

NEWLINK GENETICS CORP

Form 424B5

September 05, 2013

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Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)

Registration No. 333-185721

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

(To Prospectus dated January 4, 2013)

Up to \$60,000,000 of Shares of
Common Stock

We have entered into a sales agreement with Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. relating to shares of our common stock offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. In accordance with the terms of the sales agreement, we may offer and sell shares of our common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, having an aggregate offering price of up to \$60,000,000 from time to time through Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., acting as agent.

Our common stock is listed on The NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "NLNK". The last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market on September 4, 2013 was \$17.53 per share.

Sales of our common stock, if any, under this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may be made in sales deemed to be "at-the-market" equity offerings as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, including sales made directly on or through The NASDAQ Global Market, the existing trading market for our common stock, sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange or otherwise, in negotiated transactions at market prices prevailing at the time of sale or at prices related to such prevailing market prices, and/or any other method permitted by law. Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will use commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf all of the shares of common stock requested to be sold by us, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices, on mutually agreed terms between Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. and us. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in any escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be entitled to compensation at a commission rate of up to 3.0% of the gross sales price per share sold. In connection with its sale of common stock on our behalf, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be deemed to be an "underwriter" within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation of Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts.

Investing in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. Please read "Risk Factors" beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement, page 10 of the accompanying prospectus, and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Prospectus Supplement dated September 5, 2013

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

NewLink Genetics® and HyperAcute® are registered trademarks of NewLink Genetics Corporation. This prospectus supplement may also include other registered and unregistered trademarks of NewLink Genetics Corporation and other persons. Except where the context requires otherwise, in this prospectus supplement “Company,” “NewLink,” “we,” “us,” “our”, “ours” and similar references refer to NewLink Genetics Corporation and its consolidated subsidiary. Registered trademarks and tradenames will be accompanied by the “®” designation only on their first reference. All trademarks, service marks and trade names included or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus are the properties of their respective owners.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are part of a “shelf” registration statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-185721) that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, on December 28, 2012, and that was declared effective by the SEC on January 4, 2013. This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the terms of this offering of our common stock and adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus. The second part, the accompanying prospectus, provides more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined. To the extent there is a conflict between the information contained in this prospectus supplement and the information contained in the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate to the offering of shares of our common stock. Before buying any of shares of common stock offered hereby, we urge you to carefully read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, together with the information incorporated herein by reference as described under the headings “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference.” These documents contain important information that you should consider when making your investment decision. This prospectus supplement contains information about the common stock offered hereby and may add, update or change information in the accompanying prospectus.

You should rely only on the information that we have provided or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not, and Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. has not, authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it.

We are not making offers to sell or solicitations to buy our common stock in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making that offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation. You should assume that the information in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus or any related free writing prospectus is accurate only as of the date on the front of the document and that any information that we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any related free writing prospectus, or any sale of a security.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus contain summaries of certain provisions contained in some of the documents described herein, but reference is made to the actual documents for complete information. All of the summaries are qualified in their entirety by the actual documents. Copies of some of the documents referred to herein have been or will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or as exhibits to documents incorporated by reference herein, and you may obtain copies of those documents as described below under the headings “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference.”

We further note that the representations, warranties and covenants made by us in any agreement that is filed as an exhibit to any document that is incorporated by reference into the accompanying prospectus were made solely for the benefit of the parties to such agreement, including, in some cases, for the purpose of allocating risk among the parties to such agreements, and should not be deemed to be a representation, warranty or covenant to you. Moreover, such representations, warranties or covenants were accurate only as of the date when made. Accordingly, such representations, warranties and covenants should not be relied on as accurately representing the current state of our affairs.

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PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

The following summary of our business highlights some of the information contained elsewhere in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement. Because this is only a summary, however, it does not contain all of the information that may be important to you. You should carefully read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, which are described under “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference” and “Where You Can Find More Information” in this prospectus supplement. You should also carefully consider the matters discussed in the section in this prospectus supplement entitled “Risk Factors,” in the accompanying prospectus and in other periodic reports incorporated by reference herein. All references in this prospectus supplement to “\$” are to U.S. dollars.

Overview

We are a biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering, developing and commercializing novel immunotherapeutic products to improve treatment options for patients with cancer. Our portfolio includes biologic and small-molecule immunotherapy product candidates intended to treat a wide range of oncology indications. NewLink's product candidates are designed to harness multiple components of the immune system to combat cancer without significant incremental toxicity, either as a monotherapy or in combination with other treatment regimens.

Our HyperAcute product candidates are based on our proprietary HyperAcute immunotherapy technology, which is designed to stimulate the human immune system. Our lead product candidate, HyperAcute Pancreas cancer immunotherapy (algenpantucel-L), or HyperAcute Pancreas, is being studied in two Phase 3 clinical trials. We are also conducting small-molecule based research and development with an aim to produce new drugs capable of breaking the immune system's tolerance to cancer through inhibition of the indoleamine-(2,3)-dioxygenase, or IDO, pathway. We are currently studying our lead IDO pathway inhibitor product candidate in multiple Phase 2 studies in breast cancer and prostate cancer.

Company Information

We were incorporated in Delaware on June 4, 1999 and commenced operations on that date. Our principal executive office is located at 2503 South Loop Drive, Ames, Iowa 50010 and our telephone number is (515) 296-5555. Our website address is www.linkp.com. The information contained on, or that can be accessed through, our website is not part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We have included our website address as an inactive textual reference only.

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THE OFFERING

Common stock offered by us pursuant to this prospectus supplement: Shares of common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$60,000,000.

Manner of offering: "At the market" offering made from time to time through our sales agent, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. See "Plan of Distribution" beginning on page S-9 of this prospectus supplement.

Use of Proceeds: We currently intend to use the net proceeds of this offering for general corporate purposes, including regulatory, clinical trial, research and development, pre-commercial, general and administrative and manufacturing expenses. See "Use of Proceeds" on page S-5.

Risk Factors: An investment in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. See the information contained in or incorporated by reference under "Risk Factors" beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement, as well as the other information included in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

NASDAQ Global Market Symbol: Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "NLNK."

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RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. Before you make a decision to invest in our securities, you should consider carefully the risks described in the section entitled "Risk Factors" contained in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed with the SEC, as well as any amendment or update thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC or in any Current Report on Form 8-K we may file. If any of these risks actually occur, our business, operating results, prospects or financial condition could be materially and adversely affected. This could cause the trading price of our securities to decline and you may lose part or all of your investment. Moreover, the risks described are not the only ones that we face. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business, operating results, prospects or financial condition.

Risks Related to this Offering

We have broad discretion in the use of the net proceeds of this offering and, despite our efforts, we may use the proceeds in a manner that does not improve our operating results or increase the value of your investment.

We currently anticipate that the net proceeds from the sale of our common stock will be used primarily for general corporate purposes, including regulatory, clinical trial, research and development, pre-commercial, general and administrative and manufacturing expenses. However, we have not determined the specific allocation of the net proceeds among these potential uses. Our management will have broad discretion over the use and investment of the net proceeds of this offering, and, accordingly, investors in this offering will need to rely upon the judgment of our management with respect to the use of proceeds, with only limited information concerning our specific intentions. These proceeds could be applied in ways that do not improve our operating results or increase the value of your investment. Please see the section entitled "Use of Proceeds" on page S-5 for further information.

If you purchase the common stock sold in this offering, you will experience immediate dilution as a result of this offering and future equity issuances.

Because the price per share of our common stock being offered may be higher than the book value per share of our common stock, you may suffer immediate substantial dilution in the net tangible book value of the common stock you purchase in this offering. See the section entitled "Dilution" below for a more detailed discussion of the dilution you will incur if you purchase common stock in this offering.

The issuance of additional shares of our common stock could be dilutive to stockholders if they do not invest in future offerings. Moreover, to the extent that we issue options or warrants to purchase, or securities convertible into or exchangeable for, shares of our common stock in the future and those options, warrants or other securities are exercised, converted or exchanged, stockholders may experience further dilution.

