



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PUBLIC GOOD**

2018 Community Agenda

1. Reform Solitary Confinement in Erie County

The Erie County Legislature should pass legislation mirroring the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Bill, known as the “HALT” bill. The legislature should require the Sheriff’s Department to comply with these rules at the Erie County Correctional Facility and Holding Center:

- a) no solitary confinement of vulnerable persons, including those under age 22 and those with an intellectual or physical disability or significant mental health problem;
- b) limiting solitary confinement to 15 consecutive days, or 20 out of any 60;
- c) mandatory public reporting of each use of solitary confinement, including an identifier for the person confined, race/ethnicity, reasons for use of solitary, and dates so confined;
- d) use of solitary only for actions of significant violence and other concrete threats to safety;
- e) hearings before use of solitary confinement with the right to have an advocate, call witnesses, and quickly appeal to an independent ombudsperson; and
- f) any person who remains a danger to others after 15 days should be transferred to a unit that is separate from the general population but provides therapy, programming, and significant daily out-of-cell time with meaningful human contact.

2. Expand Community Policing, Increase and Improve Police Training, and Reduce Arrests in the City of Buffalo

The Buffalo Police Department should require all officers to devote a certain number of hours each week to community policing activities, and create incentives for officers who do community policing well such as pay increases, promotions, and public recognition. The department should increase and improve training on diversity, implicit bias, de-escalation, and “alternatives to force,” both for new recruits in the Police Academy and for seasoned officers through regular continuing education. Together with the City and Erie County District Attorney’s Office, the department should reduce arrests and racial disparities with alternative responses to low-level offenses, such as “fix-it tickets” and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD).

3. Ensure Fair and Affordable Housing in Erie County

The City of Buffalo should pass an inclusionary zoning ordinance that applies to all new developments with ten or more rental units. The ordinance should require developers to set aside 30 percent of the units for people with an income below 60 percent of the area median income. The Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) should require developers to include an affordable housing component if they are applying for residential adaptive reuse subsidies. Erie County should pass a fair housing law that forbids discrimination by landlords based on source of income, such as section 8 vouchers or public assistance.

4. Certify Buffalo and Erie County as Welcoming Communities and Create Comprehensive Language Access Plans

Buffalo and Erie County should demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and diversity by becoming certified “Welcoming Communities.” The City and County should create comprehensive Language Access Plans that meet the standard set by Welcoming America and ensure that people with limited English proficiency have equal access to government services and civic participation.

5. Establish an Accessible Office of the New York State Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities in the City of Buffalo

The New York State Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) should work with state and local planning officials, the New York State Dormitory Authority, the NFTA, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Health, voluntary service providers for people with disabilities, community members, and lawmakers to establish an accessible office of the OPWDD within the City of Buffalo.

6. Invest in the Fruit Belt Neighborhood

The City of Buffalo, including the Office of the Mayor, the Office of Strategic Planning, and the Common Council President, should partner with Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and Fruit Belt leaders to:

- a) Transfer over 200 City-owned vacant lots to the FB Community Land Trust for a nominal fee;
- b) Require that all further developments in the Fruit Belt neighborhood be accompanied by legally enforceable community benefits agreements, negotiated by neighborhood leaders and residents.
- c) Fund and construct a community center in the Fruit Belt that includes an indoor gym, health equity center, commercial kitchen, and employment resource center.

7. Make the NFTA Work for Western New York

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) should be accountable to all riders and ensure that better access to public transit is available, especially in Lackawanna and other communities where people with low incomes and people of color are concentrated. To ensure that riders' needs are prioritized, at least three voting members of the NFTA board of commissioners should be regular riders of public transportation. Erie County and New York State should increase budget allocations to ensure that the NFTA provides reliable and comprehensive bus service, including more trips on given routes, cleaner buses, and bus stops that are well maintained. The NFTA should mandate that its police officers undergo restorative justice training. The NFTA should phase in electric buses as their current buses age and are removed from the fleet.

8. Pass the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act and End Arrests for Low-Level Marijuana Possession in Buffalo

New York State should pass the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) to:

- a) Legalize and regulate the use of marijuana, requiring a license to sell marijuana and forbidding sales to youth under the age of 21;
- b) Seal, reduce, or remove past convictions for crimes that MRTA eliminates;
- c) Allocate taxes collected from marijuana as follows: 25 percent to education, 25 percent to drug treatment programs, and 50 percent to fund community-based projects that redress harms caused by the War on Drugs.

The City of Buffalo should designate marijuana the “lowest level enforcement priority” for the Buffalo Police Department and stop making arrests for low-level, simple possession of marijuana.

9. Ensure that Banks Fulfill Billion-Dollar Community Benefits Agreements with Western New York

KeyBank and Northwest Bank should implement their commitments in Western New York to provide over \$1 billion in small business loans, mortgage loans, and home rehabilitation loans for low- to moderate-income borrowers; build new branches in underserved communities; improve language access at branches to extend services to those without English proficiency; fund meaningful local community development projects; create new banking products and services for those denied access to traditional checking accounts; and improve marketing and outreach to underserved communities.

10. End Lead Poisoning of Buffalo’s Most Vulnerable Citizens

The City of Buffalo and Erie County should implement the recommendations in the forthcoming Action Plan on Lead Poisoning regarding changes to laws and policies, funding, community education, and other means of eliminating childhood lead poisoning.