



## Overview & Update - February 2021

*Compiled by April Harrington, Project Manager*

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### History of CHWC

The Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (CHWC) was originally launched in 2016, with grant support from JPMorgan Chase and led by Advocate Aurora Health and the Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance, for the purpose of aligning employers and workforce partners to address systemic challenges in healthcare workforce development.

Today the Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative stands as an independent consortium overseen by volunteer employer co-chairs and comprised of employer members, strategic partners, and funders throughout Chicagoland.

The Collaborative follows the industry workforce partnership model. As training providers, educators, and employers meet and discuss issues influencing the industry, The Collaborative drives the conversation around equity and employment which is in interest to all.

Unlike job developers, The Collaborative does not have the transactional pressure of forced speaking engagements or job opening requirements. The purpose is to have a no-pressure inclusive environment where individuals from recognized healthcare organizations can join an action team to take charge against systemic issues together across the healthcare ecosystem.

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## Member Organizations

### Co-Chairs:

Clayton Pryor, Director, Workforce Development, Advocate Aurora Health

Betsy Rahill, Senior Consultant, Internal and Community Workforce Strategy, UChicago Medicine

Jason Spigner, Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, Sinai Health System

### Healthcare Employers

Advocate Aurora Health

Amita Health

Cook County Health and Hospital System

Loyola University Medical Center

Lurie Children's Hospital

Northshore

Northwestern Medicine

Rush University Medical Center

Sinai Health System

South Shore Hospital

University of Illinois Health & Hospital System

University of Chicago Medicine

### Strategic Partners

Chicago AHEC Health & Medicine

Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

Chicago Department of Public Health

Chicago Public Schools

Civic Consulting Alliance

EdSystems

Illinois Medical District

Illinois Public Health Institute

Malcolm X Community College

Midwestern Career College

West Side United

Safer Foundation

World Business Chicago

### Funding Partners

Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance

Fry Foundation

JP Morgan Chase

McCormick Foundation

Michael Reese Health Trust

## Mission, Vision, and Strategic Priorities

**Mission:** The Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative unites employers and industry partners to support an inclusive healthcare workforce, provide accessibility for unemployed and underemployed populations, and develop innovative responses to the evolving needs of the healthcare industry.

**Vision:** CHWC is the source of innovative workforce solutions that result in a stronger and more diverse local workforce for the Chicago Healthcare industry.

**Value Proposition:** For healthcare employers who believe in the necessity of a strong local workforce, the Healthcare Workforce Collaborative is a consortium of employers and partners that identifies and implements impactful, data-driven and action-oriented training and hiring solutions, especially for communities with high rates of unemployment and underemployment.

**Strategic Priorities:** These priorities were identified by an array of stakeholders, particularly Human Resources staff at member employers, in a facilitated process at the launch of the Collaborative.

1. **Education and Training:** Bridging the gap by uniting a variety of partners across the healthcare industry
2. **Local and Targeted Hiring:** Focusing recruitment efforts in areas with higher concentrations of unemployment
3. **Retention & Career Pathways:** Offering training and education opportunities to new career pathways for employees

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## Operations

The Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance (CWFA) retains a consultant to serve as the Project Manager, formerly Bonnie Kang and now April Harrington. Adrian Esquivel leads the project as Deputy Director of the CWFA.

Three employer co-chairs (listed earlier) lead the collaborative. Action teams have been formed around each of the strategic priorities, with team chairs.

The full Collaborative meets quarterly. The Co-chairs and action teams meet more frequently, but do not currently have a regular meeting schedule.

In early 2020, CHWC adopted a 3-tier membership system with associated dues for employer members. The top tier, Executive Membership for \$10,000+ annually, includes the ability to serve as co-chair or leader of an action team, voting rights, eligibility to apply for funding opportunities, and priority publicity on marketing materials. Waivers are also available for members who are unable to pay.

*Membership tier selection and due collection has been temporarily suspended while employers grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic.*

CHWC launched a website in late 2019: <https://chihealthworks.com/>.