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FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein contain “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act. These statements relate to future events or to our future operating or financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about:

- our plans to develop and commercialize our product candidates;
- our ongoing and planned preclinical studies and clinical trials, including the timing for completion of enrollment and outcome of our Phase 3 clinical trial for our algenpantucel-L cancer immunotherapy;
- the timing of release of data from ongoing clinical studies;
- the timing of and our ability to obtain and maintain regulatory approvals for our product candidates;
- the clinical utility of our products;
- our plans to leverage our existing technologies to discover and develop additional product candidates;
- our ability to quickly and efficiently identify and develop product candidates;
- our commercialization, marketing and manufacturing capabilities and strategy;
- our intellectual property position;
- the potential benefits of strategic collaboration agreements and our ability to enter into strategic arrangements; and
- our estimates regarding expenses, future revenues, capital requirements and needs for additional financing.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as “may,” “will,” “should,” “could,” “would,” “expect,” “plans,” “anticipates,” “believes,” “estimates,” “projects,” “predicts,” “potential” and similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events, are based on assumptions and are subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss in greater detail, and incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement in their entirety, many of these risks under the heading “Risk Factors” contained in any free writing prospectus we may authorize for use in connection with a specific offering, and in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in our most recent quarterly report on Form 10-Q, as well as any amendments thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement. Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. Thus, you should not assume that our silence over time means that actual events are bearing out as expressed or implied in such forward-looking statements. You should read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, together with the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as described in any free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you, we currently intend to use the net proceeds of this offering for general corporate purposes, including regulatory, clinical trial, research and development, pre-commercial, general and administrative and manufacturing expenses. The amounts and timing of these expenditures will depend on a number of factors, such as the timing and progress of our research and development efforts, the timing and progress of any partnering efforts, technological advances and the competitive environment for our product candidates. As of the date of this prospectus supplement, we cannot specify with certainty all of the particular uses for the net proceeds to us from this offering. Accordingly, our management will have broad discretion in the application of these proceeds. Pending these uses, we will invest the net proceeds in investment-grade, interest-bearing securities.

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If you invest in our common stock in this offering, your ownership interest will be diluted to the extent of the difference between the public offering price per share and our pro forma net tangible book value per share after this offering. We calculate net tangible book value per share by dividing our net tangible book value, which is tangible assets less total liabilities, by the number of outstanding shares of our common stock.

Our net tangible book value as of June 30, 2013 was approximately \$54.4 million, or \$2.12 per share. After giving effect to the sale by us of an aggregate of \$60,000,000 in shares of common stock in this offering at an assumed offering price of \$17.53 per share, which was the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market on September 4, 2013, and after deducting commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us, our as adjusted net tangible book value as of June 30, 2013 would have been approximately \$112.4 million, or \$3.86 per share of common stock. This represents an immediate increase in the net tangible book value of \$1.74 per share to our existing stockholders and an immediate dilution in the net tangible book value of \$13.67 per share of common stock to new investors purchasing common stock in this offering. The following table illustrates this calculation on a per share basis:

Assumed public offering price per share		\$ 17.53
Net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2013	\$ 2.12	
Increase in net tangible book value per share after this offering	\$ 1.74	
As adjusted net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2013, after giving effect to this offering		\$ 3.86
Dilution per share to new investors in this offering		\$ 13.67

The table above assumes for illustrative purposes that an aggregate of 3,422,703 shares of our common stock are sold at a price of \$17.53 per share, which was the last reported sale price of our common stock on The Nasdaq Global Market on September 4, 2013. The shares sold in this offering, if any, will be sold from time to time at various prices. An increase of \$0.50 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price of \$17.53 per share shown in the table above, assuming all of our common stock in the aggregate amount of \$60,000,000 is sold at that price, would increase our adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering to \$3.87 per share and would increase the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors in this offering to \$14.16 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us. A decrease of \$0.50 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price of \$17.53 per share shown in the table above, assuming all of our common stock in the gross aggregate amount of \$60,000,000 is sold at that price, would decrease our adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering to \$3.85 per share and would decrease the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors in this offering to \$13.18 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us. This information is supplied for illustrative purposes only.

The information and table above are based on 25,700,286 shares of our common stock outstanding as of June 30, 2013, and excludes, as of June 30, 2013:

- 4,476,177 shares issuable upon the exercise of outstanding stock options granted under our equity incentive plans at a weighted-average exercise price of \$5.78 per share;
- 968,611 shares available for grant under our 2009 Equity Incentive Plan and 2010 Non-Employee Directors' Stock Award Plan; and
- 332,250 shares available for sale under our 2010 Employee Stock Purchase Plan.

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PRICE RANGE OF OUR COMMON STOCK

Our common stock has been quoted on The NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "NLNK" since our initial public offering on November 11, 2011. The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, the reported high and low closing sales price per share of our common stock as reported by The NASDAQ Global Market for the periods indicated:

Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2013	High	Low
First Quarter	\$12.70	\$11.40
Second Quarter	\$22.56	\$11.27
Third Quarter (through September 4, 2013)	\$20.16	\$17.04
Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2012	High	Low
First Quarter	\$10.17	\$6.48
Second Quarter	\$17.69	\$8.76
Third Quarter	\$16.50	\$11.27
Fourth Quarter	\$16.09	\$10.84
Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2011	High	Low
Fourth Quarter (beginning November 11, 2011)	\$7.18	\$6.37

On September 4, 2013, the closing price of our common stock as reported by The NASDAQ Global Market was \$17.53 per share. As of September 4, 2013, there were approximately 175 stockholders of record of our common stock. This does not include the number of persons whose stock is held in nominee or "street name" accounts through brokers.

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DIVIDEND POLICY

We have never paid cash dividends. We do not expect to declare or pay any cash dividends on our common stock in the near future. We intend to retain all earnings, if any, to invest in our operations. The payment of future dividends is within the discretion of our board of directors and will depend upon our future earnings, if any, our capital requirements, financial condition and other relevant factors.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We have entered into a Controlled Equity OfferingSM Sales Agreement with Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. (Cantor) under which we may offer and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sales price of up to \$60,000,000 from time to time through Cantor, acting as agent. The Sales Agreement has been filed as an exhibit to a report filed under the Exchange Act and incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement.

Upon delivery of a placement notice and subject to the terms and conditions of the Sales Agreement, Cantor may sell our common stock by any method permitted by law deemed to be an “at-the-market” offering as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act, including sales made directly on the NASDAQ Global Market, on any other existing trading market for our common stock or to or through a market maker. Cantor may also sell our common stock by any other method permitted by law, including in privately negotiated transactions. We may instruct Cantor not to sell common stock if the sales cannot be effected at or above the price designated by us from time to time. We or Cantor may suspend the offering of common stock upon notice and subject to other conditions.

We will pay Cantor commissions for its services in acting as agent in the sale of common stock. Cantor will be entitled to compensation at a commission rate of up to 3.0% of the gross sales price per share sold. Because there is no minimum offering amount required as a condition to close this offering, the actual total public offering amount, commissions and proceeds to us, if any, are not determinable at this time. We have also agreed to reimburse Cantor for certain specified expenses, including the fees and disbursements of its legal counsel in an amount not to exceed \$50,000. We estimate that the total expenses for the offering, excluding compensation and reimbursements payable to Cantor under the terms of the Sales Agreement, will be approximately \$150,000.

Settlement for sales of common stock will occur on the third business day following the date on which any sales are made, or on some other date that is agreed upon by us and Cantor in connection with a particular transaction, in return for payment of the net proceeds to us. Sales of our common stock as contemplated in this prospectus will be settled through the facilities of The Depository Trust Company or by such other means as we and Cantor may agree upon. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

Cantor will use its commercially reasonable efforts, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices, to solicit offers to purchase the common stock shares under the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the Sales Agreement. Cantor will act as sales agent on a commercially reasonable efforts basis. In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, Cantor will be deemed to be an “underwriter” within the meaning of the Securities Act and the compensation of Cantor will be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to Cantor against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

The offering pursuant to the Sales Agreement will terminate upon the earlier of (i) the sale of all shares of our common stock subject to the Sales Agreement, or (ii) termination of the Sales Agreement as permitted therein. We and Cantor may each terminate the sales agreement at any time upon ten days prior notice.

Cantor and its affiliates may in the future provide various investment banking, commercial banking and other financial services for us and our affiliates, for which services they may in the future receive customary fees. To the extent required by Regulation M, Cantor will not engage in any market making activities involving our common stock while the offering is ongoing under this prospectus supplement.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in electronic format may be made available on a website maintained by Cantor and Cantor may distribute this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus electronically.

