



SKILLS FOR
CHICAGOLAND'S
FUTURE

2023 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

WRITING A NEW CHAPTER IN

Workforce Equity

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From Our Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills), I extend my heartfelt thanks to you for being part of another remarkable year of connecting employers with talented job seekers. Your support has allowed us to continue our mission of providing access to quality employment opportunities for individuals who have historically been overlooked.

Take a moment to reflect on your first job. Did someone lend you a helping hand, perhaps a family member or a friend, to make a connection or polish your resume? Did you click with the interviewer over a shared experience or common interest? For many of us, these personal connections were key to securing that opportunity. But for so many in our communities, these connections don't exist, and the job search becomes a frustrating, uphill battle.

A job search is deeply personal and often feels subjective. Factors like where we come from, what we look like, and the experiences we've inherited or learned can create invisible barriers. These barriers have nothing to do with a person's talent or potential but everything to do with systemic inequities. Unfortunately, they not only limit individual job seekers but also ripple through families and communities, impacting economic mobility and perpetuating cycles of inequality.

This is where Skills comes in. We are here to break down those barriers, to level the playing field, and to connect overlooked talent with quality jobs. Our work is about ensuring that a person's skills and potential, not their circumstance, define their opportunities. We believe everyone deserves a fair chance at a good job, and this belief drives our mission every day.

Over the past year, we have helped over 1,100 find employment. These are individuals who, without organizations like Skills and partners like you, might have been passed over, their talents left untapped. We're incredibly proud of the progress we've made, but we know there's still much work to be done.

We cannot do this work alone. Our success is built on the relationships we've fostered with community-based organizations, employer partners, and donors who share our commitment to creating a more equitable job market. Together, we are not only changing lives, but also uplifting communities and reshaping the workforce landscape in Chicago.

As we look ahead, we invite you to continue this journey with us. Whether you're an employer looking to hire, a community leader seeking partnership, or a donor wanting to make an impact, we encourage you to join our team in advancing this important work. Your support is the reason we can continue making a difference in the lives of so many.

Thank you for your commitment to Skills and for being a vital part of our community. Together, we will continue to break barriers, open doors, and transform lives.



Bridget Altenburg

Chief Executive Officer, Skills for Chicagoland's Future

How We Work

Skills for Chicagoland's Future is dedicated to bridging the 'access gap' by prioritizing direct connections between job seekers and open roles. By starting with existing job opportunities, we collaborate closely with a network of employer partners to address their long-term hiring needs. This approach accelerates pathways to quality jobs by removing barriers and making hiring more inclusive.

Through partnerships with forward-thinking organizations, we help streamline hiring criteria, opening doors for candidates from Chicago's historically underinvested communities and supporting meaningful economic mobility.

SKILLS' JOBS-FIRST MODEL



Writing a New Chapter in Workforce Equity

At Skills for Chicagoland's Future, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to secure meaningful employment. We are dedicated to connecting individuals with life-changing jobs by removing barriers and offering pathways to opportunity.

Our mission is to empower unemployed and underemployed job seekers by expanding access to diverse roles that promote career growth and financial mobility. Through innovation and our demand-driven approach, we're committed to helping more people take the next step in their professional journey.

