

**Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board (WDB)
Program Year 2023 (PY2023) Request for Proposals**

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Title I Youth Formula- Year-Round
Workforce Development Elements/Services**

Contract Period: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026

** At its discretion, the WDB may amend contracts based on performance and funding availability and/or renew contracts for up to 3 consecutive contract periods (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024) based on performance and funding availability.*

Essential Information w/Dates

Release Date	Friday, March 10, 2023
Bidder’s Conference (Informational Session) held via zoom. Please RSVP by emailing Cassilda Campbell at ccampbell@rochesterworks.org	Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 1:00 PM
Technical Assistance	At Informational Session Only
Deadline for Submission	Friday, April 21, 2023 – 12:00 PM (Noon)
Executive Committee	Tuesday, May 16, 2023
WDB Approval	Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Formal Award Notification	Friday, June 23, 2023

RochesterWorks, Inc.
www.rochesterworks.org

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*“If you can’t be a pencil to write someone’s opportunity,
then try to be a nice eraser to remove their barriers.”*

– Author Unknown

1. BACKGROUND

RochesterWorks, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, serves as a fiscal agent, career center operator, and research and development staff for the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board (WDB), which oversees millions of dollars in workforce development resources, including WIOA funds. RochesterWorks, Inc. is located at 100 College Ave Suite 200, Rochester, NY 14607.

RochesterWorks is Monroe County’s largest employment and training system. The RochesterWorks system was created due to the Workforce Investment Act, which took effect in 2000 to connect multiple federally funded employment and training programs in Monroe County. Today, the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and supportive services and match employers with skilled workers to compete in the global economy.

RochesterWorks offers employment and training services to thousands of job seekers and businesses at three (3) Career Center locations in addition to services supported through competitively procured contracts among community-based youth-serving organizations. The Career Centers provide “one-stop” access points for deliverable services. Job Seekers can utilize the resource rooms to access computers, copiers, faxes, telephones, and job search materials. Workshops and one-on-one job search assistance, career counseling, and access to training funds for skills development are offered. Assisting businesses with identifying qualified employees, posting job vacancies, and access to training funds for professional workforce development. Additional information on programs and services can be found at www.rochesterworks.org.

2. PURPOSE

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) developed a formula-funded youth workforce development program serving eligible youth, ages 16-24, who face barriers to gaining employment. Funds for youth services are allocated to state and local areas. Service strategies developed by workforce providers prepare youth for post-secondary education and/or employment through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. Local communities provide youth activities and services in partnership with the America’s Job Centers (RochesterWorks) and under the direction of local Workforce Development Boards.

RochesterWorks, Inc. solicits proposals from various governmental units, public or private not-for-profit or for-profit corporations, local educational agencies, and faith-based and community-based agencies to serve **100% of out-of-school youth (OSY) target populations**. As a result of this process, RochesterWorks, Inc. will select agencies to fund the recruitment and hiring of Youth Workforce Development Service Navigator(s) from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026. A Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) unit equals one employee working full-time. We require a single full-time equivalent Navigator to fill each FTE Navigator position. Preference will be given to agencies that can house at least two to a maximum of five Navigators. Agencies with the capacity to house only one Navigator must provide a detailed contingency plan of how youth will be served if there is a Navigator transition when a Navigator leaves the agency and through the 6 weeks, it usually takes to recruit and fill the open Navigator position.

Objectives of the youth workforce development program system:

- Provide participants assistance in achieving their academic and/or employment goals through effective and comprehensive activities to improve educational and skill competencies and connections to employers.
- Remove barriers to active participation in education, training, and employment through various supportive services.
- Ensure ongoing mentoring opportunities with adults.
- Provide opportunities for training, career exploration, work experience, employment and financial literacy.
- Provide incentives for attaining WIOA performance measures and recognition of participation in workforce-related activities and outcomes.
- Provide activities related to leadership development, decision-making, citizenship, and community service.

Navigators support participants in achieving their goals within the case management process. Participants are responsible for taking ownership to achieve their educational and/or employment outcomes. Navigators cannot force change on youth but can use their relationship-building, persuasion, and supportive skills to influence change in the youth.