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LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the shares of common stock offered in this prospectus supplement is being passed upon for us by Cooley LLP, Broomfield, Colorado. Cantor is being represented in connection with this offering by Reed Smith LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of NewLink Genetics Corporation and subsidiary (a development stage enterprise) as of December 31, 2012 and 2011, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2012, and for the period from June 4, 1999 (inception) through December 31, 2012, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financing reporting as of December 31, 2012 have been incorporated by reference herein in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

This prospectus supplement is part of the registration statement on Form S-3 we filed with the SEC under the Securities Act and does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus supplement to any of our contracts, agreements or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement or the exhibits to the reports or other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement for a copy of such contract, agreement or other document. Because we are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically. You may also read and copy any document we file at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the Public Reference Room. You can find additional information about the company at our website, <http://www.newlinkgenetics.com>. We have included the SEC's website address and our website address as inactive textual references only. Neither the contents of the SEC's website or our website, nor any other website that may be accessed from such websites, is incorporated in or otherwise considered a part of this prospectus supplement.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" information from other documents that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus supplement. Information in this prospectus supplement supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus supplement, while information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus supplement. We incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the registration statement of which this prospectus supplement is a part the information or documents listed below that we have filed with the SEC (Commission File No. 001-35342):

- our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012, filed with the SEC on March 15, 2013;
 - our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the three-month periods ended March 31, 2013 and June 30, 2013, filed with the SEC on May 8, 2013 and August 8, 2013, respectively;
 - our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 4, 2013, January 18, 2013, January 29, 2013, January 31, 2013, February 5, 2013, February 15, 2013, April 2, 2013, April 4, 2013, April 5, 2013, April 8, 2013, May 14, 2013, May 16, 2013, June 3, 2013, June 5, 2013, August 14, 2013 and September 5, 2013;
- the information specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 referred to above from our definitive proxy statement relating to our 2013 annual meeting of stockholders, which was filed with the SEC on March 27, 2013; and

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the description of our common stock set forth in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on November 8, 2011, including any amendments thereto or reports filed for the purpose of updating this transaction. We also incorporate by reference any future filings (other than current reports furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K and exhibits filed on such form that are related to such items unless such Form 8-K expressly provides to the contrary) made with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act and until we file a post-effective amendment that indicates the termination of the offering of the securities covered by this prospectus supplement and will become a part of this prospectus supplement from the date that such documents are filed with the SEC. Information in such future filings updates and supplements the information provided in this prospectus supplement. Any statements in any such future filings will automatically be deemed to modify and supersede any information in any document we previously filed with the SEC that is incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein by reference to the extent that statements in the later filed document modify or replace such earlier statements. We will furnish without charge to you, on written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents incorporated by reference, including exhibits to these documents. You should direct any requests for documents to Gordon H. Link, Chief Financial Officer, NewLink Genetics Corporation, 2503 South Loop Drive, Ames Iowa 50010, telephone: (515) 296-5555.

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PROSPECTUS
\$150,000,000
Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Debt Securities
Warrants

From time to time, we may offer and sell up to \$150,000,000 of any combination of the securities described in this prospectus, either individually or in combination with other securities. We may also offer common stock or preferred stock upon conversion of debt securities, common stock upon conversion of preferred stock, or common stock, preferred stock or debt securities upon the exercise of warrants.

We will provide the specific terms of these offerings and securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you in connection with these offerings. The prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, as well as the documents incorporated by reference, before buying any of the securities being offered.

Our common stock is listed on The NASDAQ Global Market under the trading symbol "NLNK." On December 26, 2012, the last reported sale price of our common stock was \$11.13 per share. The applicable prospectus supplement will contain information, where applicable, as to other listings, if any, on The NASDAQ Global Market or other securities exchange of the securities covered by the applicable prospectus supplement.

INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES INVOLVES A HIGH DEGREE OF RISK. YOU SHOULD REVIEW CAREFULLY THE RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES DESCRIBED UNDER THE HEADING "RISK FACTORS" CONTAINED IN THE APPLICABLE PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT AND IN ANY FREE WRITING PROSPECTUS WE HAVE AUTHORIZED FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH A SPECIFIC OFFERING, AND UNDER SIMILAR HEADINGS IN THE DOCUMENTS THAT ARE INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE INTO THIS PROSPECTUS AS DESCRIBED ON PAGE 10.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO CONSUMMATE A SALE OF SECURITIES UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

The securities may be sold directly by us to investors, through agents designated from time to time or to or through underwriters or dealers, on a continuous or delayed basis. For additional information on the methods of sale, you should refer to the section entitled "Plan of Distribution" in this prospectus. If any agents or underwriters are involved in the sale of any securities with respect to which this prospectus is being delivered, the names of such agents or underwriters and any applicable fees, commissions, discounts and over-allotment options will be set forth in a prospectus supplement. The price to the public of such securities and the net proceeds we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED IF THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

The date of this prospectus is January 4, 2013.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, utilizing a “shelf” registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may offer and sell shares of our common stock and preferred stock, various series of debt securities and/or warrants to purchase any of such securities, either individually or in combination with other securities, in one or more offerings, up to a total dollar amount of \$150,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer securities under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain more specific information about the terms of that offering. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you that may contain material information relating to these offerings. The prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you may also add, update or change any of the information contained in this prospectus or in the documents that we have incorporated by reference into this prospectus. We urge you to read carefully this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, together with the information incorporated herein by reference as described under the heading “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference,” before buying any of the securities being offered.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate a sale of securities unless it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, along with the information contained in any free writing prospectus we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. This prospectus is an offer to sell only the securities offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so.

The information appearing in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus is accurate only as of the date on the front of the document and any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus, or any sale of a security. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates. This prospectus contains summaries of certain provisions contained in some of the documents described herein, but reference is made to the actual documents for complete information. All of the summaries are qualified in their entirety by the actual documents. Copies of some of the documents referred to herein have been filed, will be filed or will be incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and you may obtain copies of those documents as described below under the section entitled “Where You Can Find More Information.”

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PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and does not contain all of the information that you need to consider in making your investment decision. You should carefully read the entire prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, including the risks of investing in our securities discussed under the heading "Risk Factors" contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You should also carefully read the information incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including our financial statements, and the exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

NewLink Genetics Corporation

Overview

We are a biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering, developing and commercializing novel immunotherapeutic products to improve cancer treatment options for patients and physicians. Our portfolio includes biologic and small-molecule immunotherapy product candidates intended to treat a wide range of oncology indications. Our lead product candidate, HyperAcute Pancreas cancer immunotherapy (algenpantucel-L), or HyperAcute Pancreas, is being studied in a Phase 3 clinical trial in surgically-resected pancreatic cancer patients that is being performed under a Special Protocol Assessment, or SPA, with the United States Food and Drug Administration, or FDA. We initiated this trial based on encouraging Phase 2 data that suggests improvement in both disease-free and overall survival. We have also received Fast Track and Orphan Drug designations from the FDA for this product candidate for the adjuvant treatment of surgically-resected pancreatic cancer. Our additional HyperAcute product candidates in clinical development include our HyperAcute Lung (tergenpumatumucel-L) and our HyperAcute Melanoma. To date, our HyperAcute product candidates have been dosed in more than 300 cancer patients, either as a monotherapy or in combination with other therapies, and have demonstrated a favorable safety profile.

Our HyperAcute product candidates are based on our proprietary HyperAcute immunotherapy technology, which is designed to stimulate the human immune system. Our HyperAcute product candidates use allogeneic cells from previously established cell lines rather than cells derived from the patient. We believe our approach enables a simpler, more consistent and scalable manufacturing process than therapies based on patient specific tissues or cells. Our product candidates are designed with an objective to harness multiple components of the immune system to combat cancer, either as a monotherapy or in combination with current treatment regimens without incremental toxicity. We are also conducting small-molecule based research and development with an aim to produce new drugs capable of breaking the immune system's tolerance to cancer through inhibition of the indoleamine-(2,3)-dioxygenase, or IDO, pathway. We are currently studying our lead IDO pathway inhibitor product candidate, d-1-methyltryptophan or indoximod, in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute, or NCI. We believe that our immunotherapeutic technologies will enable us to discover, develop and commercialize multiple product candidates that can be used either alone or in combination to enhance or potentially replace current therapies.

In addition to oncology products, we have received grants to develop and commercialize vaccines to control infectious disease. This effort leverages HyperAcute immunotherapy technology, which is applicable to enhancing vaccines for influenza and other pathogens.

We are a development stage company and have incurred significant losses since our inception. As of September 30, 2012, we had an accumulated deficit of \$98.5 million. We incurred a net loss of \$17.0 million, \$12.3 million, and \$98.4 million, for the nine months ended September 30, 2012 and 2011, and since inception through September 30, 2012, respectively. We expect our losses to increase over the next several years as we advance into late-stage clinical trials and pursue regulatory approval of our product candidates. In addition, if one or more of our product candidates are approved for marketing, we will incur significant expenses for the initiation of commercialization activities.

On October 19, 2011, our board of directors approved a 2.1-for-one reverse split of the Company's common stock which became effective upon filing of a Certificate of Amendment of the Restated Certificate of

Incorporation with the Secretary of State of Delaware on October 25, 2011. All share and per share amounts have been retroactively restated in the accompanying financial statements and notes for all periods presented.

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Company Information

We were incorporated in Delaware on June 4, 1999 and commenced operations on that date. Our principal executive office is located at 2503 South Loop Drive, Ames, Iowa 50010 and our telephone number is (515) 296-5555. Our website address is www.linkp.com. The information contained on, or that can be accessed through, our website is not part of this prospectus.

NewLink Genetics® and HyperAcute® are registered trademarks of NewLink Genetics Corporation. This prospectus may also include other registered and unregistered trademarks of NewLink Genetics Corporation and other persons. Registered trademarks and tradenames will be accompanied by the "®" designation only on their first reference.