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## **Sector-Based Partnership Model: Employer Driven, Community Supported**

Sector Partnerships are defined as, “partnerships of companies, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, with education, workforce development, economic development, community organizations and other stakeholders that collectively focus on a set of priorities that matter to the health and competitiveness of their industry.”<sup>1</sup>

Sector strategies have been utilized in Chicago for decades and are a cornerstone of local and regional economic development strategies.

In 2015, The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity released [Sector Partnership-based Employer Engagement: A Framework for Illinois](#), which introduces the [Next Generation Sector Partnership](#) model, created by the Woolsey Group and the Institute for Networked Communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Woolsey Group, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, and Maher & Maher (2015). Sector Partnership-based Employer Engagement: A Framework for Illinois, Retrieved from [https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Documents/ILSectorBasedEmpEngVision\\_Final\\_20150513.pdf](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Documents/ILSectorBasedEmpEngVision_Final_20150513.pdf)

“Next Gen Sector Partnerships organize around industry needs, not around existing public program needs,”<sup>2</sup> according to Woolsey Group. Industry leaders serve as the champions and active partners in sector-based strategies and public partners sit at the table to listen and respond to industry needs. Partnerships act as one-stop-shops for businesses to address their collective issues and for public partners to find ways to collaborate, as opposed to public partners individually approaching industry to fulfill their needs.

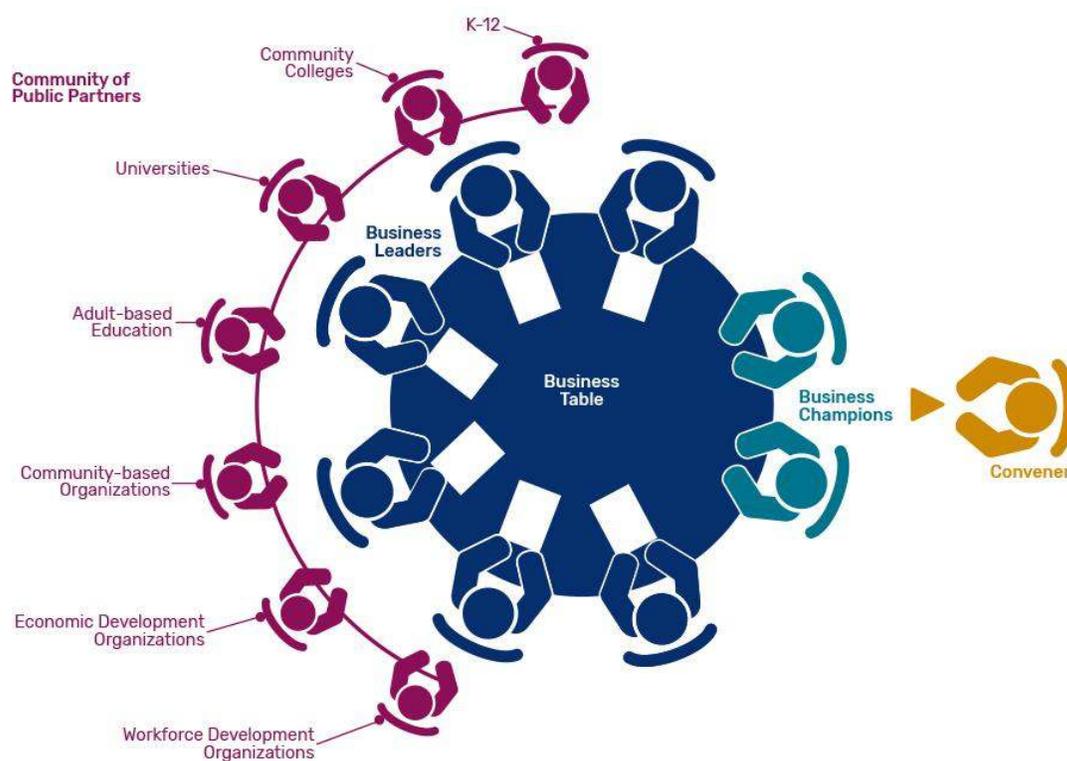
This [short video](#) and [two-pager](#) give an excellent, succinct overview of the Next Gen Sector Partnership model.

