



ANNUAL REPORT 2020 & 2021:
THE PANDEMIC YEARS

REIMAGINING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC



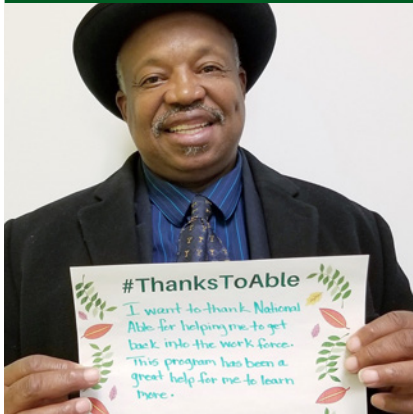
able!
National Able Network®



As we readied ourselves to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with congressional leaders in February 2020, the world was just beginning to familiarize themselves with the word “COVID-19”. We spent the remainder of the month planning for how we would continue to serve our communities with a stay-at-home order in place. On March 16, 2020, our offices were closed to the public. Our digital channels and staff were open, virtually at least, and we made efforts to conduct business as usual in very unusual times. What we initially thought would be two weeks of virtual work has turned into two years.

There are countless lessons and changes that we have experienced, but what remains constant is our commitment to continuing to adapt and evolve for a more equitable future. We thank all of our funders and supporters who have helped us make this a successful journey. **We celebrate all of the job seekers who experienced success in the most uncertain of times.**

ABOUT US



National Able Network, Inc. is a leading non-profit organization whose mission is focused on building equity through employment. Each year, more than 50,000 individuals across the Midwest receive access to our career programs and services. We serve those whose journey to economic self-sufficiency has been challenging. Many want to give up. But National Able Network is there to help and restore hope.

Social equity is broadly defined as fairness or justice in the way people are treated. Over the past several years, National Able Network has guided its mission through the lens of equity. In that time, we have worked to develop a theory of change which helps advance racial, social, and economic equity in our work and in the workplace. National Able Network's programs reach populations that experience persistently high unemployment rates, and we work in communities that are veritable opportunity deserts. 2020 was a year like no other. We saw already challenged clients sink deeper into duress because of the economic ripple effects of a global pandemic. To help measure our progress, we surveyed our clients about the employment impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to meet the needs of our clients.

National Able Network employs strategies that help break down systemic injustices and support equity in the workplace by working in communities that need us most and with employer partners who share our values. The economic impact of the pandemic is far-reaching, and the hardest hit and slowest to recover are people of color and low-wage workers.

OUR CLIENTS

Far too many job seekers face barriers to obtaining quality jobs because of their individual circumstances, whether that is race, gender, age, or others. Even worse, **nearly a third of clients recently surveyed said that they experienced employment discrimination.** Of the clients surveyed, we asked if they identified with demographics that typically experience greater challenges to employment.

WHO WE SERVE¹

5%

Identify as LGBTQ+

17%

Reported a disability

8%

Identify as an immigrant or refugee

7%

Have a prior arrest on their record

38%

Are senior citizens (55 years of age or better)

3X

Higher unemployment rate for those who identify as LGBTQ+

11%

Unemployment rate of workers with a disability²

7.3%

Unemployment rate of immigrant workers²

5X

Higher unemployment rate for those with a prior arrest on their record

45.5%

Of job seekers age 55+ are long-term unemployed²

WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE IN THE JOB MARKET

¹ Identification reported by National Able Network, Inc. November 2020 survey respondents.

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2020

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our client's lives in many ways — housing, food access, and other lifeline resources — the loss of a job impacts nearly every aspect of life. What has helped people remain connected — *technology* — was out of reach for many of our clients. For others, we are proud to share their remarkable resiliency and ability to find hope and opportunity with virtual job interviews amid extraordinarily challenging circumstances.

Despite almost **a third of clients losing their jobs because of the pandemic**, nearly **half feel hopeful about their job search** even during the pandemic. **1 in 4 struggle to secure adequate food** for their household, and **1 in 5 are facing challenges with secure housing**. At the time of the survey, only 18% had found a job during the pandemic.

