

**Manhattanville in West Harlem Implementation Plan Report
October 15, 2026 Submission**

Declaration Reference and Key Data

Obligation Section Number: **5.07(c)(xxi)**

Obligation Title: **Workforce Training Program**

Obligation Page Number: **57**

Obligation Trigger: **Acquisition by ESD or CU of all Initial Stage 1 Condemnation Parcel(s)**

Obligation Start Date: **March 12, 2012**

Obligation End Date:

Obligation Status: **In Compliance**

Obligation

Workforce Training Program. Commencing with the acquisition by ESD or CU of all Initial Stage 1 Condemnation Parcels, CU shall provide up to \$750,000 to fund and support the design, development and implementation of industry response (skills-based) education and workforce development training. Materials to be developed shall include competency based curriculum, assessment strategies, recommendations for textbooks, instructional aides, delivery strategies and include implementation training for service providers.

Evidence of Compliance

1. Annual report
2. Copy of contract with selected provider

Columbia University's Implementation Plan and all supporting documentation are made available on the Columbia Neighbors Webpage at <https://neighbors.columbia.edu/content/community-commitments>.

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EOC Checklist for Obligation 5.07(c)(xxi):

Please check to verify EOC items submitted for review.

- ☐ 1. Annual report
- ☐ 2. Copy of contract with selected provider

Monitor's Notes / Comments:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Status:

Please check to indicate the status of Obligation 5.07(c)(xxi):

- ☐ In Compliance
- ☐ In Progress
- ☐ Not In Compliance
- ☐ Not Triggered

Annual Report: Workforce Training Program

State Submission Annual Reporting Period: October 2025 - September 2026

Executive Summary

Columbia University, via the Office of Government and Community Affairs (GCA), has allocated funding to eligible not-for-profit organizations that focus on impact driven education and workforce development training programs for disconnected and at-risk youth in Northern Manhattan as detailed in the table below.

A grant in the amount of \$60,000 was awarded to Youth Justice Network (YJN) in April 2025. This grant, approved by the proposal review committee for a period of one year, was awarded to fund a Youth Advocate to work with YJN staff to target justice-impacted young people living in West Harlem and the surrounding zip codes.

Youth Justice Network's mission is to break cycles of incarceration and build an equitable justice system by providing young people with individualized advocacy, mentorship, and opportunities to grow, thrive, and lead. The organization empowers justice-involved young people ages 16-24 with access to individual advocates and vital opportunities for personal growth and economic independence, so they can effect change in their lives, families, and communities. Formerly known as Friends of Island Academy, YJN was created on the school floors of Rikers Island at a time when 3500 young people – ages 16 to 18 and almost entirely people of color – were held daily in custody. Since founding, the agency has learned, grown, and is sought after as a leader in youth justice innovation.

Workforce Training Program Payments To Date		
Organization	Payment Date	Amount Awarded
Friends of Island Academy	Apr-18	\$75,000
Friends of Island Academy	Jun-19	\$75,000
Friends of Island Academy	Jul-20	\$75,000
Entrepreneurial Design Thinking	Feb-20	\$25,000
User Research Lab Fellowship (UxR)	Feb-20	\$30,000
User Research Lab Fellowship (UxR)	Mar-21	\$30,000
Entrepreneurial Design Thinking	Aug-21	\$40,000
Youth Justice Network (formerly Friends of Island Academy)	Sep-21	\$75,000
Entrepreneurial Design Thinking	Sep-21	\$32,500
Entrepreneurial Design Thinking	Feb-22	\$53,000
User Research Lab Fellowship (UxR)	Mar-22	\$30,000
Youth Justice Network	Nov-22	\$75,000
Youth Justice Network	Apr-25	\$60,000
TOTAL ALLOCATED TO DATE:		\$675,500
Remaining Funding		\$74,500

Funding provided by Columbia University is used to support and sustain YJN's capacity to offer a social network of support for Manhattan- and Bronx-based youth to achieve outcomes in health and wellbeing, jobs and careers, educational advancement, civic engagement, and youth leadership. Funds are primarily allocated toward the salary of a Youth Advocate dedicated to young people who reside in Harlem and the South Bronx and are attached to the Harlem youth hub.

During the period of October 2025 to March 2026, Youth Justice Network's Career Services team engaged 55 participants within the designated West Harlem and surrounding area zip codes. Once a youth is referred to a Career Specialist, a career assessment is conducted to determine the participant's employment history, current job readiness, and missing documentation. Youth are then informed and enrolled into upcoming job readiness workshops, which last three to five days and cover various topics including hard and soft skills, communication, conflict resolution, and interview preparation. If required, YJN also assists the youth in purchasing interview attire.