The graphic below (Figure 1) illustrates the recommended composition of a Next Gen Partnership, with business champions and leaders at the center table providing strategic leadership, and the convener and public partners sitting in the periphery to offer support and collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> Woolsey Group. Next Generation Sector Partnerships: A Primer, Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bd0bbded86cc969f84d716c/t/5bd119284785d39740c40e6e/1540430121198/next-generation-secto>

Figure 1. Next Gen Model. Official Site of the State of New Jersey, Retrieved from <https://www.nj.gov/labor/employer-services/industry-partnerships/about.shtml>



The Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative already adheres to, and can continue to develop, practices that align with the Next Gen model. However, there are a couple of limitations. The Next Gen Model requires partnerships to address the health and competitiveness of the industry holistically and look beyond workforce to regulatory, infrastructure, and other issue areas. Alternatively, CHWC focuses specifically on workforce, allowing CHWC to focus its efforts and bring the right employer representatives to the table (in most cases, HR staff).

Another aspect of CHWC that can be considered a challenge and an asset is the rich and active field of workforce development that exists in the sector with or without CHWC. This includes State- and City-driven public-private partnerships as well as initiatives driven by active private funders, community organizations, and mission-driven employers. These initiatives are highly valuable and push shared goals forward but change the way Chicago’s healthcare sector partnership can and should function.

As ILDCEO and Woolsey group predicted in 2015, “There is enormous opportunity in Illinois because of this alignment in vision and strategy. There is also a risk: if regional programs and

organizations in each of these systems build partnerships with industry independently of each other, duplication of effort and inefficiencies will increase dramatically.”<sup>3</sup>

As CHWC re-groups in 2021, it should focus on strategies to reduce duplication of efforts and inefficiencies across an active field.

Meanwhile, there are continued calls for CHWC to carry out its mission. In the just released [Advancing Workforce Equity in Chicago: A Blueprint for Action](#) produced by the National Equity Atlas, researchers recommend sector-based partnerships as a powerful lever for advancing workforce equity. They also include specific recommendations for the healthcare sector in moving individuals from lower-paying positions into higher paying, more stable careers (charts listing those positions are included).<sup>4</sup>

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## CHWC Initiatives & Programs: Past & Present

### **Study of Select Healthcare Occupations and Review of Targeted Hiring Policies:**

CHWC worked with The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning to study six occupations that members identified as in-demand and to explore hiring policies for target populations. The study was published in January 2018.

The six occupations studied included Certified Nursing Assistant, Patient Care Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse, Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, and Community Health Worker. Researchers looked at similarities and differences across member employers in occupation definition and requirements, the hiring process, relationships with education providers, and issues relating to employee retention and barriers to success.

The study found MA positions to be in-demand at all employers, which influenced the decision to build an MA Pathway Program, described below.

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<sup>3</sup> Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Retrieved from <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Pages/SectorStrategies.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> National Equity Atlas (2021). Advancing Workforce Equity in Chicago: A Blueprint for Action, Retrieved from <https://nationalfund.org/learning-evaluation/publications/advancing-workforce-equity-in-chicago/>

The hiring policy review studied policies and practices related to three target populations: local candidates, candidates with records, and candidates with disabilities. This work influenced CHWC's decision to work with Safer Foundation on policies and best practices related to hiring individuals with backgrounds, also described below.

**Medical Assistant Pathway Program (MAPP):**

Launched in 2018, MAPP brings together member employers, Malcolm X College, West Side United, and One Million Degrees to provide a pathway program into Medical Assistant positions. Other partners including the Civic Consulting Alliance, World Business Chicago, and Erie House were also involved in the launch.

The program is designed to serve existing employees of member healthcare systems (incumbent workers) who were in non-clinical roles, usually environmental or dietary, and enroll them into a pathway program towards the clinical role of Medical Assistant. Applicants see the opportunity as a career ladder, a way to secure better hours and work locations, and a way to find more meaning in their work.