HOW HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTED YOU?³

29%

Lost their job
because of the
pandemic

18%

Found a job during
the pandemic

48%

Feel hopeful about
their job search
during the pandemic

1 in 4

Are facing challenges
with securing food for
their household

1 in 5

Are facing challenges
with secure housing

³ National Able Network, Inc. November 2020 survey respondents.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS

CONTINUED

By the time National Able Network's offices closed in mid-March 2020, we had already deployed the vast majority of our career services using virtual resources. While thousands of clients continued to access career training, coaching, and job search resources, far too many clients found themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. **Nearly a third of clients do not have a computer or tablet in their home, which are necessary tools for job searching, resume writing, submitting job applications, and adapting to the "new normal" of virtual job interviews.** Further, 1 in 5 clients do not have in-home internet access, and not surprisingly, the same number do not use online resources to find job leads. We revamped our interview preparation workshops to help clients navigate virtual job interviews, just in time for 37% of clients to participate.

HOW HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTED YOUR JOB SEARCH?⁴

30%

Do not have a home
computer or tablet

1 in 5

Have school-age
dependents
participating in
e-learning at home

37%

Have participated in
virtual job interviews

1 in 5

Do not have reliable
in-home internet
access

1 in 5

Are not using online
resources to find
job leads

⁴ National Able Network, Inc. November 2020 survey respondents.

CLIENTS WHO INSPIRE

Perseverance. Adaptability. Devotion. Courage.

These are some of the words that come to mind as we reflect on the accomplishments of the clients we have served at National Able Network. Changing careers can feel like a risk under normal circumstances, and we were inspired by so many clients who chose this path during the pandemic when there was so much uncertainty. We are inspired by the clients who have continued to adapt and advance in their new career pathways! But mostly, we are grateful. Our clients have given us so much. We are grateful for your patience, your drive to help us succeed, and your ability to explore creative solutions in this new normal.

SUSAN ZHOU



Since high school, Susan Zhou had a natural talent for all things information technology. So much so that family and friends would count on her to help set up laptops, computers, and even complete basic troubleshooting whenever they ran into an issue. As she started her college career, Susan said she felt the path into information technology was intimidating, so she pursued another passion of hers – English. Since Susan was so determined to enter the information technology field, she took a leave of absence from her job and jumped into the pursuit of her dream career by attending National Able Network's IT Career Lab. Susan recounts her experience with fellow students while taking the courses in the program, **"It wasn't just about coming to class...We were always asking our instructor questions. We wanted to do a lot of labs, so that we could be hands on...whenever anyone struggled, we worked together to make sure we all understood."** Susan interviewed for the Network Support Engineer position at Jewish United Fund, a local non-profit. They found her personality, professionalism and drive to be just the right fit and Susan was hired!

MARCHEITA CRAWFORD



Marcheita Crawford, who was working as a billing administrator for a major corporation, was notified that after 15 years of employment she would be laid off from the job that had helped support her family for more than a decade. Once she began her job search, she realized that her substantial experience alone would not be enough to replace her lost wages. She had been working on an Associate Degree since 2013 and was very motivated to complete it, but it hardly seemed like a step she could take while unemployed. “I was working towards my associate degree at that time. [National] Able [Network] took me through the enrollment process and I was told I could go even further and get my BA in Business,” Marcheita said. **“From the moment I met with my intake counselor I already knew what my plans were going to be, so I decided to pursue my bachelor’s degree in Business Administration.”** The best news of all, though, was that Marcheita found a job earning more than she earned at her old job. “I believe there’s a blessing in everything, if you look at a situation,” she said.

JULIE PARKER



Julie Parker was in a difficult position in September 2019. She was just laid off from her job in Omaha’s healthcare industry and her confidence was at an all-time low. She felt discouraged about her job search because she is an older worker with a lot of experience, but she had never been laid off before. “I was at a very serious crossroads in my life at the time,” she said. “There were so many factors preventing me from finding a job.” But when she connected with National Able Network at Heartland Workforce Solutions, her confidence about starting a new career drastically improved. Julie decided to attend The AIM Code school for further training in Foundations-Web Development. While enrolled in class, Julie worked part time as a mental health therapist and worked hard to complete her course. Her hard work paid off and she passed her exams with flying colors! Although Julie has completed her training course, she is not done working: **“I am in the process of getting my certification now that I passed all my classes,”** she said. Throughout her learning process, Nadja and the team at [National] Able [Network] provided encouragement, career support, and job placement services.

