

**North
Lawndale**
**is
worth
it.**



North Lawndale Employment Network
2015 Annual Report



Our Mission

To improve the earnings potential of the North Lawndale community.

Worth can be measured in many ways.

In steady income. In hard-earned wages. In the financial independence, confidence, and pride that comes from being hired and being trusted.

By improving their earnings potential through innovative employment initiatives, supporting their hopes, and subsequently helping boost their confidence, NLEN reinforces the belief among the residents of North Lawndale that their community is worth it. That they are worth it.

We create economic advancement and improved quality of life in North Lawndale—so that employers see the incredible worth here. And so that residents, too, see it in their community and in themselves.



NLEN's founders saw the opportunity — and felt the responsibility — to help improve an underserved community.

Our History



Existing NLEN office location



New NLEN office location

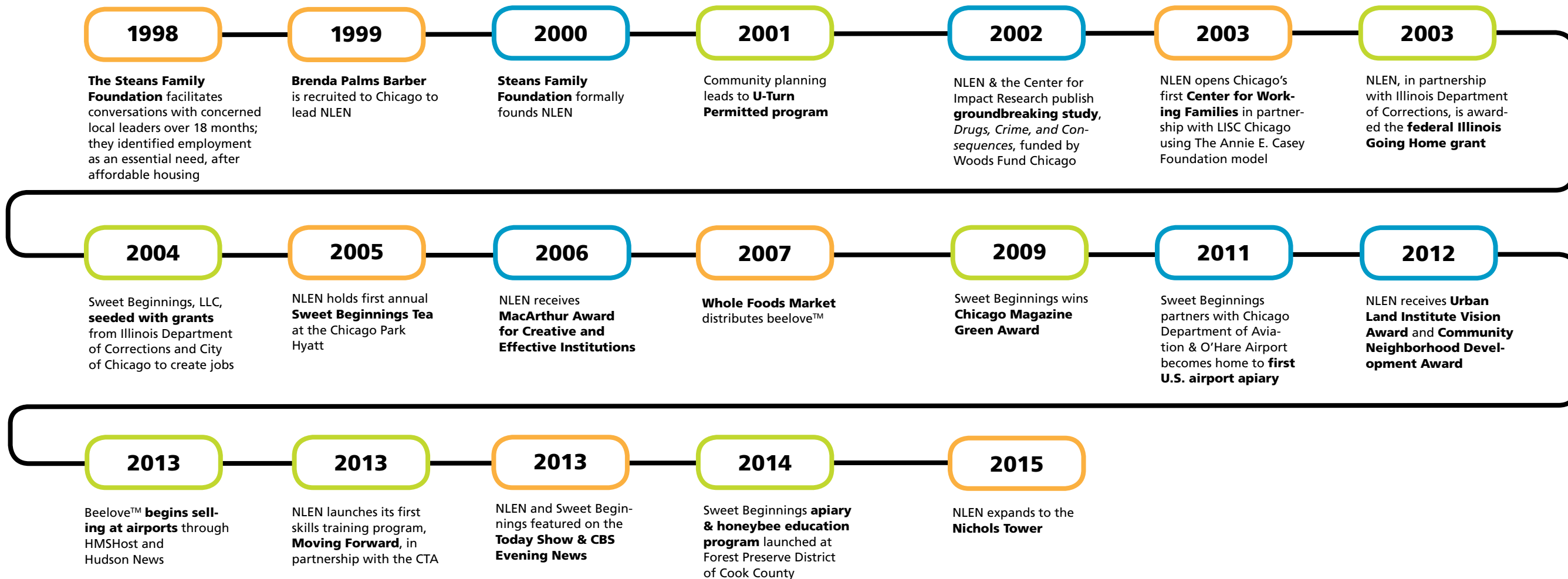
Since 1999, Committed to North Lawndale's Residents

North Lawndale was once a thriving community on Chicago's West Side. But since the Civil Unrest in 1968 following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it has struggled economically and been deeply impacted by mass incarceration.

The founders of North Lawndale Employment Network, and its first Executive Director Brenda Palms Barber, recognized the potential for rebound and empowerment in the community, through programs that focus on improving the earnings potential of its residents.

