



## Summer Youth Employment

*a look at emergency responder careers*

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*Story by Catherine Norton, Development Associate*

On July 20, East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) commenced with its second annual Mayor's Youth Summer Police and Fire Academy, a local youth program that helps participants learn what it's like to be an emergency responder. The program was initiated last summer by East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva who recognized the need for area youth to increase their awareness of work being done by the law enforcement officers and firefighters in their town of East Providence. Mayor DaSilva also realized that local police officers and fire fighters would benefit from the additional opportunities to interact with city's youth and young adults.

The Mayor's Youth Summer Police and Fire Academy is coordinated by EBCAP's Youth Center and is open to youth ages 14 to 24. "We had such great success with our pilot academy in 2019, where participants gained first-hand knowledge of our local police and fire departments' operations that we decided to make this an annual academy," relates Mayor DaSilva.

Each participant receives a \$200 stipend for their participation in the program which began on July 20 and concludes on August 19. The Summer Police and Fire Academy is funded through the Governor's Workforce Board's REAL Skills for Youth Program. The Real Skills for Youth program is part of Rhode Island's larger effort, called PrepareRI, a three-year action plan supported by a \$2 million New Skills for Youth grant from JP Morgan Chase and designed to ensure that all Rhode Island students are college and career ready.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the second annual Mayor's Youth Summer Police and Fire Academy looks a little different than its inaugural 2019 session. Everyone is required to wear masks, and youth are tasked with cleaning their desk and chairs upon arriving every day. And unlike last year, when youth traveled to various police and fire locations, there is no longer group transportation. All instruction takes place at East Providence's Phillips Street Hall to provide ample space for social distancing among the youth and program instructors. All emergency-service apparatus and gear are brought to Phillips Street Hall to provide students with the opportunity to learn more about equipment operation and specialty gear and devices.

"We have 12 students enrolled this year which is actually up from last year in terms of the number of participants," explains Brian Hannon, Director of EBCAP's Youth Center. Last year, the program got off to a later start and served 8 youth.

While restrictions have altered some aspects of the program, students are still enjoying the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of what it is like to be a police officer and fire fighter. They are also learning about the important service police officers and fire fighters provide to community on a daily basis. "It's a unique program and EBCAP is very proud to be able to implement the Mayor's Police and Fire Academy for the second year in row," explains Dennis Roy, EBCAP

President and CEO. “This program helps youth gain exposure to the fields of law enforcement and fire science, while also developing employability and leadership skills.”

The East Providence Mayor’s Youth Summer Police and Fire Academy is among one of the many services offered through EBCAP’s Youth Center. The Center provides a comprehensive array of educational, vocational, and wraparound support services for East Bay area youth and young adults ages 14 to 24. It specializes in highly individualized services that include short-term tutoring, in-depth work readiness training, placement in an internship (with eventual placement in unsubsidized employment), or long-term occupational skills training. The goal of all Youth Center programs is to provide needed support to help each participant achieve his/her educational or vocational goals. For more information on eligibility requirements, contact Brian Hannon at [bhannon@ebcap.org](mailto:bhannon@ebcap.org).

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