The Securities We May Offer

We may offer shares of our common stock and preferred stock, various series of debt securities and/or warrants to purchase any of such securities, either individually or in combination with other securities, with a total value of up to \$150,000,000 from time to time under this prospectus, together with the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of any offering. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer a type or series of securities under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the securities, including, to the extent applicable:

- 1 designation or classification;
- 1 aggregate principal amount or aggregate offering price;
- 1 maturity date, if applicable;
- 1 original issue discount, if any;
- 1 rates and times of payment of interest or dividends, if any;
- 1 redemption, conversion, exercise, exchange or sinking fund terms, if any;
- 1 ranking;
- 1 restrictive covenants, if any;
- 1 voting or other rights, if any;
- 1 conversion or exchange prices or rates, if any, and, if applicable, any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the conversion or exchange prices or rates and in the securities or other property receivable upon conversion or exchange; and
- 1 material or special U.S. federal income tax considerations, if any.

The applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you may also add, update or change any of the information contained in this prospectus or in the documents we have incorporated by reference. However, no prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus will offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of the effectiveness of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO CONSUMMATE A SALE OF SECURITIES UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

We may sell the securities directly to investors or to or through agents, underwriters or dealers. We, and our agents or underwriters, reserve the right to accept or reject all or part of any proposed purchase of securities. If we do offer securities to or through agents or underwriters, we will include in the applicable prospectus supplement:

- 1 the names of those agents or underwriters;
- 1 applicable fees, discounts and commissions to be paid to them;
- 1 details regarding over-allotment options, if any; and
- 1 the net proceeds to us.

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Common Stock. We may issue shares of our common stock from time to time. The holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any outstanding shares of preferred stock, the holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably such dividends as may be declared by our board of directors out of legally available funds. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of our common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preferences of any outstanding shares of preferred stock. Holders of common stock have no preemptive rights and no right to convert their common stock into any other securities. There are no redemption provisions applicable to our common stock. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the common stock under "Description of Capital Stock-Common Stock." We urge you, however, to read the applicable prospectus supplement (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) related to any common stock being offered.

Preferred Stock. We may issue shares of our preferred stock from time to time, in one or more series. Under our certificate of incorporation, our board of directors has the authority to designate up to 5,000,000 shares of preferred stock, \$0.01 par value per share, in one or more series and to fix the privileges, preferences and rights of each series of preferred stock, any or all of which may be greater than the rights of the common stock. If we sell any new series of preferred stock under this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, our board of directors will determine the designations, voting powers, preferences and rights of the preferred stock being offered, as well as the qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, including dividend rights, conversion rights, preemptive rights, terms of redemption or repurchase, liquidation preferences, sinking fund terms and the number of shares constituting any series or the designation of any series. Preferred stock may be convertible into our common stock or other securities of ours, or may be exchangeable for debt securities. Conversion may be mandatory or at the holder's option and would be at prescribed conversion rates. We will file as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, or will incorporate by reference from reports that we file with the SEC, the form of the certificate of designation that describes the terms of the series of preferred stock that we are offering before the issuance of the related series of preferred stock. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the preferred stock under "Description of Capital Stock-Preferred Stock." We urge you, however, to read the applicable prospectus supplement (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) related to the series of preferred stock being offered, as well as the complete certificate of designation that contains the terms of the applicable series of preferred stock.

Debt Securities. We may issue debt securities from time to time, in one or more series, as either senior or subordinated debt or as senior or subordinated convertible debt. The senior debt securities will rank equally with any other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner described in the instrument governing the debt, to all of our senior indebtedness. Convertible debt securities will be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or our other securities. Conversion may be mandatory or at the holder's option and would be at prescribed conversion rates.

The debt securities will be issued under an indenture that we will enter into with a national banking association or other eligible party, as trustee. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the debt securities under "Description of Debt Securities." We urge you, however, to read the applicable prospectus supplement (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) related to the series of debt securities being offered, as well as the complete indenture and any supplemental indentures that contain the terms of the debt securities. We have filed the form of indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental indentures and forms of debt securities containing the terms of the debt securities being offered will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or will be incorporated by reference from reports that we file with the SEC.

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Warrants. We may issue warrants for the purchase of common stock, preferred stock and/or debt securities in one or more series. We may issue warrants independently or in combination with common stock, preferred stock and/or debt securities. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the warrants under "Description of Warrants." We urge you, however, to read the applicable prospectus supplement (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) related to the particular series of warrants being offered, as well as the form of warrant and/or the warrant agreement and warrant certificate, as applicable, that contain the terms of the warrants. We have filed the forms of the warrant agreements and forms of warrant certificates containing the terms of the warrants that we may offer as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We will file as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, or will incorporate by reference from reports that we file with the SEC, the form of warrant and/or the warrant agreement and warrant certificate, as applicable, that contain the terms of the particular series of warrants we are offering, and any supplemental agreements, before the issuance of such warrants.

Warrants may be issued under a warrant agreement that we enter into with a warrant agent. We will indicate the name and address of the warrant agent, if any, in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of warrants.

RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. Before you make a decision to invest in our securities, you should consider carefully the risks described in the section entitled "Risk Factors" contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed with the SEC, as well as any amendment or update thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC or in any Current Report on Form 8-K we may file. If any of these risks actually occur, our business, operating results, prospects or financial condition could be materially and adversely affected. This could cause the trading price of our securities to decline and you may lose part or all of your investment. Moreover, the risks described are not the only ones that we face. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business, operating results, prospects or financial condition.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference contain "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act. These statements relate to future events or to our future operating or financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about:

- future research and development activities, including the scope, timing, initiation and completion of clinical trials, and status of product development;
- the size and timing of expenditures and whether there are unanticipated expenditures;
- our requirements for additional capital;
- plans for regulatory filings;
- the timing of regulatory submissions and the timing, scope and anticipated outcome of related regulatory actions;
- our current and potential future collaborators' ability to market, commercialize and achieve market acceptance for our product candidates or products that we may develop;
- our ability to maintain our collaborative arrangements and to establish and maintain potential new collaborative arrangements for the development and commercialization of our current or future product candidates;

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- our ability to protect our intellectual property and operate our business without infringing upon the intellectual property rights of others;
- the implementation of our corporate strategy;
- our estimates regarding the sufficiency of our cash resources and our use of the net proceeds from this offering; and
- future financial performance.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as "may," "will," "should," "could," "would," "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "believes," "estimates," "projects," "predicts," "potential" and similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events, are based on assumptions and are subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss in greater detail, and incorporate by reference into this prospectus in their entirety, many of these risks under the heading "Risk Factors" contained in the applicable prospectus supplement, in any free writing prospectus we may authorize for use in connection with a specific offering, and in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in our most recent quarterly report on Form 10-Q, as well as any amendments thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement. Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. Thus, you should not assume that our silence over time means that actual events are bearing out as expressed or implied in such forward-looking statements. You should read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement, together with the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

FINANCIAL RATIOS

Our net losses were inadequate to cover fixed charges for each of the periods presented. Accordingly, the following table sets forth the dollar amount of the coverage deficiency. Because of the deficiency, ratio information is not applicable. Amounts shown are in thousands.

	Year Ended December 31,					Nine Months Ended
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	September 30, 2012
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges(1)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coverage deficiency	\$ (7,484)	\$ (8,738)	\$ (9,899)	\$ (16,031)	\$ (17,845)	\$ (16,799)

(1) The ratio of earnings to fixed charges was computed by dividing earnings by fixed charges. For this purpose, earnings consist of net loss before fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of estimated interest expense on outstanding lease liabilities and amortization of debt discount and accrual of interest on outstanding debt plus one-third (the proportion deemed representative of the interest factor) of rent expense.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as described in any applicable prospectus supplement or in any free writing prospectus we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, we currently intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities under this prospectus, if any, for working capital and general corporate purposes, including research and development expenses and general and administrative expenses. We will set forth in the prospectus supplement applicable to a specific offering our intended use for the net proceeds received from the sale of any securities in that offering.

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The amounts and timing of our use of the net proceeds from any offerings hereunder will depend on a number of factors, such as the timing and progress of our research and development efforts, the timing and progress of any partnering and collaboration efforts and technological advances. As of the date of this prospectus, we cannot specify with certainty all of the particular uses for the net proceeds to us from offerings hereunder. Accordingly, our management will have broad discretion in the timing and application of these proceeds. Pending application of the net proceeds as described above, we intend to temporarily invest the proceeds in short-term, interest-bearing instruments.

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

General

As of the date of this prospectus, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, or the Restated Certificate, authorizes us to issue 38,833,334 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, and 5,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.01 per share. As of December 21, 2012, 20,955,150 shares of common stock were outstanding and no shares of preferred stock were outstanding. On October 25, 2011, we effected a reverse stock split of our common stock, whereby each 2.1 outstanding shares of our common stock were combined into one share of our common stock. All share numbers and prices per share in this prospectus, other than descriptions of historical issuances, reflect the consummation of such reverse stock split.

