



FISCAL YEAR 2025

Impact report.

What a year of programs did, and what an independent evaluator found when they measured it.

WHY WE EXIST

Mission

To create opportunities for inner-city youth through entrepreneurial development.

Vision

A generation of young people who are confident, capable, and equipped to lead in business, career and community.

ARK serves young people from five to twenty-four in Chicago — a ladder that starts with a first idea and ends with a first career. Along it they learn to build a business, run it, communicate it, sell it and lead. Most of what follows was measured by After School Matters, who place teens with community organizations across the city and evaluate every one of them.

MEASURED BY AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS

What an outside evaluator found.

84%

Average daily attendance

82%

Program completion rate

89

Unique teens, filling 105
places

70%

From a City priority group

A priority group, as the Department of Family & Support Services defines it: teens at CPS schools rated Level 2 or 3, teens with a disability, English language learners, teens who have had juvenile justice or DCFS involvement, and teens who are unstably housed.

9,808 program hours

2,615 program days

6 programs run

FROM 31 TEEN SURVEYS

What the teens said.

96% were challenged to try new things

93% said it gave them something fun to do

87% gained confidence in their skills

82% were more interested in a career in that field

95% were satisfied with the program

89% were more determined to finish high school

85% got to explore their own interests

77% came away with critical life and work skills

WHO COMES

They travel to get here.

ARK ran these programs from one site. Teens came to it from 21 community areas across Chicago — and the largest share already live in North Lawndale, which is where the second campus is going.

North Lawndale	15.7%
South Lawndale	15.1%
Near West Side	13.0%
Austin	9.7%
East Garfield Park	7.0%

21

Community areas they came from

89

Unique teens

105

Places filled between them

70%

From a DFSS priority group

A priority group is the City's own definition: a Level 2 or 3 school, a disability, an English language learner, DCFS or justice involvement, or no stable housing.

TEEN DEMOGRAPHICS • 89 TEENS

Who they are, counted by somebody other than us.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Black or African American	64.8%
Hispanic or Latinx	29.7%
White	2.2%
Two or more races	2.2%
Not reported	1.1%

One in eight arrived already out of school. Those are the young people a pathway has to reach first.

GENDER IDENTITY

Female	59.6%
Male	40.4%

SCHOOL

In 9th through 12th grade	62.5%
Not in school when they joined	12.5%

Source: After School Matters, FY25 evaluation. These are the teens in the programs ASM places, not every young person ARK serves.

**“Thank you for believing that
our teens are our future.”**

An After School Matters teen, in the FY25 evaluation

WHAT RAN IN 2025

Three programs, one ladder.

Youth Boss Expo

160 young entrepreneurs, ages 6 to 24, showed products, services and business plans to 600 people — community leaders, funders and neighbors.

\$13,000 awarded in startup funding, and over \$5,000 in production costs covered.

arkec.org

After School Matters • CHA

One hundred students a cycle, autumn and spring. Business development, leadership, financial literacy, and improv for communication.

Each cycle ends in a field trip and a showcase.

Be Entrepreneurial • DFSS

Fifty young adults aged 16 to 24 through One Summer Chicago — entrepreneurial mindset, job readiness and career exploration.

Paid internships and mentorship throughout.

OUR OWN COUNT

And the numbers we keep ourselves.

Across every program, not the evaluated ones alone. Everything on this page is ARK's own count and is marked as such wherever it appears.

160

Young entrepreneurs
showcased at the Youth
Boss Expo

600

People who came to watch
them pitch

\$13,000

Awarded in startup funding
to the top three

92%

Average attendance, across
every program

The attendance figure here is not the one on the third slide. After School Matters measured 84% across the programs they place teens in; 92% is ARK's own, across everything it runs. Different programs, different count.

FISCAL YEAR 2025

Where the money went.

\$450,000

Revenue and in-kind

\$420,000

Expenses

85%

Of the budget spent on programs

WHERE IT CAME FROM

City grants, individual donors, and foundation support.

WHO WE WORK WITH

IDHS · Chicago Housing Authority · After School Matters · DFSS · DCFS · Alternative School Network · Aspira · local businesses

THE CAMPUS • OPENING 2028

What the new building makes room for.

96

Children in licensed early childhood care, ages 0–5

200

Young people in entrepreneurship and workforce programming

24

Transitional living units for young adults

WHY IT MATTERS

The building ARK works in today caps it at 150 young people. The campus at 2221 S. Lawndale Ave. in North Lawndale is what lifts that ceiling.

arkec.org

ARK TEEN LIVING

The twenty-four units are a licensed child welfare program with DCFS, for young people in care — because a pathway only works if there is somewhere to stand while you walk it.

**To every donor, volunteer, mentor and partner —
thank you.**



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Independent figures: After School Matters, FY25 Community-Based Organization Impact Report.