

## Request for Proposals (RFP)



## OVERVIEW

The **New York State Youth Employment Program (YEP)**, launched in 2024, provides year-round employment opportunities designed to reduce community gun violence and youth involvement in the criminal justice system. Research shows that at-risk and unemployed youth often face long-term challenges such as poverty, dependence on public assistance, and barriers to stable employment—particularly when exposed to trauma or violence. YEP funding supports employment, education, and career exploration opportunities for **TANF-eligible youth** as part of New York State’s broader gun-violence-reduction strategy.

Since 2024, **RochesterWorks** has administered YEP on behalf of the **Monroe County Department of Social Services (DSS)**, branding it locally as the **ROC Your Job** initiative. The program served 310 youth in its abbreviated first year and expanded to 451 participants in 2024–2025, who collectively worked more than 113,000 hours with 66 local employers.

Participation among 14- and 15-year-olds, however, has been limited, as many younger teens are not yet ready for traditional employment settings. To address this gap, RochesterWorks seeks to fund **alternative programming** that provides meaningful, age-appropriate work experiences for this group—modeled after the success of the annual **Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)**.

Through this **Request for Proposals (RFP)**, RochesterWorks invites community-based organizations to deliver **structured, paid work experiences** for eligible Monroe County youth during **after-school and weekend hours** throughout the 2025–2026 school year. Funding for this initiative is provided by the **New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)** through the Youth Employment Program.

This initiative prioritizes **TANF-eligible and high-risk youth**, including those affected by gun violence, involved in the justice system, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness. Providers are strongly encouraged to collaborate with **SNUG Street Outreach Programs**, law enforcement, and community organizations serving at-risk youth, in alignment with New York State’s comprehensive gun-violence-reduction model.

This is a **rolling solicitation**. Proposals will be accepted between November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 through March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, provided that all programming concludes by **April 30, 2026**, and meets the required **minimum participant hour standards**. RochesterWorks reserves the

right to close this Request for Proposals sooner than the posted deadline if circumstances warrant.

## 1. TIMELINE

| Event   | Date  |
|---|---|
| RFP Release   | November 10, 2025   |
| OPTIONAL Bidder's Conference Zoom link:<br><a href="https://rochesterorks.zoom.us/j/85141668171">https://rochesterorks.zoom.us/j/85141668171</a><br>Meeting ID: 851 4166 8171 | November 19, 2025, at 1 pm.   |
| Proposals Accepted Starting   | November 19, 2025   |
| Initial Selection   | December 1, 2025  |
| Deadline to Submit Proposals:   | March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2026 provided all programming concludes by April 30, 2026 |
| Program End Date  | April 30, 2026  |

## 2. SCOPE OF SERVICES

RochesterWorks seeks proposals from qualified organizations in the Greater Rochester (NY) area to provide after-school and weekend work experience programming for youth who are enrolled in a middle or high school or a TASC/GED exam preparation program.

### A. PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

Qualified Proposals must:

- Employ at least 5 qualified youth participants.
- Provide a minimum of 80 hours of paid work experience per participant.
- A minimal operation for 6–8 weeks, **with the following exceptions:**
  - Programs may run for a longer period if offering at least five paid hours per week and still meeting the 80-hour minimum per participant, **or**

- Program may be offered during a school break if providing at least 30 paid hours of paid work experience during that one-week period.

## B. GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Programming should be tailored towards 14- and 15-year-olds, who are the primary population intended to be served by this RFP.

Attention must be given to developing traditional paid employment activities that mirror true-to-life job activities with a youth-driven and strength-based employment focus. Employers are encouraged to partner with local businesses to provide structured work experiences. Partnerships should include a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) or a Letter of Intent to detail the working relationship. Specific job tasks must be consistent with the New York State minimum-age standards for employed youth under the age of 18, available at <https://dol.ny.gov/state-prohibited-occupations-minors>

Qualified work experiences must incorporate financial literacy, sexual harassment training, and job readiness training. When responding to this RFP, employers should carefully address how they plan to integrate these training components into their work experience programming.

According to federal guidelines, 20% of all 2025 YEP participants can be program-based; therefore, program-based proposals will receive secondary consideration in accordance with these guidelines.

