

Access to Capital

Access to Micro-lending

As with our other offerings, the *Entrepreneurship Center* takes a multi-tiered approach to assisting our businesses with access to capital. The first pillar of this approach is financial education. Through our one-on-one consulting, our classroom curriculum, and our close partnership with the Housing & Financial Empowerment Center, we ensure that our entrepreneurship clients receive the training they need to have a foundational understanding of both personal and business finance. The second pillar of this approach is funding education. Through our one-on-one consulting, our classroom curriculum, and our multiple Access to Capital events, we ensure that our entrepreneurship clients understand the various funding sources available to their businesses, recognize the pros and cons of each, and can make informed decisions about which type(s) of funding fit with their current business needs. The third pillar of this approach is connections. The Chicago Urban League maintains relationships with a large variety of startup and small business funders throughout the Chicagoland area and beyond including, but not limited to: ACCION, Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, Hyde Park Angels, Goodcity Chicago, Valley Economic Development Corporation, Community Reinvestment Fund, the Private Bank, BMO Harris Bank, the Women's Business Development Center, Caerus Investment Partners, the Pritzker Group, US Bank, Kiva Zip, and many more. Representatives from these partner organizations regularly come to speak to our classes, serve on workshop panels, attend networking events, and keep us informed of any new product offerings. Through these relationships we are able to: 1) understand the different offerings available to our clients from different partners; and 2) be able to make individualized introductions for our clients to those who can provide funding.

Connection to Capital and Funding Opportunities

As stated above, the *Entrepreneurship Center* provides our clients with access to a host of training options to ensure they're prepared to navigate the small business funding space. Once we have identified what type of funding a given client should pursue, we help them prepare to seek that capital through investor pitch preparation consulting, business plan and loan packaging assistance, referrals to appropriate experts such as CPAs and lawyers, and individualized introductions to the funders best matched to be able to assist each specific client. In 2016, *Entrepreneurship Center* clients received over \$1.6MM in loans, grants, and equity investments for their businesses.

We also offer a minimum of two Access to Capital events and a minimum of four investor pitch nights each year.