



Erie County
Department of Social Services
Employment Division
290 Main Street 8th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

Mark Poloncarz
Erie County Executive

Karen Rybicki
Social Services Commissioner

2026 ERIE COUNTY SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



Youth Participant Handbook

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Buffalo Urban League
15 Genesee St.
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 250-2400

Career Connection Network
5500 Main St, Suite #212
Williamsville NY 14221
(716) 630-7008

Erie County Department of Social Services
290 Main St. 8th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 858-1006



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SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Welcome to the Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). The goal of the program is to provide you with a meaningful work experience that will help you acquire job skills that can be used to improve your school performance, prepare for future employment and explore career pathways.

You will participate **20 hours** per week **July 6, 2026 through August 28, 2026** at an assigned worksite. During the program you will also be required to participate in mandatory program activities.

Through this experience, you will have the opportunity to acquire basic work competencies, make new friends, and earn wages while you learn.

Your willingness to put forth your best effort and develop good work habits are key to having a productive and successful work experience.

During your worksite placement interview, a case manager will discuss with you your interests and career goals. You will be matched to a worksite based on your occupational interests and availability of worksite slots in proximity to your home. If you need transportation assistance, please let the case manager know during this interview. A bus pass will be provided to assist you with travel to/from your worksite.

The information in this handbook is designed to help explain the program rules, expectations, roles and responsibilities. Inside this manual you will find valuable information that will help answer many of your questions.

Program staff will provide you with further information during the mandatory orientation and will remain available throughout the program to address any concerns or questions that may arise.

**Please use the below section to record your
Summer Youth Employment information**

**The information can be used as a reference tool
when completing job applications or creating your resume**

Name of Organization/Business _____

Address _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

Telephone # _____

Supervisor Name/Title _____

Type of Organization/Business _____

Employed From _____ To _____ # Hours/Week _____

Title of Position _____

Work Performed/Duties

Additional Responsibilities

KEY DATES

Program Dates

July 6, 2026– August 28, 2026

Mandatory Activities @ Buffalo & Erie County Library Auditorium

6/29/26, 6/30/26, 7/1/26

1st Day at Assigned Worksite

July 6, 2026

Payroll Processing

Time Sheets Due

Monday, July 13, 2026

Monday, July 27, 2026

Monday, August 10, 2026

Monday, August 24, 2026

Monday, August 31, 2026

Pay Dates

Friday, July 17, 2026

Friday July 31, 2026

Friday, August 14, 2026

Friday, August 28, 2026

Friday, September 4, 2026

- ♦ Timesheets are required by the above dates to ensure timely processing of payroll.
- ♦ You will be issued a pay card and your wages will be electronically loaded onto the card the morning of the pay date.

As a youth participant we encourage you to:

- ♦ put forth your best effort on the job.
- ♦ develop good work habits.
- ♦ present a positive attitude.
- ♦ accept feedback from your supervisor.
- ♦ take initiative.
- ♦ problem solve.

Youth Participant Roles and Responsibilities:

- ♦ Be at your worksite on time and ready to work
- ♦ Understand the duties and requirement of your job
“Don’t be afraid to ask questions”
- ♦ Wear appropriate clothing applicable for your job (If you need assistance with obtaining appropriate clothing please discuss with your case manager)
- ♦ Use any and all safety equipment issued by the worksite
- ♦ Perform the job assigned to you to the best of your ability
- ♦ Follow instructions and all program rules
- ♦ Inform your worksite supervisor or case manger of any problems or concerns that arise
- ♦ Behave in a professional manner that is at all times courteous and respectful

Youth Participant Goals:

- ♦ Gain valuable work experience and acquire new skills
- ♦ Develop appropriate workplace behaviors
- ♦ Increase confidence and build self-esteem
- ♦ Earn money and learn how to budget
- ♦ Discover your talents
- ♦ Learn job readiness skills
- ♦ Improve communication skills
- ♦ Set career goals

TIME AND ATTENDANCE

Hours of Work

- ◆ Your assigned worksite supervisor will determine your daily work schedule.
- ◆ You are permitted to participate 20 hours per week.

