



# Van Nuys Airport Community Update

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Van Nuys Airport Youth Leadership Airport Academy Celebrates Final Session**

*Youth participants receive recognition from local officials in celebration of program completion*

**VAN NUYS, Calif.** — On April 26, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), in partnership with Los Angeles City Council District 6 and the City of Los Angeles Youth Development Department, successfully concluded the Van Nuys Airport (VNY) Youth Leadership Airport Academy (YLAA), with a special recognition ceremony honoring participants for their completion of the program. The final session focused on empowering youth advocacy in leadership and encouraging participants to envision their impact through civic engagement and potential aviation career pathways.

The culminating session featured Los Angeles Councilmember Imelda Padilla (District 6), who presented certificates to the students in recognition of their achievements. Darby Whipple, Associate Director of Infrastructure-Airport, Office of the Mayor and Sheldon Cruz, the Director of Strategic Partnerships & Government, Youth Development Department also participated in the ceremony, providing

information about future opportunities for community involvement and professional development.

*"Congratulations to the students of the Youth Leadership Airport Academy on completing this meaningful program," said Councilmember Imelda Padilla. "I'm encouraged to see Van Nuys Airport investing in opportunities that inspire and empower local youth. By exploring aviation, public service, and civic leadership, these young leaders are not only preparing for bright futures—they're also helping shape the future of our community."*



The final session included student reflections on their experiences, discussions about aviation career pathways, and an overview of the Youth Development Department's programs and involvement opportunities. Students also participated in a vision board and thought-leadership activity to help them visualize their future goals and aspirations.

*"The Youth Leadership Airport Academy exemplifies our commitment to fostering the next generation of aviation leaders and community advocates," said Jacob Haik, Van Nuys Airport Manager. "By connecting the youth with opportunities in aviation and public service, we're building stronger bridges between the airport and our surrounding communities."*

Throughout the program, participants gained insights into airport operations, developed leadership skills, and learned about the importance of youth voices in community decision-making. The YLAA aimed to inspire participants to become changemakers who help shape the future of their communities and potentially pursue careers in the aviation industry.

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**Van Nuys Airport (VNY):** VNY is one of two airports owned and operated by Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), a proprietary, revenue-generating department of the City of Los Angeles. VNY serves as a valued San Fernando Valley resource, providing ongoing leadership in general aviation, business and community service. Dedicated to noncommercial air travel, more than 200 businesses are located on the 730-acre airport, including four major fixed-base operators and numerous aviation service companies. For more information, visit [iflyvny.com](http://iflyvny.com).



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