IN 2020 WE CONTINUED TO BUILD OUR PORTFOLIO OF BEST-IN-CLASS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Like the rest of the world, when COVID-19 took us by surprise in early 2020, it created unprecedented challenges for countless aspects of our working lives. OAI was fortunate that we were able to adapt fairly quickly due to our strong foundations in occupational health and safety. Our own workplace became a key testing ground for implementing safe and effective protocols that would protect not only ourselves but our communities at large. Hence, OAI was relatively prepared when NIEHS asked us to help launch a nationwide COVID-19 safety training initiative to help both employers and workers stay safe during this pandemic.

We began by delivering comprehensive 8-hr Train-the-Trainer Programs on COVID-19 safety protocols and infectious disease awareness to our pool of health and safety instructors with previous experience in OSHA safety topics, respiratory protection, and FEMA disaster response. They learned about disease transmission, infection control protocols, COVID-19 knowns and unknowns, OSHA’s hierarchy of controls, and OSHA’s Bloodborne Pathogen standard. Many of our trainers were frontline and essential workers themselves, holding positions as firefighters, EMS personnel, state police, environmental health and safety instructors, and community health educators so they were able to easily relate to their students concerns. During the first 3 months of the initiative, we trained 76 instructors who, in turn, trained over 321 frontline or essential workers in 13 states. Because of this early effort, NIEHS awarded an additional $300,000 of emergency supplemental funding to continue and expand our COVID-19 safety training to reach essential workers.

OAI also distributed barrier reduction emergency aid funds from the Chicago Community COVID-19 Relief Fund, LISC and Xylem Watermark to over 250 individuals and families totaling $58,367 between April and June, 2020 with more planned to distribute in the coming year. We continued offering pre-employment training and job placement services using virtual and hybrid formats in Chicago, suburban Cook County, Kansas City, Mo and Dallas, TX. With the many mental, physical and psychological challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff and trainers centered mental health awareness as a core area of concern for participants and staff alike. As we adjust to new remote working conditions, we are also seeking to care for and support one another as best we can. We will only get through these difficult circumstances through mutual aid and collective community support.

EVERYONE has the right to be safe, no matter what the job.

OAI’s Hazardous Waste Worker Training program provided OSHA-related health & safety training to 2,856 vulnerable workers in 13 states.

EVERYONE deserves a chance to succeed, no matter where they are starting from.

Together, OAI’s Environmental Career Worker Training and Greencorps Chicago programs placed 107 individuals into permanent employment.

EVERYONE succeeds when workers are skilled, engaged, and employed.

OAI’s Chicago Southland department placed 160 participants into employment in healthcare, manufacturing and TDL with an average wage of $14.71.
SUCCESS STORY

BRUCE REYNOLDS was paroled to the Salvation Army Pathway Forward reintegration program in 2019, where he learned about OAI’s Chicago-based Environmental Career Training Program. He was eventually able to earn 11 industry certifications and completed the program with high honors. Shortly after graduation he was hired with USIC Locating Services as a Technician at $18.00 per hour. He has since earned a position as a Fiber Optic Splicer for ATT earning $36.00 per hour. Bruce has continued working with his OAI financial coach on improving his credit score. He stated:

“Prior to OAI, I never really maximized my potential. I just kind of ruined everything. I’ve overcome that because now I settle for absolutely nothing. I can always improve myself every day in every way.”

TRIBUTE TO DR. SHEILA PRESSLEY

Dr. Pressley was a beloved employee of OAI and served as the Associate Director of Environmental Health and Safety from 1998 - 2004. She left OAI and Chicago to pursue her PhD at Eastern Kentucky University, where she eventually became the Dean of the College of Health Sciences. She served on OAI’s board of directors and our National Advisory Committee for our NIEHS programs from 2013 to 2020. She was a loyal advisor and thought leader to all of us at OAI for more than 20 years before her untimely passing in January, 2020. Her legacy for environmental justice and public health will be remembered by our entire community for many years to come.

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FUNDERS

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
U.S. Dept. of Labor
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ComEd
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
IL Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Polk Bros. Foundation

Local Initiatives Support Coordination
Chicago Women in Trade
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Great Lake One Water
The Legacy Foundation
Cook County Workforce Partnership

The Chicago Community Covid-19 Relief Fund
Xylem Watermark
Chicago Community Foundation
The Conservation Fund
McCormick Foundation
Cook County Justice Advisory Council

Cook County Dept. of Planning & Development
Chicago Community Trust
Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance
Boeing
Turner Construction
Northern Illinois University 60 by 25 Network

FINANCIALS

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE FY2020
Federal Grants $2,646,378 59%
State of Illinois Grants $638,800 14%
Foundation/Corporations $1,012,594 23%
Contributions $22,278 1%
Fee for Service & Program Income $140,240 3%
Interest & Misc Income $12,385 0%
TOTAL INCOME $4,472,675 100%

TOTAL EXPENSES $4,524,837 100%
Management & General Expenses $693,442
Fundraising Expenses $22,555
Total M&G + Fundraising Expenses $715,997 16%

*of M&G and Fundraising to Total Expenses