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National Able Network receives \$1 Million Grant from Walmart Foundation Job Seekers to Train for, and Enter High-Growth Careers in Illinois and Indiana

CHICAGO (February 2015) - [National Able Network](http://www.nationalable.org), one of the nation's leading workforce development nonprofit organizations, is one of just seven non-profit organizations in the U.S. to receive a grant award from the Walmart Foundation for their new Retail Jobs Initiative. The two-year \$1 million grant award from the Walmart Foundation will help National Able Network expand its innovative career training and placement program for 1,000 job seekers residing in Illinois and Indiana. National Able Network's programming effectively addresses the "skills gap:" the delta between open jobs (approximately 4.7 million) and unemployed workers (more than 9 million) with the qualifications to fill those jobs.

The goals of the program are to increase the long-term career prospects of job seekers by offering leading-edge occupational training and by fostering connections to sustainable careers in high-growth occupations in the retail, manufacturing and logistics sectors. The focus of the expanded program is to prepare job seekers for middle skill jobs-those that require more than a high-school diploma but less than a four-year degree-which make up the majority of Indiana and Illinois' economy, at 55 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

"We are thrilled to have the Walmart Foundation as a key supporter in our efforts to help job seekers in need through our innovative occupational training and career placement strategies," said Grace Powers, president & CEO of National Able Network. "The career pathways we help place our clients on offer living wages and economic stability, and our business partners benefit from easy access to our talented job candidate pool. Tailor-made services that address the needs of both businesses and job seekers is what makes our program model so successful, and we are pleased to leverage our expertise to help fulfill the shared mission of our agency and that of the Walmart Foundation."

"We are excited to partner with other foundations, employers, training providers, government bodies and nonprofit organizations to improve career pathways for people in retail and adjacent sectors," said Kathleen McLaughlin, president of the Walmart Foundation, senior vice president of Corporate Affairs. "We believe progress requires collective action in the industry to align on the skills required for

advancement and develop more innovative, effective, and universally-used training and assessments that recognize on-the-job learning. Ultimately, we aim to increase economic mobility of the U.S. retail workforce as a whole."

All participants receive end-to-end support throughout their transition into new careers, including a comprehensive skill and aptitude assessment, dedicated career coach, occupational training, wraparound support to address basic needs, access to exclusive job openings and job retention support. Using this best-practice model, National Able Network has helped more than 1,000 job seekers launch new careers in the past year alone. National Able Network will leverage its expertise in helping specific sub-populations of job seekers who face even more significant barriers to employment, including seniors, military veterans, those whose jobs have been offshored or eliminated altogether, and individuals with low literacy.

In addition to directly helping job seekers during the two-year grant period, National Able Network's training and business development teams will work with major retail employers to develop a set of best practices for training for long-term pathways in this growing sector. Once complete, the curriculum will become a national model for skill development and career pathways in the retail sector.

[Click here](#) to read more about the initiative.

About National Able Network

National Able Network, Inc. is a leading non-profit organization specializing in providing career counseling, training, and placement services for disadvantaged job seekers of all ages and skill levels. By designing programs that are mission-driven and results-oriented, National Able Network is a leader in implementing workforce development strategies that strengthen local and national economies of scale. To that end, for every \$1 invested in a National Able Network client, \$5.95 is contributed back into the economy. National Able Network's services for job seekers includes individualized short- and long-term career planning, nationally-recognized Job Readiness Training, access to wraparound services to meet basic needs, connections to post-secondary education and training, and job placement assistance. Each year, National Able Network provides career services to more than 125,000 individuals in Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

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