

Urban Resource Institute Economic Empowerment Program (EEP)



Urban Resource Institute: Organization Overview

Since 1980, Urban Resource Institute (URI) has been committed to the vision of a world free of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty, and trauma, where individuals, families, and communities are safe, stable, and thriving throughout New York City. URI works across the spectrum of prevention, intervention and services to empower individuals, families, and communities, particularly communities of color and other disenfranchised populations, to increase their safety and resiliency. Each night, we serve and protect more than 1,100 survivors of domestic violence and have more than 1,000 additional beds available for homeless families. URI is the largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the country and oldest in New York State with 12, soon to be 14, domestic violence shelters, and nine homeless shelters. We have over 550 front-line staff helping our clients every day.

Economic Empowerment Program

100% of our clients are low- or - moderate income. URI launched a new Economic Empowerment Program (EEP) in 2018 to provide economic empowerment services to our domestic violence survivors and homeless residents. The Economic Empowerment Program was designed within the framework of providing client- centered, trauma-informed care to our clients. EEP also provides access to a continuum of care that extends beyond shelter residency. URI recognizes that poverty and domestic violence are often contributing factors to housing instability. Permanent supportive housing is part of the solution for our clients to obtain and maintain economic security, safety and stability.



We conduct an initial assessment to create a personalized plan for each client. Over 90% of the people served by the EEP are Black and Latinx women. We create our curriculum with an anti-oppressive framework and operate with the understanding that our clients come from different backgrounds who have faced unique challenges. After the initial assessment, we develop a comprehensive evaluation of the participant's education, training, and employment history, followed by the creation of a comprehensive service plan outlining their personal goals. They are connected with our career specialists and financial empowerment specialists to provide them with one-on-one support, which includes access to job training, internships, externships, specialized training, job coaching and placements and financial education.

For clients who would like more training and educational support before entering or reentering the workforce

EEP offers three different training programs, in addition to the individualized support that they are already receiving. The programs are

geared towards providing clients with education and experiential learning through internships and/or externships. EEP's Career Exploration Program is a 14-week training program, which includes six weeks of workshops and eight weeks of a paid internship or externship with one of our partners. This program has been specifically designed for clients who are not quite sure what career path they would like to pursue and provides the opportunity to learn about different fields while getting paid. The majority of the workshops have also been translated into Spanish. All of the workshops have been adapted to be conducted virtually. Additionally, EEP recently created two specialty programs, Non-Profit Bookkeeping Program in partnership with Fiscal Management Associates (FMA) and a virtual admin program.

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Virtual Admin Program

With all of the recent changes to the world of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EEP has created responsive programming that not only is reflective of the changes in the job market, but also to the needs of the clients. The EEP has developed a virtual administration program to help clients secure jobs as administrative staff. Admins are an important position in every career sector with a projected employment growth of 9%. This is faster than average for all other occupations and has a great outlook of longevity, considering the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy.

The program was designed to use the participant's strengths. Career specialists cultivate a collaborative environment that is participant driven. Activities throughout the workshops have been created with the physical and emotional wellbeing of participants in mind. Most importantly, career specialists focus on creating clear expectations with participants. The career specialists are dedicated to developing a strong rapport with each participant, so they feel safe and supported throughout the program.



Non-Profit Bookkeeping Program

In partnership with Fiscal Management Associates (FMA), URI's EEP created a non-profit bookkeeping program for EEP's clients. Part of EEP's mission is to support participants in finding meaningful employment that has the potential to lead to a fulfilling career path with a living wage. At URI, we believe that clients hold innate strength and skills that will make them successful in a range of different industries, including the financial sector.

FMA exists to build a community of individuals with the confidence and skills to lead organizations that change the world. From training front-line staff to CFOs or facing challenges from selecting the right software to making critical strategic decisions, the FMA team values collaborating with our clients to ensure they achieve their goals. URI and FMA develop a tailored 8-session curriculum for clients to build their nonprofit financial management knowledge and skills, so they can successfully participate in an 8-week experiential training program at local nonprofits.

With the impact of COVID-19, we have made the program available via Zoom, providing laptops and hotspots to clients and cultivating internship placement sites that will be entirely virtual. By training clients to do this work virtually, it opens up the job market where participants could find remote employment anywhere in the country.

Outcomes

Within the current fiscal year, URI Economic Empowerment Program has:

- Served 160 clients
- Provided 56 total trainings
- Conducted over 800 career counselling sessions
- Managed 5 cohorts of different training programs

We expect EEP to continue helping our clients achieve independence with increased numbers as we expand the program by increasing capacity and introducing additional innovative programs.