Navigator Duties:

- Outreach, recruitment, assessment, eligibility determination, and enrollment of targeted youth
- Assist youth in identifying appropriate post-secondary educational, training, and employment opportunities to help them reach their goals.
- Develop an Individual Service Strategy specific to each youth based on an objective assessment and identifies an employment goal, an educational goal, and any appropriate services supporting the achievement of identified goals.
- Expose participants to all the available 14 WIOA Youth Elements, as appropriate, based on need and/or interest (see A-9), including advocacy for supportive services needed (i.e. clothing, transportation, personal hygiene products)
- Keep youth engaged by regularly spending time and building rapport with them.
- Navigators will apply for individual NYSDOL web-based America's One-Stop Operating System, OSOS access through RochesterWorks and be granted specific limited security permissions to enable them to complete timely and correct OSOS data entry.
- Utilize OSOS for completing required data entry within 5 business days of contact with youth.
- Utilize NYSDOL SENSE (Situation, Evaluation, Next Steps, Sufficient Information {Say What You See}, Employment-Related Information Only) Model when completing progress notes in OSOS comments.
- Maintain accurate progress notes with comments (SENSE Model) with the primary focus on workforce development, educational and/or employment-related information and updates and supporting documentation for each youth in hard file.
- Prepare youth for post-secondary education, training and/or employment opportunities by providing and/or connecting each to basic and occupational skills development and work readiness, including paid/unpaid internship.
- Utilizing the One Stop Operating System (OSOS) to document the Youth Employment Program (YEP) is required before approving a staffing agency invoice for payment for youth hours worked.

- Problem-solve and follow up with youth and/or service provider to determine the effectiveness of results.
- Monitor the progress of each youth toward successful completion of their WIOA performance individual educational and/or employment goals, outcomes and other agreed-upon outcome measures (see A-5: WIOA Performance Measures Goals).

The Navigator approach incorporates components of The Youth Works Model – A Workforce Development Model developed by the Monroe County/Rochester Youth Committee (see A-4). The model has outcomes in line with WIOA youth funding - credential attainment, workplace and post-secondary readiness, skills gains, median earnings, and retention in employment. These outcomes are accomplished through a coordinated approach where the Navigator works as the conduit in partnership with educators, community and faith-based organizations, employers, career centers, and governmental units to connect youth to needed services.

This WIOA Request for Proposals (RFPs) solicitation aims to fill and fund a total of nineteen (14) Navigator positions within agencies that can accommodate and manage at a minimum 2 Navigators and/or at a maximum 5 Navigators. Each Navigator is expected to work autonomously in the community and responsible for a specific geographic area such as a city quadrant or county, east-west/town(s), and/or a specific target population (see A-6)

The basic service delivery design, as envisioned by RochesterWorks

The Navigator enhances access to and success in existing programs and services for the target out-of-school youth (OSY) populations. The Navigator must establish formal relationships with targeted youth system partners and community-based service providers. This will be anticipated to include appropriate and/or periodic co-location opportunities at suitable youth-frequented locations throughout the community to reach a maximum number of interested and eligible out-of-school youth (OSY), offering improved access to workforce development services. Navigator(s) will be expected to be flexible and available in scheduling activities and providing elements/services to meet with youth beyond the conventional hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. It is important to allow participants to attend schooling, training, or work while still being able to connect with Navigators for support in achieving their educational and/or employment goals.

The RochesterWorks Career Center (RWCC) will partner with the Navigator to offer workforce preparation services to support Navigator efforts, including but not limited to:

- Interest and skills assessments
- Workshops on resume preparation, interview skills, job search strategy, and job retention
- Resume reviews and mock interviews
- Subsidies for occupational skills development, including individual training accounts, on-the-job training, and structured work experience/internship.
- Youth-focused job and career fair events
- If needed, on a limited reservation basis, Navigators can request the use of cubicle space at a RochesterWorks Career Center to gain access to office equipment such as computers, printers, faxes, copiers, and telephones (see A-7)

3. FUNDING

At the release time of this RFP, a formal funding amount has yet to be appropriated, allocated, or received from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) to RochesterWorks, Inc. It is anticipated that RWI will commit \$980,000 in funds to support this solicitation. **The maximum award available for each full-time equivalent Navigator is \$70,000.** This amount is inclusive of all expenses (see A-2). The expectation is that annual written contracts will clearly state that each FTE Navigator will enroll and serve at least 25 active-status youth (including carry-in). Also, each FTE Navigator is responsible for providing follow-up elements/services to youth on follow-up status for 12 months unless the youth declines receiving follow-up services or the youth's contact information is not current. The Navigator has attempted to connect with the youth, as documented in OSOS comments (SENSE Model), with no success. RWI will negotiate a final contracted number with approved service providers based on the population to be served and activities to be provided.

