

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

2025-2026



PURPOSE

The Youth Employment Program is an important platform which is intended to help reduce community gun violence and youth criminal justice involvement by providing year-round employment opportunities. Research shows that vulnerable at-risk and unemployed youth can face struggles later in life, including poverty, dependence on public benefit programs and criminal justice involvement. In addition, youth exposed to trauma and violence may suffer long-term effects, including barriers to successful employment and economic stability.

The New York State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget appropriated \$40.6 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for services and expenses to support a Youth Employment Program. Erie County received an allocation of \$5.2 million.

WHAT'S NEW TAKE A LOOK INSIDE

377 youth were engaged in meaningful jobs, educational opportunities and career exploration activities

28 community partners and businesses hosted youth

Broadview Federal Credit Union presented on Developing Healthy Financial Habits

Career Connection Network provided an interactive training on Sexual Harassment Prevention

YOUTH EXPERIENCE

Through this experience youth had the opportunity to acquire basic work competencies, explore various careers and earn a wage while they learned. The program provided youth with several tools that will enable them to succeed in future endeavors.

- ❖ *Gained first-hand work experience*
- ❖ *Developed appropriate workplace behaviors*
- ❖ *Increased confidence*
- ❖ *Built self-esteem*
- ❖ *Improved communication skills*
- ❖ *Earned income*
- ❖ *Learned how to budget*
- ❖ *Discovered talents*
- ❖ *Obtained job readiness skills*
- ❖ *Explored career possibilities*
- ❖ *Set career goals*
- ❖ *Contributed to the community*

WORKSITE SPONSORS

ABC Hardware & Rental
Apollo Media Center
Away Out Queens
Azeem Family Foundation
Back to Basics Outreach Ministries
Brothers Restaurant
Build Promise
Community Action Organization
Cyn Heavenly Angels Quality Care
EM Tea Coffee Cup Café
Group Ministries
Hope of Buffalo-Peaceprints
King Urban Life Center
Love Alive Fellowship
Massachusetts Avenue Project
Peace of the City Ministries
Resource Council of WNY
Restoration Society
Salud Market
Seneca Babcock
Starlight Family Daycare Center
Stop the Violence Coalition
The House of Learning
To Our Legacy & Legends
TRU-WAY Community Center
Urban Christian Ministries
West Side Community Services
Youth Guardian Program

FINANCIAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Broadview Federal Credit Union
From First Job to Financial Freedom

Topics: Financial Knowledge Check; Banks vs Credit Unions; Opening an Account; Using Your Money- credit cards, debit cards, digital wallet, convenience cost; Understanding Your Paycheck; Taxes; Retirement

Participation Summary	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
Total Participants in Paid Employment	65	312	377
Total Participants in Educational Only Activity	0	0	0
Total Overall Participants	65	312	377

Youth Served by Age	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
Youth Served at Age 14	5	22	27
Youth Served at Age 15	13	63	76
Youth Served at Age 16	24	81	105
Youth Served at Age 17	13	54	67
Youth Served at Age 18	8	53	61
Youth Served at Age 19	1	20	21
Youth Served at Age 20	1	19	20

School Status	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
In School Youth	59	245	304
Out of School Youth	6	67	73