For the youth YJN serves, the pathway to job readiness and employment is often accompanied with various challenges. Those referred to a Career Specialist also have a Youth Advocate who assists in navigating those challenges and meeting the participant where they are. That often includes overcoming barriers such as lack of identification, disengagement from education, and navigating various physical and mental health challenges. YJN's holistic, wraparound services provide participants with access to various supports, including tutoring and HSE preparation with YJN's Education team and mental health services through Wellness Trust.

Additional Supporting Documentation

- Youth Justice Network Grantee Report (April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026)

Youth Justice Network

Amount Funded: \$60,000

Purpose: To strengthen and sustain YJN's capacity to offer a foundation of support for youth in custody and the community, helping them achieve their goals in health, well-being, jobs, and careers, education advancement, civic engagement, and youth leadership.

Grantee Report:

Reporting Period: April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

Program Description:

With support from Columbia University, Youth Justice Network's Career Services Center helps young people impacted by the justice system build skills, explore career interests, and pursue employment opportunities. This partnership supports YJN's work with young people ages 16–24 from upper and northern Manhattan and other identified priority communities

Program Participation and Duration:

Founded in 1990, YJN was created on the school floors of Rikers Island at a time when 3500 young people – ages 16 to 18 and almost entirely people of color – were held daily in custody. Previously known as Friends of Island Academy, we leveraged the relationships we built with young people in jail to support them in the neighborhood post-release. While each young person is unique, all have experienced intergenerational systems involvement, over-policing, and community violence.

Generous support from Columbia University contributed to the launch of Youth Justice Network's Career Services Center in 2018 and provided the agency with the foundation and nimbleness required to navigate both positive and challenging external factors including legislation changes and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Program Location:

Youth Justice Network advocacy and arts programming primarily occurs in our Harlem office space located at 63 W 125th street. Career readiness workshops and educational programming primarily occur in our Bronx office, 424 E 147th Street.

Goals and Outcomes:

In our proposal, YJN sought to engage with 150 youth members who return home to key Manhattan and Bronx zip codes through our core advocacy services. Of these, we expected that 80% will achieve positive outcome in at least 3 of 5 areas: health and wellbeing,

education, employment, civic engagement, and creativity; 50 young people would find employment,; and 20 young people would advance in their academic goals.

Positive Outcomes

During the grant period, YJN engaged with 100 youth from key Manhattan and Bronx zip codes within the community. Of these, 24 achieved meaningful, positive progress in one youth outcome categories (health and wellbeing, education, employment, civic engagement, and creativity), 10 in two categories, and five in three or more.

<i>Progress toward Goals</i>	<i>Youth</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Progress in exactly 1 area</i>	24	24%
<i>Progress in exactly 2 areas</i>	10	10%
<i>Progress in at least 3 of the 5 areas</i>	7	7%
<i>No qualifying progress identified</i>	59	59%
<i>Total youth engaged in the community</i>	100	100%

The 59 young people who did not have significant progress is not indicative of an absence of progress or support. Engagement notes describe barriers including housing instability, disconnected phones, court obligations, mental health and substance-use needs, and competing family responsibilities. For many of these youth, advocates and YJN staff focused on immediate stabilization. Additionally, 10 maintained or renewed contact with YJN staff over periods spanning at least three months. Six of these youth had nine or more distinct successful community contact dates, demonstrating repeated engagement despite the absence of progress toward milestones. These ongoing connections provide opportunities to address barriers and support progress toward individual goals while demonstrating tireless efforts by staff to maintain consistent communication with youth.

Employment

<i>Outcome indicator</i>	<i>All participants</i>	<i>Local participants</i>	<i>Local %</i>
Enrolled in job readiness workshop	48	11	23%
Completed job readiness workshop	14	2	14%
Placed in employment	29	5	17%

Education

During the same period, 14 youth advanced specifically in academic goals, including attending tutoring or CARE (careers, arts, recreation, and education) programming and classes, and applying to and/or attending university. One participant earned her high school equivalency.

<i>Academic goal measure</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Target number of young people advancing academic goals</i>	20
<i>Unique young people with documented academic progress</i>	14
<i>Percentage of target achieved</i>	70%

YJN's Education Programming, and the vision of our Education Director, is student-centered and responsive, creating a space where every student will: (1) redefine what education means to them; (2) recognize their individual power and agency; (3) follow through on the commitment they make to their growth; and (4) begin to exercise self-determination and to achieve self-actualization through education. We engage our students with culturally resonant content and dialogic pedagogy according to the principles of Popular Education and Culturally Responsive Adult Education. We keep classes small in order to respond with individualized attention to each student's unique academic and social-emotional strengths and needs. Through peer work in class, our students are further positioned to develop their sense of self-empowerment and self-esteem as capable learners and leaders. As the weeks progress, our students claim increasing ownership of their education and their lives.

