



Job Description

Position:	Director of Workforce Innovations and Solutions
Reports to:	Chief Impact and Innovation Officer
Status:	Exempt
Hours:	Full-Time / Maximum of 40 hours per week
Hours of Operations:	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm with some evenings and weekends

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. We are actively seeking a visionary Director of Workforce Innovations and Solutions to lead our dynamic team. This role entails ensuring rigorous compliance in the day-to-day operations of our workforce development programs, while also serving as the key liaison to oversee and direct our programs and services with a commitment to excellence. You will play a crucial role in not only driving innovation and fostering growth but also in cultivating a culture of excellence through effective leadership, coaching for results, and continuous improvement. This position is pivotal in propelling our organization forward, ensuring competitiveness, and adaptability in an ever-evolving workforce landscape.

Key Responsibilities.

- Provide visionary leadership, setting ambitious goals and driving innovation in program design, implementation, and evaluation for workforce justice and opportunity initiatives.
- Develop and implement strategic vision followed by active work plans leveraging cutting-edge practices to address systemic inequities and create economic empowerment pathways for marginalized communities.
- Lead innovative workforce development programs, utilizing technology, data analytics, and human-centered design to drive impact and scale.
- Embed equity and inclusion principles into program design and implementation, ensuring responsiveness to diverse community needs.
- Conduct research and evaluation to identify trends, best practices, and opportunities for innovation in workforce development.



North Lawndale Employment Network

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- Build staff and partner organizations' capacity in innovation and equity through training and mentorship.
- Oversee program delivery, ensuring high-quality services and comprehensive participant support from entry via Universal Intake Process to exit and beyond.
- Actively collaborate with partners and stakeholders to drive the development and implementation of workforce programs that amplify NLEN's programs and services.
- In collaboration with Development, Finance, and the Data Team, contribute to the full grant life cycle, including application submission, program budgets, and reporting, to ensure complete compliance and financial sustainability.
- Foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring accessibility for all community members.
- Maintain strong relationships with community partners, employers, and stakeholders, representing the organization publicly.
- Manage all current and future strategic internal and external workforce initiatives, including The Filmore Center, Residential Community Justice Center, Transitional Job Site Placements, and more, ensuring they are aligned with organizational goals and objectives.
- Develop and oversee exceptional wraparound support programs through our Financial Opportunity Center to exceed client needs and expectations with excellence.
- Provide diligent supervision and unwavering support to program staff, ensuring not only high-quality service delivery but also fostering an environment of continuous learning and improvement.
- Perform other assigned duties.

Qualifications:

- Advanced degree in workforce development, social work, business administration, or a related field, demonstrating a commitment to high-quality services. Bachelor's degree required.
- At least 7-10 years of experience in workforce development, social services, or a related field, with a track record of success in program development and management, emphasizing navigating through change and ensuring high-quality service delivery. Experience in managing large teams, including multi-site teams.
- Strong analytical skills and the ability to use data to make informed decisions.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and collaboration skills, with a demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse stakeholders, and high emotional intelligence.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Expert knowledge of workforce development policies and regulations, including experience with grant writing and reporting.



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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.