The following summary description of our capital stock is based on the provisions of our Restated Certificate, our amended and restated bylaws, or the Bylaws, and applicable provisions of the Delaware General Corporation Law. This information may not be complete in all respects and is qualified entirely by reference to the applicable provisions of our Restated Certificate, our Bylaws and the Delaware General Corporation Law. For information on how to obtain copies of our Restated Certificate and Bylaws, which are exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, see "Where You Can Find More Information."

Common Stock

Voting Rights. Each holder of common stock is entitled to one vote for each share on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders, including the election of directors. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and amended and restated bylaws do not provide for cumulative voting rights. Because of this, the holders of a majority of the shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors can elect all of the directors standing for election, if they should so choose.

Dividends. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any then outstanding preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled to receive dividends, if any, as may be declared from time to time by our Board of Directors out of legally available funds.

Liquidation. In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of common stock will be entitled to share ratably in the net assets legally available for distribution to stockholders after the payment of all of our debts and other liabilities and the satisfaction of any liquidation preference granted to the holders of any then outstanding shares of preferred stock.

Rights and Preferences. Holders of common stock have no preemptive, conversion, subscription or other rights, and there are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to the common stock. The rights, preferences and privileges of the holders of common stock are subject to and may be adversely affected by, the rights of the holders of shares of any series of preferred stock that we may designate in the future.

Fully paid and Nonassessable. All of our outstanding shares of common stock are, and the shares of common stock to be issued in this offering will be, fully paid and nonassessable.

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Preferred Stock

Pursuant to our Restated Certificate, our board of directors has the authority, without further action by our stockholders, to issue up to 5,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series, to establish from time to time the number of shares to be included in each such series, and to fix the designations, powers, preferences, privileges and relative participating, optional or special rights and the qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, including dividend rights, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption and liquidation preferences, any or all of which may be greater than the rights of the common stock. The board of directors, without stockholder approval, can issue preferred stock with voting, conversion or other rights that could adversely affect the voting power and other rights of the holders of common stock. Preferred stock could thus be issued quickly with terms calculated to delay or prevent a change in control of our company or make removal of management more difficult. Additionally, the issuance of preferred stock may have the effect of decreasing the market price of the common stock and may adversely affect the voting power of holders of common stock and reduce the likelihood that common stockholders will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation.

Our board of directors will fix the rights, preferences, privileges, qualifications and restrictions of the preferred stock of each series that we sell under this prospectus and applicable prospectus supplements in the certificate of designation relating to that series. We will incorporate by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part the form of any certificate of designation that describes the terms of the series of preferred stock we are offering before the issuance of the related series of preferred stock. This description will include:

- the title and stated value;
- the number of shares we are offering;
- the liquidation preference per share;
- the purchase price per share;
- the dividend rate per share, dividend period and payment dates and method of calculation for dividends;
- whether dividends will be cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends will accumulate;
- our right, if any, to defer payment of dividends and the maximum length of any such deferral period;
- the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any;
- the provisions for a sinking fund, if any;
- the provisions for redemption or repurchase, if applicable, and any restrictions on our ability to exercise those redemption and repurchase rights;
- any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange or market;
- whether the preferred stock will be convertible into our common stock or other securities of ours, including warrants, and, if applicable, the conversion period, the conversion price, or how it will be calculated, and under what circumstances it may be adjusted;
- whether the preferred stock will be exchangeable for debt securities, and, if applicable, the exchange period, the exchange price, or how it will be calculated, and under what circumstances it may be adjusted;
- voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock;
- preemption rights, if any;
- restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;
- a discussion of any material or special United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;
- the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights if we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs;
- any limitations on issuances of any class or series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the series of preferred stock being issued as to dividend rights and rights if we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs; and
- any other specific terms, rights, preferences, privileges, qualifications or restrictions of the preferred stock.

When we issue shares of preferred stock under this prospectus, the shares will be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

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Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the preferred stock will rank, with respect to dividends and upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up:

- senior to all classes or series of our common stock and to all of our equity securities ranking junior to the preferred stock;
- on a parity with all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank on a parity with the preferred stock; and
- junior to all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank senior to the preferred stock.

The term "equity securities" does not include convertible debt securities.

The General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, the state of our incorporation, provides that the holders of preferred stock will have the right to vote separately as a class on any proposal involving fundamental changes in the rights of holders of that preferred stock. This right is in addition to any voting rights that may be provided for in the applicable certificate of designation.

Stock Options

As of December 21, 2012, there were 4,731,951 shares of common stock reserved for issuance under our employee benefit plans. As of December 21, 2012, there were 3,754,909 options to purchase shares of common stock outstanding under our employee benefit plans.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Delaware Law and Our Charter Documents

Charter Documents. Our Restated Certificate and Bylaws contain provisions that could discourage potential takeover attempts and that could delay or prevent changes in control or our management, which could adversely affect the market place of our common stock.

Among other things, our Restated Certificate and our amended and restated bylaws provide for the following.

Our board of directors to issue up to 5,000,000 shares of preferred stock, with any rights, preferences and privileges as they may designate, including the right to approve an acquisition or other change in our control.

The personal liability for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty of our directors to NewLink and our stockholders is limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Delaware General Corporation Law. This provision may reduce the likelihood of derivative litigation against directors and may discourage or deter stockholders or management from bringing a lawsuit against directors for breach of their fiduciary duty.

All stockholder action must be effected at a meeting of stockholders and not by written consent. In addition, special meetings of stockholders may only be called by the board of directors pursuant to a resolution adopted by a majority of the total number of authorized directors, the chairman of the board of directors, or the chief executive officer.

Finally, our bylaws establish procedures, including requirements for advance written notice and the form and content for stockholder notices, with regard to the nomination of candidates for election as directors and stockholder proposals. These provisions may delay or preclude stockholders from bringing matters before a meeting of stockholders or from making nominations for directors at a meeting of stockholders, which could delay or deter takeover attempts or changes in management.

The board of directors is divided into three classes of directors, with each class as nearly equal in number as possible, serving staggered three-year terms. As a result, approximately one-third of the board of directors will be elected each year. The classified board provision could have the effect of discouraging a third party from making a tender offer or attempting to obtain control of us. In addition, the classified board provision could delay stockholders who do not agree with the policies of the board of directors from removing a majority of the board of directors for two years. Our Restated Certificate does not provide for cumulative voting for our directors. The absence of cumulative voting may make it more difficult for stockholders owning less than a majority of our stock to elect any directors to our board of directors. In addition, directors may be removed only for cause, and removal requires the affirmative vote of the holders of 66 2/3% of the company's voting stock.

Subject to the rights of the holders of any outstanding series of our preferred stock, all vacancies, including newly created directorships, may, except as otherwise required by law, be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of our

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directors then in office, even if less than a quorum. In addition, the authorized number of directors may be changed only by resolution of our board of directors.

Stockholders are permitted to amend our amended and restated bylaws only upon receiving at least 66 2/3% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of all outstanding shares then entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

Delaware Law. We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. Section 203 generally prohibits a public Delaware corporation such as us from engaging in a "business combination" with an "interested stockholder" for a period of three years following the time that the stockholder became an interested stockholder, unless:

- prior to the time the stockholder became an interested stockholder, the board of directors of the corporation approved either the business combination or the transaction which resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder;
- upon consummation of the transaction which resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owned at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation outstanding at the time the transaction commenced, excluding for purposes of determining the number of shares outstanding (a) shares owned by persons who are directors and also officers and (b) employee stock plans in which employee participants do not have the right to determine confidentially whether shares held subject to the plan will be tendered in a tender or exchange offer; or
- at or subsequent to the time the stockholder became an interested stockholder, the business combination is approved by the board and authorized at an annual or special meeting of stockholders, and not by written consent, by the affirmative vote of at least 66 2/3% of the outstanding voting stock which is not owned by the interested stockholder.
- any merger or consolidation involving the corporation and the interested stockholder;
- any sale, lease, exchange, mortgage, pledge, transfer or other disposition (in one transaction or a series of transactions) involving the interested stockholder of 10% or more of the assets of the corporation (or its majority-owned subsidiary);
- subject to exceptions, any transaction that results in the issuance or transfer by the corporation of any stock of the corporation to the interested stockholder;
- subject to exceptions, any transaction involving the corporation that has the effect, directly or indirectly, of increasing the proportionate share of the stock or any class or series of the corporation beneficially owned by the interested stockholder; and
- the receipt by the interested stockholder of the benefit, directly or indirectly (except proportionately as a stockholder of such corporation), of any loans, advances, guarantees, pledges or other financial benefits, other than certain benefits set forth in Section 203, provided by or through the corporation.

In general, Section 203 defines an interested stockholder as any entity or person beneficially owning 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation and any entity or person that is an affiliate or associate of such entity or person.

