



2010 Community Agenda

People

1. Reduce Poverty with Living Wages

The City and Buffalo School District should address the low-wage work crisis in Buffalo by improving and fully implementing living wage policies.

- a. The Buffalo School District and Superintendent Williams should implement the Living Wage Resolution passed by the School Board in April 2009 and begin phasing in a living wage for bus aides and food service workers while also extending living wage requirements to private contractors.
- b. The City of Buffalo should revise its Living Wage Ordinance to cover subsidies, grants, and loans and to require the City to post key information about all of its contracts on its website.

2. Improve Conditions at the Holding Center

Erie County should improve the conditions at the Holding Center and satisfy the requirements of the Department of Justice and the New York State Commission of Corrections.

3. Maintain Health Care Services in Disadvantaged Communities

Erie County should fully fund and maintain existing city health clinics.

Place

1. Address Regional Vacancy Crisis

All levels of government must work together to address the vacancy crisis in the region. Specifically,

- a. New York State should enact Land Bank enabling legislation;
- b. Erie County should implement a Regional Property Intelligence Network in partnership with the local university community; and
- c. The City of Buffalo should work with community based partners to review and reform the acquisition, maintenance and disposition of blighted properties, while increasing its investment in repairs, foreclosure prevention, and targeted vacancy reduction.

2. Clean Up Tonawanda Coke

The Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation should improve pollution controls at the Tonawanda Coke plant by mandating the installation of the best available control technology to reduce benzene emissions.

3. Target Block-by-Block Revitalization to Green Development Zones

The City of Buffalo and New York State should launch concentrated initiatives in two target communities to focus existing programs (including housing programs, Green Jobs NY, infrastructure improvements, etc.) and create additional resources for concentrated and holistic reinvestment. Housing, quality of life issues, and green job creation within the neighborhood should be addressed simultaneously.

4. Improve Food Security

The City of Buffalo should establish a Food Policy Council to address the documented food insecurity of Buffalo residents. The City should revise zoning ordinances to recognize community gardens and urban farms as the best use of some of the City's vacant land. Food security should be a priority in the City's Charter and Comprehensive plan

Governance

1. Reform New York State's Subsidy Programs

New York State should reform its major subsidy programs, including Industrial Development Agencies and Empire Zones, to ensure that economic development dollars are spent wisely and with maximum community input. Reform legislation should include job quality standards (living and prevailing wages), local hiring, green building requirements, anti-pirating and recapture mechanisms, and anti-sprawl provisions. Locally, the six IDAs in Erie County should be merged into one countywide authority.

2. Require a Community Benefit Agreement for Erie Canal Redevelopment

The Empire State Development Corporation and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation should not give subsidies to Benderson Development, Bass Pro or other corporations involved in the Canal Side redevelopment without a community benefit agreement requiring

- a. living wage jobs,
- b. environmentally friendly building and operations,
- c. locally owned businesses,
- d. mixed income housing, and
- e. a building and site design appropriate to the location.

3. Reform New York State Campaign Finance

New York State should adopt comprehensive campaign finance reforms, including

- a. Voluntary public financing,
- b. Lower contribution limits,
- c. A ban on soft money,
- d. Improved disclosure requirements, and
- e. An independent and adequately funded campaign finance agency.