While proposals will be funded through this RPF on a rolling basis throughout the program year, work experience programming must be provided using a **cohort model**. Funded organizations may provide programming during the 2025-2026 YEP Program year, provided they do not exceed the maximum authorized funding award from RochesterWorks.

## C. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Programs funded through this RFP must begin serving participants by March 1, 2026.

## D. YOUTH RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND JOB PLACEMENT

- All youth employed through RochesterWorks-funded work experiences will be selected **exclusively through the Youth Employment Program (YEP) application process** administered by RochesterWorks. Employers should **not recruit or preselect youth** for their programs, nor guarantee acceptance into

any work experience. Instead, interested or potentially eligible youth should be **encouraged to apply directly through the official YEP application process.**

- All youth who successfully complete the application process and are deemed eligible for employment will be **considered equally** for available opportunities that match their interests and qualifications. If a provider is interested in hiring a specific youth, they must **notify RochesterWorks staff immediately** for placement consideration and approval.
- Youth referred to work experience opportunities may have **limited or no prior work experience** and may face **barriers to maintaining stable employment.** Employers are expected to provide supportive supervision and foster a positive, inclusive learning environment for all participants.
- Prior to the start of each work experience, **RochesterWorks will refer eligible youth for interviews** with employers selected for funding. Minimum interview standards and related guidance will be shared with all approved worksites prior to contract execution.

### **3. PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE & COMMUNICATIONS**

Questions about this RFP will be taken at an initial Bidder's Conference, to be held on November 19, 2025. Questions may also be sent to SYEP@rochesterworks.org.

RochesterWorks will make every reasonable effort to keep respondents informed about the RFP process. Notifications about timeline date changes, amendments to the RFP, and other information about the RFP will be posted on the RochesterWorks website for this RFP. RochesterWorks' failure to provide such information shall not delay nor invalidate RochesterWorks' right to decide to award an agreement pursuant to this RFP.

### **4. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Respondents must complete the 2025-2026 YEP Work Experience Proposal Form, available online at [www.rochesterworks.org](http://www.rochesterworks.org). The form is attached as a reference (Attachment A), but must be completed and submitted electronically. Each organization should submit one proposal for all projected employment activities.

Proposals must include the following information:

#### **A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

##### **i. Description of Organization & Program**

Provide the name of the organization applying, include the name of the employment activity, and the actual employment site/location.

##### **ii. Number of Youth proposed to Serve**

Indicate the number of youth (minimum of 5) to be served through this employment experience. This may include multiple cohorts of participants, provided that each cohort serves 5 participants.

**iii. Duration of Program**

Qualified programs must:

- Operate for 6–8 weeks and provide at least 80 hours of paid work experience, **with the following exceptions:**
  - Programs may run for a longer period if offering at least 5 paid hours per week and still meeting the 80-hour minimum per participant, **or**
  - Program may be offered during a school break if providing at least 30 paid hours of paid work experience during that one-week period.

**iv. Employment Activity**

Provide a detailed employment overview of no more than 5 sentences to include a summary of the primary employment activity. In detail, include actual work to be performed, when, where, and how the employment activity will be delivered during the program. Programs are encouraged to provide copies of MOUs and or Letters of Intent for partnerships developed with local employers.

**v. Youth Job Title(s)**

Provide a job title for each youth position to be performed through this employment experience.

**vi. Youth Job Descriptions**

A detailed job description must be included for each Youth Job Title(s). This should be a formal job description on company/agency letterhead and speak to the following:

- Job Title
- Role Description
- Major Responsibilities
- Qualifications
- Physical Demands

**vii. Related policies and procedures**

Describe the policy on attendance, payroll procedures, appearance, behaviors, and grievances. Please note that this is a short-term employment opportunity, with youth receiving payment on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. If the employment activity

proposes an entrepreneurial or product sale component, you must include the policy on how any profits will be utilized or dispersed.

**viii. Transportation Policy**

Employers should describe in detail their transportation policy, should it require youth employees to be transported during working hours. Transportation policies should include the staff-to-youth employee ratio for transportation, and whether youth employees will be transported in private vehicles or program vehicles. Insurance liability information should also be provided for each specified transportation policy.