"NLEN creates viable opportunities for individuals to establish a work history, learn productive work habits, and gain marketable skills"

— Rahm Emanuel,
Mayor of the
City of Chicago





In our 15th year, we are delighted to present a new annual report highlighting our recent accomplishments, growth, and future.

We have added capacity and stabilized our operational structure with systematic data tracking and reporting.

We have completed our new strategic plan, inspired by the Results-Based Accountability framework developed by Mark Friedman, focused on creating the results we want for the people we serve.

Our Sweet Beginnings social enterprise, in its 10th year, is looking towards its future with a new business plan for growth.

In partnership with the Chicago Transit Authority, we have launched Moving Forward, a skills certification program for rail and diesel repair jobs — a growing sector.

To accommodate our growth, we are expanding into Nichols Tower, the original Sears Tower in North Lawndale.

Thank you to our many supporters over the years — funders, board members, clients, and others. We look forward to many more years in North Lawndale.

Sincerely,

Brenda Palms Barber,
Executive Director, NLEN
and CEO, Sweet Beginnings, LLC

Dr. Michael A. McAfee,
President, Board of Directors,
North Lawndale Employment Network

Our Programs

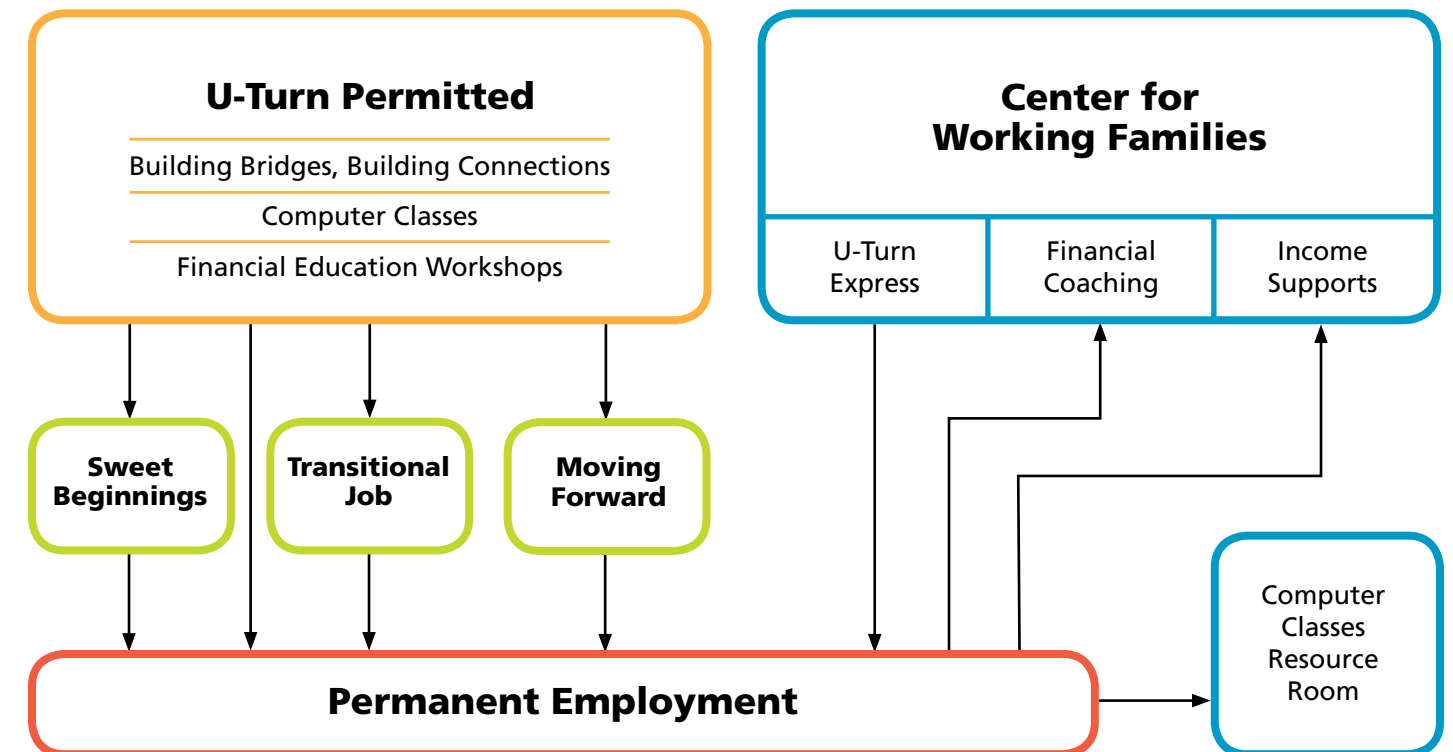
An array of results-driven programs catering to the needs of many different North Lawndale residents.