Although Section 203 permits us to elect not to be governed by its provisions, we have not made this election. As a result of the application of Section 203, potential acquirers of NewLink may be discouraged from attempting to effect an acquisition transaction with us, thereby possibly depriving holders of our securities of certain opportunities to sell or otherwise dispose of such securities at above-market prices pursuant to such transactions.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for the common stock is Computershare. The transfer agent for any series of preferred stock that we may offer under this prospectus will be named and described in the prospectus supplement for that series.

Listing on the NASDAQ Global Market

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "NLNK."

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DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

We may issue debt securities from time to time, in one or more series, as either senior or subordinated debt or as senior or subordinated convertible debt. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any debt securities that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any debt securities offered under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below. Unless the context requires otherwise, whenever we refer to the indenture, we also are referring to any supplemental indentures that specify the terms of a particular series of debt securities.

We will issue the debt securities under the indenture that we will enter into with the trustee named in the indenture. The indenture will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act. We have filed the form of indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental indentures and forms of debt securities containing the terms of the debt securities being offered will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or will be incorporated by reference from reports that we file with the SEC.

The following summary of material provisions of the debt securities and the indenture is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, all of the provisions of the indenture applicable to a particular series of debt securities. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplements and any related free writing prospectuses related to the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus, as well as the complete indenture that contains the terms of the debt securities.

General

The indenture does not limit the amount of debt securities that we may issue. It provides that we may issue debt securities up to the principal amount that we may authorize and may be in any currency or currency unit that we may designate. Except for the limitations on consolidation, merger and sale of all or substantially all of our assets contained in the indenture, the terms of the indenture do not contain any covenants or other provisions designed to give holders of any debt securities protection against changes in our operations, financial condition or transactions involving us.

We may issue the debt securities issued under the indenture as “discount securities,” which means they may be sold at a discount below their stated principal amount. These debt securities, as well as other debt securities that are not issued at a discount, may be issued with “original issue discount,” or OID, for U.S. federal income tax purposes because of interest payment and other characteristics or terms of the debt securities. Material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to debt securities issued with OID will be described in more detail in any applicable prospectus supplement.

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of debt securities being offered, including:

- the title of the series of debt securities;
- any limit upon the aggregate principal amount that may be issued;
 - the maturity date or dates;
- the form of the debt securities of the series;
- the applicability of any guarantees;
- whether or not the debt securities will be secured or unsecured, and the terms of any secured debt;
- whether the debt securities rank as senior debt, senior subordinated debt, subordinated debt or any combination thereof, and the terms of any subordination;
- if the price (expressed as a percentage of the aggregate principal amount thereof) at which such debt securities will be issued is a price other than the principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount thereof payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity thereof, or if applicable, the portion of the principal amount of such debt securities that is convertible into another security or the method by which any such portion shall be determined;

the interest rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, or the method for determining the rate and the date interest will begin to accrue, the dates interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payment dates or the method for determining such dates;

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our right, if any, to defer payment of interest and the maximum length of any such deferral period;
if applicable, the date or dates after which, or the period or periods during which, and the price or prices at which, we may, at our option, redeem the series of debt securities pursuant to any optional or provisional redemption provisions and the terms of those redemption provisions;
the date or dates, if any, on which, and the price or prices at which we are obligated, pursuant to any mandatory sinking fund or analogous fund provisions or otherwise, to redeem, or at the holder's option to purchase, the series of debt securities and the currency or currency unit in which the debt securities are payable;
the denominations in which we will issue the series of debt securities, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof;
any and all terms, if applicable, relating to any auction or remarketing of the debt securities of that series and any security for our obligations with respect to such debt securities and any other terms which may be advisable in connection with the marketing of debt securities of that series;
whether the debt securities of the series shall be issued in whole or in part in the form of a global security or securities; the terms and conditions, if any, upon which such global security or securities may be exchanged in whole or in part for other individual securities; and the depositary for such global security or securities;
if applicable, the provisions relating to conversion or exchange of any debt securities of the series and the terms and conditions upon which such debt securities will be so convertible or exchangeable, including the conversion or exchange price, as applicable, or how it will be calculated and may be adjusted, any mandatory or optional (at our option or the holders' option) conversion or exchange features, the applicable conversion or exchange period and the manner of settlement for any conversion or exchange;
if other than the full principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount of debt securities of the series which shall be payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity thereof;
additions to or changes in the covenants applicable to the particular debt securities being issued, including, among others, the consolidation, merger or sale covenant;
additions to or changes in the Events of Default with respect to the securities and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders to declare the principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, with respect to such securities to be due and payable;
additions to or changes in or deletions of the provisions relating to covenant defeasance and legal defeasance;
additions to or changes in the provisions relating to satisfaction and discharge of the indenture;
additions to or changes in the provisions relating to the modification of the indenture both with and without the consent of holders of debt securities issued under the indenture;
the currency of payment of debt securities if other than U.S. dollars and the manner of determining the equivalent amount in U.S. dollars;
whether interest will be payable in cash or additional debt securities at our or the holders' option and the terms and conditions upon which the election may be made;
the terms and conditions, if any, upon which we will pay amounts in addition to the stated interest, premium, if any and principal amounts of the debt securities of the series to any holder that is not a "United States person" for federal tax purposes;
any restrictions on transfer, sale or assignment of the debt securities of the series; and
any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the debt securities, any other additions or changes in the provisions of the indenture, and any terms that may be required by us or advisable under applicable laws or regulations.

Conversion or Exchange Rights

We will set forth in the prospectus supplement the terms on which a series of debt securities may be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or our other securities. We will include provisions as to settlement upon conversion or exchange and whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option. We may include provisions pursuant to which the number of shares of our common stock or our other securities that the holders of the series of debt securities receive would be subject to adjustment.

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Consolidation, Merger or Sale

Unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, the indenture will not contain any covenant that restricts our ability to merge or consolidate, or sell, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of our assets as an entirety or substantially as an entirety. However, any successor to or acquirer of such assets (other than a subsidiary of ours) must assume all of our obligations under the indenture or the debt securities, as appropriate.

Events of Default under the Indenture

Unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, the following are events of default under the indenture with respect to any series of debt securities that we may issue:

- if we fail to pay any installment of interest on any series of debt securities, as and when the same shall become due and payable, and such default continues for a period of 90 days; provided, however, that a valid extension of an interest payment period by us in accordance with the terms of any indenture supplemental thereto shall not constitute a default in the payment of interest for this purpose;
- if we fail to pay the principal of, or premium, if any, on any series of debt securities as and when the same shall become due and payable whether at maturity, upon redemption, by declaration or otherwise, or in any payment required by any sinking or analogous fund established with respect to such series; provided, however, that a valid extension of the maturity of such debt securities in accordance with the terms of any indenture supplemental thereto shall not constitute a default in the payment of principal or premium, if any;
- if we fail to observe or perform any other covenant or agreement contained in the debt securities or the indenture, other than a covenant specifically relating to another series of debt securities, and our failure continues for 90 days after we receive written notice of such failure, requiring the same to be remedied and stating that such is a notice of default thereunder, from the trustee or holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the applicable series; and
- if specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

If an event of default with respect to debt securities of any series occurs and is continuing, other than an event of default specified in the last bullet point above, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series, by notice to us in writing, and to the trustee if notice is given by such holders, may declare the unpaid principal of, premium, if any, and accrued interest, if any, due and payable immediately. If an event of default specified in the last bullet point above occurs with respect to us, the principal amount of and accrued interest, if any, of each issue of debt securities then outstanding shall be due and payable without any notice or other action on the part of the trustee or any holder.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series may waive any default or event of default with respect to the series and its consequences, except defaults or events of default regarding payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, unless we have cured the default or event of default in accordance with the indenture. Any waiver shall cure the default or event of default.

Subject to the terms of the indenture, if an event of default under an indenture shall occur and be continuing, the trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under such indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of the applicable series of debt securities, unless such holders have offered the trustee reasonable indemnity. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series, provided that:

- the direction so given by the holder is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture; and
- subject to its duties under the Trust Indenture Act, the trustee need not take any action that might involve it in personal liability or might be unduly prejudicial to the holders not involved in the proceeding.

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A holder of the debt securities of any series will have the right to institute a proceeding under the indenture or to appoint a receiver or trustee, or to seek other remedies only if:

- the holder has given written notice to the trustee of a continuing event of default with respect to that series;
- the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request;

- such holders have offered to the trustee indemnity satisfactory to it against the costs, expenses and liabilities to be incurred by the trustee in compliance with the request; and

the trustee does not institute the proceeding, and does not receive from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series other conflicting directions within 90 days after the notice, request and offer.

These limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of debt securities if we default in the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities.

We will periodically file statements with the trustee regarding our compliance with specified covenants in the indenture.

