



**Leadership Greater Chicago  
Rockwell Leadership Network  
2006 Job Readiness Programs and Activities**

**What is Leadership Greater Chicago?**

Leadership Greater Chicago (LGC) was founded in 1985 to educate, connect and mobilize Chicago's emerging leaders. Each year 35 Fellows are selected to study key challenges facing the region, including economic development, education, race and ethnic relations, housing, crime and violence, and health care. Classes are diverse in terms of profession, interests, gender, race and ethnicity and geography, and the experience creates an unparalleled network of leaders. LGC now has close to 700 alumni who have participated in the 10-month Fellows program, and an active Leadership Fellows Association.

**What is the LGC Job Seekers Network?**

In recognition of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, LGC initiated the Rockwell Leadership Network as its first project to involve Fellows in a collective effort to address challenging community concerns. Through the network, LGC collaborates with multiple partners including Marcy-Newberry Association, Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Eastlake Development and the Rockwell LAC to help residents of Rockwell Gardens make a successful transition to the new West End community during the CHA's Plan for Transformation.

In 2005, the Rockwell Leadership Network created the Job Seekers Network. Approximately sixty CHA residents and close to sixty LGC Fellows and their associates participated in a variety of workshops and activities designed to expand the job readiness resources available to residents. The network gives CHA residents access to professionals in all walks of life who can provide training, coaching and mentoring to assist in job searches. It makes connections between people who would otherwise not meet, and opens doors to employment. It also provides opportunities to train staff who are helping CHA residents meet their relocation goals.

**What activities will the Job Seekers Network offer in 2006?**

Thanks to funding from the Partnership for New Communities, LGC is able to continue to provide job readiness activities in collaboration with Rockwell/West End community partners as well as a small number of other community partners who are helping CHA residents make the transition to other new mixed-income communities under the Plan for Transformation (hereafter referred to as Transformation communities). LGC will enter agreements with select community partners for programs to be delivered between June and December 2006 that meet the following criteria:

- Participating clients must be CHA Housing Offer Process (HOP) clients who are considered eligible to meet the criteria to relocate to a Transformation community. They must be actively seeking to meet the employment criteria in order to move in.
- Residents of Transformation communities who are considered "working to meet" or are experiencing challenges staying employed are also eligible to participate.

- LGC works through service providers, service connectors and other community partners. We require contact with a case manager, job developer, employment coordinator or other responsible liaison who is in direct contact with the client. The community partner will be responsible for:
  - Identifying and recruiting appropriate participants
  - Ensuring attendance at scheduled sessions, mock interviews and all other appointments, including reminder calls and providing transportation if necessary
  - Logistics for arranging facilities, transportation, supplies, food service or other (although LGC may be able to provide assistance)
  - Follow up and debriefing with participants
  - Reporting progress back to LGC
  - Entering a written memorandum of understanding with LGC including a schedule of activities and outline of responsibilities and contact people.

### **Activities**

Our hope is that the connections made through the Rockwell Leadership Network will result in lasting relationships that can increase residents' job readiness and successful employment. LGC will recruit and train its volunteers to work with employment specialists, social service staff and residents to deliver the following activities. LGC requires at least four weeks notice to schedule an activity, and requires confirmation with the number of participants at least one week in advance. In order to maximize resources and efficiency, LGC may elect to work with more than one Transformation community partner on any given activity:

### **Speakers on job search topics**

- Introduction to job search – what are employers looking for
- Coming prepared – what you need when you go to an interview
- Presentation skills (proper attire/dressing for the interview, effective interview communications and/or phone etiquette)
- Interviewing skills (can include multiple sessions)
- Navigating a job fair
- Resume writing
- Basic computer use for job search including topics such as setting up an email address and filing on-line applications
- Staying employed – what happens once you have the job
- Financial Literacy issues including budget preparation and credit repair

### **Requirements:**

The community partner should provide a setting such as a job club or training course, and should plan to have at least eight participants. If appropriate, LGC can arrange a downtown setting for the activity. Most successful sessions last between one-and-a-half and three hours depending on the topic.

### **Mock phone interview sessions**

Many companies use phone interviews as screening tools prior to inviting a candidate for an actual interview. How a candidate answers the phone, the nature of his or her answering machine message, or ability to express himself or herself clearly and

articulately can make or break his or her ability to get to the interview stage. LGC's mock interview session includes:

- A speaker on interviewing skills or opportunities to watch an interviewing video
- Individual coaches who work with participants prior to making the phone call
- Volunteer interviewers who can be reached by phone
- Immediate feedback on the phone interview
- The opportunity to try a second time
- The opportunity to "debrief" in a group

Requirements:

- Setting: A room for the speaker along with breakout space for coaching and individual phone lines are required. LGC can help with arrangements if necessary.
- Number of participants: A minimum of six HOP clients should participate. We can accommodate up to twelve people in one session.
- Length: Depending on the number of participants, this session can last from two to four hours.

**In-person mock interviews in a workplace setting**

Mock interviews can help to calm nerves and provide important feedback about individual presentation. They may open the door to a mentoring relationship. Ideally participants will already have participated in the phone interview session or other interviewing training.

The mock interview includes:

- A face-to-face 30 to 45 minute interview with a professional in an office setting
- Immediate feedback with a note-taking journal for the participant
- A feedback form provided to the community partner for further debriefing

Requirements:

- Participants must have appropriate interview clothes
- Participant must have a complete resume
- Community partner must provide transportation or otherwise be able to ensure that the client is at the interview promptly (ideally 10 minutes early)
- Phone confirmation with LGC of the time, place and interview candidate's name, at least two business days in advance of the interview. Ideally the client's resume will be transmitted electronically at least two days prior to the interview.

**Workplace tours**

LGC has access to employers who are willing to arrange half-day tours for CHA residents who are engaged in job search. These provide an invaluable insider's view of different workplaces. In the past we have visited Sears downtown store, The Chicago Tribune Freedom Center and Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital. Tours last four to six hours including opportunities to meet people in entry-level positions, see actual workplaces, learn about job descriptions and meet with human resources personnel in both information and mock interview sessions.

Requirements

- At least twenty HOP clients must be signed up to participate (can be from a variety of developments and community partners)

- Community partner representative must participate in a planning meeting and must participate in the tour
- Ideally the participants have had interviewing experience and/or participated in the mock phone and in-person interviewing activities
- Participants must have appropriate interview clothes
- Participant must have a complete resume
- Community partner must provide transportation or otherwise be able to ensure that all clients arrive promptly
- Phone confirmation with LGC of the list of participants with addresses and phone numbers at least one week in advance of the tour.

### **Mentors/Employment Coaches**

LGC is available to explore the possibility of setting up mentoring or coaching relationships between individual LGC Fellows and HOP clients. The community partner must be willing to play an ongoing role in encouraging consistent participation and initiative on the part of the client.

### **Occasional communications: email and phone**

Other options for valuable contact that do not require the intensity of a coaching relationship include an email “pen pal” option. This can be a valuable way to help clients develop the habit of checking and responding to their email, which is essential during a job search. Volunteers can also place phone calls to clients to provide an opportunity to practice receiving a recruiter phone call and to talk with someone they don’t know over the phone.

### **Other**

LGC is available to work closely with community partners to brainstorm and develop on other activities that supplement on going job readiness and job search programs. We are available to brainstorm and schedule a variety of opportunities to work together.

### **For further information:**

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