



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

CREATING PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS & STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES





DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

As we reflect on the past year, one truth stands out: the relationship between unemployment rates and community needs is far more complex than it appears. Despite a year of historically low unemployment, we witnessed firsthand the significant barriers that many individuals face in securing meaningful employment. Chief among these challenges is the persistent mismatch between employer needs and job seeker skillsets.

Through our unwavering commitment to help bridge this skills gap, our teams provided critical support to thousands of individuals to prepare them for in-demand careers and make connections with employers in need of diverse and capable talent. **Our programs helped job seekers access vocational and on-the-job training opportunities that lead to careers in high-growth sectors such as information technology, logistics, transportation, healthcare, and other industries offering family-sustaining wages.**

This year, we also navigated a national dialogue surrounding migrants, refugees, and the complexities of our immigration system. While these debates unfolded and continue to be ever-present within the public forum, we remained steadfast in prioritizing services for communities striving to achieve independence and economic security. Challenges persist, and we are mindful of the potential impact policy changes could have on our nation’s workforce. Nevertheless, **our steadfast commitment to advancing equity and opportunity within the job market has never been stronger.**

Our work also extended beyond employment services. Thanks to the generosity of our staff and donors, we were able to distribute hundreds of care packages containing essential personal items which helped address our job seekers’ most basic needs. At the same time, we continued to offer and provide employment resources, empowering individuals to take major strides toward self-sufficiency. While language differences are often framed as barriers, we see them as opportunities for growth and pathways to success. This perspective fuels our efforts to foster inclusive, thriving communities where everyone has access to meaningful employment.

On a personal note, my travels this year took me throughout the Midwest, the South, and to Washington, D.C. where I met with policymakers to advocate for our mission and champion why continued investment in our nation’s workforce infrastructure is crucial to a strong job market and economy. These highly effective programs are vital to supporting thousands of workers and employers nationwide. As we prepare to collaborate with a new Presidential Administration and legislature in 2025, **I remain focused on ensuring that the voices of those we serve are heard, and that workforce solutions remain a top priority.**

As we look ahead, I invite you to join us in these efforts. **Whether through advocacy, volunteering, or financial support, your partnership is essential to our successes.** Together, we can continue to strengthen our nation’s economic foundation by creating pathways to opportunity for everyone.

IN SERVICE WITH YOU,
Matt



Our work is defined not just by the services we provide, but by the transformative journeys we witness. In the face of evolving economic landscapes, our programs continue to stand as beacons of hope, bridging the gap between job seekers and meaningful employment opportunities.

We proudly share stories of individuals whose lives have been changed through our programs. These stories underscore our commitment to creating pathways that lead to economic independence and personal fulfillment. Each story is a testament to the resilience of our clients and the dedication of our team.



“IT Career Lab has helped me tremendously in building my confidence. I feel like I can tackle anything in the world. They opened up a lot of doors for me especially as a woman and a mom in a male-dominated field.”

FROM NURSING TO IT: ONE WOMAN’S BIG CAREER PIVOT

Although she originally pursued an education in nursing and had a steady career in sales while managing her very own small business, Brandy Newbern, a 28-year old Chicago mother, had always been interested in Information Technology (IT).

Brandy learned about National Able Network’s IT Career Lab program and how she could finally make her dream career change into IT a reality. She worked hard during class, taking advantage of opportunities to network with program alumni, and even participated in Cisco Live which allows graduates to vie for a spot on the “Cisco Live Dream Team.” Out of thousands of applicants across the United States and Canada, only seven were selected...and Brandy was one of seven selected!

“It was a big opportunity to network...I met so many Cisco executives and even met Chuck Robbins, the CEO of Cisco,” says Brandy, “It was a once in a lifetime experience. Many of us left with job opportunities and mentors. Being part of the Cisco Dream Team opened up a lot of doors.” After nine days at Cisco Live in Las Vegas, Brandy returned to Chicago and jumped right back into her IT Career Lab coursework without skipping a beat.

When reflecting on her experience, Brandy says, “IT Career Lab has helped me tremendously in building my confidence. I feel like I can tackle anything in the world. They opened up a lot of doors for me especially as a woman and a mom in a male-dominated field. Because of IT Career Lab I met people I wouldn’t have been able to meet and get advice from them. IT Career Lab put me in another bracket. My resume is going to stand out because of the opportunities I received at IT Career Lab.”

