



Job Description

Position:	Manager of Community Initiatives and Retention
Reports to:	Chief Impact and Innovation Officer
Status:	Exempt
Hours:	Full-Time / Maximum of 40 hours per week
Hours of Operations:	Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
Salary:	\$70,000 - \$80,000 / annually

Organizational Description. North Lawndale Employment Network is a comprehensive workforce development agency on Chicago's West Side dedicated to advancing the economic outcomes of the community's residents through innovative employment initiatives, including our social enterprises. In August 2021, North Lawndale Employment Network transitioned to a new campus which features a premier community café for residents and stakeholders.

Our Mission. To improve the earning potential of the North Lawndale community through innovative employment initiatives that lead to economic advancement and an improved quality of life for residents.

Opportunity. North Lawndale Employment Network seeks a Manager of Community Initiatives and Retention who will lead and oversee the full lifecycle of community-driven workforce development projects within the Workforce Collaborative, partnering with the Steans Family Foundation (SFF), NLEN, and other key stakeholders. This role will drive strategic coordination and project management of workforce initiatives that not only address retention but also foster the success of the community through referrals, upskilling, and access to resources.

As a key manager in this collaborative effort, the Manager of Community Initiatives and Retention will ensure initiatives are aligned with both retention goals and broader community empowerment objectives. This includes working closely with community partners, leading events, ensuring seamless resource coordination, and utilizing data to continuously improve efforts.

Responsibilities:

- **Project Management & Coordination:** Manage and oversee the full lifecycle of workforce development initiatives within the Workforce Collaborative, Filmore Initiative ensuring alignment with both NLEN's mission and community priorities. Coordinate efforts across stakeholders to meet objectives, timelines, and deliverables.
- **Community Engagement & Workforce Retention:** Develop strategies that integrate workforce retention into broader community initiatives, addressing barriers to success and ensuring long-term employment outcomes for individuals placed through collaborative efforts.



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- Relationship Building & Resource Coordination: Build and maintain relationships with wraparound service providers to connect employees with vital resources, including housing, transportation, mental health services, and legal assistance, enhancing retention and community stability.
- Upskilling & Career Advancement: Lead efforts to connect individuals to upskilling opportunities and career development services that foster long-term employability and career progression.
- Event Coordination & NLCCC Workforce Committee: Plan, coordinate, and co-host Collaborative-led events, including financial literacy workshops, professional development sessions, hiring fairs, and community roundtables. Work closely with the NLCCC's Workforce Committee to ensure these events align with retention and community development goals while serving as platforms for workforce engagement.
- Data Entry, Analysis & Reporting: Oversee the entry, management, and analysis of workforce data, ensuring that retention metrics, community engagement outcomes, and other key performance indicators are accurately tracked. Use data insights to refine strategies, identify areas for improvement, and generate reports for internal stakeholders and funding partners.
- Cross-Collaborative Leadership: Work closely with other project leads within the SFF Grantee Collaborative, NLEN, and other community partners to ensure coordination across initiatives. Attend bi-weekly meetings with the SFF Collaborative and other groups to provide updates, share feedback, and ensure alignment.
- Employer Collaboration & Retention Best Practices: Collaborate with employers to understand retention challenges and develop strategies to foster inclusive, supportive work environments. Provide feedback to employers on retention strategies and workplace best practices.
- Continuous Improvement & Policy Advocacy: Conduct research to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities in workforce retention and community empowerment. Advocate for policies and systemic changes that support long-term career success, resource access, and workplace inclusivity in the West Side community.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in social work, Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field. Master's degree preferred.
- Minimum of 5 years of leadership experience in workforce development, community engagement, or project management, ideally within a nonprofit or collaborative environment.
- Relevant certifications in Project Management (e.g., PMP, CAPM) or Workforce Development are a plus.
- Proven track record in managing community-driven initiatives and cross-stakeholder coordination, with a focus on workforce retention, development, and empowerment.
- Experience working with marginalized communities and connecting individuals to wraparound services (e.g., housing, transportation, mental health).
- Demonstrated ability to build strategic partnerships, including working with employers, service providers, and community leaders.



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NLEN Core Values

Neighborhood-focused employment initiatives are fundamental.

Successful programs are neighborhood-focused and community-driven so they meet the specific needs of individuals.

Quality of work matters.

People who work hard should not be poor. A full-time job must meet basic needs and offer conditions for engagement, advancement, and respect.

Economic mobility is essential to reducing poverty.

Family supporting wages and financial literacy are core to addressing economic insecurity, which disproportionately affects African American, Latino, and other families of color. Economic insecurity is not only impacting the poor; it has grown to threaten the middle class. Self-employment and entrepreneurship are critically important economic mobility strategies to generate income and boost household finances.

We must address the racial wealth gap and social inequality.

The United States' history of racially charged public policy has created the modern racial wealth divide not just through the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, but through the more recent race-based discrimination in hiring, housing subsidies, tax subsidies, and veteran benefits as well as other implicitly and explicitly racist public policies.

Everyone deserves human dignity and empowerment.

To uphold this belief, we do all of our work in a manner that values human dignity and eliminates shame, humiliation, and stigma by building on the strengths that help our participants and community survive loss and trauma and rebalance the power dynamic between participants and authority figures.