CORPORATE COALITION of CHICAGO

CORPORATE CONNECTOR UPDATE

22

NOVEMBER 2022

In its first 18 months, the Corporate Connector brought together 35 corporate partners with 30 community-led development projects and small businesses, providing technical expertise and building high-quality connections to increase the likelihood of those projects' success. **Projects supported by the Connector plan to attract $300 million in investments and create 1,500 jobs over the next one to three years.**

The Corporate Connector was established by the Corporate Coalition in early 2020 to address barriers to advancing catalytic real estate projects and related business enterprises in disinvested neighborhoods. To begin, Coalition staff interviewed developers, investors, community leaders, financial institutions, and foundations to get perspectives on what stalls new projects.

The Coalition zeroed in on two barriers: the need for specific technical expertise at the right time and the lack of connections to obtain the needed support. The Corporate Connector was established to help locate sources of specific support and foster the relationships needed to deliver support successfully—in both the short- and long-term.

Corporate Coalition staff facilitate results by playing matchmaker. They match a running list of community projects' needs with corporate partners that have capacity and interest in taking on a Corporate Connector engagement.

The staff work with community project leaders to scope each project and find the best matches with corporate partners. To date, corporate partners have provided seven types of service that community project leaders identified as areas of need: bulk purchasing discounts, financial planning, industry expertise, legal expertise, market analysis, real estate expertise, and strategic planning. The Corporate Connector staff have also helped cement business partnerships among community projects as well as between community projects and corporate partners. A detailed list of projects and assistance received is available for download here.

The Corporate Connector's success is rooted in the creativity, leadership, and dedication of all those involved in the community projects. Staff add careful listening to determine specific needs, expertise in scoping projects to address the needs, and connections to those who can help. Staff then make connections to corporations and their employees who want to engage in the vital work of rebuilding disinvested communities, but don't know how to get involved.

CASE STUDY

"We're uniting education, wellness, sustainability, and economic vitality to drive multi-generational impact. As a growing non-profit that serves an under-resourced, 96% minority community, the support we received from industry leaders via the Corporate Connector has been game-changing."

— Sarah Elizabeth Ippel, Cultivate Collective board member

CULTIVATE COLLECTIVE AND L.E.K. CONSULTING'S CHICAGO INSPIRE CHAPTER

Cultivate Collective is typical of a community development project that the Corporate Connector supports. The group's six-acre education and wellness campus in Chicago Housing Authority's LeClaire Courts on the Southwest Side broke ground this spring.

THE CAMPUS WILL FEATURE:

- public charter K-8 school and early childhood center
- federally qualified health center
- urban farming operation
- workforce development
- community teaching kitchen
- neighborhood fresh food store and café

The campus is on track to be the first of its kind in the Midwest to achieve the Living Building Challenge certification as a net-positive energy demonstration site by generating 105% of its energy needs, as well as net water positivity.

A team at L.E.K. Consulting's branch of Inspire, a nonprofit consultancy, worked with Cultivate Collective on projects that Ippel says led to thoughtful, creative and innovative solutions. Consultants at Inspire identified a need in the region for 13 million pounds of fresh produce. A farmer's market, retail store, or juice bar are just some of the options Inspire analyzed for Cultivate Collective.

Both parties benefit, according to the Inspire chapter office head and L.E.K. Consulting's Associate Consultant Madeleine Welch. Pro bono consulting projects are an important way to help newer staff gain key skills, Welch says: "Our team that worked with Cultivate Collective, led by case team leaders Eli Berlin and Abby Weber, had the opportunity to get high client interaction and be thought leaders – creating the story, narrative, and leading the iteration of the work product through completion."

These projects are highly sought after by team members, Welch adds. "Sustainability-oriented projects are high on our list of what volunteers are looking for," she says. "Cultivate Collective was an ideal project."

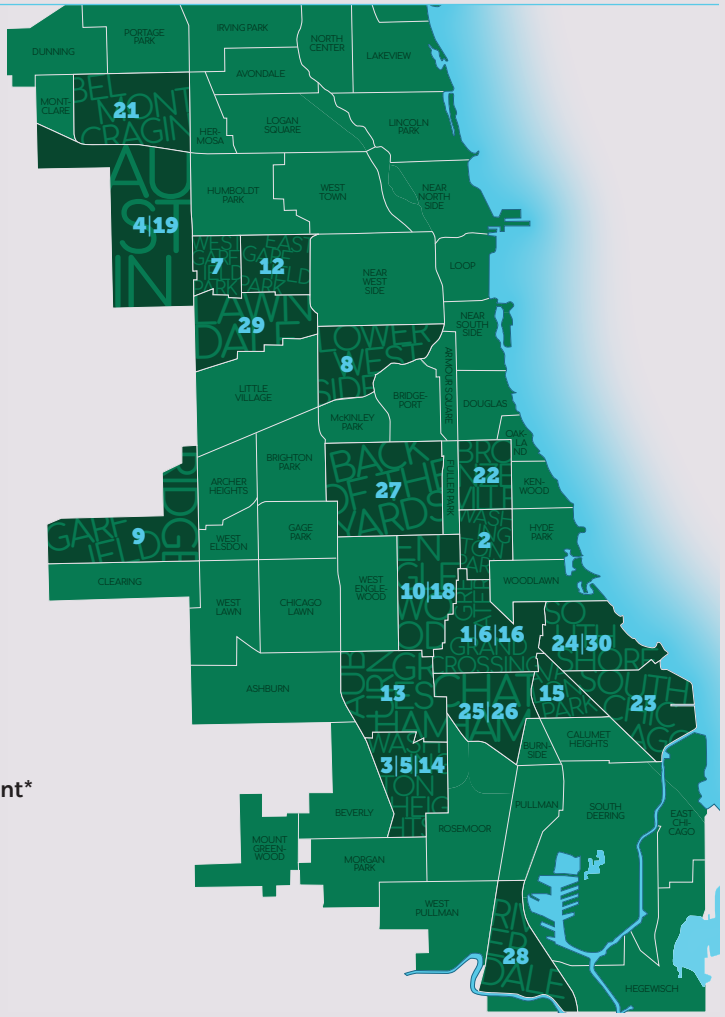
Welch notes that the Inspire team also began to build the long-term relationships with their client that the Corporate Connector aims to curate. They were excited to learn the project is one of six finalists in the Pritzker Traubert Foundation Chicago Prize competition. "The whole team can't wait for the Chicago Prize to be announced," she says. "We have a horse in that race now!"