SKILLS CUMULATIVE IMPACT



JOB SEEKERS PLACED
INTO ROLES BY SKILLS

12,147



EMPLOYER PARTNERS

134



PLACEMENTS IDENTIFY AS
FEMALE

65%



PLACEMENTS IDENTIFY AS
BIPOC

88%



PLACEMENTS ARE FROM
THE SOUTH AND WEST
SIDES OF CHICAGO

82%



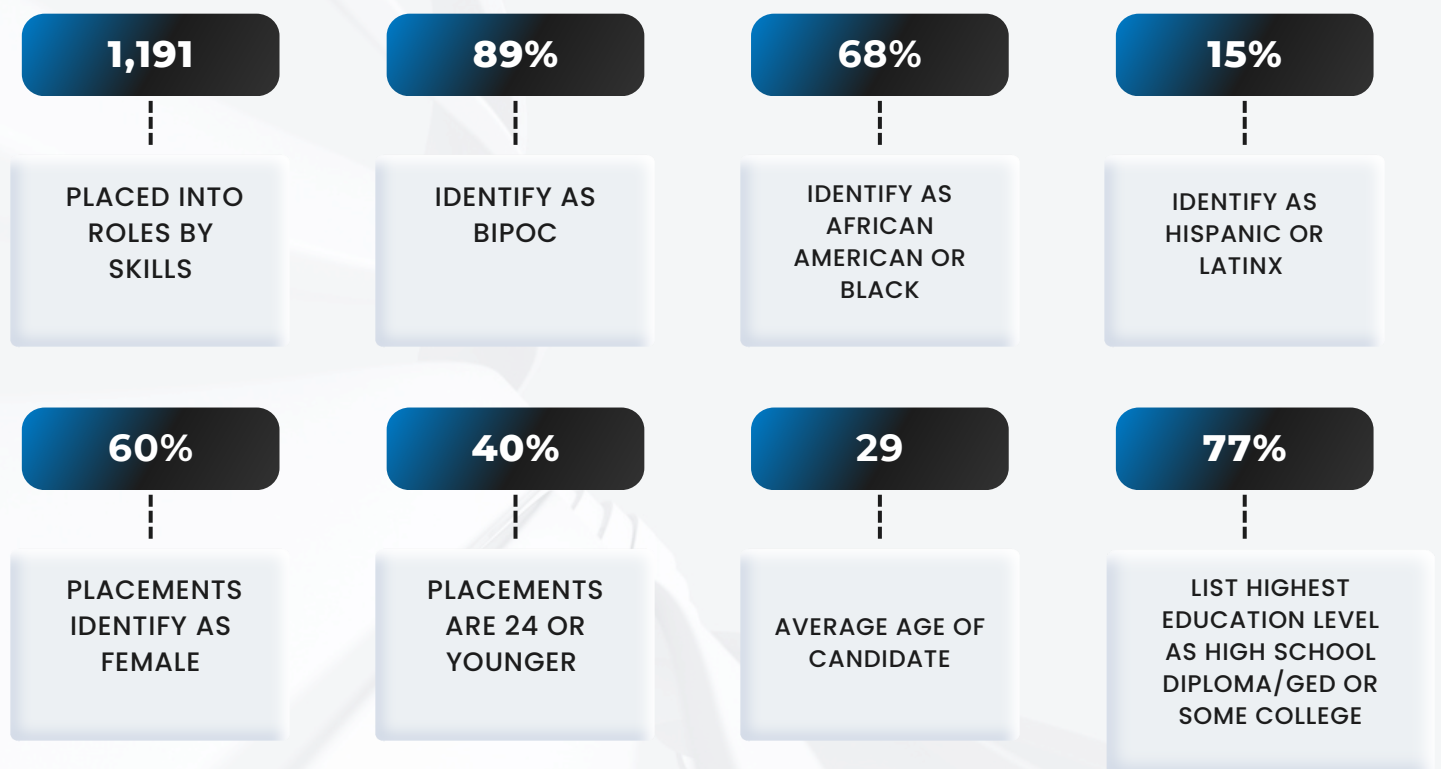
TOTAL WAGE IMPACT

\$278.2M

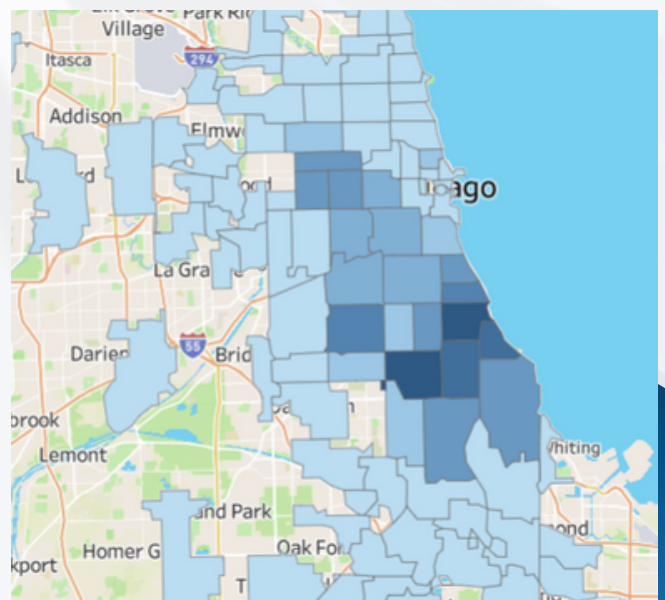
2023 Placements

In 2023, the Skills team supported over 2,000 local job seekers by providing application screening, hosting hiring events, working with community partners, and offering career development programs. Our goal is to help individuals overcome barriers and connect them to meaningful employment opportunities.