Malcolm X provides the training and has adjusted their regular course schedule to allow participants to work full-time while pursuing the program. One Million Degrees provides case management and job-readiness services. Funding is provided by JP Morgan Chase, WIOA incumbent worker funds, and member employers in the form of tuition coverage. West Side United now manages the program and the partnerships.

To date, 39 participants have enrolled in the program in three cohorts, 13 have completed, 26 are still in the program, and 3 graduates have been placed in MA positions.

The MAPP team has experienced a variety of successes and challenges with the program and has continually made adjustments as new challenges arise.

Some of the challenges include:

- Many candidates need to hone basic English and math skills in order to pass the Malcolm X placement test. Malcolm X was able to support those candidates through their Level Up program, but this has added another layer of the program, and time commitment for the candidates.
- The part-time MA training provided by Malcolm X takes two years to complete, and some participants have had to drop out for a variety of life circumstances during that duration.

- Once participants finish the program (2+ years after applying), the salary increase from their current non-clinical position to MA is too small, non-existent, or in some cases represents a decrease in pay.
- The pool of applicants into the program has drastically decreased since the first cohort.

Moving forward, the MAPP team is planning to reconsider recruitment pools to serve candidates who are more likely to finish the program and move into MA roles, including existing Malcolm X MA students (those who have finished one year) and part-time incumbent workers.

**Safer Foundation Technical Assistance for Hiring People with Arrest and Conviction Records:**

Safer Foundation is one of the nation’s largest nonprofits working tirelessly to disrupt the cycle of recidivism and social injustice in our society. For nearly 50 years, they’ve been a leader in the fight to break down barriers and provide people with arrest and conviction records the opportunity for a second chance.

The Safer Demand Skills Collaborative prepares and places individuals in healthcare occupations and has placement partnerships with some of the health systems in CHWC.

In 2016, Safer Foundation released [A Healthcare Employer Guide to Hiring People with Arrest and Conviction Records](#). Since then, they have been building their capacity to support employers in adopting Fair Chance Hiring practices. Most recently, they have developed a Virtual Training Center directed at HR and other key staff on Fair Chance Hiring best practices, with customizable modules.

In 2019, The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance offered support for technical assistance partnerships between Safer Foundation and member employers. Sinai Health System has since completed the research and analysis phase of the technical assistance project.

The assessment conducted by Safer was focused on how three domains relate to people with arrest or conviction records: (1) Policy, Process, and Systems, (2) Workforce Development Practices, and (3) Human Resource Practices. A Review of Model Hiring Practices for People With Arrest and Conviction Records at Sinai Health System was completed in early 2020, with detailed recommendations. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed the adoption of those recommendations, but Sinai plans to take action when they are more capable.

**Industry Convenings**

In February 2020, CHWC held an Industry Convening focused on Medical Assistants. Best practices for hiring and retention were presented by Rush University Medical Center, and best

practices for an enhanced externship experience were presented by Northwestern Medicine and Malcolm X. Breakout sessions focused on MA certification requirements and aligning the externship experience with workforce needs.

An additional Industry Convening focused on Retention was scheduled for 2020 but was postponed due to COVID-19.

### **Covid-19 HR Discussion Series**

When the pandemic hit, CHWC's former Project Manager Bonnie Kang quickly shifted priorities to create a space for employers and strategic partners to discuss new and rapidly changing challenges prompted by Covid-19. Bonnie sent out weekly emails with resources, and organized four HR Discussions with speakers, panels, and opportunities to share best practices.

Discussion topics included Managing New Staffing Demands in a Crisis, Workplace Accommodations, Chicago Contact Tracing Efforts, and Teaching and Learning for Healthcare Professionals during COVID-19. Participants found the conversations to be extremely helpful in a trying time.