18-MONTH PROGRESS

PROJECTS SUPPORTED

PROJECTS

1 7346 S. Cottage Grove
2 Ace Tech
3 Bridget's Bodega
4 BUILD
5 Cafe Du Bois
6 ChiFresh Kitchen
7 Coalition Food Hall
8 CREDMADE
9 Cultivate Collective
10 E.G. Woode
11 Food Processing Innovation Center*
12 Garfield Park Rite to Wellness
13 GreenERA Biodigestor
14 Imani Village
15 Justice of the Pies
16 Lyte Lounge
17 Manningdale Development*
18 Margaret's Village
19 Mildred Wiley Wellness Hub (MWWH)
20 Millennial Beacon*
21 Northwest Center
22 Overton Center of Excellence
23 Salud Center
24 Sista Afya
25 Soul Delivered
26 Southside Market
27 Star Farm
28 TCA Nutrition Center
29 Turning Red Lines Green
30 Urban Core/Studio Yogi



PARTNER SERVICES

Bulk Purchasing Discounts
Business Relationships
Financial Planning
Industry Expertise
Legal Expertise
Market Analysis
Real Estate Expertise
Strategic Planning

PARTNERS

Amazon*
AT&T*
Bain & Co.
BOMA
CBRE
Comcast*
Conagra
CRG
DL3 Realty*
EY*
Gensler
JPMorgan Chase*
L.E.K. Consulting
Lakeshore Fitness
Mars Wrigley*
McKinsey & Co.
Northwestern Medicine
Produce Alliance
Protiviti*
Salesforce*
Sidley Austin LLP
Slalom
SmithGroup
Takito Kitchens
The Planera Group
Tribune Real Estate Holdings
UChicago Medicine*
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Verizon*

*Corporate Coalition members

*NOT ON MAP: 11 South Suburbs; 17 Joliet; 20 Location TBD

THINK DIFFERENTLY. ACT COLLECTIVELY.

CORPORATE COALITION of CHICAGO

The Corporate Coalition was convened in 2019 by business leaders who came together to find ways for the business sector to use its assets, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm in new ways to address economic and racial inequities across all neighborhoods in the Chicago region.

MEMBERS:

- Abundant Venture Partners
- Accenture
- AdventHealth
- Allstate
- Amazon
- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
- AT&T
- The Blommer Chocolate Company
- The Boston Consulting Group
- Chicago Commons
- Comcast
- ComEd
- Discover
- DL3 Realty
- Exelon
- EY
- Fifth Third Bank
- Freedman Seating Company
- Google
- Halo Security
- Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC)
- J.P. Morgan Chase
- Mars Wrigley
- NORC
- Northern Trust
- Northwestern Medicine
- Protiviti
- Rush University Medical Center
- RW Ventures
- Salesforce
- SDI Presence
- Sinai Health System
- St. Bernard Hospital
- Third Horizon Strategies
- UChicago Medicine
- United Airlines
- Verizon
- Wintrust Financial
- Zeno Group

INITIATIVES:

Chicago Resiliency Network
Corporate Connector
EPIC: Equity Products for Investing in Communities
Fair Chance Initiative
5/25 Move to Action (a collaboration with We Rise Together)

LEADERSHIP:

Co-Chairs are the public face of the Corporate Coalition. Our Leadership Council is comprised of business executives and anchor partner leaders who collectively guide the work of the Coalition.

- **Roger Hochschild**, Co-Chair
  President and CEO, Discover
- **Eileen Mitchell**, Co-Chair
  President, AT&T Illinois and AT&T Great Lakes
- **Maurice Smith**, Co-Chair
  CEO, Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC)

JOIN

All companies are welcome, no matter where they are on their journey to address inequities. Members contribute $10,000, which provides:

- Access to Corporate Coalition initiatives, offering tangible ways to engage assets, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm to address inequities in the Chicago region
- Invitations to participate in quarterly meetings, hear updates from local public sector leaders, and engage in conversations with thought leaders
- Admission to practice-sharing forums
- Opportunities to lift up and highlight member company practices via Business UNusual spotlights

Potential members are welcome to attend meetings before deciding whether to join. For more information on the Corporate Coalition and membership, please contact Brian Fabes at brian.fabes@corpcoalition.org.