

PropelNext In Action

Able Works

Able Works focuses on stabilizing families and preparing youth for careers and self-sufficiency through financial literacy, life skills, and self-empowerment programs. According to co-founder and CEO John Liotti, the organization launched in 2006 – amidst the financial crisis that deeply affected oppressed and marginalized communities – in response to generational cycles of poverty and growing economic inequality in Northern California.

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mobility. We wanted to walk alongside youth and young mothers to navigate barriers and explore their full potential.

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Able Works’ flagship FutureProfits program partners with local organizations and public high schools to support under-resourced students at risk of being caught in generational cycles of poverty and gives them the tools to make sound



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financial decisions – laying the groundwork for strong futures.

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Able Works’ LiveAble cohort program aims to bring economic self-sufficiency to female heads of household ages 18-30 through coaching, credit counseling, goal setting, education and career planning, jobs, and other needs resources – all in a healthy and encouraging environment.

Through PropelNext, Able Works is becoming a more data-driven organization and aims to deepen and expand its services. With a greater level of sophistication in collecting and evaluating data, Able Works will be able to demonstrate effectiveness and ensure a system of quality control within its programs.

Specifically, Able Works is working with PropelNext to pilot and evaluate a post-high school financial literacy cohort program. “I’ve always wanted to have a post-high school interaction with the students that we serve – we serve 500-700 student a week in schools during the school day. The work we are doing with PropelNext will help us bring together motivated youths and walk with them through that difficult and transformative time of transitioning into adulthood,” Liotti said.

In terms of scale, Able Works is focused on deepening the quality of its programs to strengthen their reach and impact. According to Liotti, Able Works “always assumed we would serve a smaller number of kids with a greater level of engagement,” which PropelNext is helping them to achieve.

With better data and a more sophisticated evaluation process, Able Works will be able to pursue more and different funding opportunities, particularly from foundations, to both deepen its existing programs and expand services to other regions.

PropelNext is a program of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation that helps promising nonprofits convert their passion for serving disadvantaged youth into data-driven insights and practices that increase their impact on young people’s lives. This is a look into Able Works, a PropelNext grantee in their Northern California 2021 cohort, and the organization’s experience thus far in the program. The Heising-Simons Foundation is the co-investor for Able Works.