If your program is on a bus line, please include the route number for the bus from downtown Rochester to and from your worksite with departure times. If your program is not on a bus line, please detail what transportation accommodations will be made for youth workers to arrive at the worksite from downtown Rochester or a predetermined location.

RochesterWorks has the capacity to provide each youth in need with a monthly bus pass, if necessary to facilitate participant in a program.

**ix. Organizational Overview**

Provide an overview of the organization to include qualifications to operate proposed employment, such as experience, incorporation status, organization type, Affirmative Action Plan, bankruptcy filings, independent audit, and years of operation in Monroe County.

**x. Description of Key Employment Personnel**

Resumes and/or Job Descriptions of involved staff members, along with credentials of partner staff, and all other inclusions, must be compiled as a separate and single PDF included as a second attachment to the email and titled Attachments for 2025-2026 Youth Employment Program Work Experience Proposal.

**xi. Unique or Special Request:**

Employers should indicate any unique requests for the review team to consider when reviewing their proposal. These could include serving youth 16 – 20 years of age, unique starting times, and/or special transportation requests.

**xii. Volunteering**

Youth employed will not be allowed to engage in volunteer opportunities with an organization while they are program participants.

## **B. PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

### **i. Pre-Employment Activity**

Describe the pre-employment activity for the employment program. This should include an orientation for the youth and their parents, along with the dates, times, and locations. This should also include financial literacy and sexual harassment training.

#### **Work Schedule**

Provide a detailed schedule of the work hours for participants that are compliant with DOL's Laws Governing the Employment of Minors.

Given that youth employment opportunities will be provided outside of the school day, there is no requirement to have a set work schedule, provided that programs must meet the minimum participant hours.

Employers are not required to provide a meal break for less than 6 hours of work.

Per New York State law, during weeks when school is in session, minors 14- and 15-years-old are limited to the following hours in most occupations:

- No more than 3 hours on any school day
- No more than 8 hours on a Saturday or a non-school day
- No more than 18 hours in any week
- No more than 6 days in any week
- Not between 7 am and 7 pm during the school year. (Working Hours)

### **ii. Additional Activity**

Describe how the youth can make up missed work assignments due to pre-approved absences. Describe any post-employment activities carried out through this work experience.

## **C. Employment Budget**

An itemized budget and narrative explanation of all costs associated with the proposed work experience, including staff, operations, and participant costs, must be included. The total project budget should align with the model used by RochesterWorks' Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), with adjustments to reflect the after-school structure of the ROC Your Job program.

For this initiative, the cost per youth is based on a **6-week, 18-hour-per-week work** experience model at an hourly rate of \$16.00. The total cost per youth is **\$2,455**, which equates to approximately **\$409.17 per youth per week**. Of that amount, **\$288.00 per week** represents youth wages, and **\$121.17 per week** is available for employer overhead, staff supervision, supplies, and related expenses.

Please note that the wage portion is managed through TES Staffing, which serves as the employer of record for all youth participants. Therefore, when preparing your proposal budget, employers should exclude the youth wage portion and base their budgets solely on the non-wage portion of **\$121.17 per youth per week** for up to six weeks. This remaining amount covers administrative costs, supervision, and program-related expenses.

Indirect Costs must not exceed 10% of the total employment budget.

Payments are issued on a reimbursement basis, with no advance payments permitted. Employers must be equipped to handle reimbursement-based contracts. Typically, reimbursements are processed within up to four weeks after submission, contingent on timely follow-through.

#### **D. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

2025-2026 ROC Your Job Work Experience Proposal Forms will be accepted beginning November 19, 2025 through March 1, 2026

**Proposals are to be emailed only to:** SYEP@rochesterworks.org.

#### **E. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following is a summary of the proposal evaluation criteria. It is within RochesterWorks' discretion to determine the value assigned to each of these criteria.

