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Nonprofits partner to decrease unemployment in Skokie

[Stephanie Kelly](#), City Editor
January 7, 2015 •

A partnership between two nonprofit organizations, one of which is based in Evanston, started this January to fight unemployment in Skokie.

Childcare Network of Evanston and National Able Network, Inc. have partnered together to combat unemployment in Skokie. CNE provides access to childcare services to families in Evanston and the northern suburbs, while National Able Network provides career training and services to individuals and business.

Because of a \$5,000 grant from the Skokie Community Fund, the two organizations were able to “formalize” their partnership, said Andi Drileck, National Able Network’s vice president of workforce services.

“That’s what it’s really doing,” Drileck said. “It’s providing the additional services to this population and to focus it on the skills that they need.”

With the grant money, CNE and National Able Network will look to put 25 people through their different services, with probably 75 percent completing full job readiness sessions that National Able Network offers, Drileck said. They are not expecting a large dropout rate, she said.

CNE will refer either existing clients or new clients to National Able Network and provide case management services to the clients, she said.

CNE and National Able Network staffers will finalize the specific services provided for the clients in the next couple of days, Drileck said, but the project will focus on job readiness skills.

The two organizations met in December to start planning for the project, she said.

So far this year, CNE has been reaching out to the families they help and seeing what their needs are and if this will be beneficial for them, said Jamie Ferguson, CNE’s director of marketing and communications. As CNE staff members talk to the clients, they will refer them to services that National Able Network provides.

“(National Able Network is) going to have a direct tie for families in need, and we are going to be that bridge for them,” Ferguson said.

Ferguson said the partnership is mutually beneficial because although CNE is located in Evanston and works with Evanston families, it also reaches out to families all over the northern suburbs. This partnership will give CNE a way to connect with Skokie families, she said.

“It’s a way for us to expand our services and have a greater impact on the northern suburbs,” Ferguson said.

The partnership is part of CNE's plan to offer services to not only children, but their impoverished parents and siblings as well, according to a news release from CNE.

"We are very pleased to be partnering with National Able Network to help our clients achieve a more stable future for themselves and their families," said Andrea Densham, CNE's executive director, in the news release.

Ferguson called National Able Network a leader in its field.

"For us to have them nearby and on board and excited about this partnership, we really wanted to jump into it and see what we can do together," she said. "We were just impressed by what they do and enthusiastic about their mission and the feeling was mutual."

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**CNE - Childcare Network of Evanston**

This is the beginning of a beautiful thing! Thank you for getting the word out Stephanie, and thanks National Able and Skokie Community Fund for making this dream a reality for our families.

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**Jamie Lynn Ferguson** · Director of Marketing and Communications at CNE - Childcare Network of Evanston

Thanks for this great article, Stephanie! Can't wait to see how families lives' are improved because of this amazing partnership and opportunity.

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