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CHICAGO COOK
WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Selected as Grant Recipient of Youth Opportunity Fund to Connect Low-Income Youth in Cook County to Career Opportunities

The new \$3 million Fund, led by the Citi Foundation and America's Promise Alliance, supports innovative city programs that prepare low-income youth for future success

CHICAGO (August 27, 2015) – [The Citi Foundation](#) and [America's Promise Alliance](#) today announced that the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) has been selected as a recipient of the Youth Opportunity Fund, a \$3 million initiative to support city-level, innovative and scalable programs connecting youth to opportunities that increase their employability and prepare them for lifelong success.

The Youth Opportunity Fund is part of the Citi Foundation's [Pathways to Progress](#) initiative, designed to support direct-service programs that empower urban youth, ages 16 to 24. A total of 12 grants will be awarded to nonprofit organizations in 10 of the largest U.S. cities: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Newark, St. Louis, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

The Partnership will receive a one-year grant totaling \$250,000 to help young people obtain long term employment, reengage in school, prepare for post-secondary education and/or connect to industry-focused education and training programs. The training is a demand-driven program comprised of industry-specific curriculum that combines employer's skill-set needs.

"Increasing the number of young people trained to work will provide a much-needed boost to our regional economy, now and in the future," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "With this welcome support from America's Promise Alliance and the Citi Foundation, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will develop homegrown talent, improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens, and help strengthen our communities and our city."

"Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership runs innovative, proven programs that connect young adults to jobs in our workforce centers and partner agencies," said the Partnership CEO Karin M. Norington-Reaves. "Working in partnership with the LeadersUp, America's Promise Alliance and the Citi Foundation, we will provide skills training that will better prepare more professional youth in Chicago for academic and career success."

The Fund supports programs that address youth unemployment through partnerships with municipal governments and collaborations across industries that are core to the

economies of the *Pathways to Progress* cities, including IT, tech, healthcare, the service industry and environmental sustainability. Grantees will collaborate and share best practices on the most effective ways to expand and connect youth to economic opportunity in their communities.

“The future competitiveness of America’s cities hinges on the positive economic outcomes of our young people,” said **Brandee McHale, President of the Citi Foundation**. “We launched the Youth Opportunity Fund to support the innovative work of community partners who are helping low-income youth create the on-ramps that will lead towards career success.”

“We are dealing with the mixed reality of our nation’s high school graduation numbers increasing at unprecedented rates, while an estimated 5.6 million young people are not in school or employed,” said [John Gomperts](#), president & CEO of America’s Promise. “The dozen Youth Opportunity Fund grantees are vital to connecting thousands of young people to opportunities that boost their ability to compete in today’s economy.”

In its first year, [nearly 25,000 young people](#) have been impacted by the Citi Foundation’s *Pathways to Progress* initiative, a three-year, \$50 million commitment to give 100,000 low-income youth in the U.S. the opportunity to develop the workplace skills and leadership experience necessary to compete in a 21st century economy. The initiative includes national organizations such as the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Points of Light, AmeriCorps, Management Leadership for Tomorrow, iMentor and the Cities for Financial Empowerment.

To learn more about the Youth Opportunity Fund and see a full list of grantees visit: www.americaspromise.org/youthopportunityfund.

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The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership)

The Partnership is a non-profit agency created under the joint leadership of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. The Partnership's mission is to improve workforce development services and support job creation and economic development across Cook County. It’s goal is to create comprehensive workforce development services by helping job seekers prepare for and find jobs, while better serving the needs of employers ensuring they have a skilled labor force that meets the market’s demands. The Partnership designs employer-customized training programs that build leadership and workplace skills in young adults and connects them with employment opportunities. With support from the Youth Opportunity Fund, 250 youth will complete workforce-training programs and have opportunities for industry certification and full-time employment.

About America’s Promise Alliance

America’s Promise Alliance leads an alliance of organizations, communities and individuals dedicated to making the promise of America real for every child. As its signature effort, the GradNation campaign mobilizes Americans to increase the on-time high school graduation rate to

90 percent by 2020 and prepare young people for postsecondary enrollment and the 21st century workforce. For more information, visit www.americaspromise.org.

About the Citi Foundation

The **Citi Foundation** works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation’s “More than Philanthropy” approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.