At NLEN, we offer programs that were carefully, strategically created to address the different barriers to employment faced by the residents of North Lawndale. Please read more about those programs on the following pages.

Our New Home in North Lawndale

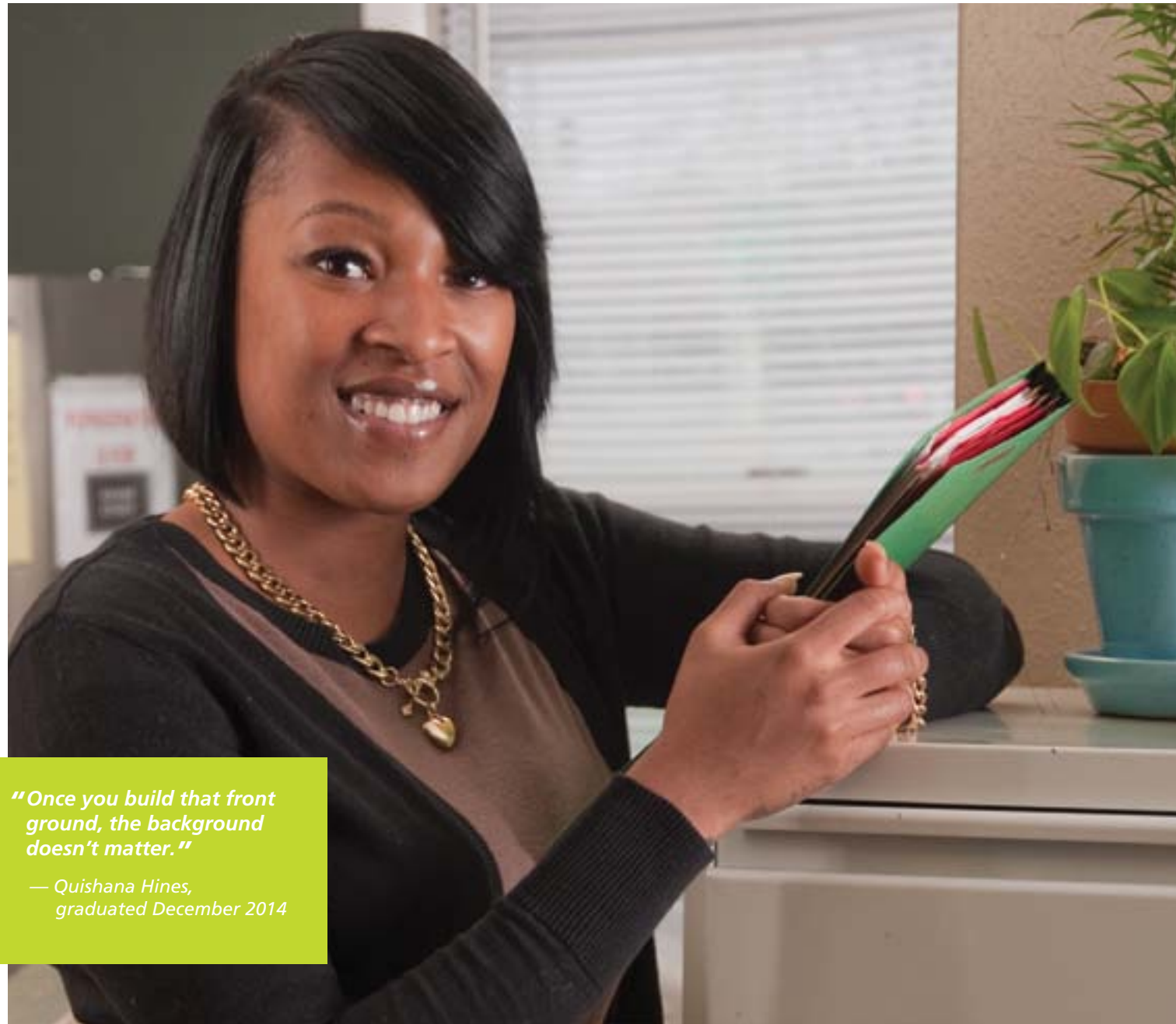
As NLEN has found new ways to effectively serve more of North Lawndale, we've simply outgrown our space on West Flournoy Street. We're proud to announce that we'll be expanding in August 2015 into the John D. and Alexandra Nichols Tower, the original Sears Tower, at Homan Square.

