



More Ideas for a Better Buffalo-Niagara 2019

1. Home Stability Support Legislation
2. End Source of Income Discrimination in New York Now!
3. Erie County Workers' Bill of Rights
4. Amending the New York State Open Meetings Law
5. Renaissance for All: (Re)Investing in our Neighbor(hood)s
6. Protecting Homeowners from Displacement
7. Make the Buffalo Property Auction Work for Buffalo
8. The Buffalo Water Board should develop equitable policies and fair rates for water services for residents who document financial need
9. Protect and Improve the Outer Harbor

1. Home Stability Support Legislation

New York State should pass the Home Stability Support bill to create a new statewide rent supplement for families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance benefits and who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions.

2. End Source of Income Discrimination in New York Now!

New York State should pass Assembly Bill 10077 to amend its Human Rights Law to prohibit housing discrimination based on a person's lawful source of income.

3. Erie County Workers' Bill of Rights

The Erie County Legislature should pass a Workers' Bill of Rights securing necessary scheduling and leave rights to every worker in Erie County. The Bill should also require the subset of employers contracting with Erie County to pay a living wage of 150% of the federal poverty level to their employees.

4. Amending the New York State Open Meetings Law

New York State should amend its Open Meetings Law to:

- a) require that government officials hear from the public at their meetings.
- b) mandate that the meeting documents must be posted online for the public to see before a meeting is held.
- c) mandate that meeting minutes must be posted online.
- d) provide enforcement power to the Attorney General or some other entity to address violations of the Law.

5. Renaissance for All: (Re)Investing in our Neighbor(hood)s

KeyBank and Northwest Bank should continue to implement their commitments in Western New York to:

- a) provide over \$1 billion in small business loans and mortgage loans for low- to moderate-income (LMI) borrowers;
- b) improve language access at branches to extend services to those without English proficiency;
- c) fund meaningful local community development projects;
- d) create new and improve upon existing banking products and services for those denied access to traditional checking accounts; and
- e) improve marketing and outreach to underserved communities.

Over the next year at least two additional banks should enter into CBAs, committing to investing and supporting LMI communities and communities of color.

6. Protecting Homeowners from Displacement

To preserve affordable housing and neighborhood diversity and stability, the City of Buffalo should work with New York State to create a property tax exemption for low and moderate-income homeowners in Buffalo's fast-gentrifying neighborhoods. In particular:

- a) The City of Buffalo Common Council should pass a resolution requesting that New York State pass an enabling act for such an exemption;
- b) New York State should pass the enabling act; and
- c) The City of Buffalo should then create the exemption.

7. Make the Buffalo Property Auction Work for Buffalo

The City of Buffalo should make changes to its annual tax foreclosure process, seeking changes in state laws if necessary, so that:

- a) Western New York residents are allowed to bid on properties before bidders from outside the area;
- b) When a property is sold for more than the money owed, any surplus funds are returned to the owner automatically.

8. The Buffalo Water Board should develop equitable policies and fair rates for water services for residents who document financial need

The Buffalo Water Board should enact reform policies so that residents who document certain levels of financial need are charged reduced water rates or are provided financial assistance to help pay their bills.

9. Protect and Improve the Outer Harbor

In order to protect and improve Buffalo's Outer Harbor:

- a) New York State should designate the Outer Harbor as parkland;
- b) The City of Buffalo should rezone the Marina and Terminals parcels to prevent privatization and housing development;
- c) The City of Buffalo should designate Terminal A as a local landmark.
- d) The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) should improve the parcels it owns in ways that:
 - Provide public access for all residents, including people without cars;
 - Progress toward a 21st century park that honors Olmsted's legacy;
 - Protect the natural environment and provide more trail options;
 - Conserve our cultural heritage and re-use existing structures; and
 - Foster sustainability, climate resilience, and smart growth.