Below is a demographic snapshot of the talented individuals we helped secure quality jobs with companies that are committed to inclusive hiring and creating pathways to success.



We are dedicated to supporting individuals from neighborhoods that face the highest unemployment rates and have historically seen less investment. The map highlights areas where we've made the most impact, connecting residents to meaningful employment opportunities.



Success Stories

Meet a few job seekers who were either placed into jobs or promoted in 2023 with the help of Skills for Chicagoland's Future



Aisha W.

MANAGER OF CUSTOMER SERVICE, CARELON MEDICAL BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

Aisha W., an experienced insurance professional, found herself navigating an 18-month stretch of unemployment. Despite her strong background, she struggled to find a new opportunity—until she attended a job fair at her church and discovered Skills for Chicagoland's Future. Aisha's experience and drive caught the attention of a Skills recruiter, who recommended her for an upcoming role.

Shortly after, Aisha secured a position as a Referral Specialist with Carelon. That initial opportunity opened doors: over the years, she's earned several promotions, now leading as a Manager of Customer Service. Aisha credits Skills for their guidance and interview coaching, which gave her confidence during a challenging time. Her role with Carelon has provided financial stability and a supportive work-life balance, even enabling her to buy a home.

"I always recommend Skills because they truly take the time to understand your strengths and match you with a job you'll enjoy for the long term"

PROPHET H.

WELDER, FREEDMAN SEATING COMPANY

Prophet H. graduated high school with a vision of building a career in the trades, though he hadn't yet chosen a specific path. When he learned about a program offering hands-on work and NC3 certification courses in machinery and welding, he seized the chance to enroll.

After completing the program, Prophet sought additional job placement support at the ULON Resource Center, where he was referred to Skills for Chicagoland's Future. Inspired by a Welder position with Freedman Seating Company, he applied through Skills, was hired, and began his new role.

Reflecting on his journey, Prophet values Skills' support with his resume and a quick, seamless hiring process. His position with Freedman provides invaluable experience, ongoing welding training, and guidance from skilled mentors—essential steps toward his goal of advancing in the electrical trade and eventually launching his own business.

"Skills made the hiring process quick and seamless, connecting me with mentors and opportunities to build the skills I need for my career goals."



Sterling D.

LOSS PREVENTION OFFICER, JEWEL-OSCO

Sterling D. was searching for more than just a job—he wanted a stable career with room for growth. He sought a role where he could establish himself and avoid the dead ends he had encountered before. Hearing positive reviews, Sterling reached out to Skills for Chicagoland's Future, hoping they could help him find the right opportunity.

Through Skills, Sterling secured a position as a Loss Prevention Officer at Jewel-Osco. Since starting, he's valued the support and career potential within the company. Reflecting on his experience, Sterling shared that our team at Skills was consistently supportive, even checking in after he was hired.

With this role, Sterling now has a stable income, helping him work toward financial goals like moving into his own apartment. Grateful for Skills' guidance, he mentioned that he actively recommends us to others, noting this is his second successful placement through our support.

"Skills helped me find more than a job—they connected me to a career path with growth and stability. Their support made all the difference."



Our Employer Network

Our team is committed to connecting local, job-ready individuals—whether unemployed or underemployed—with meaningful employment opportunities. We're proud to celebrate the employers who partnered with us in 2023 to help people secure jobs through Skills for Chicagoland's Future.



Employer Spotlights



Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) is deeply committed to improving the health and well-being of communities across Chicago, with a special focus on underserved neighborhoods like Pilsen and Morgan Park. Through local hiring initiatives and community investment, BCBSIL has created job opportunities that support economic stability and access to healthcare services in these areas. Their work in Pilsen and Morgan Park reflects a broader dedication to addressing social determinants of health and improving quality of life for residents.

In partnership with Skills for Chicagoland's Future, BCBSIL has expanded its impact by connecting local talent to meaningful roles within the organization. This collaboration ensures that jobseekers in Pilsen and Morgan Park not only gain employment but also have access to long-term career growth. Together, Skills and BCBSIL are breaking down employment barriers, empowering residents to secure sustainable jobs and enhancing the overall economic mobility of these communities.



The University of Chicago Medicine (UCM) has long been a key player in enhancing health and wellness on Chicago's South Side, particularly through initiatives like the Urban Health Initiative (UHI) and its Pathway Programs. These programs address the underrepresentation of minorities and women in STEM fields by expanding access and inclusion for local students. UCM is also committed to building a more diverse healthcare workforce by offering training and career opportunities in fields like medical assisting and pharmacy.