An overview of NLEN's programs



Giving clients the tools to be ready for work, and equipped for life, after incarceration.

U-Turn Permitted



"Once you build that front ground, the background doesn't matter."

— Quishana Hines, graduated December 2014

A Range of Professional and Personal Skills

Our flagship program, U-Turn Permitted was designed by our community members to teach returning citizens strategies, techniques, and skills that focus not just on making them better prepared workers, but on making them strong, capable individuals.

This range of personal and professional skills includes conflict resolution, anger management, team building, résumé development, financial counseling, and racial healing.

In collaboration with community experts, U-Turn Permitted gives clients the necessary skills to secure employment, and to advance, in the modern working world. And program graduates are granted ongoing access to our services and to job placement assistance.

Staff and alumni also engage in advocacy to eliminate structural barriers to employment. NLEN has been integral in successful campaigns to “ban the box” inquiring about criminal backgrounds on job applications, including with hiring partner Chicago Transit Authority, as well as at the city and state level.



Tommy Hicks, U-Turn Permitted Graduate

Tommy Hicks started planning for his post-incarceration life while still in prison. When he came across NLEN, he was encouraged by the possibilities he saw. Shortly after his release in 2012, Tommy enrolled in U-Turn Permitted and learned about CTA's Second Chance program.

Tommy was initially hired as a temporary car servicer. After never missing a day of work in two years, he became a permanent CTA employee in March 2015.

Now, at 43, he's working with NLEN's Center for Working Families to improve his credit, budget, and save money to buy a house. And he volunteers monthly at the Great Chicago Food Depository.

"NLEN has so many resources and options," says Tommy. "I don't know what I'd be doing or where I'd be without NLEN."



"I found resources here I couldn't find anywhere else."

— Tommy Hicks



6% Program Graduates Recidivism Rate



52% Illinois Recidivism Rate*

* "State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons". Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011.

Moving Forward

Building expertise for the growing sector of mechanics jobs.

A Skills-Training Partnership with the CTA

Funded by the Chicago Community Trust, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and the City of Chicago, Moving Forward trains participants for rail and diesel mechanic jobs, where this is a growing demand. Like all NLEN programs, this focuses on ensuring clients with multiple barriers to employment are ready to succeed.



\$15 Average Wage post Diesel Mechanics Program

\$8.25 Illinois Minimum Wage



Mark Cross, CTA Rail Car Repairer

"I always dreamed of working for the CTA," says Mark. With a degree in Automotive Technology, Mark has the skills to pursue his career goals.

But his criminal background kept him from getting hired.

So he graduated from U-Turn Permitted and enrolled in Moving Forward — and everything changed. Mark has been employed full-time by the Chicago Transit Authority as a Rail Car Repairer since April 2014.

A father of two, Mark is also busy with dance recitals and basketball games. He looks forward to working towards a master's degree in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering to help him advance in his new career.

"NLEN taught me that dreams only come true when you actually wake up and move forward."

— Mark Cross

Building Bridges, Building Connections

Promoting understanding between citizens and police officers.



Alfonzo Wysinger, Chicago Police Department First Deputy Superintendent with NLEN's Brenda Palms Barber

"We know that the reality on the street doesn't always mirror our goals," says Chicago Police Department First Deputy Superintendent Alfonzo Wysinger. He and NLEN's Brenda Palms Barber agree that more spaces to bring police and community together for honest dialogue are needed.

According to Palms Barber, the work helps us "connect and understand another person's perspective and put a face on the individuals interacting in the community." Building Bridges, Building Connections changes the way community members think about interacting with the police.

Some recognize they have stereotyped the entire department for what a few officers have done. And the exchanges remind officers why they went into policing in the first place and motivate them to treat the public with fairness and respect. Both groups agree these dialogues should continue not only in North Lawndale, but throughout the City of Chicago.



