

We continue to actively work to decrease youth incarceration and reduce referrals of youth to the juvenile justice system through our Youth Development Academy (the Academy). We had a class of 25 and our graduates are all being placed in their internships! The Academy began in 2021 with 15 youth receiving training in advocacy which included a mock Board of Supervisors meeting, introductions to other advocacy organizations, alternative career paths and much more to include the Aircraft Institute of Maintenance, the Civil War Museum, and elected officials, to name a few. We opened a bank account for any youth without an account and deposited the first \$100. At the completion of the instruction phase, our students graduated and selected one of the organizations with which to complete a six-month paid internship.

We are so pleased to report that four of our year one graduates were offered and are continuing to work in full time positions with the organizations they selected for their paid internship! Five of our graduates are still in high school and applied and were accepted a second time into the Academy.

In year two of the Academy, we offered our students more. In addition to everything offered in year one, we increased the number of students from 15 to 20, added a personal development plan, mentors for each student, and introduced community service, requiring every student to complete 12 hours of community service within any of the organizations introduced during the Academy to be eligible to graduate. In addition to opening a bank account for youth without one, we also offered to purchase the first professional outfit for each graduate appropriate to the internship they selected.

We are pleased to report that two of our year two graduates are now full time employed with their internship site and seven other youth are employed in similar fields to their internship site!

This year we leveled up yet again! In addition to everything from years one and two, we accepted 25 students, increased the number of employment opportunities, and added professional development coaching, which includes, soft skills training such as professional communication, interpersonal communication, drafting emails, personal style assistance, interview tips and tricks for success and much more. Each student recorded a personal introduction video and had the opportunity to walk through an evaluation of their video with a professional talent acquisition professional. We also increased the amount of time our students spent developing their professional skills by providing opportunities for public speaking, inviting our students to participate in community events as volunteers and as participants.

Our current year students have [graduated!](#) We had two graduates decide to go back to high school to receive their high school diploma, three graduates applied to college and got in!! Currently we have a graduate working to develop his own healing café with one of our partners, three of our graduates are in a barbering academy that will lead to them teaching barbering in their own community high school under the tutelage of their current instructor, three other students are learning real estate and will be prepared to take the real estate exam upon completion of their internship/training. One graduate is interning at a dental office and will be ready to take the course to become a dental assistant at the end of her internship, and two other students are now employed at the oldest historic Black theaters in Richmond, VA! There are other exciting placements, but these are some of our highlights!

We are so proud of the work the Youth Development Academy is doing to provide opportunities for youth who would not traditionally have access to such robust training, skill building, and employment opportunities. We recognize that these opportunities will have the intended result of fewer youth referred to or engaged in the justice system as well as building career paths for our youth leading to creating healthier living environments for our youth and their families

We are also incredibly proud of our RISE Youth Leaders Advocacy Network! The program is more robust as we now develop personal development plans with each of our Youth Leaders as well. We currently have Youth Leaders working with each staff member of RISE! Our Youth Leaders have developed a presentation for the Vanguard Next City Cohort program when it came to Richmond and taught a group of 60 + leaders from around the country about building a future for every youth through reclaiming community assets and developing spaces of healing and industry designed by and fully employing the community to elevate itself! Our Youth Leaders have planned and lead community meetings around the Commonwealth helping to develop the policy platform that will inform RISE for Youth's legislative advocacy in the coming year! RISE for Youth has served more than 200 individual youth through our Youth Leader Advocacy Network program. We have served more than 5,000 youth and more than 2,000 families through our community outreach programs, community events, and pro bono legal advocacy.

RISE has provided rental and utility assistance to more than 300 families and provided housing assistance and referrals to more than 100 families. RISE for Youth helped to pass legislation that ended the collection of child support from the families of youth incarcerated in youth prison impacting more than more than 200 youth per year since 2021. RISE also helped pass legislation that require law enforcement officers to notify parents before interrogating youth to

We are creating pipelines for youth to grow into leadership and developing strong advocates and community leaders, which also reduces the number of youths engaged in the justice system overall.