

America's semiconductor industry. Recent state and federal awards to our [STELLAR](#) Engine further reinforce Greater Rochester's position as a place where laser research, technology, and innovation can drive the next generation of economic growth.

These awards are significant votes of confidence, but attracting investment is only part of the equation. Creating the jobs that will support these new opportunities is another.



Dave Seeley

Perhaps most significantly, we have to build the workforce that will fill those jobs. And we have to do it at the same time we transform our local economy, if not beforehand.

Recently, through the support of [Monroe County](#), New York State and many other partners, [RochesterWorks](#) broke ground on its future \$14.5 million One-Stop Career Center at [Monroe Community College's](#) (MCC) Downtown Campus. When it opens next year, it will become a front door to [workforce development](#) in Monroe County—a place where people from every neighborhood and background can discover careers, develop skills and connect with employers.

The RochesterWorks One-Stop Career Center isn't being built just anywhere. RochesterWorks is co-locating with MCC, our region's largest workforce training provider.

This is a strategic partnership, not simply a real estate decision

For those who argue our workforce system needs to operate more effectively as one unit, we agree. Cementing a partnership between one of our region's largest occupational skills training institutions and its largest workforce development initiative, not just on paper, but through brick and mortar, is a good place to start.

Alongside the Career Center, our organizations are launching the \$31 million Finger Lakes [ON-RAMP](#) initiative, centered at MCC's Finger Lakes Workforce Development (FWD) Center, a state-funded initiative designed to create more seamless and sustainable pathways to careers in [advanced manufacturing](#).

MCC is also playing a leading role in STEP UP, the Semiconductor Talent and Employer Partnership in Upstate New York. This is the workforce component of the NY SMART I-Corridor. And through its internationally renowned optics program, MCC is spearheading workforce development strategies for the STELLAR Engine, which will help make our region a primary hub in a \$16 trillion global laser market.

Together, these efforts represent a more integrated approach to workforce and economic development in the Rochester area.

It takes a collective effort to build a better workforce

MCC brings decades of experience in education, technical training, and credential development. RochesterWorks brings the reach and resources of the public workforce system—connecting job seekers with career guidance, training, supportive services, and employment—while working directly with employers to understand their talent needs.

But this partnership extends beyond our two organizations

As operator of the federally funded One-Stop Career Center system in Monroe County, RochesterWorks is charged with convening partners and helping create a system where there is no wrong door for someone seeking a career pathway.

The new RochesterWorks One-Stop Career Center and Finger Lakes ON-RAMP are being designed with that philosophy in mind. The Young Adult [Manufacturing](#) Training Employment Program (YAMTEP) can help address transportation barriers. TogetherNow's MyWayfinder can connect job seekers with

social care resources when needs such as housing, food, transportation, or child care stand between someone and employment.

A resident considering a new career should not need to understand the boundaries among education, workforce development and community services before getting help.

Imagine instead walking through one door and gaining access to career counseling, information about growing industries, supportive services, education and training, and connections to employers with partners helping you move from interest to preparation to employment.

This is the future we are building at 321 State Street in downtown Rochester

And the timing matters. The industries Greater Rochester is working to grow will require people at every level: scientists and engineers, but also technicians, skilled tradespeople, production workers, equipment operators and supervisors.

For employers, a more coordinated system means a stronger, more responsive talent pipeline. For residents, it means clearer pathways into careers with a future. For our community, it means bringing more people into our regional economy precisely when employers need more talent.

Greater Rochester cannot reach its economic potential unless more of our residents can reach theirs

For more than a quarter-century, RochesterWorks has opened its doors to job seekers from across our community. MCC has spent even longer opening doors to education and economic mobility. This next chapter brings those missions closer together at a moment when our region needs them more connected than ever.

Tech Hub, STELLAR, ON-RAMP, and the new Career Center are not simply announcements to celebrate. They are opportunities to build upon.

Our task now is to connect investments in technology and industry with an equally ambitious investment in people.

Together, we can build a workforce system equal to this moment. Giving employers the talent to compete, residents pathways to opportunity, and Greater Rochester the foundation to turn today's momentum into decades of shared prosperity.

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Tags: [ON-RAMP](#), [MCC Career Center](#), [Monroe Community College](#), [Monroe County](#), [advanced manufacturing](#), [tech hub](#), [NY SMART I-Corridor](#), [STELLAR](#), [RochesterWorks](#), [manufacturing](#)