Modification of Indenture; Waiver

We and the trustee may change an indenture without the consent of any holders with respect to specific matters:

- to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency in the indenture or in the debt securities of any series;
- to comply with the provisions described above under “Description of Debt Securities-Consolidation, Merger or Sale;”
- to provide for uncertificated debt securities in addition to or in place of certificated debt securities;
- to add to our covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions such new covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities, to make the occurrence, or the occurrence and the continuance, of a default in any such additional covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions an event of default or to surrender any right or power conferred upon us in the indenture;
- to add to, delete from or revise the conditions, limitations, and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms, or purposes of issue, authentication and delivery of debt securities, as set forth in the indenture;
- to make any change that does not adversely affect the interests of any holder of debt securities of any series in any material respect;
 - to provide for the issuance of and establish the form and terms and conditions of the debt securities of any series as provided above under “Description of Debt Securities-General” to establish the form of any certifications required to be furnished pursuant to the terms of the indenture or any series of debt securities, or to add to the rights of the holders of any series of debt securities;
- to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment under any indenture by a successor trustee; or
- to comply with any requirements of the SEC in connection with the qualification of any indenture under the Trust Indenture Act.

In addition, under the indenture, the rights of holders of a series of debt securities may be changed by us and the trustee with the written consent of the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series that is affected. However, unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, we and the trustee may make the following changes only with the consent of each holder of any outstanding debt securities affected:

- extending the fixed maturity of any debt securities of any series;
- reducing the principal amount, reducing the rate of or extending the time of payment of interest, or reducing any premium payable upon the redemption of any series of any debt securities; or
- reducing the percentage of debt securities, the holders of which are required to consent to any amendment, supplement, modification or waiver.

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Discharge

Each indenture provides that we can elect to be discharged from our obligations with respect to one or more series of debt securities, except for specified obligations, including obligations to:

- provide for payment;
- register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of the series;
- replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of the series;
- pay principal of and premium and interest on any debt securities of the series;
- maintain paying agencies;
- hold monies for payment in trust;
- recover excess money held by the trustee;
- compensate and indemnify the trustee; and
- appoint any successor trustee.

In order to exercise our rights to be discharged, we must deposit with the trustee money or government obligations sufficient to pay all the principal of, any premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities of the series on the dates payments are due.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

We will issue the debt securities of each series only in fully registered form without coupons and, unless we provide otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof. The indenture provides that we may issue debt securities of a series in temporary or permanent global form and as book-entry securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company, or DTC, or another depository named by us and identified in a prospectus supplement with respect to that series. To the extent the debt securities of a series are issued in global form and as book-entry, a description of terms relating to any book-entry securities will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

At the option of the holder, subject to the terms of the indenture and the limitations applicable to global securities described in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holder of the debt securities of any series can exchange the debt securities for other debt securities of the same series, in any authorized denomination and of like tenor and aggregate principal amount.

Subject to the terms of the indenture and the limitations applicable to global securities set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the debt securities may present the debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer, duly endorsed or with the form of transfer endorsed thereon duly executed if so required by us or the security registrar, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for this purpose. Unless otherwise provided in the debt securities that the holder presents for transfer or exchange, we will impose no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange, but we may require payment of any taxes or other governmental charges.

We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement the security registrar, and any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar, that we initially designate for any debt securities. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents or rescind the designation of any transfer agent or approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of each series.

If we elect to redeem the debt securities of any series, we will not be required to:

- issue, register the transfer of, or exchange any debt securities of that series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day of mailing of a notice of redemption of any debt securities that may be selected for redemption and ending at the close of business on the day of the mailing; or
- register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities so selected for redemption, in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any debt securities we are redeeming in part.

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Information Concerning the Trustee

The trustee, other than during the occurrence and continuance of an event of default under an indenture, undertakes to perform only those duties as are specifically set forth in the applicable indenture. Upon an event of default under an indenture, the trustee must use the same degree of care as a prudent person would exercise or use in the conduct of his or her own affairs. Subject to this provision, the trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers given it by the indenture at the request of any holder of debt securities unless it is offered reasonable security and indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities that it might incur.

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of the interest on any debt securities on any interest payment date to the person in whose name the debt securities, or one or more predecessor securities, are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for the interest.

We will pay principal of and any premium and interest on the debt securities of a particular series at the office of the paying agents designated by us, except that unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make interest payments by check that we will mail to the holder or by wire transfer to certain holders. Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will designate the corporate trust office of the trustee as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to debt securities of each series. We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement any other paying agents that we initially designate for the debt securities of a particular series. We will maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of a particular series.

All money we pay to a paying agent or the trustee for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt securities that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holder of the debt security thereafter may look only to us for payment thereof.

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, except to the extent that the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 is applicable.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus and the related warrant agreements and warrant certificates. While the terms summarized below will apply generally to any warrants that we may offer, we will describe the particular terms of any series of warrants in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. If we indicate in the prospectus supplement, the terms of any warrants offered under that prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below. However, no prospectus supplement shall fundamentally change the terms that are set forth in this prospectus or offer a security that is not registered and described in this prospectus at the time of its effectiveness. Specific warrant agreements will contain additional important terms and provisions and will be incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as an exhibit to a report that we file with the SEC.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of warrants, including:

the offering price and aggregate number of warrants offered;

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- the currency for which the warrants may be purchased;
- if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each such security or each principal amount of such security;
- if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the related securities will be separately transferable;
- in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of one warrant and the price at, and currency in which, this principal amount of debt securities may be purchased upon such exercise;
- in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock, as the case may be, purchasable upon the exercise of one warrant and the price at which these shares may be purchased upon such exercise;
- the effect of any merger, consolidation, sale or other disposition of our business on the warrant agreements and the warrants;
- the terms of any rights to redeem or call the warrants;
- any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the exercise price or number of securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants;
- the dates on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and expire;
- the manner in which the warrant agreements and warrants may be modified;
- any material or special U.S. federal income tax consequences of holding or exercising the warrants;
- the terms of the securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants; and
- any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of or restrictions on the warrants.

Before exercising their warrants, holders of warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the securities purchasable upon such exercise, including:

- in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the right to receive payments of principal of, or premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities purchasable upon exercise or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture; or
- in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the right to receive dividends, if any, or payments upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up or to exercise voting rights, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder to purchase the securities that we specify in the applicable prospectus supplement at the exercise price that we describe in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants at any time up to 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on the expiration date that we set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

Holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants by delivering the warrant certificate representing the warrants to be exercised together with specified information, and paying the required amount to the warrant agent in immediately available funds, as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement. We will set forth on the reverse side of the warrant certificate and in the applicable prospectus supplement the information that the holder of the warrant will be required to deliver to the warrant agent.

Upon receipt of the required payment and the warrant certificate properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue and deliver the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If fewer than all of the warrants represented by the warrant certificate are exercised, then we will issue a new warrant certificate for the remaining amount of warrants. If we so indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may surrender securities as all or part of the exercise price for warrants.

Enforceability of Rights by Holders of Warrants

Each warrant agent will act solely as our agent under the applicable warrant agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust with any holder of any warrant. A single bank or trust company may act as warrant agent for more than one issue of warrants. A warrant agent will have no duty or responsibility in case of any default by us under the applicable warrant agreement or warrant, including any duty or responsibility to initiate any

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proceedings at law or otherwise, or to make any demand upon us. Any holder of a warrant may, without the consent of the related warrant agent or the holder of any other warrant, enforce by appropriate legal action its right to exercise, and receive the securities purchasable upon exercise of, its warrants.

LEGAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

We can issue securities in registered form or in the form of one or more global securities. We describe global securities in greater detail below. We refer to those persons who have securities registered in their own names on the books that we or any applicable trustee, depository or warrant agent maintain for this purpose as the "holders" of those securities. These persons are the legal holders of the securities. We refer to those persons who, indirectly through others, own beneficial interests in securities that are not registered in their own names, as "indirect holders" of those securities. As we discuss below, indirect holders are not legal holders, and investors in securities issued in book-entry form or in street name will be indirect holders.

Book-Entry Holders

We may issue securities in book-entry form only, as we will specify in the applicable prospectus supplement. This means securities may be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depository on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depository's book-entry system. These participating institutions, which are referred to as participants, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

Only the person in whose name a security is registered is recognized as the holder of that security. Securities issued in global form will be registered in the name of the depository or its participants. Consequently, for securities issued in global form, we will recognize only the depository as the holder of the securities, and we will make all payments on the securities to the depository. The depository passes along the payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depository and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors in a book-entry security will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depository's book-entry system or holds an interest through a participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect holders, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Holders

We may terminate a global security or issue securities in non-global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in "street name." Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account he or she maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities, and we will make all payments on those securities to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect holders, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders

Our obligations, as well as the obligations of any applicable trustee and of any third parties employed by us or a trustee, run only to the legal holders of the securities. We do not have obligations to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect holder of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global

form.

For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment or notice even if that holder is required, under agreements with depositary participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect holders but does not do so. Similarly, we may want to obtain the approval of the holders to amend an indenture, to relieve us of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of the indenture or for other purposes. In such an event, we would seek approval only from the

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holders, and not the indirect holders, of the securities. Whether and how the holders contact the indirect holders is up to the holders.

