



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

SWFI Program @ Rochester Rehabilitation

Collaborating to support careers in health care, IT, and advanced manufacturing

The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor that partners with businesses in the fields of health care, IT, and advanced manufacturing. These businesses are dedicated to investing in their current and prospective employees and their community. SWFI supports parents of children under age 13 (or under age 18 with a disability) who enter a school or training to find jobs in these three industries or who currently work for one of the business partners and want to improve their position. SWFI provides guidance and financial assistance to help people achieve their goals.

Who are the people our program served?



84% of participants had low incomes



96% of participants were female



87% of participants had high school diplomas (or the equivalent)



80% of participants were Black or African American



Advanced manufacturing



Health care



Information technology

Building evidence



156 participants completed training



60% of participants received child care support



94% of participants who completed training earned a credential



100% of participants received transportation assistance

Jeffrey's story

Jeffrey learned about the SWFI program at a Young Adult Manufacturing Training Employment Program (YAMTEP) presentation. The program was a good fit for him, but he realized he was going to need more support to complete all 12 weeks of it. He connected with the SWFI navigator, who helped him with funds for child care, transportation, and training-related equipment. While attending the training, Jeffrey started working at a local optical company. He began as a part-time employee and continued his training with YAMTEP. Once he finished the YAMTEP program, he was recognized as one of the company's best workers and given a full-time position.



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Empowering the Rochester Community

Looking ahead

SWFI intends to play a vital role in empowering and improving the careers of families living in Monroe County. More specifically, we want to help people get jobs in the fields of health care, IT, and advanced manufacturing. SWFI plans to collaborate with employers and the county and city of Rochester to help them achieve their goal of making the region first in these three critical fields. SWFI is in a position to provide vital supports, such as child care, uniforms, books, fees, and transportation assistance. SWFI will expand recruitment in the area training centers and also partner with businesses as they seek to improve the skills of their incumbent workers. SWFI plans to be an integral part of any workforce development strategy to improve the lives of the Rochester community.

Tasha's story



While working as a certified nursing assistant (C.N.A.) at a nursing home, Tasha often thought about expanding her career and becoming a licensed practical nurse (L.P.N.). She knew this would help her to better provide for her family. Her employer (part of Rochester Regional Health System) offered a program to cover the cost of training for employees who wanted to advance in their careers. She saw this as a perfect opportunity. She enrolled in Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC), where she learned about the SWFI program. Tasha connected with a navigator who explained how SWFI worked and how it could help her achieve her goal of becoming an L.P.N. Tasha took advantage of the child care and transportation assistance, as well as the emotional support she received from her navigator. SWFI had a staff person designated to work with FLCC, and whenever Tasha's grades or attendance started to slip, the counselor would connect with the SWFI navigator, and together they would help her get back on track. After a year of working, going to school, and managing a household with small children, Tasha graduated with her L.P.N. credential. Not only did her self-esteem soar, she was offered a position at a bigger location with better hours, higher salary, and more career opportunities. She is forever grateful for the support she received from the SWFI program, and looks forward to its help when she pursues her R.N. degree.

Key partners

- The Child Care Council (CCC) is a pivotal partner in the success of the SWFI program. CCC works with SWFI participants to identify reliable, licensed day care providers and have the provider and participant work out a schedule so the participant can go to school or training.
- Action for a Better Community is providing critical research into systems change and the effect of a loss of child care and other important benefits as one transitions to viable employment.
- Training partners: SWFI has partnered with the leading schools and training centers in the city of Rochester and Monroe County that provide instruction in the health care, IT, and advanced manufacturing fields. These partners include Monroe Community College, Rochester Educational Opportunity Center, Isabella Graham School of Nursing, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, The Office of Adult and Career Education Services, Rochester Technology and Manufacturing Association, Gleason Works, and Medical Billing & Coding Services.



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