Lunch and Breaks

- ◆ You are permitted an unpaid lunch period.
- ◆ If you work six (6) or more hours per day you must receive ½ hour lunch period (Unpaid).
- ◆ Breaks are determined by the worksite supervisor and are included in the hours of work.

Tardiness

- ◆ Since establishing good work habits is one of the goals of the program, tardiness is not acceptable. In line with establishing good work habits, it is your responsibility to be at the worksite and ready for work on time. Such explanations as missing the bus, car trouble, or oversleeping are not acceptable reasons.
- ◆ If you are going to be late, you must call your worksite supervisor. Your supervisor will record all lateness and you will not be paid for time missed.
- ◆ Repeated tardiness will be reported to the program case manager and may result in termination from the program.

Absences

- ◆ It is your responsibility to notify the worksite supervisor in advance of expected absences.
- ◆ If your absence is due to an emergency or illness, you must notify the worksite supervisor at least one-half hour before the start of your scheduled shift.
- ◆ You will not be paid for time missed from work.
- ◆ Excessive absences will be reported to the program case manager and may result in termination from the program.

LABOR LAWS

Equal Opportunity

The Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program is committed to diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity. It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunity in every aspect of employment to all youth, without regard to age, race, ancestry, religion, creed, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, predisposing genetic characteristics, military status, marital status or domestic violence victim's status and other basis protected by New York State and Federal Laws.

Harassment Policy

The SYEP is committed to maintaining a work environment free of unlawful harassment, and will not tolerate harassment. Your worksite is required to take reasonable steps necessary to prevent discrimination and harassment from occurring. During orientation you will receive sexual harassment prevention training. The training will be interactive and include an explanation of sexual harassment; examples of conduct that would constitute unlawful sexual harassment; information about federal and state laws regarding sexual harassment; remedies available to victims of sexual harassment and your rights; and how to file a complaint. If you believe that you are being subjected to harassment, you should report it to your supervisor and case manager immediately so that a rapid response and appropriate action may be taken. If the complaint involves your supervisor, promptly report it to your case manager or the program operators (Buffalo Urban League or Career Connection). Your report will be kept confidential, or limited to the individuals involved in resolving the situation.

Child Labor Laws

The Division of Labor Standards governs the maximum and prohibited working hours as well as type of work permitted for minors. If you are between the ages of 14 and 17 years old you must provide working papers to the program operator before you can start work. Application for working papers can be obtained at your school guidance office or from Buffalo City Hall. If you turn 16 during the program, you must obtain new working papers before you will be allowed to continue to work. Your working papers will be returned to you at the end of the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

The health and safety of SYEP participants is essential. All workplace settings must comply with health and safety regulations and adhere to state and federal guidance.

Sick Policy

You should not report to work symptomatic for any potential illnesses. You must notify the worksite supervisor at least one-half hour before the start of your scheduled shift if you are unable to report. If you report to work sick or becomes sick while at work, you will be sent home immediately. If you are not feeling well, please stay at home to recover.

Accident and Injury Prevention

Caution and common sense should be used every day at your assigned worksite. You should make every effort to avoid accidents and remain alert to potential safety concerns and hazardous conditions throughout the work day. You should be provided with a copy of the health and safety rules and regulations that you are expected to follow at your worksite. The worksite will advise you of the proper attire required (closed toed shoes, long sleeves, pants, etc.) and provide you with appropriate safety equipment (gloves, safety goggles, etc.) for your assigned duties.

Evacuation Procedures

You will be provided with information and instructions to deal with emergencies, including the evacuation of the workplace. Every workplace must have a clear evacuation procedure in place and ensure you are aware of the procedures.

Reporting Incidents

You should report all workplace safety concerns and incidents to your supervisor immediately. Supervisors will assess and act on all workplace safety concerns and hazardous conditions immediately to resolve the problem and prevent future accidents and/or injuries. Supervisors will report any injuries immediately to the case manager. If you sustain an injury please seek medical attention immediately.

