

Ernest “Ernie” Sanders is the executive director for South Shore Works. He is a first-generation college graduate and business professional of more than 35 years. He has worked on national causes to 1) reduce recidivism and unemployment, 2) advocate for safe driving habits, 3) enhance literacy and academic enrichment in middle and high schools, 4) increase access to healthcare, housing, and social services, 5) promote digital, equitable and network excellence in lower-income populations and 6) lead supply chain processes.



As an African American male, Ernie continues to share his personal and professional stories of racism and oppression faced in his adolescent and adult days. His decision to share these personal encounters are not rooted in finger-pointing, but more so modeling and creating exceptional leaders of tomorrow. As a former seminarian, Ernie's foundation is based on accepting people as themselves. However, when it came to his fellow African Americans, his work would be even more intentional in modeling inclusion, equity, and leadership characteristics. Through counseling, working in low-income communities and a sheer passion for truth, he repurposed and retooled his narrative to Black Lives Mattering in the larger story of America's history. A sampling of his work is found in participating and leading [citywide equity convenings](#).

Specializing in community and economic development activities such as youth workforce development, promoting healthcare equity, language development, civic engagement, team building, and strategic planning, Ernie continues to expand his proficiency in philanthropic circles, lead equity convenings, participate as a national grant reviewer and lead a variety of significant projects in Chicago and other U.S. cities.

Ernie holds a master's degree in Advance Professional Studies from DePaul University and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Loyola University of Chicago. In 2018, his consulting firm was recognized by DePaul University for maintaining [Vincentian Values](#) of justice, service, and leadership beyond the institution. In 2014, Ernie was named the [University of Chicago's Community Partner of the Year](#) for his work on the Southside of Chicago encompassing issues such as youth workforce development ([MAPSCorps](#)), community-based participatory research, and broadband adoption/use for low-income families.

Ernie obtained professional certifications in Liberal Learning for Professionals (2019), Six Sigma-White Belt (2017), and Faith-based Leadership Development (2007). He is currently seeking professional certifications as an Online Instructor and Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), establishing himself as a credible and ethically-principled fundraiser, while advocating for equitable resources and advancing nondiscriminatory based programs for social change in the (global) marketplace.

Ernie currently serves as a board member for DePaul University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies and the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club, while working in similar capacities with other entities as Loyola University Black Alumni Board and Voice of the People – affordable housing advocates, Healthy Schools Campaign, Men Run Deez Streets, and his parish, the Faith Community of St. Sabina.