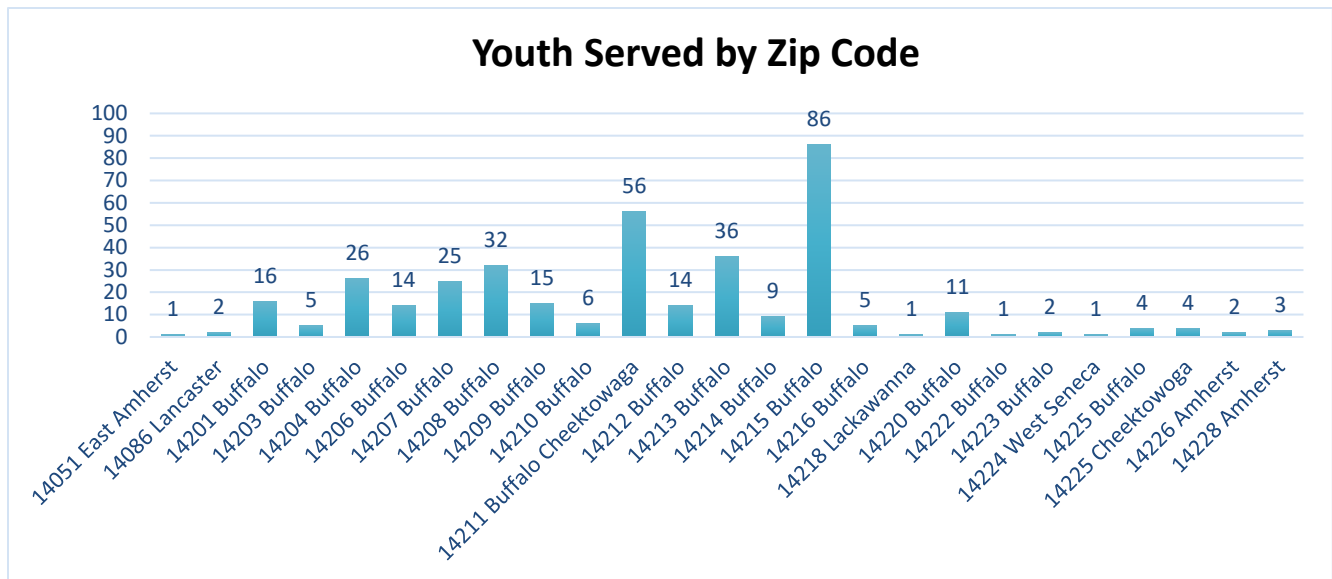
Gender Identity	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
Male	36	245	281
Female	29	67	96
Non-Binary/X/Transgender/Different Identity	0	0	0

Race/Ethnicity	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
Hispanic or Latino	6	27	33
Native American or Alaskan Native	0	3	3
Asian	3	9	12
Black or African American	51	265	316
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0	1
White	3	4	7
Unknown	1	4	5

Target Groups	FA or SN-Family	TANF 200%	Total
Youth at Risk of Gun Violence *	59	250	309
Foster Care	2	7	9
Homeless/Runaway Youth	4	7	11
Youth With a Disability	3	48	51

*Referred by local SNUG organizations, juvenile justice system involved or identified as living in an at-risk location (14204, 14206, 14207, 14208, 14209, 14210, 14211, 14212, 14215)

- 199 of the youth from the 2025 SYEP enrolled in the 2025-2026 YEP
- 280 of the 377 2025-2026 YEP youth transitioned into the 2026 SYEP



Special efforts were made to ensure participation of vulnerable and high-risk youth residing in high ranked poverty communities, youth impacted by gun violence, foster care, homeless and runaway youth. **Back to Basics Outreach Ministries**, the **WNY Peacemakers**, **Stop the Violence Coalition** and members of the **Street Engagement Team** have been an integral part of the Youth Employment Program, identifying and connecting youth to the program, assisting at program events, mediating conflict and providing mentoring services.

POSITIVE YOUTH EXPERIENCES/ RECOGNIZING YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT

"YEP was beneficial to me because I have something to do with my time. The program helps other youths, helps the community, save lives, prepares me for the world, it is serious, it is a base or foundation for living. I love public speaking and can now advocate for myself." **Iyana- 18**

"The YEP has helped me financially, I learned how to save, help my family if needed. The program also helped me to change my mind set and to keep me safe." **Demone-19**

"The program is fun and relaxing. I enjoy working in the greenhouse getting my hands in the dirt and helping the community. What is big for me is that the program helps me to open up, stand up for myself and others positively, and prepare for college." **Maurice-19**

"The best part of my day is the YEP. I learned leadership skills and, how to communicate better. The program taught me to take care of my mental health, knowing what upsets me and how to control my actions. I have improved from my mistakes and try changing the negatives into positives." **Abdi -17**

Empress is 18 years old and has been in YEP for three years and has successfully transitioned to SYEP each year. Empress has fine-tuned the following skills, states her mom, "her social, communication and leadership skills, and she doesn't like to be late. More importantly YEP has provided Empress the settings to become more selective when choosing her friends in that she chooses positive friends". Empress starts Buffalo State College in September and plans to major in Forensic Science. She wants to find a way to give back to her community, she wants to study the why and how in criminology to help prevent crimes.

*Erie County Department of Social Services
Comprehensive Employment Division
Karen Rybicki, Commissioner of Social Services*