Narrative Information:

The young people our Advocates, Career Center staff, and Educators serve come to YJN with a range of challenges. Staff meet youth where they are, beginning with trust, rapport, and a consistent presence, even when participation is interrupted. Our experience reinforces that progress is rarely linear: addressing immediate needs and maintaining a connection can be necessary steps toward education and employment goals. Going forward, our priorities include strengthening coordination across teams and more consistently documenting incremental progress alongside major milestones.

Career services operated with limited staff capacity during a period of organizational transition. Adjustments to staff responsibilities and a temporary leadership vacancy placed

additional demands on the team. These challenges reinforced the importance of clear handoffs, shared priorities, and coordination among advocates, educators, and career services staff. Strengthening these practices remains a priority for supporting continuity and timely follow-up.

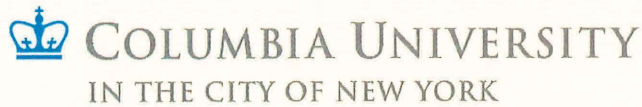
YJN advocates responded to the internal, structural changes with the career center by ensuring that participants were connected to relevant programming either contracted to YJN, such as Community Resources for Employment and Development Program (CRED), or with sister organizations and partnerships.

Renewal Request of \$60,000

Our connection to West Harlem is grounded in years of work alongside local young people and families, including residents of Manhattanville and Grant Houses. Through our Career Services Center, Youth Advocacy team, and Shifting Gears mobile program, we offer accessible, relationship-based support within the community. We plan to maintain a weekly Shifting Gears presence in Harlem and welcome opportunities to participate in community events coordinated by Columbia.

YJN's neighborhood presence and experience supporting young people impacted by the justice system also provide a foundation for collaboration with Columbia's workforce initiatives. Our advocates can help participants address barriers, remain connected to services, and pursue education and employment goals.

We respectfully request renewed support and partnership with Columbia. The continuation of this partnership comes at a pivotal moment. In July, YJN's Executive Director of 18 years left the organization and her Deputy Executive Director of 12 years is now at the helm. This renewal will help sustain YJN's advocacy, career services, and education capacity and continue helping young people build skills, access opportunities, and move toward greater stability.



OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

April 28, 2025

[REDACTED]
Executive Director
Youth Justice Network
63 W. 125th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10027

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your recent proposal and for your longstanding partnership with Columbia University in addressing the needs and challenges of justice-impacted youth in our community.

We are very pleased to renew our commitment to the Youth Justice Network (YJN) with a \$60,000 grant to "strengthen and sustain YJN's capacity to offer a foundation of support for youth in custody and the community, helping them achieve their goals in health, wellbeing, jobs, and careers, education advancement, civic engagement, and youth leadership."

Pursuant to this letter, funding will be available on or around May 1, 2025.

As in previous years, we request a brief mid-year progress report (by 9/30/25), along with a detailed end-of-year report sufficient to satisfy our reporting requirements to Empire State Development outlined on the following page.

Please review those requirements as well as the above terms and return a signed copy of this letter at your convenience. Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Loftin Flowers
Vice President, Government & Community Affairs

[REDACTED]
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Signature

4/29/2025

Date

Columbia University Education & Workforce Development Fund
Annual Reporting Requirements

This commitment is included as part of an annual report that is submitted by Columbia University to Empire State Development each October 15. As such, information regarding any grantees of this funding and their corresponding programs must be submitted to the Construction Business Initiatives unit by September 30 of each year. This information, required for the report, includes the following:

- *Description of the scope of the program and delivery method (in-person/online)*
- *Number of cohorts conducted with the grant*
- *For any cohort funded:*
 - *Number of participants*
 - *Number of participants who reside in the local community (Zip codes include 10025, 10026, 10027, 10029, 10030, 10031, 10032, 10033, 10034, 10035, 10037, 10039, 10040, 10451, 10454, 10455, and 10474)*
- *Explanation of outreach process*
- *Explanation of application/interview/acceptance process*
- *Description of program objectives or impact*
- *Information about plans for additional cohorts*
- *Explanation of any follow up that was provided to program participants after the cohort concluded*
- *Copies of any materials, curriculum, or collateral for the program*