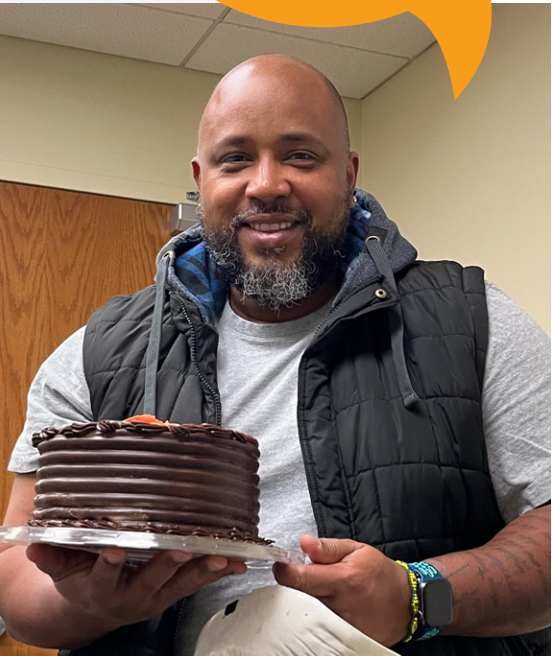
DESTINOS & EMPOWERMENT:
NEW ARRIVALS IN CHICAGO
WILLIAM’S STORY

“I never had a plan to go anywhere [outside of Venezuela],” says William Paul Mijares, a 46-year-old new Chicago resident, “But things were getting worse every time. I couldn’t find a job.” William was well-prepared for three different careers with the educational degrees and experiences to support each one: English teacher, industrial safety expert, and SWAT-team equivalent police officer. The most serious problems began when William worked as the head of security for a television station that very publicly and directly opposed the current Venezuelan government. Due to his role in security at that media channel as well as his background in police work, the government’s enforcers associated him with the opposing political group, and began to follow and harass William. At one point, William was shot, and bullet fragments remain in his body to this day.

He left Venezuela and attempted to find work in neighboring countries, but the Venezuelan government’s reach seemed limitless. “The only place that is directly opposing the government there is the United States, and that’s why I decided to come here,” says William, “Everywhere else in Latin America, there is no peace.” On August 28, 2022, William entered the United States through Texas. “I was supposed to go to New York, but I ended up in Chicago just by destiny,” says William.

William found stable and fulfilling employment as Community Worker Supervisor with National Able Network in its Pilsen location, where he leads a team and provides assistance and guidance to fellow new arrivals. In addition to finding work, William was eventually joined in the United States by his wife and his two youngest children. Now that he has family here, is employed, and is safe, William reflects on what he hopes for the future, “We just want to belong and feel like we belong. National Able Network makes me feel like I belong to something and that I belong here. And that’s what I’m trying to give back to the community, as well as just to give the best of me.”

In November 2024, William received great news: he received an associate degree equivalency for his credentials that is recognized in the U.S. This recognition further validates his professional expertise and opens new pathways here in the United States.



“We just want to belong and feel like we belong. National Able Network makes me feel like I belong to something and that I belong here. And that’s what I’m trying to give back to the community, as well as just to give the best of me.”

DESTINOS & EMPOWERMENT:
NEW ARRIVALS IN CHICAGO
NELSON’S STORY

As the administrator of Illinois’ busiest and most successful American Job Center in Chicago’s Pilsen community, National Able Network offers a wealth of career preparation and transition assistance to thousands of individuals each year. With bilingual English and Spanish-speaking staff, the center is a hub for individuals in need, most of whom are building their English language skills along with searching for work.

Venezuela native Nelson Gonzalez, 56, was one of these individuals—qualified and motivated to succeed, he received was enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) which gave him the opportunity to receive paid on-the-job training as a custodian at the center in Pilsen.

Jaira Estrada, Workplace Manager at National Able Network along with Terri Wright, Maintenance Custodian, were pleased to welcome Nelson to the team that keeps the center running! Jaira is bilingual, but Terri, who would serve as a supervisor for Nelson, only speaks English and Nelson has very limited English skills. Terri and Nelson saw this as an opportunity for both of them to learn another language!

“Communication wasn’t a barrier at all. It really speaks about their open mindedness — they didn’t see it as an obstacle. Their attitude was ‘I want to work, I want experience, and I want help finding work.’ And they’re really happy to be here. Terri says, “It’s been positive and wonderful. I don’t speak much Spanish, and they don’t much speak English, but we’ve finding our way around that. They’re learning English and I’m learning more Spanish.”

“This experience has been marvelous, and the people are incredible. I’ve left a place full of stress and came to this place of miracles where people lend you a hand, speak with you, converse with you, ask you questions. I feel very good here. The most important thing is communication. It is the fundamental base, and with humility, you can achieve anything.”



“This experience has been marvelous, and the people are incredible. I’ve left a place full of stress and came to this place of miracles where people lend you a hand, speak with you, converse with you, ask you questions. I feel very good here.”

“If you’re in the market and you need to upgrade your skills even with a resume or cover letter – National Able [Network] would be the place to go! They also have employment opportunities they can refer you to.... I think it’s really great and it should always be around to help individuals.”



ONE SENIOR’S JOURNEY FROM THE FRONT DESK TO A MEDICAL OFFICE

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) supports older workers by providing paid, on-the-job training that helps them gain the skills and experience needed to re-enter the workforce. Lillian Egbo joined SCSEP on May 16, 2024, and began her training at the front office of the National Able Network’s Reception Desk. During this time, she focused on enhancing her phone etiquette and customer service skills. Lillian’s dedication and commitment to securing employment were clear as she worked toward her goal of finding unsubsidized work.