Since 2014, UCM has partnered with Skills for Chicagoland's Future to create accessible career pathways for local residents, including the Pharmacy Technician Training Program. This collaboration offers jobseekers hands-on training, education, and licensure, helping them secure stable, rewarding roles within UCM. To date, nearly 800 candidates have been placed into roles through this partnership, contributing to UCM's goal of fostering economic mobility and improving health outcomes across its service area.



Divvy, Chicago's bike-sharing system, has been dedicated to expanding transportation accessibility across the city. In partnership with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Divvy achieved citywide coverage in 2023, including adding new stations in underrepresented areas on the Northwest, Southwest, and Far South Sides. This initiative, which includes the conversion of e-bike-only stations into traditional Divvy stations and the addition of nearly 3,000 new classic bikes, reflects Divvy's commitment to promoting sustainable, accessible transportation options for all Chicagoans.

Beyond infrastructure, Divvy engages in community-building efforts. In collaboration with Adaptive Adventures, they hosted a free adaptive biking event, and with Pedal Power, they donated bikes to CPS honor roll students. Divvy also partnered with the Street Project to advocate for safer streets.

Since 2015, Divvy has partnered with Skills for Chicagoland's Future, creating career pathways for nearly 800 candidates. This collaboration not only supports Divvy's operational needs but also empowers local jobseekers by connecting them to meaningful roles within the company.

Delivering More than a Job

Our Career Access programs help job seekers build long-term careers and advance into middle-skill roles by offering a combination of quality job placements, coaching, mentorship, professional development, and educational opportunities.



Through partnerships with leading local companies, our Pivot to Success program does more than connect job seekers to work—it opens the door to long-term career growth. Participants begin in entry-level roles while receiving no-cost education, mentorship, and personalized guidance. As they progress, each new credential they earn serves as a stepping stone, equipping them with the skills and confidence to secure promotions and advance on their career path. This program ensures job seekers don't just find employment but thrive and grow within their chosen fields.



The Credential Connection program enables job seekers to apply their newly earned credentials to meaningful employment. After completing training or certification with a partner organization, participants receive job readiness support, including tailored professional development in resume preparation, interview skills, and employer-specific guidance. Upon completion, our team connects qualified candidates with hiring employer partners, helping them take the next step in their careers.

SUCCESS STORY

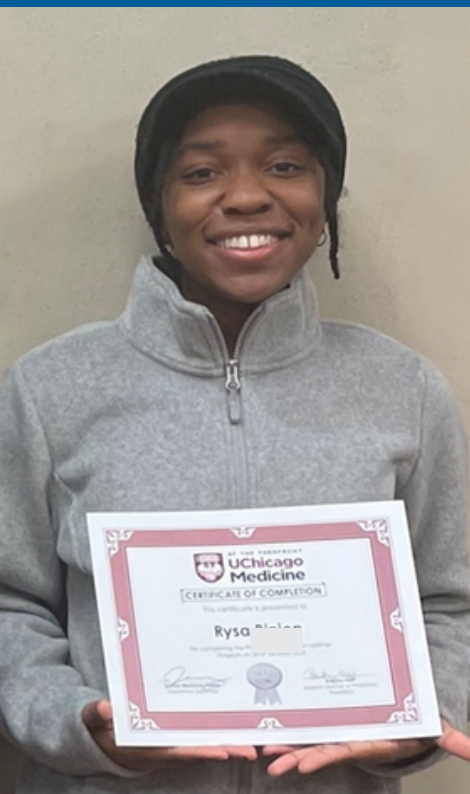
RYSA B.

SKILLS PHARMACY TECH PROGRAM, UCHICAGO MEDICINE

Since joining the Skills for Chicagoland's Future Pivot to Success program in September 2023, Rysa has navigated numerous challenges, including mental health, housing instability, and food insecurity. With support from Skills' bi-weekly mentorship, she connected with essential financial, economic, and medical resources, allowing her to remain focused on her certification journey. Despite these obstacles, Rysa consistently achieved top grades in her class.

In November, Rysa passed her midterm exam, marking an important step toward becoming a Pharmacy Technician. During the December holidays, she completed hands-on training at UChicago Medicine, working alongside experienced Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacists. She also successfully passed her final exam, qualifying her to sit for the Illinois state boards.

