

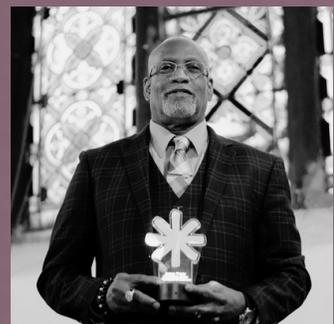


ADVOCACY IN ACTION

1ST ANNUAL SUMMIT



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SUMMIT SCHEDULE



	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
9:00am-9:30am	Check-In & Light Breakfast Bulger Communication Center Lobby		
9:30am-10:00am	Welcome/Introduction Bulger 215		
10am-11:00am	Policy Advocacy 101 Caudell 209	Working with the Media Caudell 233	Meeting with Legislators Caudell 208
11:15am-12:30pm	Plenary: Winning Change in Buffalo Bulger 215		
12:45pm-1:45pm	LUNCH Bulger 215		
2:00pm-3:00pm	Trauma-Informed Advocacy Caudell 208	City & County Advocacy Caudell 233	Coalition Building Caudell 209
3:15pm - 4:15pm	Burnout & Compassion Fatigue Caudell 233	Working with the Media Caudell 208	Coalition Building Caudell 209

SESSION TOPICS



PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION | 11:15AM

Winning Change in Buffalo

How have advocates won changes that make Buffalo and Erie County more just and equitable? We'll look at three advocacy campaigns that have won new laws, policies, and programs in our city and county. How did these campaigns come together? How did they organize community members and community groups to build power and win policy changes? What were the challenges, obstacles, or opposition they had to overcome?



ENDING LOW LEVEL MARIJUANA ARRESTS INDIA WALTON

In 2018, before marijuana was legalized, hundreds of Buffalonians were arrested each year for possessing small amounts of marijuana. While white residents used marijuana at the same or higher rates, Black Buffalonians were 8 out of 10 low-level marijuana arrests. A coalition of residents called on Mayor Byron Brown to designate marijuana possession the “lowest law enforcement priority” to end these arrests, which he did in 2019.

LEXINGTON CO-OP MARKETS UNIONIZATION MAXWELL BOLLMAN

In December 2022, workers at the Lexington Co-Op Markets voted to unionize with Workers United Upstate NY & Vermont. After eight months of negotiations, workers secured their first contract in August 2023 winning higher starting wages, fair and consistent wage increases, and better benefits.



NO NEW JAILS SHONTAY BARNES

In 2023, Erie County leaders proposed building a new, state-of-the-art jail to “improve mental health services for incarcerated people.” Local advocates decried investing hundreds of millions of dollars into jail construction and called for investment instead in community-based mental health, housing, and other needs. The No New Jail campaign forced the County to study the issue in 2024, which led the County to cancel its plan to build a new jail.

SESSION TOPICS



Policy Advocacy 101 | 10AM

CAITLIN CROWELL • COMMUNITY RESEARCHER, PPG

Policy shapes our everyday lives: how much we get paid, our access to healthcare, what our kids are fed in school, and so much more. In this session, we'll discuss what policy is and how you can change it—through coalition building, working with elected officials, and working with the media. At this session, we'll hear from advocacy leaders who won a more accessible location of the NYS Office for People with Development Disabilities in the City of Buffalo, including Mike Rogers and Sophia Roberts from the Self Advocacy Association of NYS and Leslie Nickerson from Open Buffalo.

Working with the Media | 10AM & 3:15 PM

DEJIA JAMES • DIRECTOR OF POLICY ADVANCEMENT & MEDIA, PPG

To move your advocacy forward, it's important to be seen and heard in the media on a regular basis. This workshop will cover how to work with journalists and how to clearly present your message with facts and stories. We'll discuss how to do news interviews, and how to offer memorable quotes and answer difficult questions. We'll hear directly from experienced local journalists I'Jaz Jaciel and Geoff Kelly, both from Investigative Post, joining us to share their tips.

Meeting with Legislators | 10AM

ANDREA Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PPG

To change public policy, you need more than just a good idea. You'll need to meet with elected officials to advocate and win their support. In this session, we'll discuss the *before, during, and after* of meeting with elected officials: how to request meetings, how to make your case and respond to their questions, and how to build lasting relationships with partners in government. At this session, we'll hear from Janayia Capers, Housing Justice Organizer at PUSH Buffalo, on her experiences meeting with local elected officials.

Coalition Building | 2PM & 3:15PM

COLLEEN KRISTICH • SENIOR COMMUNITY RESEARCHER, PPG

This workshop will discuss the importance of building and maintaining powerful coalitions to make lasting policy change. We'll cover what coalitions are, how they form, what challenges face all coalitions, and how to build a foundation for success using strategy, structure, and support. Resources for coalition members and leaders will be shared.

SESSION TOPICS



Trauma-Informed Advocacy | 2PM

REGINE NDANGA • COMMUNITY HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT MANAGER, PPG
MEGAN BATTISTA • ADVOCACY AND LEARNING COORDINATOR, LIFTOFF WNY
JENNI THURSTON • MSW INTERN, PPG

Best practice for advocacy centers the voices of those with lived experience. How can we make sure that we are empowering those engaged in the work rather than exploiting them? Trauma-informed advocacy and activism is not being responsive to the people in the room, but it is creating the room - a place where safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural humility produce community-driven change.

City and County Advocacy | 2PM

ANDREA Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PPG
CAITLIN CROWELL • COMMUNITY RESEARCHER, PPG

To be an effective advocate, you need to bring your issue to the right level of government. In this session, we'll learn the basics of City of Buffalo vs. Erie County government. Who are the leaders and legislators in the City and County? What are their powers and responsibilities? We will map the key departments and issue areas addressed by each local government.

Burnout and Compassion Fatigue | 3:15PM

REGINE NDANGA • COMMUNITY HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT MANAGER, PPG
BIJOUX BAHATI • MSW

This workshop provides a community space to process current crises, share experiences, and develop strategies to reduce burnout and compassion fatigue. Participants will engage in discussions on crisis management, explore personal and collective coping strategies, and identify ways to move forward together during uncertain times. Through shared learning and community support, we aim to build resilience and create sustainable approaches to well-being.



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