A Heartfelt Dialogue with CPD

In response to local tensions between police and community, NLEN's Building Bridges, Building Connections program was developed in 2010 with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The program focuses on building positive relationships between returning citizens and Chicago Police. It has served more than 500 citizens and reached 9,000 Chicago Police Department Officers through direct participation or police training. In 2014, NLEN and CPD were honored with a MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award for collaboration on this program.

9,000+ Chicago Police Officers participated since 2010

79% of officers said program will positively influence community interaction

Creating important transitional job opportunities for clients struggling with barriers to employment.

Sweet Beginnings



"I learned how to put my past in the past."

— Patricia Downing

Valuable Experience in a Green Industry

A wholly owned subsidiary of NLEN, Sweet Beginnings, LLC, offers three-month full-time transitional jobs for returning citizens who struggle with significant barriers to employment.

Sweet Beginnings produces beelove™, an all natural line of raw, urban honey and honey-infused body care products. Our workers gain invaluable experience caring for the bees and hives, harvesting honey (from one of our urban apiaries), making and packaging beelove™ products, tracking inventory, and selling at retail outlets and special events.

This training — in an earth-minded, green industry — transfers to positions in manufacturing, food service, distribution, warehousing, hospitality, customer service, and more.

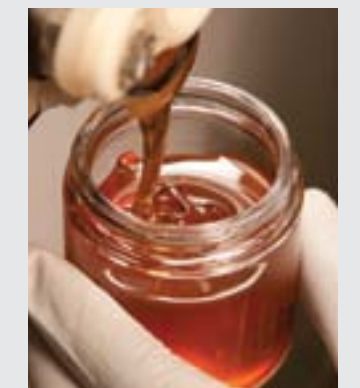


Patricia Downing,
Sweet Beginnings Employee

Pat had good jobs at government agencies for 23 years until being convicted of bribery in 2012. At 50, after losing her job as a Bus Operator, she became homeless. She learned about NLEN and U-Turn Permitted at a shelter. Pat says being in a program tailored for felons gave her hope that she could get a job and bring herself back to self-sufficiency.

Through UTP, "I learned how to deal with anger, guilt and shame over what I had done and lost. I learned how to put my past in the past and speak openly and honestly about what I had done."

Pat graduated UTP in February 2014 and is currently working at Sweet Beginnings.



131

Hives Maintained

60%

Increase in Hives vs. PY

\$ 8²⁵

Illinois Minimum Wage

\$ 11⁰⁶

Average Wage post Sweet Beginnings

Center for Working Families

Providing financial coaching and income services to help North Lawndale residents set and reach their economic goals.



Focused on Improving Net Worth and Income

The Center for Working Families (CWF) serves as a hub for all NLEN resources. It helps our clients reach economic goals with the help of financial planning, coaching, education, and resources.

Clients enrolled in two or more CWF services are four times more likely to improve their credit rating, 11 times more likely to improve their net worth, and 14 times more likely to improve their net income.

Included within CWF is U-Turn Express, catering to community members without a criminal background who are actively seeking work, by offering critical job-seeking skills and resources, like creating a résumé, developing job leads, and interviewing successfully.



Michael Anderson,
U-Turn Permitted Graduate

It was in his 20s that Michael Anderson, a Chicago Native, began using drugs. "On the streets I didn't care about being on time for anything. I had no morals." So when he was released from incarceration in 2013, Michael was "tired of living" his old life — and ready for change.

Michael graduated from U-Turn Permitted in August 2013.

Now 46, Michael is up each day at 4am to load trucks at Jakacki Bag & Barrel until 1pm, when he works at his wholesale fragrance business, selling scents to car washes and resellers.

And he loves it. In February 2015, Michael remarried his first wife and plans to start a snow-removal/landscaping business. "Now I pace myself every day," he says



Earl Baughns,
U-Turn Express Graduate

Earl Baughns grew up in Lawndale. He'd been coming to NLEN since its doors first opened. But in 2013, Earl came to NLEN in a true time of need — he'd been laid off from his job as a security guard, and was soon after evicted from his apartment and forced to move into a shelter.

