

City of Rochester – Department of Recreation & Human Services –
Recreation & Youth Services Bureau

Main Prompt

How can DRHS more effectively share information about its programs and services so that youth and families are consistently aware of the opportunities available to them?

Path 1: Marketing & Communications – MAI and VERONICA

How might we leverage social media, digital platforms, and other outreach methods to increase visibility, engagement, and value for the community—while also ensuring that information is accessible to all youth and families, including those who face barriers related to technology, language, or access?

Background information about Path 1: *[What is already being done? What resources do we have? What is our current processes/ best practices for marketing? Any other pertinent information.]*

Currently, our marketing efforts include a mix of digital, print, and in-person strategies designed to increase visibility and engagement. We leverage existing resources such as our website, social media platforms, email distribution lists, and community networks to promote programs and initiatives. In addition, we work closely with the Communications Department who provides the design, marketing templates, and staff support for content creation for distribution.

To market and share programming information about the department, we use several platforms, including:

- Social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok)
- YouTube Channel
- Constant Contact
- Media buys, including radio ad, billboards, social media boosts, magazine ads, etc.
- Press releases for new programs or initiatives
- Summer R-Guide including detailed list of programming information, dates, location, etc
- Monthly E-Newsletter
- Flyer and R-Guide distribution to R-Centers, Library's, and RCSD
- Digital televisions at R-Centers and the administration building promoting programs through photos
- Outreach through department units who are “boots on the ground”

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- Tabling events
- Annual Outreach Day (door-to-door canvassing)
- Presentations at RCSD monthly parent meetings
- Collaborations with RCSD on marketing initiatives (e.g., tagging each other in FB posts)
- Video creation for Facebook and Instagram reels to highlight program offerings (a new initiative currently being developed)
- Our current process follows best practices such as ensuring consistent branding, tailoring messaging for specific audiences, and tracking engagement to refine strategies.

Path 2: Summer Youth Employment Programs – ISAAC & JANAI

How might we improve communication and transparency about our partnership with Rochester Works so that families clearly understand the similarities, differences, and unique benefits of the youth employment and internship opportunities we provide?

Background information about Path 2:

Currently The City of Rochester's Summer of Opportunity Program (SOOP) and Rochester Works' Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) share a joint application for youth in Monroe County.

- Youth age 14-20 living in Monroe County apply to one application for summer employment or internship placement.
- After applying to the City and Rochester Works (RW) then splits the youth in the program based on program eligibility by the following requirements:
 - City criteria: must be a City of Rochester resident, wages and stipends
 - RW criteria: TANF income guidelines, live in monroe county, all wages
- There are also several differences between City & RW programs including:
 - Programs wage payments can be different
 - Program timeline and onboarding procedures

These variances create confusion for youth, guardians and at times other community stakeholders like school counselors and administrators who share this information with their students.

- Additional question:

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- o How can we best educate and efficiently spread the word to program stakeholders about the process and the differences of the program.

Web resources for more information:

- SOOP: [Summer of Opportunity Program \(SOOP\) | City of Rochester, New York](#)
- Rocsummeryouth: [Summer Youth Employment Program \(SYEP\) & Summer of Opportunity Program \(SOOP\) – Providing youth \(ages 14-20\) with six weeks of paid work experience through work sites and programs all across Monroe County.](#)

Path 3: Sexual Health Education – ISAAC & BILEL

How do we communicate with the community about the importance and value of sex education, and reinforce that sex education is an essential part of overall health and well-being?

Background information about Path 2:

Program

- Re-imagining Sexual Health Education (RISE) is made up of two core programs: Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) and Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE). CAPP is designed to significantly reduce teenage pregnancy rates in Monroe County, while SRAE focuses on supporting social-emotional development and helping youth ages 10–13 delay the onset of sexual activity. Both programs deliver evidence-based, age-appropriate curricula to youth in schools, R-Centers, and community organizations across Rochester. Sexuality Outreach Advocacy & Resources (SOAR) is a youth education team through Rise trained in sexual health providing peer to peer in sexual and overall health and wellness.

Challenge

- Sexual health is often a sensitive and complex topic, which makes it challenging to communicate its importance effectively. Many youth may feel embarrassed, unsure, or hesitant to engage in conversations about sexual health. At the same time, parents and guardians often find these discussions uncomfortable, and some may lack the knowledge, resources, or confidence to guide their children in this area. This hesitation can create barriers to open dialogue and limit young people's access to accurate, age-appropriate information.
- These same challenges extend to broader stakeholder engagement. Schools, community organizations, and even policymakers may struggle to prioritize or openly discuss sexual

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health education due to cultural norms, stigma, or competing demands. As a result, it can be difficult to fully convey the critical role that programs like CAPP and SRAE play in reducing teen pregnancy, promoting social-emotional development, and supporting healthier futures for youth. Strengthening communication strategies and building trust with stakeholders is essential to ensuring these programs are not only understood but also valued and supported.

Questions asked by Alumni Facilitators: *[Is there anything specific you would like to be addressed in the area of sex education to guide everyone? Is a lack of knowledge; a need for protection, unsafe acts, sex as a means of social status or power? Etc?]*

Response: These are areas that we are looking to address regarding the importance of sex health education in our community:

- **Framing Sex Education as Lifelong Health**
Sex education should be understood as a foundation for lifelong health and well-being, not just as a response to immediate concerns. It supports youth in making informed, healthy decisions now and throughout adulthood.
- **Building Protective Factors & Resilience**
By equipping young people with accurate information and healthy coping strategies, sex education helps them recognize risks, set boundaries, and build resilience against unsafe acts, exploitation, or peer pressure.
- **Parental & Caregiver Partnership**
Families play a central role in guiding youth. Partnering with parents and caregivers ensures consistent messaging, strengthens trust, and empowers families to have open, supportive conversations at home.
- **Equity & Access**
Every young person deserves access to accurate, culturally relevant, and judgment-free information, regardless of background, identity, or circumstance. Sex education should close gaps in knowledge while addressing systemic barriers to health and safety.
- **Youth Empowerment & Voice**
Young people should be at the center of the conversation. Providing space for their voices ensures education is responsive to their real questions and experiences while reinforcing their agency in making healthy choices.
- **Prevention & Future Opportunities**
Sex education is about more than preventing negative outcomes—it's also about opening

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doors to future opportunities. By understanding consent, respect, and responsibility, youth are better positioned for healthy relationships, educational success, and long-term well-being.

- **Safe & Supportive Environment**

Creating safe spaces where young people can learn, ask questions, and grow without judgment is essential. A supportive environment fosters trust and encourages positive decision-making.