



Rochester Youth Year 2026-2027

Who? Rochester Youth Year members are recent graduates of Rochester-area colleges or natives of the Rochester area who have recently graduated from college elsewhere. **Students graduating in winter 2025 and spring 2026** are especially encouraged to apply, but we welcome applicants who have graduated from a Rochester-area college within the last five years.

Successful applicants are passionate about **promoting equity and social justice**; open-minded and curious; comfortable working with people from diverse backgrounds; committed to the Rochester community; and have interest/previous experience in community or public service, urban issues, or other areas of civic engagement. In keeping with AmeriCorps VISTA requirements, Rochester Youth Year members must be **US citizens, nationals, or permanent residents**.

What? Rochester Youth Year empowers local graduates to strengthen the capacity of community organizations in an effort to **alleviate the effects of poverty** for Rochester Youth and families. The program emphasizes civic engagement, promotes learning about urban issues, and encourages a celebration and appreciation for cross-cultural issues and urban life. Highlights of the program include:

Capacity-Building Service – Rochester Youth Year members are placed in **paid fellowships** with nonprofit agencies located in the City of Rochester. Projects focus on educational equity, health equity, food access/food sovereignty, economic empowerment, and/or environmental stewardship. Rochester Youth Year members perform **indirect, capacity-building service**, working behind the scenes to support **sustainable solutions to poverty**. Common activities include recruiting and managing volunteers; building community partnerships; writing grants; fundraising; conducting community outreach; planning events; developing programs; and assessing community needs.

Professional Development and Networking – Rochester Youth Year members are **community organizers**, and over the course of their service terms, they connect with other Rochesterians to develop their projects and enhance their understanding of the Flower City. Members' networks expand to include community leaders and changemakers, other members of the Rochester Youth Year cohort, and RYY alumni who continue to serve their communities as fully-fledged professionals. In order to develop their skills, members participate in **extensive on-the-job training** as well as **monthly professional development activities** organized by Rochester Youth Year.

AmeriCorps VISTA Benefits – Rochester Youth Year members serve as **AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers**, and they receive numerous benefits offered by AmeriCorps including a modest living allowance of \$68.39/day; a healthcare allowance of \$8,550; an end-of-service benefit (an education award of \$7,395 OR a cash stipend of \$1,803); 10 days of personal time; 10 days of sick time; and more.¹ You can learn more about AmeriCorps VISTA benefits [here](#).

Where? Rochester Youth Year is hosted by the University of Rochester. Members serve at community organizations throughout the City of Rochester and must reside within an hour's drive of their host organization.

When? Rochester Youth Year members serve as full-time AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers for 365-day terms. The 2026-2027 program will run from early August 2026 through early August 2027.

Questions? Contact our staff at rochester@youthyear.org or at 585-276-6860. For more information, visit our website: <https://www.youthyear.org/>

¹ The benefits listed here apply to the 2025-2026 service year, and as such are subject to change.



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** Submit your application here: <https://bit.ly/26-27RYYApplication> **

The **priority deadline** for the 2026-2027 service year is **Sunday, February 15**. Candidates who submit a complete application by the priority deadline will be guaranteed an interview and will receive a decision by March 13.

We will review **regular cycle** applications on a rolling basis through **Sunday, April 12** or until all positions are filled. We encourage interested applicants to apply **early** for the best chance of being matched with a host organization for the 2026-2027 service year.

Application Requirements:

- A one-page resume **in PDF format** highlighting your relevant experiences and skills. You will upload this PDF document directly into the application form.
- A cover letter **in PDF format** including the answers to the below questions. Please limit your letter to two pages. You will upload this PDF document directly into the application form.
 - o Describe your interest in Rochester Youth Year and how RYY fits into your future plans.
 - o What local, national, or global challenge most concerns you? What action have you taken?
- Two letters of recommendation, submitted **by your recommenders**.
 - o Share this link with your recommenders: <https://bit.ly/2627Recommendations>
 - o One recommendation should be from a professor and the other should be from a supervisor, coach, or other mentor who knows you well. **Do not include a recommendation from a peer**.
 - o Please be ready to include your recommenders' names and contact information (email address and phone number) in the application form.
 - o **Priority applicants:** recommendation forms must be submitted by Sunday, February 15.
 - o **Regular cycle applicants:** recommendation forms must be submitted by Sunday, April 12. Applications will be reviewed once all materials (including recommendations) are received, so please communicate with your recommender about your submission timeline for the quickest decision.
- A copy of your academic record from each higher education institution that you have attended. You will upload your academic record(s) directly into the application form.
 - o Your academic records should detail the courses you've taken and grades received at each higher education institution you have attended. You may submit screenshots from your institution's course management system or an unofficial transcript.
 - o Rochester Youth Year may request an official transcript following your graduation.

If you have any questions about the application requirements, the web form, or the Rochester Youth Year program, please contact our staff via email at rochester@youthyear.org or by phone at 585-276-6860.