



## **2016 Community Agenda**

### **1. Fair Elections in the City of Buffalo**

The City of Buffalo should pass and implement public financing legislation recommended by the Committee for Fair Elections for all city elections.

### **2. Raise the Age in New York State**

New York State should raise the age of criminal responsibility in a comprehensive manner:

- New York should pass legislation to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility from sixteen to eighteen, so that youth charged with a crime are treated in a more age-appropriate manner, as they are in 48 other states in the U.S.
- The legal process should respond to all children as children, with services and placement options that meet their rehabilitative needs.

### **3. Language Access in Buffalo and Erie County**

The City of Buffalo and the County of Erie should improve language access policies, practices and training so that immigrants and refugees receive meaningful access to government services, as required by federal and state civil rights laws. Specifically, comprehensive written Limited English Proficiency plans should be created in partnership with the community and implemented. Top priorities should include the City's Police and Fire Departments, the County's Department of Motor Vehicles, and the County's Social Services Department.

#### **4. Targeted Hire on Publicly Funded Projects**

State and local economic development programs (Empire State Development, New York Power Authority, and the industrial development authorities) should require companies receiving subsidies and tax incentives to use targeted hire programs that give disadvantaged workers, including those living in high poverty zip codes, the first opportunity to be hired for a new opening.

#### **5. High Road Economic Development at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus**

The member institutions of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus should make a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) to ensure that nearby residents, workers, and the whole community benefit from the development on and near the campus.

#### **6. Develop a Plan for a Downtown Regional Multimodal Transportation Center**

The City of Buffalo should take the lead, working with the GBNRTC, ECHDC, NFTA, and other key stakeholders, on planning a downtown multimodal transportation center.

#### **7. Enact an Erie County Fair Housing Law**

Erie County should pass a fair housing law which:

- Creates a single county-wide statute prohibiting source of income discrimination;
- Requires larger housing providers to use affirmative fair housing marketing in an effort to attract a diverse pool of applicants; and

- Encourages cities and towns to adopt inclusionary zoning standards to make a percentage of new multi-family housing affordable.

## **8. Community-Oriented Policing in the City of Buffalo**

The City of Buffalo should commit that all police officers will receive community policing training by the end of 2017 and community policing training will be incorporated into the new officer training program from 2017 on.

## **9. Paid Family Leave for Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and New York State**

- The cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls should provide paid family leave benefits to their city employees.
- New York State should enact the New York Paid Family Leave Insurance Act (S.3004), which will expand our current Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program to provide workers with up to 12 weeks of paid leave a year to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or address certain issues arising from a family member's military service. It will also increase the TDI benefit from its current \$170 a week, to 2/3 of a worker's average weekly income, up to a cap of 3/4 of New York's average weekly wage (approximately \$633 per week).

## **10. Create a Human Rights Commission for the City of Buffalo**

The City of Buffalo should amend Section 18 of the City Charter to transform the Commission on Citizens' Rights and Community Relations into a broader, more effective Commission on Human Rights for the City of Buffalo. The Charter amendments would:

- enhance the political independence and rights-based profile of Commission members;

- expand the Commission’s mandate and powers, empowering it to take on the full set of human rights concerns relevant to the city, including, inter alia, affordable housing, redlining, healthcare, living wages, racial justice, food security, gender equity, LGBT rights (i.e., in addition to complaint-based racial discrimination and police misconduct); and
- significantly strengthen and expand its promotional and investigatory powers.

### **11. Raise the Minimum Wage to \$15 per hour**

New York State should raise the minimum wage for all employees to \$15 per hour by 2021.

### **12. Improve Education for Students with Disabilities**

The Buffalo Public School District should

- Appoint a parent of a student with disabilities (with an Individualized Education Program) to the BPS school board. This parent does not have to be a voting member and can be appointed by a district parent group such as the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee.
- Provide extensive professional development regarding special education to all direct-support professionals, especially teacher aides and assistants.
- Implement protocols to accurately screen for and diagnose English Language Learners, English as a Second Language students, and multilingual students who may have disabilities.
- Hold disciplinary hearings for students with disabilities within the first two days of the student’s suspension. At the hearing, give the parents a manifestation determination and specific date for when the child is allowed to return to school.