Through NLEN, Earl got a job at Gate Gourmet in March 2014. Though he faces an 80-minute commute, Earl always arrives two hours early to earn overtime. His hard work has paid off. After starting at \$8.25 per hour, Earl recently earned a raise to more than \$10.

Earl is active in the community, volunteering at the Alderman's office and his church. He hopes to continue advancing in his company.

"I've now seen how well hard work will pay off."

— Earl Baughns

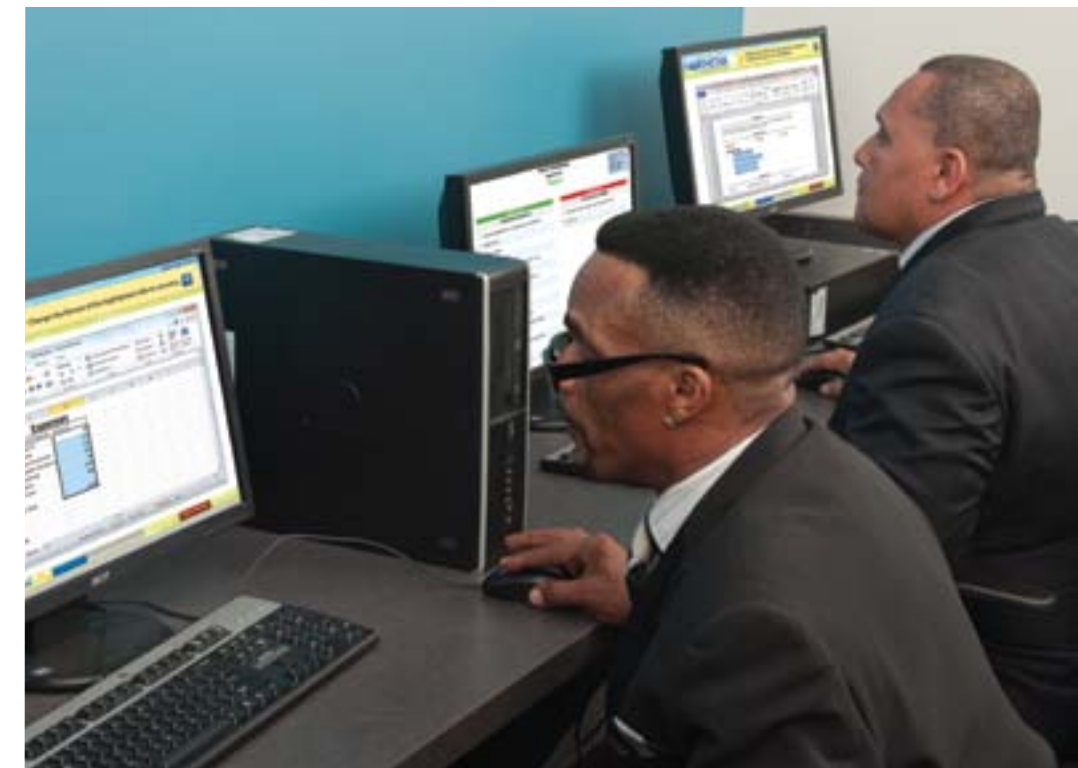
U-Turn Express

Focusing on, and providing accelerated services to, community members without a criminal background.

An Offering of Job-Seeking Skills and Resources

U-Turn Express is designed to cater to the needs of North Lawndale residents who don't have a criminal background and are actively seeking work. As the name suggests, U-Turn Express is an accelerated track offering critical job-seeking skills and resources, including the following:

- Create or update a professional résumé
- Develop and maintain job leads
- Successfully interview with proven methods
- Search for jobs online
- Budget money and improve credit rating



10,546 Total visits 2014

232 Affordable Care Act Sign-ups

\$403,058 Value of external social service support made accessible to clients

Awards & Recognition

While nothing is as rewarding as client successes in North Lawndale, we're honored to be recognized in the media and with awards.