Recording Time and Attendance

- ♦ It is your responsibility to record your actual hours worked.
- ♦ You must sign in/out daily recording arrival and departure times on the official time sheet provided by the program operators.
- ♦ Your signature certifies the accuracy of entries and is required.
- ♦ Your time sheet entries will be used to calculate your pay.
- ♦ Falsifying hours worked will result in immediate termination from the program.

Payroll

- ♦ At the end of the two-week pay period, the worksite supervisor will review your time sheet record for accuracy.
- ♦ You and the worksite supervisor must sign your time sheet in order to receive credit for time worked.
- ♦ Your pay will be only for actual hours worked.
- ♦ In your folder there will be a schedule of your pay dates.
- ♦ You will be paid \$16.50 per hour for actual hours worked, not to exceed the maximum 20 hours in one week.
- ♦ There are no fringe benefits such as sick pay, vacation pay or prepaid medical insurance. However, the employer share of FICA, workers' compensation and unemployment insurance are provided.

Performance Evaluations

Your worksite supervisor will complete an evaluation of your performance. Performance factors include: personal qualities, e.g. time and attendance, team work, attitude, initiative etc.; basic skills such as communication and following instructions; thinking skills including problem solving and reasoning; general appearance, e.g. appropriately dressed and maintaining good personal hygiene; and technology, e.g. computer skills. The performance evaluation is designed to be an ongoing development tool to enhance communication between you and your supervisor, clarify expectations and help you develop on the job skills.

PROGRAM MONITORING

Representatives from Buffalo Urban League, and Erie County Department of Social Services will be monitoring your progress throughout the program. We ask that you give complete cooperation to the monitoring staff when they visit. During these visits the case manager will be interested in hearing from you about your experience, including any difficulties or concerns you may have. Additionally the case manager will meet with your worksite supervisor to review your job performance including, time and attendance, behavior, attitude, initiative and skills development.

During the course of the program it may be necessary to transfer or terminate you. If there is a conflict between the supervisor and you which cannot be resolved, the case manager will determine the course of action to be taken. In the event of repeated conflict, unsafe working conditions, poor supervision, or lack of meaningful work, the case manager may determine a worksite is inappropriate and may need to transfer you to an alternate worksite.

Case Manager

The person who is responsible for monitoring your performance through out the program is the "Case Manager". The case manager will make regular visits to your worksite to ensure things are going well and to hear from you about your experience, including any difficulties or concerns you may have.

Worksite Supervisor

The person who is in direct charge of you at your worksite is the "Worksite Supervisor." You are accountable to this person for your daily work performance. The Worksite Supervisor assigns your work tasks, assists you in accomplishing your assigned tasks, schedules your hours of work, and evaluates your work performance.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The orderly and efficient operation of the program requires that you observe certain minimum standards of behavior and performance. The rules listed below are to ensure proper conduct. This list does not cover all behaviors/situations which discipline may result, every possibility for which discipline may result cannot be listed.

The following acts are prohibited:

- ◆ Fighting, provoking a fight or horseplay, disorderly conduct of any kind
- ◆ Threatening or intimidating a supervisor or coworker
- ◆ Drinking, possessing alcoholic beverages or narcotic substances, reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or sale of drugs or intoxicants
- ◆ Smoking/Vaping
- ◆ Violation of any criminal law
- ◆ Insubordination or failure to follow the reasonable direction or order of the supervisor
- ◆ Theft or intentional destruction of property, tools, equipment, etc.
- ◆ Falsification of documents or time sheet records
- ◆ Possession of firearms, explosives, or other weapons
- ◆ Leaving the work premises/area during scheduled working hours without permission of the supervisor
- ◆ Sleeping during work hours
- ◆ Carelessness, negligence, or willful actions which result in damage to property
- ◆ Discourteous treatment or use of abusive, profane , or threatening language to supervisors, co-workers, or program staff
- ◆ Use of phones for personal calls or texting during work hours (personal or organization/business phones)
- ◆ Failure to use safety equipment provided
- ◆ Misuse of work time such as loitering, interfering with others work routines, engaging in prolonged conversations which are not work related

Failure to comply with program rules will result in disciplinary actions, which may include: coaching, counseling, oral warnings, written reprimand, program suspension or termination from the program.