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## **Healthcare Workforce Initiatives Across Chicagoland**

Since CHWC launched in 2016, a rich diversity of partnerships and initiatives related to healthcare workforce development have been implemented across Chicagoland. Many of them target specific communities, and approach healthcare career pathways through different lenses including community health, population health, public health, racial equity, anti-violence, anchor mission strategies, and more.

Below are a few of the initiatives to be aware of. The list is far from exhaustive and does not include the variety of partnerships that workforce development, community engagement, and HR teams at member employers have launched themselves.

**HEAL:** "In October 2018, U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL) challenged 10 leading Illinois health systems to join forces and use their organizations' economic and community footprint to

redouble their efforts to curb violence and improve health in 18 vulnerable Chicago neighborhoods.”<sup>5</sup> All ten hospital systems participating in HEAL are also members of CHWC. Chicago HEAL— Hospital Engagement, Action and Leadership—is a bold, three-year initiative to reduce violence and improve health through neighborhood engagement.

Three pillars:

1. Increase Local Workforce Commitment to reduce economic hardship
2. Support Community Partnerships to improve health and safety of public environments
3. Prioritize key in-hospital clinical practices to address unmet needs<sup>5</sup>

The [2020 one-year report](#) highlights an increase in hiring from HEAL neighborhoods, and an increase in summer and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students.

**West Side United:** In 2017 and 2018, [West Side United](#) (WSU) was formed to improve neighborhood health on the West side by addressing inequality in healthcare, education, economic vitality and the physical environment using a cross-sector, place-based strategy. Partners include healthcare providers, education providers, the faith community, business, government and others working together to coordinate investments and share outcomes.

Five of the hospital systems in CHWC are also founding hospitals of West Side United. At least four of those hospitals are also members of the [Healthcare Anchor Network](#), a national collaboration of over 60 leading healthcare systems building more inclusive and sustainable local economies.

In addition to the Medical Assistant Pathway Program, WSU also manages pathway programs for Certified Nursing Assistant/ Patient Care Technician, Respiratory Therapy, and Health IT.

**The City of Chicago Recovery Taskforce:** The City convened a Recovery Taskforce that in July 2020 released the [Recovery Taskforce Advisory Report: Forward Together, Building a Stronger Chicago](#). The plan includes recommendations related to strengthening the healthcare system including mental health services, building career pathways for community health workers, and diversifying the workforce.

A Healthcare Workforce Development committee is currently convening to look at career pathways for Social & Human Service Assistants, Community Health Workers, Pharmacy

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<sup>5</sup> Dick Durbin United States Senator Illinois (2020). Hospital Engagement Action and Leadership 2020 Report to Stakeholders, Retrieved from <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/IHA-HEAL-report-v14-singles%20--%20Final%20-%20205-20-20.pdf>

Technicians, Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses, Medical Assistants, Medical Records Specialists, and Dental Hygienists.

**More Initiatives to Know About:**

- The [Equitable Recovery Corps Fund](#) from the [Chicago Workforce Funder Alliance](#) recently gave \$450,000 to support the public health workforce through the expansion of trusted messengers including promotoras, resource navigators, and other Covid response teams at [Enlace](#) and [Southwest Organizing Project](#).
- Vaccine Ambassador programs are developing pathways into community health roles and other healthcare occupations. [Michael Reese Foundation](#) is supporting the [Vaccine Corps Partnership](#), and the [Illinois Medical District](#) is building a Youth Vaccine Ambassador program.
- The [Sinai Urban Health Institute](#), [Esperanza Health Centers](#), and the [Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership](#) are launching a Population Health Career Pathways Program focused on bilingual Latinx high school graduates on the West Side, likely in Community Health roles.
- [JP Morgan Chase](#) has awarded a \$3M grant to Advocate, Sinai, and UChicago to focus on three workforce pillars: community engagement, future of work, and an emergent leader program for people of color.
- The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership oversees the [Community-Based Contract Tracing Corps](#), which employs 600 people through community partnerships. Malcolm X and UIC will offer continuing education and terminal certifications for Contact Tracers in various allied health occupations.