



2019 Community Agenda

1. Protect and Expand Voting Rights

New York State should pass legislation to protect and expand voting rights in five ways:

- a) Early voting;
- b) Automatic voter registration;
- c) Flexibility to change party affiliation closer to Election Day;
- d) Pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds;
- e) Restored voting for people on parole.

2. Expand Community Policing and Alternatives to Arrest in Buffalo

The Buffalo Police Department (BPD) should reduce arrests and racial disparities by implementing two alternative responses to low-level offenses: “fix-it tickets” and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. These programs can better address incidents driven by poverty, mental health, or substance use, and build better police-community relations at the same time. BPD should require all officers to devote a certain number of hours each week to community policing activities, such as foot and bike patrols, attending community meetings, or collaborating on community improvements. BPD should also create incentives for officers who do community policing well, such as promotions and public recognition.

3. Form a Complete Count Committee for Buffalo-Niagara Representation in Census 2020

Erie and Niagara Counties should lead in forming a local Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census with representation from education, business, religion, community organizations, media, and local governments, as well as county level elected officials to:

- a) identify concerns and barriers to a complete count for the 2020 Census;
- b) develop and implement strategies to dispel misinformation and garner wider support among the community, including a communications strategy and funding support;
- c) overcome the identified barriers for traditionally undercounted populations.

4. Invest in the FB Community Land Trust

The City of Buffalo (the Office of the Mayor, the Office of Strategic Planning, and the Common Council President) should partner with Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and the Fruit Belt leadership to secure the transfer of 20 city-owned vacant lots to the FB Community Land Trust in 2019 for a nominal fee and to place affordable housing-related deed restrictions on all remaining City-owned lots in the Fruit Belt.

5. Improve Language Access and Inclusion in Erie County

Buffalo and Erie County should demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and diversity for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – those whose primary language is not English – by taking these steps:

- a) The City of Buffalo should become a certified Welcoming Community, achieving formal recognition from Welcoming America of having smart policies, programs, and partnerships in place for immigrant inclusion.
- b) Using the Welcoming Standard as a guide, Erie County should pass a county-wide comprehensive language access policy, to be followed by department-specific LEP plans, practices, and training so that immigrants and refugees receive meaningful access to government services as required by federal and state civil rights laws.

6. Provide Child Care Subsidies for Income-Eligible Persons in Workforce Training or Education Programs

Erie County should provide child care subsidies for income-eligible persons in workforce training or education programs intended to lead to family-sustaining jobs with higher wages. New York State provides critical funding support to working parents for expensive childcare, with a sliding scale family share. Erie County can extend this to parents in workforce training and education programs by checking “YES” on their Consolidated Service Plan for New York State.

7. Adopt a Good Food Purchasing Program for Buffalo Public Schools

The Buffalo Public Schools should adopt a Good Food Purchasing Program to increase the alignment of its food purchases with five values:

- a) nutrition,
- b) sustainability,
- c) valued workforce,
- d) animal welfare, and
- e) local economies.

8. Pass the Climate and Community Protection Act to Ensure a Just Transition for All New Yorkers

Governor Cuomo and the NYS Legislature should take bold action on climate, jobs, and equity in 2019 by passing the Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA) to:

- a) Commit NYS to an economy-wide transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050;
- b) Make greenhouse gas emission reductions mandatory and legally enforceable;
- c) Promote renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- d) Direct 40% of clean energy spending to disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- e) Make sure that green jobs created are high quality jobs;
- f) Provide a just transition for workers and communities that have depended on fossil fuels for jobs and tax revenues.

9. Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure in Buffalo and Erie County

The City of Buffalo and Erie County should implement the recommendations in the Lead Action Plan to prevent early childhood lead exposure. Progress can be achieved this year by:

- a) Increasing proactive inspections of residential housing, including one- and two-unit rentals;
- b) increasing rental registration by landlords in Buffalo;
- c) improving regulation and education around home renovations;
- d) implementing in-person and interactive community education at the neighborhood level;
- e) linking lead exposure prevention to a broader set of child, family, and school wellness issues.

10. Improve Public Transit in Buffalo-Niagara with Financial Contributions to Achieve the Paris Climate Accord

Local government should take steps to achieve the Paris Climate Accord goals, and improve equality and environmental and economic sustainability in Buffalo-Niagara, by supporting public transit.

- a) Erie County should designate \$1M of its \$9M budget surplus to initiate a study of high quality zero-carbon transit to serve East Side neighborhoods, Larkinville, and the airport, including extension of Metro Rail as a major focus, along with other modes.
- b) Erie County should designate an additional 1/4 % (for a total of 3/8%) of the county sales tax to NFTA operations in exchange for an NFTA commitment to increase bus frequency and make other service improvements, including purchase of electric buses.