- 2015 Impact 100 Chicago Award and Transformational Grant
- 2014 Metlife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award
- 2014 Airports Going Green Award
- 2014 Green Festival: Chicago Brand and Community Award
- 2014 Illinois Governor's Sustainability Award
- 2014 Social Enterprise Alliance Community Award for Leadership
- 2014 Chicago State University "Essence of an Angel" Award
- 2014 ComEd Power of One Neighborhood Hero
- 2012 Environmental Achievement Award, Airports Council International – North America
- 2012 Urban Land Institute Vision Award
- 2012 Chicago Neighborhood Development Special Recognition Award
- 2011 Jewel-Osco Leadership Award in Environmental Stewardship
- 2010 Neighborhood Housing Services Neighborhood Hero Award
- 2009 Green Award, Chicago Magazine
- 2009 NBC Jefferson Award
- 2009 Phenomenal Woman Award, Black Women's Expo
- 2006 Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

"North Lawndale Employment Network is in, of, and for the community. I am here to learn and improve alongside each and every person we serve. But I'm also here to identify and destroy any barriers a person has to reaching their goals."

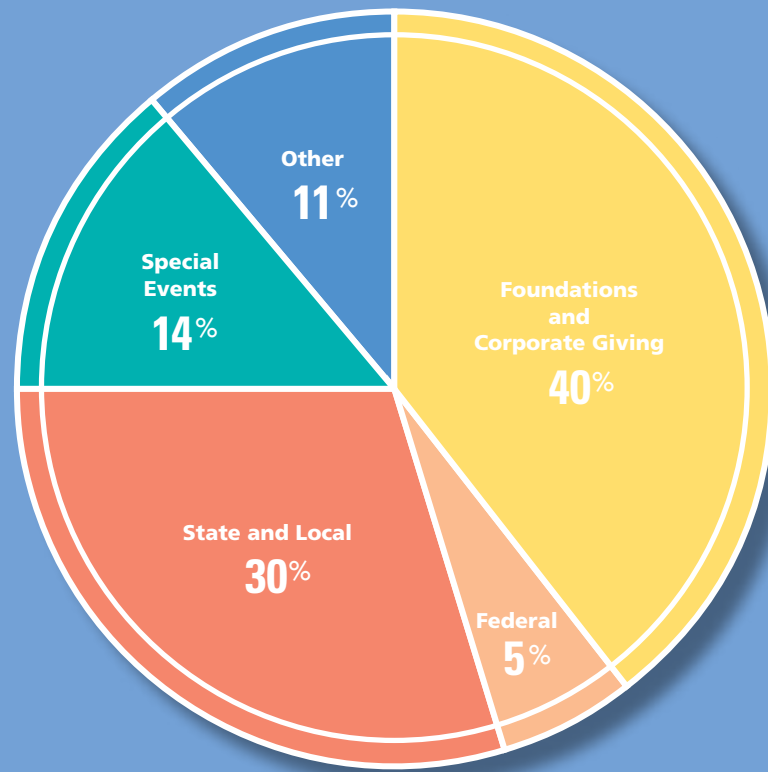
— Daniel Rossi,
Evaluation Specialist

Financials

NLEN has a strong financial position. The diversified funding base with over 35 public and institutional funding sources is an important factor in NLEN's stability.