Rysa is now preparing to take the Illinois State Pharmacy Technician exam and has already been offered a full-time position, ready to begin her new career upon passing the boards.



Embedded in the Community

Skills' Neighborhood Link initiative was designed to connect Skills directly with the communities we serve, making it easier for individuals to access job opportunities and career development. As part of our commitment to reducing barriers and expanding economic access, these neighborhood sites provide local job seekers with direct support from the Skills for Chicagoland's Future team.

Over the past three years, we've expanded our presence in key neighborhoods. In 2021, we opened our first Skills Neighborhood Link in partnership with the Greater Englewood Community Development Corporation at 815 W. 63rd Street on Chicago's Southside. In 2022, we partnered with the North Lawndale Employment Network at 1111 S. Homan Ave on the Westside. Most recently, in 2023, we joined forces with PODER at 3357 W. 55th Street on the Southwest Side.

At these locations, we've hosted job fairs, hiring events, resource days, and one-on-one appointments with local job seekers, helping individuals connect with meaningful employment right in their communities.

More than 70% of the individuals we've placed in jobs come from neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West Sides.

TOP PLACEMENT NEIGHBORHOODS

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. SOUTH SHORE | 6. WOODLAWN |
| 2. AUSTIN | 7. GRAND BOULEVARD |
| 3. AUBURN GRESHAM | 8. ROSELAND |
| 4. GREATER GRAND CROSSING | 9. NORTH LAWDALE |
| 5. ENGLEWOOD | 10. HUMBOLDT PARK |

57%

PLACEMENTS
FROM THE
SOUTH SIDE

21%

PLACEMENTS
FROM THE
WEST SIDE



Community & Strategic Partnerships

In 2023, our Community & Strategic Partnerships team focused on strengthening relationships with local workforce and community partners, streamlining candidate journeys to make the process more efficient and effective. As a result, the number of candidates hired through referrals increased. Our team expanded partnerships in south, west, and southwest side neighborhoods, working closely with community organizations to better serve local job seekers. Currently, Skills has staff co-located with three partners in Englewood, North Lawndale, and Gage Park.



OUR REFERRAL NETWORK

The following community partner organizations referred job seekers to Skills, leading to successful job placements in 2023.

Above and Beyond	Greater West Town Project	Phalanx
Anixter Center	Growing Home Inc.	POAH
Arrupe College of Loyola University	Heartland Alliance	PODER
Association House of Chicago	Housing Opportunities for Women	Roosevelt University
Build Chicago	IDES	St. Sabina ERC
By the Hand	Lawrence Hall	Teamwork Englewood
Cara Collective	LIFT	The Chicago Lighthouse
Centers for New Horizons	LYTE Collective	UCAN
Chicago Scholars	Mercy Home for Boys and Girls	ULON Life
Chicago State University	Mercy Housing	Urban Alliance
Chicago Urban League	Metropolitan Family Services	Year Up, Inc.
City Colleges	National Able	Youth Guidance
DeVry	Noble Network	Youth Job Center
E&ES	North Lawndale Employment Network	YWCA
Friends of the Children	Paul Simon Job Corps	

Voices of Our Staff

Skills' commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is deeply integrated into our work with external stakeholders and our internal culture. Our DEI efforts focus on three key pillars: offering a wide range of quality, diverse job opportunities, ensuring inclusive communication both internally and externally, and fostering an environment where staff can bring their full selves to work.

The Voices of Our Staff (VOS) group was created to cultivate a culture of inclusion and celebrate diversity within Skills. VOS provides a safe space for team members to share ideas, express themselves, and promote agency across the organization. Each year, VOS sets its priorities based on staff input through surveys and engagement activities, identifying significant events, holidays, and recognition months. The group then organizes panels, celebrations, and discussions to reflect and honor these priorities.

Some of the events that took place in 2023 include:

- Black History Month: Panel Discussion featuring community leaders
- Women's History Month: Gender Bias Workshop
- Earth Day Clothing Swap
- Hispanic Heritage Month: Humboldt Park Art Walk
- Hispanic Heritage Month: Snack Drive in partnership with PODER
- Mental Health Awareness Month: Trauma Informed Roundtable
- Pride Month: Gender Diversity and Inclusion Speaker



Skills staff at the Black History Month panel discussion featuring community leaders



Skills staff at the Earth Day Clothing Swap

Expanding Beyond Chicago



In 2023, Skills for America's Future continued to expand its reach by launching Connect to Work AZ in partnership with the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation. As the first "Powered by Skills" affiliate, Connect to Work AZ in partnership with the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation. As the first "Powered by Skills" affiliate, Connect to Work AZ operates under the Skills model, effectively connecting untapped local talent with quality jobs. Since its launch in May, the initiative has already partnered with five leading employers in Phoenix, addressing workforce needs and creating pathways to meaningful employment.

