



National Urban League

The Division of Workforce Development

The National Urban League's evidence-based and scalable signature programs are professionally implemented by local Urban League affiliates to enhance the economic and educational status of our constituents.

Project Empower University

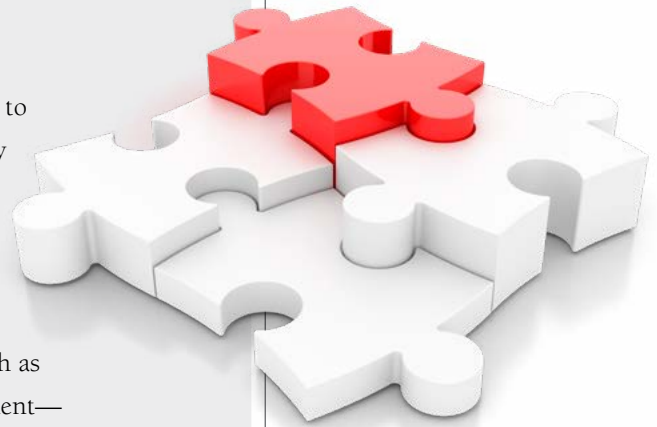
A CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVE OF THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE



Our Approach.

Project Empower University is a sequential and systematic approach to moving Urban League affiliates along the pathway to greater capacity and higher performance, with the ultimate outcome of improving financial stability and economic empowerment for the participants they serve. The National Urban League has worked to increase the effectiveness of its national affiliate network's economic services by helping it to implement workforce development best practices—such as employer engagement, career pathways, and effective data management—and to integrate services more broadly.

Project Empower University is a set of capacity-building initiatives focused on change management, helping affiliates learn how to envision and implement integrated service delivery, as well as narrative change and leadership within their communities. Affiliates are organized into tiers to help affiliates systematically advance through the planning and implementation of service integration and narrative change best practices. Project Empower University's long-term goal is to advance all 88 affiliates through all four tiers over time.



National Scope.

The National Urban League has partnered with 36 Urban League affiliates across the US for the Project Empower University initiative, which is funded by the Walmart Foundation.

2025 EMPOWERMENT GOAL

Every American has access to jobs with a living wage and good benefits.

40%

of all Urban League affiliates are participating in this initiative

\$3.00

an hour is the average increase in wages being realized by clients served by participating affiliates

30%

retention rate increase already being realized by participants across participating Urban League affiliates

AFFILIATE CEOS TESTIFY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE.

For example, Brenda McDuffie, President & CEO of the Buffalo Urban League, has said, "Project Empower University gave our team an opportunity to set aside time to really re-adjust and focus on measurable outcomes."



Accomplishments.

Although the Project Empower University initiative is still in progress, it has already helped to increase the capacity of Urban League (UL) affiliate staff members as senior organizational leads redesign operations to achieve improved economic outcomes for clients, helping them to earn more and to keep more of what they earn to build assets and opportunities for the future. It has also brought together affiliate staff at a variety of convenings to help drive narrative change from the bottom up, harnessing the power of the larger Urban League movement to help affiliates lead more effectively both within their given communities and across the nation more broadly.



Desired Capacity-Building Outcomes.

1. TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE VALUE PROPOSITIONS

2. TO CREATE GUIDING TEAMS

3. TO REFINE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

4. TO FORMULATE SMART GOALS

5. TO BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT AND MEASURE

6. TO SELF-ANALYZE WITH ONGOING REINFORCEMENT

7. TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE NARRATIVE CHANGE STRATEGIES

8. TO COMMUNICATE TO LEADERS HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY EXPAND THEIR ROLES IN THE COMMUNITY

Success Story.

JOHN GUDE, who is a 44-year-old married African American man with five children, came to the Springfield Urban League looking for employment. John had fallen on hard times and found himself and his family living in shelters. He was fortunate to have found housing just before he came to the Urban League, but he needed to gain employment to sustain his rental payments. After his first week working with the Urban League, John began to fully engage in all the work and life skills training and activities available at the League, prepared his resume, and practiced interviewing. He was diligent in his attendance and follow-up to employers, and he started receiving interviews on a weekly basis.

RESULT: While in the process of waiting for the right employment opportunity, John earned four hospitality certifications and became a role model for other clients. He gained employment with the Simplex Corporation, making a \$70,000 annual salary. With the help of a financial coach, he has established a checking and savings account, and he no longer worries about paying his rent. John has expressed to his financial coach on several occasions how this program has truly been a blessing to him and his family. He says, "Now, I'm not just viewed as an exceptional employee but also as a good father and husband."