After just three months, Lillian’s efforts paid off when she accepted a full-time position as a Medical Office Associate with the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. SCSEP played a vital role in helping her develop the skills needed to secure this role, highlighting the program’s positive impact on older workers’ lives.

Lillian’s story serves as a powerful reminder of how training and perseverance can lead to new opportunities. National Able Network is proud to support individuals like Lillian through SCSEP, helping them find meaningful employment and contribute to their communities.

SENIOR PROGRAMS BENEFIT SENIORS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Ivory Snow, Chief Administrative Officer at St. Leonard’s Ministry had her first interaction with a Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participant about five years ago. “I was an HR Director at the time and had just entered our wellness center when I was greeted by a gentleman at the front desk. He was the first one to greet me and I learned he was a SCSEP participant. That’s when I heard about the work the program does helping to reintegrate seniors into the workforce.” Since then, Ivory has hosted many SCSEP participants at St. Leonard’s Ministry throughout the years.

St. Leonard’s Ministry works with returning citizens as they transition into new lives. “It gets very busy around here and very high pace, but Miss Dee [SCSEP participant] is the first point of contact. She’s so even tempered and brings such calmness to our team and to our organization. We’re big on respect, big on dignity, and big on being kind. So it’s important to have someone at our front desk that exhibits those things. She’s such a kind, compassionate person,” says Ivory. She goes on to mention how as the first point of contact for many clients of the ministry, the value that SCSEP participants bring to the organization is critical.

Ivory had this to say to organizations and employers who may be unaware of the key benefits of working with seniors. “Be open to creating space for the aging population to feel valued and to feel important....in this labor market it’s been difficult to find and retain good talent. I’ve been in HR for 20 years, and the folks in this program are so grateful and dependable. They show up and show up with the right attitude. There is so much value in that. Even if you just look at them as the model you want for your workforce, it’ll trickle down. So, the return on investment is absolutely worth it.”



“Be open to creating space for the aging population to feel valued and to feel important....in this labor market it’s been difficult to find and retain good talent. I’ve been in HR for 20 years, and the folks in this program are so grateful and dependable.”

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 & JUNE 30, 2023

	2024	2023
Revenues		
Total Revenues	\$ 19,459,983	\$ 22,678,276
Expenses		
Program Services	17,214,055	20,621,534
Support Services	1,894,653	1,729,244
Total Expenses	19,108,706	22,350,778
Change in Net Assets	351,277	327,498
Net Assets		
Beginning of Year	5,317,629	4,990,131
Member's Equity Beginning of Year	79,767	4,990,131
End of Year	\$ 5,748,673	\$ 5,317,62



CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS OF JUNE 30, 2024 & JUNE 30, 2023

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 3,807,580	\$ 3,828,382
Net Receivables	3,828,229	3,531,798
Promise to Give	125,000	200,000
Prepaid Expenses	124,397	181,909
Total Current Assets	7,885,206	7,742,089
Net Furniture and Equipment	17,844	32,371
Right-of-Use Lease Assets .	3,987,750	4,857,431
Deposits	59,676	59,676
Total Assets	\$ 11,950,476	\$ 12,691,667
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable – Trade	\$ 1,049,230	\$ 1,194,693
Other Liabilities	1,968,676	1,866,891
Total Current Liabilities.	\$ 3,017,906	\$ 3,061,584
Long-Term Liabilities		
Total Long-Term Liabilities. .	\$ 3,183,897	\$ 4,312,454
Total Liabilities	\$ 6,201,803	\$ 7,374,038
Net Assets		
Net Assets	\$ 5,748,673	\$ 5,317,629
Total Liabilities	\$ 11,950,476	\$ 12,691,667

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

CHAIR Tammy McMiller
VICE CHAIR Khadija James-Keating
TREASURER Michael Chrisler
SECRETARY Maija Renko

DIRECTORS

Matt Weis
Angel Torres
Anthony Onagan
Danya Rosen
Lorenzo Garth
Jonelle Welch
Matthew Vandenack
Patricia O'Brien

PARTIAL LIST OF FUNDERS

GOVERNMENT

United States Department of Labor
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Indiana Department of Workforce Development
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
Illinois Department on Aging
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs

PRIVATE

Chicago Community Trust
Chicago Foundation for Women
Bank of America
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
United Way Metro Chicago
A Private Family Foundation
Dr. Scholl Foundation



At National Able Network, our mission advances workforce solutions and career pathways for an equitable future. We invite you to donate and help support our mission.

Your donation is more than just a financial contribution—it is an investment in people, in opportunity, and in the future of our workforce.

This year, your donation goes **TWICE** as far as every dollar received will be **MATCHED** by a generous sponsor.

Visit www.NationalAble.org to learn more.



National Able Network®

www.nationalable.org