Operating financial statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014

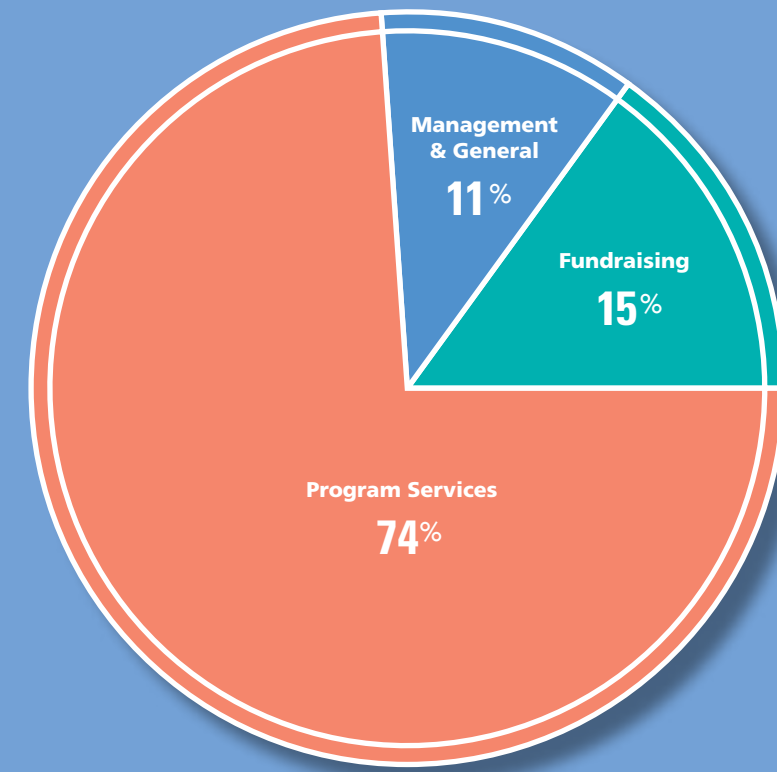
Revenues



Foundations and Corporate Giving	\$928,215
Federal	\$127,985
State and Local	\$689,927
Special Events	\$319,575
Other (includes individuals)	\$250,416

Total Revenue **\$2,316,118**

Expenses



Program Expenses	\$1,805,963
Support Expenses	
Management and General	\$274,521
Fundraising	\$363,102

Total Expenses **\$2,443,586**

Our Impact



David Figueroa and family, 2015 Creating A Community That Works Award Recipient and owner of Second Chance Renovations.”

The Dramatic Impact

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to NLEN and create a dramatic, immediate impact on North Lawndale and the lives of its residents.

Each donation made to NLEN generates returns to society in the form of:

- Taxable wages and benefits
- Reduced dependence on food assistance, housing subsidies, and other aid programs
- Lower rates of recidivism, which means fewer property crimes, as well as reduced trial costs and prison/jail operating costs

Our clients turn their lives around. Employers get trained and dedicated employees who are ready to work. And society as a whole benefits.

- Please also consider using Amazon Smile for all your online shopping needs. For every qualifying Amazon purchase, Amazon Smile will donate .5% of the price to North Lawndale Employment Network.

Social Return on Investment

For every \$1 invested in NLEN's U-Turn Permitted program in 2014, \$2.54 in benefits were generated for society

* Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations (SCNO) at Northwestern University, 2015

Thank you

To Our Funders and Community Partners

We offer our utmost gratitude for your generosity and for all you do.
You make change and empowerment in North Lawndale possible.

Funders

Adams Street Partners, LLC	Cook County Justice Advisory Council	JPMorgan Chase Foundation
Advocate Bethany Community Health Fund	COUNTRY Financial	Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
All Chicago's Emergency Fund	The Crown Family	Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Chicago
Allstate Insurance Company	Dr. Scholl Foundation	Mercy Housing
Alphawood Foundation Chicago	The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation	MetLife Foundation
The Annie E. Casey Foundation	Exelon	Net-Telligence Group
Bank of America	Fifth Third Bank	North Lawndale Kinship Initiative of Old St. Patrick's Church
Barack, Ferrazzano, Kirschbaum & Nagelberg, LLP	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	PNC Bank
BMO Harris Bank	Foundation for Homan Square	Polk Bros. Foundation
The Boeing Company	gravitytank	Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation
The Chicago Community Trust	Grosvenor Capital Management, LLP	Robert R. McCormick Foundation
Chicago Department of Aviation	Henrietta Lange Burk Fund	School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago Housing Authority	HMSHost	The Seabury Foundation
Chicago Tribune Charities - Holiday Campaign, a McCormick Foundation Fund	The John R. Houlsby Foundation	Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust
City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	I&G Charitable Foundation / 1261 Foundation	Sinai Community Institute
Community Economic Development Association of Cook County, Incorporated	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity	State Farm
	Illinois Department of Corrections	Steans Family Foundation
	Impact 100 Chicago	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	US Bank
		W.K. Kellogg Foundation

William Blair & Company, LLC

William G. McGowan Charitable Fund

Community Partners

Cabrini Green Legal Aid
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Police Department
Community Renewal Society
Credit Builders Alliance
FORCE Project
Illinois Asset Building Group
The Monroe Foundation
Justine PETERSEN
p3 Media
Park Douglas
Princeton Project 55
Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning
Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations - Northwestern University
Taproot Foundation
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" We are proud to have been an early partner in establishing the North Lawndale Employment Network in its efforts to ensure that all North Lawndale residents have the opportunity to earn a living."

— Steans Foundation

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a service grant from the Taproot Foundation