

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 9/28/2021**



**RochesterWorks!**

100 College Ave, Ste 200

Rochester, NY 14607

rochesterworks.org

Contact: Ashley Mault, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

amault@rochesterworks.org

**RochesterWorks Launches \$2.25 Million Gun Violence Prevention Initiative to provide Job Opportunities for Hundreds of Rochester Young Adults**

Rochester, NY – RochesterWorks!, the region's largest nonprofit provider of workforce and career services, is seeking Rochester community organizations to help implement a Gun Violence Prevention program that will provide career training and job opportunities for several hundred young adults living in the City of Rochester. The initiative, funded by the NYS Department of Labor, is part of a multi-phased State strategy to utilize workforce development programs to reduce gun violence.

The \$2.25 Million Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) program will serve unemployed, under-employed, and out-of-school youth ages 18 – 24, with 75% of participants residing in one of the nine priority zip codes identified by the New York State Department of Labor (14605, 14606, 14608, 14609, 14611, 14613, 14615, 14619, and 14621). The goal of the funding is to connect at-risk youth to good-paying, permanent, unsubsidized employment. Program services can include workforce preparation, case management, adult mentoring, standalone occupational skills training, or occupational skills training integrated with education or career services. The program has funding to serve several hundred youth, with a goal of 450 permanent job placements.

"Providing pathways to job opportunities is one of the best resources we have in the fight against the recent uptick in gun violence. We are grateful for this opportunity provided by the State to make a difference through effective workforce development strategies," said Dave Seeley, Executive Director of RochesterWorks. This program will only be successful if we are able to garner widespread community support to engage our youth and provide the support services necessary to keep them in these effective workforce programs, with the end goal being a permanent job. We are excited to solicit the support of the many good forces trying to bring about positive change in Rochester."

New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney, a Rochester native and representative for the state's 56th District, says of the program, "I am proud to advocate for these resources at the state level which will support our young people early in their career journeys. RochesterWorks! is focused on creating employment resources for young people at a time when our community needs it most. It is my hope that organizations throughout Rochester will seek these funds and do the work on behalf of the youth of our city. As we recover from the pandemic, access to training and educational opportunities is essential so that the future leaders of Rochester have the skills needed to compete in new industries and help our region grow."

New York State Assemblymember, Harry Bronson, adds, "A good paying job that offers our young people a chance to build their self-esteem, learn new skills, and provide for their family is one of my top priorities as a member of the Assembly. Today's announcement by RochesterWorks! regarding their comprehensive Gun Violence Prevention Program, which connects at-risk youth to the workforce, will help us meet those goals. I applaud the team at RochesterWorks! and their community partners for championing this program that will benefit our youth, our community, and our collective future."

“It’s critical that we help connect at-risk youth with employment opportunities so we can steer them toward a life of prosperity and positive choices,” said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello. “I am grateful to Dave Seeley and his team at RochesterWorks! for implementing this initiative and give special thanks to New York state for funding this vital program.”

Current Youth Navigator programs implementing youth employment services on behalf of RochesterWorks under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will be provided resources to enhance their outreach and services. The GVP program will also invite nonprofit 501(c)(3) Community- or Faith-Based Organizations, and units of local government to apply to provide outreach and recruitment services, workforce preparation services, or both. **An informational session will be held for potential partners on October 7th** at the Gantt Community Center. Interested organizations can register at [tinyurl.com/GVPBidder2021](http://tinyurl.com/GVPBidder2021)

Earlier this year, the State announced the availability of funds to establish workforce development programming for youth in various cities most impacted by gun violence. RochesterWorks received \$450,000 in July 2021 to develop a Phase I program known as SEEDS (Safety, Economic Empowerment, Development, and Support) that provides direct job placement for up to 50 youth. A second distribution of funds, totaling \$2.25 million, has been made available following the adoption of RochesterWorks' comprehensive Gun Violence Prevention Program policy by the Rochester/Monroe County Workforce Development Board.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis **beginning Thursday, October 7, 2021**. RochesterWorks will conduct evaluations on a first-come, first-served **basis through Thursday, December 30, 2021**. Organizations interested in participating as service providers can find more information at [tinyurl.com/GVP2021info](http://tinyurl.com/GVP2021info).

# # #

*As Monroe County's largest employment and training initiative, RochesterWorks is dedicated to developing a strong workforce in the Rochester, NY, region as we serve job seekers, youth, and businesses in our community.*