



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00 AM CT
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**MESIROW AND KIRKLAND & ELLIS INVEST IN CHICAGO'S BLACK YOUTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP
WITH LINK UNLIMITED SCHOLARS**

Respected Chicago firms join together in providing generous financial support for LINK's cohort fellowship program

CHICAGO – Two of Chicago's most recognizable firms, Mesirow and Kirkland & Ellis (Kirkland), announced their support of the LINK Unlimited Scholars (LINK) cohort sponsorship with a generous financial investment in Chicago's Black youth through the four-year sponsorship of a new class — doubling the incoming class of new high school students.

"We are honored that some of Chicago's most well-known businesses are joining with us to expand our programming to reach 100 new Scholars," says Jonathan T. Swain, President and CEO, LINK Unlimited Scholars. "As we continue to address the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, this investment will allow us to reach even more high-potential Black youth and support them to and through college graduation."

LINK Unlimited Scholars changes the life trajectory of outstanding Black high-school students through a four-year fellowship. This model closes the opportunity gaps and ensures the long-term economic stability for its Scholars. Throughout their fellowship, LINK Scholars engage in programming for academic enrichment, leadership development, career exposure and college access. Since 2000, 100% of LINK's senior Scholars have graduated high school with acceptance into selective colleges and universities. A unique component of LINK's fellowship is one-on-one mentorship for each Scholar. Mentors walk with Scholars for their entire four-year journey, providing invaluable guidance, access to their network, and support during college application and selection, resulting in a lifelong bond for many Mentor-Scholar pairings. For over fifty years, LINK has successfully supported Scholars throughout the city as they move to, through, and beyond college.

"We view LINK as a strategic partner in Mesirow's work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion not only at the firm and within our industry, but also in terms of creating equitable opportunities for youth in our communities," says Carl Davis, Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Corporate Recruitment for Mesirow.

In addition to their generous sponsorship, employees from Kirkland and Mesirow will be invited to serve as LINK Mentors in the upcoming school year. Future Mentors have already completed training requirements and will be matched with Scholars this fall.

"Developing and sponsoring the next generation of diverse leaders within our law firm, the legal profession and our wider communities is a strategic priority for Kirkland. We are proud to partner with LINK to help empower outstanding Chicago youth," says Joi Bourgeois, Global Director of Diversity & Inclusion for Kirkland & Ellis.

The LINK partnership is the latest in both Kirkland's and Mesirow's significant company-wide investments in diversity and inclusion initiatives and community engagement. Through their 2L Diversity Fellowship Program, Kirkland has sponsored 239 Fellows with grants of approximately \$5 million since 2004 and dedicates more than 100,000 hours each year to pro bono initiatives across an array of areas to foster a more equitable, inclusive world. In June 2020, the firm also pledged to donate \$5 million over five years to support organizations focused on ending racism, achieving inclusion and advancing social justice. Mesirow operates under a six-point commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) led by an executive-level DEI Council, and has been an active member and sponsor of organizations advancing DEI in business and the financial services industry — like Chicago United — since 1998. In 2020, Mesirow's DEI Council led new strategic partnerships with organizations working in Black and Brown communities in economic development, education and broad-based community services, including LINK. Mesirow has deep engagement in Chicago's Brighton Park neighborhood on the city's southwest side, dedicating funds and 5,000 hours of volunteer service in education, family services and financial literacy, over a decade-long partnership.

About LINK Unlimited Scholars:

LINK Unlimited Scholars provides high-potential Black students in Chicago with the resources and tools they need to change the trajectory of their future through a four-year high school fellowship that moves them to, through and beyond college. For more information, visit linkunlimited.org.

About Mesirow:

Mesirow is an independent, employee-owned financial services firm founded in 1937. Headquartered in Chicago with offices around the world, we serve clients through a personal, custom approach to reaching financial goals and acting as a force for social good. With capabilities spanning Global Investment Management, Capital Markets & Investment Banking, and Advisory Services, we invest in what matters: our clients, our communities, and our culture. To learn more, visit mesirow.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#). Mesirow was recently named one of the Best Places to Work in Chicago by the Chicago Tribune and one of the Top Places to Work by Crain's Chicago Business.

About Kirkland & Ellis:

Kirkland & Ellis is an international law firm with more than 2,700 attorneys representing clients in private equity, M&A and other complex corporate transactions, litigation and dispute resolution/arbitration, restructuring, and intellectual property matters. The Firm operates from offices in 15 cities around the world: Beijing, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Hong Kong, Houston, London, Los Angeles, Munich, New York, Palo Alto, Paris, San Francisco, Shanghai and Washington, D.C. Kirkland is committed to advancing communities, dedicating substantial energy, talent and resources to meaningful causes and initiatives that reflect its values and vision. Learn more about Kirkland's commitment at www.kirkland.com/social-commitment.

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