This year also marked the Inaugural Skills for America's Future Partner Summit, a pivotal event where affiliate leaders from Skills for Rhode Island's Future, Connect to Work AZ, and Skills for Chicagoland's Future gathered to share insights and solidify their commitment to driving equity, mobility, and inclusion within the workforce system. Together, we recognize a shared moral obligation to push boundaries and create accessible, transformative opportunities for all.

With plans to expand the "Powered by Skills" network to additional regions, we invite interested organizations to learn more about joining our mission at www.SkillsForAmerica.org. This growth is made possible by the generosity of Mark and Pam Kendall, Art and Elaine Margulis, and Joe and Elizabeth Pomerence, whose support fuels our vision for a more equitable workforce.



Affiliate leaders at the inaugural Skills for America's Future Partner Summit.



Affiliate leaders at the launched our 3rd affiliate site in partnership with the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation.

Employment Champions Breakfast

On October 4, 2023, we celebrated our impact at the Employment Champions Breakfast, our annual fundraiser themed Writing a New Chapter in Workforce Equity. Held in person at the Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk, this event brought together over 700 guests to highlight the lives transformed through our work and to honor the community and corporate partners essential to our success.

2023 AWARD WINNERS

CHAMPION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED



ADVOCATE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED



CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT



Employment Champions Breakfast

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Employment Champions Breakfast

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Funding & Support

Creating lasting impact relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, foundations, and government organizations. The funding we received in 2023 directly influenced our ability to connect job seekers with meaningful employment, positively affecting their families and strengthening the entire region.

Skills for Chicagoland's Future extends its sincere gratitude to MacKenzie Scott for her generous investment of \$5 million in unrestricted funding through her Yield Giving charitable fund in 2023.

Corporate, Foundation, & Government Funders

\$500,000 +

City of Chicago's Department of Family & Support Services

Charles Koch Foundation

\$100,000 - \$499,999

Anonymous
Discover Financial Services
International Youth Foundation
Jewel-Osco

Motorola Solutions Foundation
Pritzker Traubert Foundation
Walmart

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\$25,000 - \$49,999

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McDonald's

McKinsey & Company, Inc.
Morningstar
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Old National Bank
PODER *through We Rise Together*
UL
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
University of Chicago Medicine
Walgreens

Funding & Support

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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Alight Solutions
Anonymous
ARCO/Murray
Ariel Investments
AT&T
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Cariloop
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Challenger, Gray, and Christmas
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Dot Foods
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ITW Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc.
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\$100 - \$4,999

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Mark Hoplamazian & Rachel Kohler
Mark & Pam Kendall

Art Margulis
Joe & Elizabeth Pomeranke

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Rob Ritchie

Regional President—Mexico,
U.S./Canada Sweetener
Solutions, Industrial Solutions &
Kerr Concentrates
Ingredion

Anita Ryan

Chief Human Resource Officer
Ulta Beauty

Claudia Saran

Vice Chair of Culture
KPMG, LLP

Arbin Smith

Chief of Staff, Vice President for
Strategic Initiatives
DePaul University

Dianna Sparacino

Chief Human Resources Officer
*NorthShore University
HealthSystem*

Eric Stevenson

Vice President, Human Resources
Jewel-Osco

Michael Wilder

Chairman of the Board of
Directors
Littler Mendelson, P.C.

