

## Program Overview

NeON Works provides young people ages 16-24 with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, and experience to prepare them for success in the workplace. The program offers professional development and career exploration workshops, individualized needs assessment and coaching, and supported connections to adult education, internships, and job placements. The program is funded by the Young Men's Initiative (YMI) and implemented by the Department of Probation (DOP).



Agency	Start Date	FY24 Budget	FY25 Budget	FY25 # Served
DOP	September 2020	\$2,725,000	\$2,500,000	923

## Problem Statement & Context

The DOP Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) initiative is based on the philosophy that an effective intervention centers clients' needs, community engagement, and collaborative partnerships. NeON seeks to strengthen the communities that people on probation call home, serving as dynamic resource hubs across the City. Since 2011, DOP has established seven NeON community-based centers, located in neighborhoods where high numbers of people on probation are living: Brownsville, Bedford Stuyvesant, East New York, Harlem, Jamaica, Northern Staten Island, and the South Bronx. DOP provides people on probation with opportunities to forge new pathways so they can cultivate their strengths and avoid future contact with the legal system, including education and skills to succeed in the job market. Workforce development programs can help young people gain a foothold in the workplace by providing access to formal work experience and to opportunities to explore different jobs. This is especially true for young people of color, who face structural barriers in accessing early work opportunities, and for those with contact with the legal system, which can worsen these challenges.<sup>1</sup> Having access to community-based workforce development resources and supports can facilitate a stable transition to adulthood.<sup>2</sup> In the long term, early work opportunities are positively associated with job quality in adulthood.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Urban Institute. [Employer Engagement in Summer Youth Employment Programs](#). 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Urban Institute. [Community-Based Workforce Engagement Supports for Youth and Young Adults Involved in the Criminal Legal System](#). June 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Urban Institute. [Employer Engagement in Summer Youth Employment Programs](#): 2019.

## Program Details

NeON Works seeks to create supportive, youth-centered learning environments by implementing a 'one-size-fits-one' model that prepares young adults for the world of work and cultivates participants' agency in determining their own futures. NeON Works provides three main services:

- Professional development and career exploration workshops
- Individualized needs assessment and coaching
- Supported connections to HSE enrollment, internships, job placements

The program aims for at least 40% of participants to be on probation or community supervision at intake. Priority is given to people aged 16-24, and there are no educational requirements to participate. Participants earn a stipend based on their involvement and goal attainment, and can take part in the program for up to a full year, after which they may continue to attend workshops and receive ongoing aftercare, including supported connections to help them meet their personal goals.

## Program Goals and Expected Outcomes

- Professional Development
  - Internship and job placements
  - Job services program enrollments
- Educational and Skills Advancement
  - HSE program enrollment or high school re-enrollment
  - College enrollment
  - Connections to training that leads to a high-quality credentials to assist with job placement

## Performance Data:

	FY25		FY24
	Actual	Target	Actual
New clients served	923	1,200	924
Workshops offered	770	640	577
Participants assessed	637	415	603
New enrollees: participants engaged, assessed & enrolled in supported connection	280	271	259
Connected to a credential opportunity	193		192
Enrolled in college	10		15
Enrolled in HSE program or re-enroll in high school	23		15
Participated in internships	32		63
Hired into jobs	89		101

## Evaluation

A 2025 evaluation conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago examined the implementation of the program model across the various NeON Works sites to understand what practices support participants to succeed. The evaluation found that participants most value strong relationships with relatable staff, access to career training, and a sense of community and purpose. Participants reported gains in skills, confidence and clarity in setting goals. However, the program had low levels of completion of internships and enrollments in educational programs (below 10% and 5%, respectively) and only 12% of program participants obtained a job placement. NeON Works will continue to strive to increase these, as well as reach the 40% target of youth engaging in the program who are on probation or community supervision, which is currently at 33%. For more information, please see our [blog post](#), the [Evaluation Report](#) and [Findings at a Glance](#).

## In the News

NeON Works was [featured](#) on Pix11 News in September 2022.