

September 13, 2019

Dear Workforce Preparation Organization (WPO),

The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) has set out to fight poverty in a meaningful way. Pervasive, long-standing, deeply rooted poverty is the greatest crisis the Rochester area has ever faced. Without a new approach, it will continue to get worse. Organizations that prepare and train individuals for employment – WPOs – are a key partner in supporting our community and making it a better place for everyone to live and work. We are asking you to join us.

RMAPI's WPO Pledge provides an opportunity for WPOs in Rochester and Monroe County to commit to abiding by best practices in preparing individuals impacted by poverty for employment. The best practices speak to workplace culture, program elements, employer relationships, and retention and success. In signing the pledge, WPOs are asked to identify one or more best practice(s) to focus on implementing in the next six months, and to develop action steps that will be taken toward that goal. Signing the pledge is a commitment to work towards upholding the spirit of all of the best practices, and taking concrete actions towards as many of them as you can over time.

RMAPI is a Collective Impact effort – RMAPI succeeds when everyone in the community succeeds. The signing of the pledge is the start of an ongoing relationship. As WPOs sign the pledge, we will create learning opportunities and provide support by connecting WPOs to each other, to employers, and to other resources in the community. In time, we envision a recognition program, whereby we publicly recognize WPOs who truly live the best practices. There is also a companion pledge for Employers, and a parallel effort to support employers in improving their internal policies and practices.

Additional information about the pledge and all of the identified best practices can be found at <http://endingpovertynow.org/>. For each best practice, we have compiled examples of what it could look like "in action," as well as explanations of how each practice ties to RMAPI's Guiding Principles. Check back often, as we will continuously update the information on the website as new WPOs join and as we identify more examples of the best practices being implemented. If you have specific questions, please reach out to Rebekah Meyer, RMAPI Project Administrator, at 585.242.6430 or Rebekah.meyer@uwrochester.org.

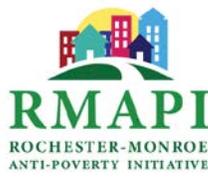
Thank you for joining RMAPI in our community's fight to end poverty.

Sincerely,

Leonard Brock
Executive Director
RMAPI

Daan Braveman
Co-Chair
RMAPI

Jerome Underwood
Co-Chair
RMAPI



About RMAPI and the Workforce Preparation Organization Pledge

What: RMAPI’s WPO Best Practices have been developed by RMAPI’s Employment Working Group. The best practices are based on lived experience of working group members, a review of available research, and taking RMAPI’s guiding principles into account. There is also a companion set of best practices for Employers.

Who: Workforce Preparation Organizations – WPOs – including training and vocational programs, workforce development programs, employment-related case management/support, and other initiatives aimed at preparing individuals for and placing them in employment. The pledge should be signed by someone in a leadership position – someone who can influence culture, policy, and practice at an organization.

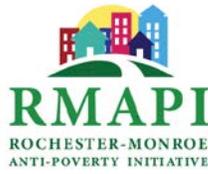
Why: RMAPI is focused on reducing poverty and increasing self-sufficiency. Increasing income through sustainable employment is a key strategy in this work. We want to actively and productively facilitate effective partnerships between employers and WPOs to make this strategy a reality.

When: To start, we are asking for 6-month action commitments around one or more best practice(s). We know that changing policies, practices, and behaviors is hard and takes time, effort, and focus. By asking for one set of commitments to start, we will learn from each other and improve as we go. As WPOs sign on to the pledge, we will work to connect WPOs to each other and to resources in the community to learn from and connect to each other.

About RMAPI: RMAPI is a Collective Impact effort. This means that RMAPI focuses on collaboration and systems change, not programmatic efforts. The WPO Pledge is a means of fostering collaboration among employers in the area, and improving the system of how employers engage with low-income community members.

About the Guiding Principles: RMAPI’s Guiding Principles are a key aspect of its work, and infuse everything it does. Employers pledging to RMAPI’s best practices are also pledging to uphold the guiding principles.

<p>Build and Support our Community: Help to rebuild struggling neighborhoods with quality support services to make them safe, healthy, and livable.</p>	<p>Address Structural Racism: End the activities and actions that continue racial inequality in public policies, institutional practices, and other cultural norms.</p>	<p>Address Trauma: Help to heal people and neighborhoods that are suffering from repeated experiences with trauma; provide support and services that are sensitive to traumatic experiences like abuse, addiction, and violence.</p>
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RMAPI Workforce Preparation Organization (WPO) Pledge

_____ [WPO name] pledges to combat poverty in the community by working towards improved internal policies and practices in alignment with one or more of the following best practices:

Workplace Culture

1. Recruit, train, and retain staff who are diverse, culturally competent, and trained in trauma-informed care best practices.

WPO Program Elements

2. Utilize evidence-based, ongoing assessment processes for individuals entering the program with well-defined expectations for participation.
3. Provide robust workforce readiness training for both hard (technical/vocational) and soft (essential/21st Century) skills.

Employer Relationships

4. Develop strong and effective partnerships with employers in order to understand their needs and align training/resources to prepare individuals to meet those needs.
5. Educate employers about incentives, the benefits of hiring individuals from poverty and diverse backgrounds, and how to best engage the community.

Retention and Success

6. Conduct post-placement follow-up and retention support for both individuals and employers.
7. Deliver intentional job matching services, which recognize individuals' interests and potential, leading to placement in jobs with living wages, comprehensive benefits, and room for growth.

We will also promote and uphold the RMAPI Guiding Principles:

Build and Support Our
Community

Address Structural
Racism

Address
Trauma

In signing this pledge, _____ [WPO name] commits to engaging with RMAPI and **identifying best practice areas of opportunity for improvement**, participating in learning opportunities with other WPOs, and developing an action plan for demonstrating progress in the next six months.

WPO Representative Name

Signature & Date

Title

Contact Information (email, phone, and mailing address):

Chosen Best Practice(s) and Action Commitments (attach additional pages if necessary):

We can provide support to other WPOs looking to improve in the following best practice(s):