##### **Quality of Employment Activity 30%**

Proposals will be evaluated based on relevance to in-demand industries, level of youth engagement, and contribution to employment partners. Demonstrated expertise and understanding of the RFP objectives and adequate workspace. Special consideration will be given to proposals that may be replicated in the Summer Youth Employment Program's Work Experience Program, which is offered annually during July and August, and whose guidelines largely mirror those outlined in this RFP.

##### **Employment Partners = 20%**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the quality of employment partners and/or work experiences created. Employment partners should be demonstrated through signed MOU's or Letters of Intent. Each work assignment must have a detailed job description.

##### **Demonstrated Capability = 20%**

This solicitation is designed to serve youth ages 14-15 who possess limited experience and/or work readiness. Diversity in employment offerings is sought. The commitment of key principals to the Employment: Demonstration of availability of senior-level staff or associates to be assigned to this work experience to ensure depth, accountability, and diversity of perspective. Employers must demonstrate the ability to serve a reasonable cross-section of youth regardless of background and work experience.

**Cost Efficiency = 20%**

Reasonable cost of expenses/supplies, fiscal and organizational/administrative capacity with sufficient cash flow and/or cash on hand to cover expenses. Payments are issued on a reimbursement basis, with no advance payments permitted. The total cost of the Respondent's proposal is important to Rochester Works; however, based on the evaluation of the other criteria, Rochester Works will not necessarily select the lowest bidder.

**Supplemental Resources & Value = 10%**

The Respondent's comprehension of the needs of Rochester Works as demonstrated by its description of its approach to the elements listed in the Scope of Services section of this RFP. Worksites are centrally located and/or easily accessible by public transportation. Demonstrates value of resources added both monetarily and otherwise (funds, contributions, activity/services, etc.). Employers who create connections for participating youth to transition to steady work and/or to additional education or training will receive added consideration. Employers demonstrating a unique ability to serve youth with limited disabilities and/or mental health needs, juvenile offenders, and youth requiring reasonable individualized supports may receive added consideration.

**Additional Evaluation Criteria:** Other criteria may be considered and evaluated by RochesterWorks if it is determined to be in the best interest of RochesterWorks and the success of the Work Experience to do so. Respondents shall provide sufficient information in their written proposals to enable RochesterWorks to make a recommendation to RochesterWorks Executive Director and the Workforce Development Board. RochesterWorks reserves the right to invite any or all Respondents to an interview to discuss their proposal. Any expenses resulting from such an interview will be the sole responsibility of the Respondent. RochesterWorks is not obligated to select any of the responding Respondents or conduct the Employment Activity described herein. RochesterWorks may amend or withdraw the RFP at any time, within its discretion. RochesterWorks shall have no liability for any costs incurred in preparing a proposal or responding to the requests with respect to the proposal.

The selection of a proposal is within RochesterWorks' sole discretion, and no reasons for rejection or acceptance of a proposal are required to be given. Although costs are an important consideration, the decision will be based on qualifications and compliance with the requirements of this RFP and not solely on cost. RochesterWorks reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to accept a proposal that does not conform to the terms set forth herein.

RochesterWorks further reserves the right to waive or modify minor irregularities in the proposals and negotiate with Employers to serve RochesterWorks' best interests.

Successful respondents will be required to cooperate with RochesterWorks to develop further proposal details as needed.

The Respondent(s) selected by RochesterWorks will be required to enter into a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with RochesterWorks (see Attachment B, RochesterWorks standard PSA form). Unless otherwise stated in the proposal, the Respondent's response to this RFP shall be deemed its acceptance of the terms of this PSA.

## **F. MISCELLANEOUS**

RochesterWorks reserves the right to amend or withdraw this RFP at the discretion of RochesterWorks, including any timeframes herein, upon notification of all Respondents as set forth above, and in such case, RochesterWorks shall have no liability for any costs incurred by any Respondent.

RochesterWorks may request additional information from any Respondent to assist with the evaluation of the proposal.

The proposal and all materials submitted with it shall become the property of RochesterWorks and will be subject to NYS Freedom of Information Law. If any proprietary information is submitted with the proposal, it must be clearly identified, and a request to keep such information confidential must be submitted.

Submission of a proposal shall constitute a binding offer by the Respondent to provide the services at the prices described therein until the parties enter a PSA.