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IDHS Launches Innovative New Pilot to Connect SNAP Recipients to Jobs

Chicago, IL (March 2020) — Today, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced an innovative partnership with private philanthropy and the National Able Network that will expand the number of organizations who can provide work and training resources for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients in Illinois.

The SNAP to Success program is part of IDHS' SNAP Employment & Training resources and it leverages federal funding to partner with community providers who help SNAP participants find employment or advance in their careers. The SNAP to Success program provides these services at little to no cost to the State of Illinois with 50% of the program resources provided through the federal government and the remaining 50% provided by the community agency.

In partnership with the Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance, IDHS has expanded the SNAP to Success program to launch a new pilot in Chicago to better engage and support small and medium based providers to participate in the SNAP to Success program. National Able Network will serve as the intermediary and centralize provider selection, monitoring, reporting and fiscal/program accountability requirements for the SNAP to Success program in Chicago. This will significantly expand the number of agencies who typically are unable to partner with the state.

“Launching this pilot program is not only smart and efficient, but it is coming at a time where we are in drastic need of innovation,” said Deputy Governor Sol Flores. “While the federal government is increasing work requirements on food insecure individuals with no additional funding to support them, it is up to the State of Illinois to find jobs for these individuals with our current resources.”

The pilot launches soon after federal changes were enacted that will require certain SNAP recipients, called Able Bodies Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs), to meet 80 hours of work requirements a month to continue to receive SNAP benefits.

The expansion of SNAP to Success through this pilot represents both a short- and long-term strategy to help alleviate the ABAWD crisis by immediately providing more meaningful opportunities in the community for skills training and to meet the ABAWD work requirement.

“SNAP to Success focuses on sustainable results for our customers. These programs give our customers the tools they need to not only find jobs, but build long-lasting careers,” said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou. “At little to no cost to the state, this program will expand over time, and participating community agencies can grow their programs by reinvesting the federal reimbursement they receive into future services.”

“To make the greatest impact in our communities, we serve job seekers both directly through our own programming but also indirectly by helping small- to medium-sized nonprofit organizations build a stronger back office infrastructure. As an experienced provider of SNAP to Success, we are uniquely positioned to help nonprofit partners navigate the complex administrative requirements of the program so that they can focus on offering exceptional career training to SNAP recipients,” said Bridget Altenburg, National Able Network President & CEO. “We are thrilled to partner with IDHS and look forward to building a network of nonprofit partners who all share a common vision of lifting Cook County’s most vulnerable residents into self-sufficiency.”

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About National Able Network, Inc.

National Able Network, Inc. is a leading Chicago-based nonprofit organization, and for 40 years has provided workforce development services for underserved populations and to help low-income individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency through gainful employment.

National Able Network is a current SNAP to Success provider in Illinois is the programmatic and fiscal administrator of several large-scale programs serving thousands of job seekers, training providers, employers and partners in the City of Chicago and Cook County, provides career coaching for displaced workers and runs the IT Career Lab for aspiring information technology professionals.

National Able Network currently operates Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs throughout Chicago and Suburban Cook County and is the programmatic and fiscal administrator of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program on behalf of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). To learn more, visit www.nationalable.org.

About the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance

The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance is the Chicagoland region's workforce development funder collaborative and is recognized as the region's major convener of the philanthropic community interested in workforce development and employment. The Alliance was launched in May 2012 by five founding workforce funders: The Chicago Community Trust, the Joyce Foundation, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and the Polk Bros. Foundation. Since its founding the Funder Alliance has engaged over 30 funders to advance its shared mission. Through a combination of grant making and civic leadership, the Funder Alliance has carved out a unique position at the complex intersection point of workforce development, social justice, education and economic development.

The Funder Alliance is structured as a Donor Advised Fund at The Chicago Community Trust. For more information go to www.chicagoworkforcefunders.com.