Special Considerations for Indirect Holders

If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

- the performance of third party service providers;
- how it handles securities payments and notices;
- whether it imposes fees or charges;
- how it would handle a request for the holders' consent, if ever required;
- whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a holder, if that is permitted in the future;
- how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and
- if the securities are in book-entry form, how the depository's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

Global Securities

A global security is a security that represents one or any other number of individual securities held by a depository. Generally, all securities represented by the same global securities will have the same terms.

Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we deposit with and register in the name of a financial institution or its nominee that we select. The financial institution that we select for this purpose is called the depository. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, DTC will be the depository for all securities issued in book-entry form.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depository, its nominee or a successor depository, unless special termination situations arise. We describe those situations below under the section entitled "Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated" in this prospectus. As a result of these arrangements, the depository, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors will be permitted to own only beneficial interests in a global security. Beneficial interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depository or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect holder of a beneficial interest in the global security.

If the prospectus supplement for a particular security indicates that the security will be issued in global form only, then the security will be represented by a global security at all times unless and until the global security is terminated. If termination occurs, we may issue the securities through another book-entry clearing system or decide that the securities may no longer be held through any book-entry clearing system.

Special Considerations for Global Securities

The rights of an indirect holder relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depository, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize an indirect holder as a holder of securities and instead deal only with the depository that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only in the form of a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

- an investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in his or her name, and cannot obtain non-global certificates for his or her interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below;
- an investor will be an indirect holder and must look to his or her own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of his or her legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe above;
- an investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and to other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form;

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- an investor may not be able to pledge his or her interest in a global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective;
- the depositary's policies, which may change from time to time, will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to an investor's interest in a global security;
- we and any applicable trustee have no responsibility for any aspect of the depositary's actions or for its records of ownership interests in a global security, nor do we or any applicable trustee supervise the depositary in any way;
- the depositary may, and we understand that DTC will, require that those who purchase and sell interests in a global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds, and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well; and
- financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system, and through which an investor holds its interest in a global security, may also have their own policies affecting payments, notices and other matters relating to the securities.

There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the actions of any of those intermediaries.

Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated

In a few special situations described below, the global security will terminate and interests in it will be exchanged for physical certificates representing those interests. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in securities transferred to their own name, so that they will be direct holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above.

Unless we provide otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the global security will terminate when the following special situations occur:

- if the depositary notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depositary for that global security and we do not appoint another institution to act as depositary within 90 days;
- if we notify any applicable trustee that we wish to terminate that global security; or
- if an event of default has occurred with regard to securities represented by that global security and has not been cured or waived.

The applicable prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply only to the particular series of securities covered by the applicable prospectus supplement. When a global security terminates, the depositary, and not we or any applicable trustee, is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions that will be the initial direct holders.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities from time to time pursuant to underwritten public offerings, negotiated transactions, block trades or a combination of these methods. We may sell the securities to or through underwriters or dealers, through agents, or directly to one or more purchasers. We may distribute securities from time to time in one or more transactions:

- at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;
- at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;
- at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or
- at negotiated prices.

A prospectus supplement or supplements (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) will describe the terms of the offering of the securities, including, to the extent applicable:

- the name or names of the underwriters, if any;
- the purchase price of the securities or other consideration therefor, and the proceeds, if any, we will receive from the sale;
- any over-allotment options under which underwriters may purchase additional securities from us;
- any agency fees or underwriting discounts and other items constituting agents' or underwriters' compensation;
- any public offering price;
- any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers; and
- any securities exchange or market on which the securities may be listed.

Only underwriters named in the prospectus supplement will be underwriters of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement.

If underwriters are used in the sale, they will acquire the securities for their own account and may resell the securities from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. The obligations of the underwriters to purchase the securities will be subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable underwriting agreement. We may offer the securities to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or by underwriters without a syndicate. Subject to certain conditions, the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement, other than securities covered by any over-allotment option. Any public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may change from time to time. We may use underwriters with whom we have a material relationship. We will describe in the prospectus supplement, naming the underwriter, the nature of any such relationship.

We may sell securities directly or through agents we designate from time to time. We will name any agent involved in the offering and sale of securities and we will describe any commissions we will pay the agent in the prospectus supplement. Unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, our agent will act on a best-efforts basis for the period of its appointment.

We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutional investors to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. We will describe the conditions to these contracts and the commissions we must pay for solicitation of these contracts in the prospectus supplement.

We may provide agents and underwriters with indemnification against civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or contribution with respect to payments that the agents or underwriters may make with respect to these liabilities. Agents and underwriters may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us in the ordinary course of business.

All securities we may offer, other than common stock, will be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters may make a market in these securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot guarantee the liquidity of the trading markets for any securities.

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Any underwriter may engage in over-allotment, stabilizing transactions, short-covering transactions and penalty bids in accordance with Regulation M under the Exchange Act. Over-allotment involves sales in excess of the offering size, which create a short position. Stabilizing transactions permit bids to purchase the underlying security so long as the stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum price. Syndicate-covering or other short-covering transactions involve purchases of the securities, either through exercise of the over-allotment option or in the open market after the distribution is completed, to cover short positions. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a dealer when the securities originally sold by the dealer are purchased in a stabilizing or covering transaction to cover short positions. Those activities may cause the price of the securities to be higher than it would otherwise be. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue any of the activities at any time.

Any underwriters that are qualified market makers on The NASDAQ Global Market may engage in passive market making transactions in the common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market in accordance with Regulation M under the Exchange Act, during the business day prior to the pricing of the offering, before the commencement of offers or sales of the common stock. Passive market makers must comply with applicable volume and price limitations and must be identified as passive market makers. In general, a passive market maker must display its bid at a price not in excess of the highest independent bid for such security; if all independent bids are lowered below the passive market maker's bid, however, the passive market maker's bid must then be lowered when certain purchase limits are exceeded. Passive market making may stabilize the market price of the securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market and, if commenced, may be discontinued at any time.

In compliance with guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, the maximum consideration or discount to be received by any FINRA member or independent broker dealer may not exceed 8% of the aggregate amount of the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement.

LEGAL MATTERS

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the validity of the securities offered by this prospectus, and any supplement thereto, will be passed upon for us by Cooley LLP, Broomfield, Colorado.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of NewLink Genetics Corporation and subsidiary (a development stage enterprise) as of December 31, 2011 and 2010, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2011, and for the period from June 4, 1999 (inception) through December 31, 2011, have been incorporated by reference herein in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

This prospectus is part of the registration statement on Form S-3 we filed with the SEC under the Securities Act and does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus to any of our contracts, agreements or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement or the exhibits to the reports or other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus for a copy of such contract, agreement or other document. Because we are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically. You may also read and copy any document we file at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the Public Reference Room. You can find additional information about the company at our website, <http://www.newlinkgenetics.com>.

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INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" information from other documents that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus. We incorporate by reference into this prospectus and the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part the information or documents listed below that we have filed with the SEC (Commission File No. 001-35342):

- our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, filed with the SEC on March 30, 2012, as amended by our Annual Report on Form 10-K/A, Amendment No. 1, for the year ended December 31, 2011, filed with the SEC on April 27, 2012;
- our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the nine months ended September 30, 2012, filed with the SEC on October 31, 2012;
- our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on the following dates in 2012: March 12, March 28, March 29, April 17, April 25, May 10, May 22, June 1, June 5, June 19, June 27, August 14, September 21, October 3, October 10, October 31, November 7, November 14, December 13 and December 21;
- the information specifically incorporated by reference into our 2011 Annual Report on Form 10-K, referred to above, from our definitive proxy statement relating to our 2012 annual meeting of stockholders, filed with the SEC on September 21, 2012; and
- the description of our common stock set forth in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on November 8, 2011, including any amendments thereto or reports filed for the purpose of updating this transaction. We also incorporate by reference any future filings (other than current reports furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K and exhibits filed on such form that are related to such items unless such Form 8-K expressly provides to the contrary) made with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, including those made after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of such registration statement, until we file a post-effective amendment that indicates the termination of the offering of the securities covered by this prospectus and will become a part of this prospectus from the date that such documents are filed with the SEC. Information in such future filings updates and supplements the information provided in this prospectus. Any statements in any such future filings will automatically be deemed to modify and supersede any information in any document we previously filed with the SEC that is incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein by reference to the extent that statements in the later filed document modify or replace such earlier statements.

We will furnish without charge to you, on written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents incorporated by reference, including exhibits to these documents. You should direct any requests for documents to Gordon H. Link, Chief Financial Officer, NewLink Genetics Corporation, 2503 South Loop Drive, Ames Iowa 50010, telephone: (515) 296-5555.

Up to \$60,000,000 of Shares of
Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

September 5, 2013
