

## Chicago Beyond Names Lawndale Christian Legal Center Winner of 2017 Innovation Challenge

\$1.66M Investment Will Support Center's Efforts to Serve  
More Young People and Grow Impact City-Wide

**CHICAGO** – Today, Chicago Beyond awarded its second-annual Go Innovate Challenge investment to [Lawndale Christian Legal Center](#) (LCLC). LCLC offers a combination of quality legal defense and holistic social services for youth facing legal charges, helping provide them a path away from the criminal justice system. Throughout the duration of the new partnership, Chicago Beyond will serve as a strategic partner to LCLC, working alongside them to reach more youth and help grow the impact of their work.

“We recognize and are confounded by the disproportionate burden of arrest and incarceration faced by youth of color,” said Liz Dozier, Founder and CEO of Chicago Beyond. “Given the urgency behind these challenges, Chicago Beyond is deeply committed to investing in innovative approaches like LCLC’s that have the power to change a young person’s life trajectory.”

Young people who have a criminal record often carry the weight of trauma and a lifelong stigmatization that can lead to further challenges such as unemployment and housing instability. LCLC offers court-involved youth community-based holistic legal representation integrated with a customized intervention program of community-based supports such as mentoring, mental health and workforce development. On average, LCLC works with youth for three years until they are completely free of the criminal justice system and empowered to move forward on a sustainable path.

“This partnership with Chicago Beyond is a game-changer,” said Cliff Nellis, founder, executive director and lead attorney of LCLC. “With their investment, we will not only be able to provide more youth with community-based holistic legal services, we will also be able to more deeply evaluate and expand our unique program model.”

Since its inception in 2010, LCLC has served more than 650 youth in the North Lawndale community. The \$1.66 million investment from Chicago Beyond will allow LCLC to scale its services for the next three years with dedicated staff serving hundreds more at-risk youth. The investment also includes a research partnership with UChicago Urban Labs to study the program’s effectiveness.

Chicago Beyond’s [2017 Innovation Challenge](#) sought 90-second videos from organizations describing their work that disrupt chronic challenges facing young Chicagoans. Last year’s winners include [The Dovetail Project](#), [Storycatchers Theatre](#) and [Genesys Works Chicago](#). These three nonprofits received investments that totaled nearly \$3 million, which has helped them expand their capacity, test the effectiveness of their program and ultimately impact more young people.

### About Chicago Beyond

Launched in 2016, Chicago Beyond is a venture philanthropy fund that seeks to create positive, transformative change for young people in Chicago’s most economically fragile communities and beyond. Chicago Beyond identifies the most disruptive and innovative ideas in youth safety and education to invest in, learn from and grow. Working hand-in-hand with its partners, Chicago Beyond strives to do whatever it takes to grow the impact of the most effective ideas - from the development of growth plans to testing the idea’s effectiveness through research partnerships.

To learn more, visit [ChicagoBeyond.org](#).

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