Cost competitiveness and efficiency are sought in this solicitation. Every applicant is expected to leverage additional non-WIOA support and/or work with key community partners, including educators, community and faith-based organizations, employers, career centers, and governmental units to support the navigator position and the services/activities generated as a result. Added consideration will be given to proposals demonstrating genuine quantifiable and value-added support.

Funding is dependent upon RWI annual youth award under WIOA. Any increases to Navigator awards for subsequent program years are contingent on funding levels and other program budget constraints and are not guaranteed and cannot exceed \$980,000.

Successful providers will enter a reimbursement-based contract with RWI to provide these services. Organizations will be expected to invoice RWI on a monthly and/or fixed basis.

At its discretion, the WDB may amend contracts based on performance and funding availability and/or renew contracts for up to 3 consecutive contract periods (July 1 through June 30) based on performance and funding availability. Additional competitive solicitations may be made to identify future Navigators and/or to procure exclusive service provisions, such as where gaps in vital services are identified.

4. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Proposals from governmental units, public or private not-for-profit or for-profit corporations, local educational agencies, and incorporated faith-based and community-based agencies will be considered. Preference in this application will be given to applicants that demonstrate a thorough understanding of the targeted geographic area and/or population, substantiate an effective blend of partnerships, and cost efficiency, show a comprehensive understanding of the systems in which the youth must negotiate, and establish open universal access for interested and eligible youth. Applicants must include their partners in the design of the proposed services included in this application.

Strong private-sector involvement is recommended under WIOA funding. Private-sector employers should be leveraged to support the system by hiring young people, making financial donations for job creation in the public sector, or donating time and resources to further such efforts. Such leveraged partnerships will receive added consideration in this solicitation.

Applicants must have the capability to proficiently enter eligibility, tracking, and other required data into the One Stop Operating System and to maintain and update such data to meet the 5-day requirement per NYSDOL Workforce Development TA 11-12.2. Applicants must coordinate with participant recruitment and acceptance of suitable youth who may be referred from various community partners, including RochesterWorks Career Center.

Applicants must be able to provide framework services that include objective assessment, Individual Services Strategy (ISS), general case management, and follow-up services that lead toward successful outcomes for WIOA youth participants.

Successful applicants will provide an appropriate mix of activities, counseling, referral, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, and case management services to WIOA-eligible youth ages 16-24. (For additional information on WIOA go to the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration website - <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa>).

5. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

5.1 Deadline

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be received as a solitary PDF document no later than **12:00 PM (Noon) on Friday, April 21, 2023**. Proposals can be submitted as a single document attachment to an email to:

Cassilda Campbell
Youth System Assistant
ccampbell@rochesterworks.org

Proposals received on/or before the deadline that comply with all RFP requirements will be reviewed and considered for funding.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

RWI staff will review all proposals to ensure compliance with the requirements of the RFP. Proposals meeting requirements will be evaluated by a Review Team comprised of RWI staff, WDB and/or Youth Committee members or their designees. Evaluation is based on but not limited to:

- **Quality of Service Design 30%**
 - Innovative, client-centered service strategy
 - Comprehensive, high-quality service components
 - Structured, thorough delivery design
 - Involvement of relevant community partners, including private-sector employers
 - Advances the Youth Works Model
- **Demonstrated Capability 30%**
 - If previous contractor, past performance and monitoring issues
 - Record of achievement in program management and operations
 - High level of professional and technical skill/knowledge, including experienced staff w/adequate support
 - History of success in serving target area/population
 - Sensible plan to reach program outcomes

- **Cost Efficiency 10%**
 - Clarity and completeness of budget detail
 - Reasonableness of costs
 - Leveraged resources and in-kind contributions that are clearly quantifiable and confirmed
 - Level of investment in relation to proposed outcomes

- **Miscellaneous 30%**
 - Value of added Resources (funds, contributions, activity/services, etc.) **10%**
 - Prior experience with RochesterWorks **10%**
 - Overall Understanding of RFP objectives **10%**

If necessary, to clarify specific points regarding what is proposed, the Review Team may seek brief revisions and/or request applicants to present to members of the WDB/Youth Committee and RWI management.

Based on the review process results, the Review Team will recommend proposals to the Youth Committee to recommend funding to the Monroe County/Workforce Development Board (WDB). The WDB makes the final approval of funding.

