



CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

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Roadtrip Nation Documentary Airing This Sunday Features Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership CEO and Suburban Chicago Young Adult Job Seeker

Partnership CEO Karin Norington-Reaves to be on Tonight's Edition of WTTW's Chicago Tonight Discussing Young Adult Career Exploration Project

CHICAGO — The [Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership](#) (The Partnership) CEO Karin Norington-Reaves will appear tonight on Chicago Tonight to discuss The Partnership's involvement in the documentary "To Be Determined", a four-part series that follows three young adults who travel the Eastern United States pursuing self-discovery and career exploration.

The series centers on the trio of 20-somethings, including one from suburban Chicago, who come from underserved communities and travel the U.S. East and Midwest in Roadtrip Nation's distinctive bright green RV, conducting informational interviews of leaders of workforce/job training programs and professionals with interesting careers. All of the episodes and interactions between the Road Trippers and the workforce professionals were produced before the COVID-19 pandemic.

To Be Determined is the brainchild of [Roadtrip Nation](#) and is made possible by AT&T. The program empowers young adults to explore who they are and what they want to do with their lives. Chicago Tonight broadcasts at 7 p.m. on Channel 11 in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The four-part documentary first premiered on Chicago's PBS station WTTW on Sunday, July 12. A virtual screening on YouTube that included a live interactive Q and A was held [online](#) on July 14. Episode 4, which features Norington-Reaves, will air on Channel 11 this Sunday, August 2, at 11:30 a.m. CDT. The full documentary series also can be viewed [online](#).

The initiative also includes a new Chicago-focused young adult workforce development [portal](#), launched jointly with The Partnership, which features conversations with, and motivational stories from a variety of successful professionals in this region's high-demand industry sectors. The website also features resources for career exploration, and local programs geared toward youth.

"This was the trip of a lifetime, a great opportunity for them to learn more not only about the world but also about themselves," said Norington-Reaves. "We are clearly living in uncertain and challenging times. It is so important for young people who are looking to their future not to become disheartened, but to stay focused and driven, knowing that they are not alone—that others have come before them and made it."



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In the episode airing Sunday, Norington-Reaves discusses her own life story and unconventional career path. "I hope they learned that there is no 'right path' to becoming who you want to be," she said.

One of the young people featured, Yasmine Tolbert of south suburban Harvey, is an alumna of Phalanx Family Services, a mentoring, workforce training, and educational advancement agency on the southside supported by The Partnership. Yasmine was accompanied on her travels by Taiheem Wentt and Denise Flores, both New Yorkers.

"What this experience taught me is life is a lesson to be learned, not a problem to be solved," said Tolbert. She is eager to "pour into" others what she has learned during her road trip.

The trio traveled in the Roadtrip Nation RV to Atlanta, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. Along the way, they interviewed the founders of the workforce programs that they completed Year Up, Per Scolas and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth program led locally by The Partnership. The young adults interviewed leaders dedicated to workforce development, as well as corporate and technology executives, and a political operative.

"During their three weeks together, Yasmine, Taiheem, and Denise learned that where you come from does not have to determine where you end up," said Norington-Reaves. "As I told them, their trip may be over, but their journey isn't. As my mother used to tell me 'you can do anything you put your mind to, even eat an elephant as long as you do it one bite at a time.'"

Designed for a variety of audiences, including those who run or participate in workforce/job training programs, social service and support agencies, and high school/college/continuing education students, the documentary – four 25-minute segments – is supplemented by an interactive discussion guide and toolkit.

More information about To Be Determined and Roadtrip Nation can be obtained from Kiera Jones – Program Director at kjones@roadtripnation.org

For more information on The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, contact Susan Massel, Chief of Communications and External Affairs at smassel@chicookworks.org.

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About the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) is a non-profit umbrella organization operating the public workforce system for the City of Chicago and Cook County. The Partnership combines federal and philanthropic resources to provide comprehensive workforce development services to both employers and job seekers.

As the largest workforce development system in the nation, The Partnership has helped place more than 70,000 individuals in employment; collaborated with more than 2,000 employers; and administered more than \$300 million in federal and philanthropic funds. The Partnership's network of 53 community-based organizations, 10 American Job Centers, and three sector-driven workforce centers serves more than 10,000 people annually. Learn more at chicookworks.org.