ROBERTO REYES



On September 16, 2018, Roberto Reyes was told he was being watched by the Cuban government for expressing his opinions freely online. He knew what this meant, and he knew he had to leave. He had been taken prisoner for 2 days in the past. He had been beaten. He had seen acquaintances, neighbors and friends disappear. So less than 24 hours later, with two family photos, four items of clothing, and his computer science diploma in tow – Roberto safely made his way to Nuevo Laredo where he crossed into the United States and was eventually granted political asylum in Chicago. An information technology professional with well over 20 years of experience, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a bachelor's degree in computer science from Universidad La Habana – he was one of the lucky ones in Cuba. However, he knew no one in Chicago. All the English he knew was fully self-taught. He needed help. Once he had internet access, he connected with World Relief and Refugee Social Services which then connected him with National Able Network and IT Career Lab. Roberto quickly signed up for his courses and was hired as an IT intern while he studied for his Cisco Certified Network Associate certification (CCNA). Roberto says, **“At National Able Network, I’ve learned how to better relate to people. I’ve learned about the culture, the true discipline and hard work here. That’s the most important thing.”** Roberto earned his CCNA and is currently working as a Systems Administrator at University of Illinois – Chicago. His next goal is to become well established enough to bring his daughter to America. He says, “In Cuba you don’t have a life, you simply survive. Here, my daughter will have more opportunities. She’ll be able to study what she wants. The United States has hope.”

MARGIT ALSTED



Margit Altstadt worked in the department of health in Champaign, Illinois for several years until she was laid off at the age of 62. “It was hard to find a job at that age,” she said, but that didn’t stop Margit from trying. She connected with a nonprofit focused on seniors and worked there for three years until her daughter had a baby. She took some time off to help care for her grandchild, but as soon as they started school – Margit was back in job search at the age of 73! That’s when she came to National Able Network (Able) for help. Through the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Margit was given the opportunity to train and work at Services Associates, and she was right on track to becoming hired full time. But then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and everything ground to a halt. Margit did what she could to not only advance her career, but to also stay in the senior services career path. She says, “I sent an email to my supervisor and said that if they are hiring someone, please keep me in mind. After I sent that email, maybe two weeks later, I got a call. I never gave up.” Now, Margit is again happily employed. She says, **“My advice to others is don’t give up. You might think it’s not going to happen but just don’t give up. Do the best you can do while you’re in training because you can show them what you’re capable of doing.”**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2021 AND JUNE 30, 2020

	2021	2020
Revenues		
Total Revenues	\$ 27,803,324	\$ 24,992,881
Expenses		
Program Services	24,075,949	22,640,763
Support Services	1,902,817	1,992,222
Total Expenses	25,978,766	24,632,985
Change in Net Assets	1,824,558	359,896
Net Assets		
Beginning of Year	2,755,418	2,395,522
End of Year	\$ 4,579,976	2,755,418

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2021 AND JUNE 30, 2020

	2021	2020		2021	2020
ASSETS			LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Assets			Current Liabilities		
Cash	\$ 3,009,027	\$ 2,763,905	Accounts Payable – Trade \$	669,132	\$ 247,709
Net Receivables	\$ 4,065,794	\$ 3,202,009	Other Liabilities	\$ 1,847,941	\$ 1,870,291
Promise to Give	\$ 215,300	\$ 50,000	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 2,517,073	\$ 2,118,000
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 174,658	\$ 104,638			
Total Current Assets	\$ 7,464,779	\$ 6,120,552	Long-Term Liabilities		
Net Furniture & Equipment ..	\$ 38,366	\$ 49,568	Deferred Rent Obligations \$	466,422	\$ 1,357,128
Deposits	\$ 60,326	\$ 60,426	Total Liabilities	\$ 2,983,495	\$ 3,475,128
Total Assets	\$ 7,563,471	\$ 6,230,546	Net Assets		
			Net Assets	\$ 4,579,976	\$ 2,755,418
			Total Liabilities	\$ 7,563,471	\$ 6,230,546

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