5.3 Minimum Requirements

- A single optimized PDF document
- Arranged in proper order
- Not to exceed eight (8) pages of narrative
- Formatted to 8.5 x 11 paper size using 12-point font, 1-inch margins and Times New Roman Font
- Text lines may be single spaced
- All pages of the narrative section must be numbered and contain the applicant's name as the footer
- Be specific when describing the elements of service delivery
- Refer to features that are definitive, not those that are only possibilities
- Include only information directly related to the services delivered and the target population
- Quantify minimum standards, hours of service, and other crucial components of service delivery
- Any proposed collaboration must be supported by detail
- *Be concise and avoid extraneous references and unnecessary detail*

5.4 Format and Content

Organizations interested in providing the requested services should submit a proposal narrative of not more than eight (8) pages that includes the following information exactly as labeled (**in bold**) and as ordered below. Required attachments will not count against the narrative page total. Such attachments include Proposal Summary Form, Resumes, Job Descriptions, Organizational Chart, Budget Forms, and Certifications.

1. Complete **Proposal Summary Form** (A-1, page 2)

2. Describe your **Organization and Experience** in providing services to youth as it relates to this solicitation. Include the unique characteristics of the population(s) you propose to serve and why

you are well suited to meet their needs. Include any established relationships with other youth serving agencies and/or systems partners within the geographic area and/or population(s) you propose to serve and how they will benefit the youth proposed to serve.

3. Describe in detail your **Strategy and Work Plan** for providing the services requested in this RFP. Include how services will be aligned with the WIOA required 14 Elements (see A-9), and how services will lead to the required WIOA performance goals, outcomes, and measures (see A-5). Include specific location(s), hours, and days that services will be available. **NOTE:** If selected, the agency must connect partners with RochesterWorks, who will provide any of the 14 WIOA Youth Elements/Services for a RochesterWorks system-wide completion of **Memorandum of Understanding(s) (MOUs)** for resource mapping.
4. Describe any **Additional or Unique Services** you will provide to enhance and/or complement the services you will provide under this RFP. Include any actual matching funds and in-kind contributions.
5. Describe **Challenges and Opportunities**, if any, that might impact your achieving successful performance outcomes as described in this RFP. *Current contractors reapplying must address known deficiencies.*
6. Describe the **Quality Control Measures and Management Procedures** that will ensure successful oversight of staff, quality service delivery, satisfactory performance, and consistent communication with the funder.
7. Provide the name and resume of the **Staff Proposed as Navigator(s)**. If specific staff is not yet identified, attach a job description including the minimum required qualifications. Agencies without the capacity to house more than one navigator should provide a detailed plan of how youth will be served through the Navigator transition. Include an Organizational chart briefly illustrating the staff and jobs dedicated to this project.
8. **Budget** (A-2) - complete the attached forms. Provide sufficient detail to justify all costs of program activities in the budget narrative. Include any in-kind funding or services and how it will support this effort.
9. **Certifications** (A-3)
 - a. Service Components
 - b. Fiscal Compliance
 - c. Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist
10. **Attachments** - Resumes, Job Descriptions, Organizational Chart, and other.

5.5 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance specific to this RFP **may be sought in the form of open questions at the Wednesday, March 22nd Bidders Conference only**. Questions may be forwarded in writing by **12 noon March 20, 2023**, via email to Cassilda Campbell, Youth System Assistant, in advance of the session – Ccampbell@rochesterworks.org. Responses to all questions will be shared at the informational session and/or posted on the RochesterWorks website following the session – www.rochesterworks.org.

6. LIMITATION

The Workforce Development Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request; to negotiate all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if found not in the best interest of the WDB and/or Youth Committee. This RFP does not commit the WDB to award a contract, to pay costs incurred for the preparation of proposals, to pay for legal liability in refusing to award a contract or to procure or contract for services. Youth Navigators funded under WIOA must adhere to EEO laws and standards. The source of funding shall be those WIOA funds appropriated to Monroe County. Funding for any project will be dependent upon the availability of WIOA funds.

Demonstration of past performance and cooperation of the organization awarded in past contract years will be considered in the review of proposals. Poor past or current contract performance with RWI or other funding sources may affect recommendations for awards. RWI reserves the right to stipulate special terms regarding the area of concern that will become part of the final contract.

All decisions of the WDB are final.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- A-1 Proposal Summary Form
- A-2 Budget Instructions and Forms
- A-3 Certifications
- A-4 Youth Works Model
- A-5 WDB Performance Goals
- A-6 Target Population and Eligibility
- A-7 Navigator Responsibilities and Service Delivery Guidelines
- A-8 Workforce Terms and Definitions
- A-9 14 Required WIOA Youth Elements
- A-10 Monitoring and Support