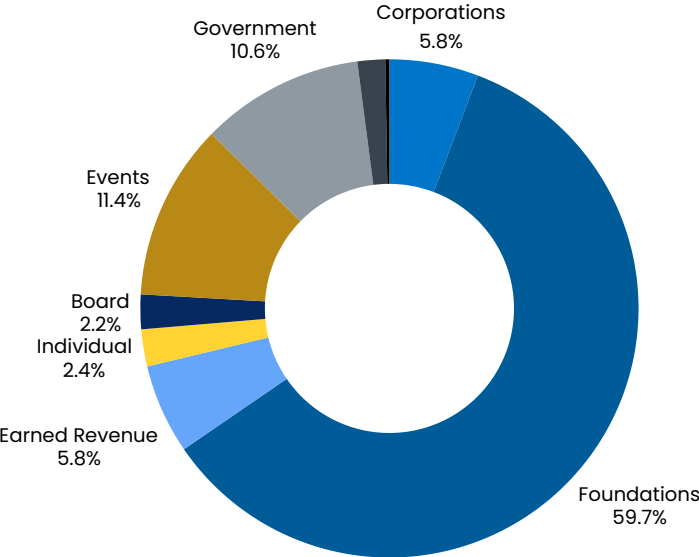
Audrey Williams-Lee

Chief People Officer
*Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's
Hospital of Chicago*

Financials

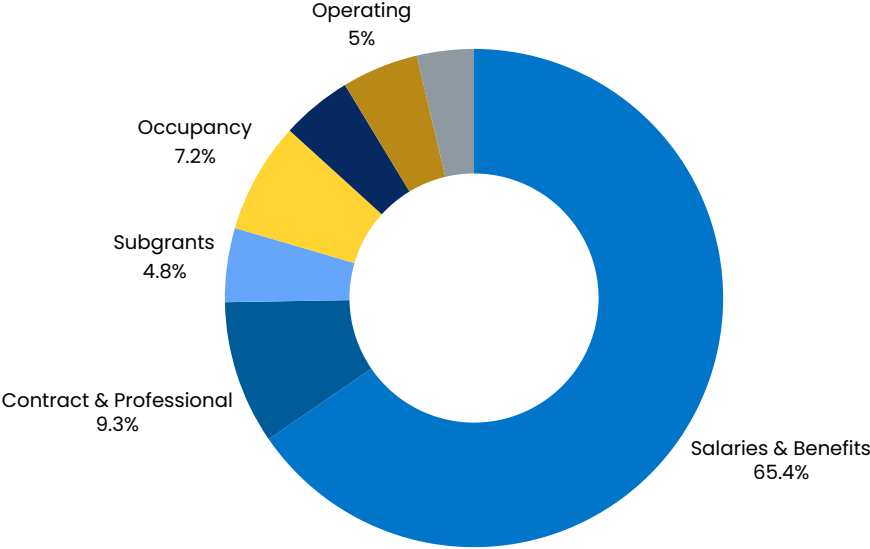
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

OPERATING REVENUE



Corporations	\$746,500
Foundations	\$7,712,000
Earned Revenue	\$751,892
Individual	\$310,825
Board	\$289,881
Events	\$1,478,858
Government	\$1,369,362
In-kind	\$232,299
Other	\$34,367
Total Revenue	\$12,925,984

OPERATING EXPENSES



Salaries & Benefits	\$6,066,924
Contract & Professional	\$864,294
Subgrants	\$445,000
Occupancy	\$668,193
Technology	\$426,285
Operating	\$461,336
External Affairs	\$342,577
Total Expenses	\$9,274,609

NET SURPLUS
\$3,651,375

Financials

STATEMENT OF POSITION

ASSETS

Cash	\$5,872,729
Contributions & Grants Receivables	\$809,672
Accounts Receivables	\$57,521
Prepaid Expenses	\$271,157
Total Current Assets	\$7,011,079
Property & equipment, net	\$93,534
Other Assets	\$443,907
Total Assets	\$7,548,520

LIABILITIES

EIDL Loan Payable	\$3,747
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$359,951
Current portion of Operating Lease Liabilities	\$151,625
Contract Liabilities	\$15,000
Deferred Revenue – Special Events	\$105,000
Total Current Liabilities	\$635,323
EIDL Loan Payable, Net of Current Portion	\$141,030
Operating Lease Liabilities, Net of Current Portion	\$15,087
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$156,117
Total Liabilities	\$791,440

NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$4,998,251
With donor restrictions	\$1,758,829
Total Net Assets	\$6,757,080
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$7,548,520



SKILLS FOR CHICAGOLAND'S FUTURE

LOOP

191 North Wacker Drive
Suite 1150
Chicago, IL 60606

ENGLEWOOD

815 West 63rd Street
2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60621

*In partnership with
Greater Englewood
Community Development Corporation*

GAGE PARK

3357 West 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60632

In partnership with PODER

NORTH LAWNSDALE

1111 South Homan
Chicago, IL 60624

*In partnership with
North Lawndale Employment Network*



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