



FINGER LAKES

Regional Economic Development Council

PRELIMINARY FLREDC Opportunity Agenda Proposal

June 13, 2013

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC), in its effort to help remove the common barriers that prevent poor people from fully participating in the state's economic revitalization, hereby proposes a preliminary Opportunity Agenda (the "Agenda") aligned with our Five-Year Strategic Plan that leverages our region's strong public-private partnerships, local planning, workforce development initiatives and State investment to better allow underprivileged communities and citizens to engage in and benefit from our economic transformation.

Statement of Opportunity: There are a number of challenges that prevent communities in the City of Rochester and other parts of the Finger Lakes Region from participating in the economy. Among them, pockets of chronic urban and rural poverty (identified as a weakness in the FLREDC's Five-Year Strategic Plan), underdeveloped and inadequate skills for employment, a scarcity of affordable quality child care, a lack of access to transportation, and poor nutrition.

Opportunity Agenda Strategies: Our Agenda proposes to overcome the above-mentioned challenges with a pro-active, targeted approach that utilizes and reinforces the strong partnerships of our region. The goal of the Agenda is to increase the number of skilled workers living in the area and their chance of landing a job, thereby, decreasing the number of people living in poverty, provide local businesses a bigger workforce pool to pick from and an incentive to stay and even expand, and attract new businesses to the community, stimulating economic growth. In so doing, it will achieve effective workforce development by supporting programs with proven success such as the Youth Employment Training Academy of Hillside Work-Scholarship Connections (HW-SC), which helps provide students in distressed urban communities with the academic and social foundation they need to go on to post-secondary education (e.g. Monroe Community College's Precision and Machining Program) and the essential entry-level skills they need for a career. Our Agenda will address the lack of child care available to our region's working poor by collaborating with not for profits like the Child Care Council (offices located in Monroe, Wayne and Livingston County) and other stakeholders to support programs that help increase the number of quality childcare slots. It will address the lack of access to transportation by working with the regional transportation authorities to support initiatives that seek to enhance the modes of transportation most widely used by the poor, making it easier and safer for individuals from distressed communities to get to work and support their families. And it will address the vulnerable population of people in our community suffering from malnutrition by promoting programs that facilitate the aggregation, storage, processing and distribution of locally produced food products to the poor through the use of urban farm stands and curbside markets. The City of Rochester has the areas of greatest need in our region. Inasmuch, and in an effort to maximize impact, this Agenda will likely focus resources from the State and other successful programs in one or more of the following Rochester neighborhood(s): El Camino, JOSANA, PLEX and/or Marketview Heights.

Implementation Plan: The FLREDC has established under its Workforce Development workgroup, an Opportunity Agenda task force to further develop this Agenda in the coming months, and also oversee the long-term implementation and stakeholder engagement process of the Agenda. This task force currently includes the following members:

Danny Wegman, Wegmans Food Markets CEO, FLREDC Co-Chair

Dr. Anne Kress, Monroe Community College President, FLREDC Workforce Development Co-Chair

Augustin Melendez, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection President, FLREDC Workforce Development Co-Chair

Paul Speranza, Jr., Wegmans Food Markets Vice Chairman & General Counsel, FLREDC Workforce Development Co-Chair

Hilda Roario-Escher, Ibero-American Action League President & CEO, FLREDC Member

Jennifer Leonard, Rochester Area Community Foundation, President & CEO

Joseph D. Morelle, NYS Assembly Majority Leader

Ted O'Brien, NYS Senator 55th District

Thomas Richards, City of Rochester Mayor

Bret Garwood, City of Rochester Director of Business & Housing Development, FLREDC Community Development Co-Chair

Todd Oldham, Monroe Community College VP of Economic Development & Innovative Workforce Services Office

Bill Strassburg, Wegmans Food Markets

Joe Wesley, Wegmans Food Markets

Performance Measures: Potential performance measures being considered to track the long-term success of the Agenda within the targeted area include:

High school graduation rates (especially compared to graduation rates for participants of programs like HW-SC)

Number of graduating students that go on to receive post-secondary education degrees or certificates

Number of graduating students that get and retain a job

Number of quality child care slots filled

Number of individuals within the area with a reliable mode of transportation

Number of urban farm stands or curbside markets

Area poverty rate

Child poverty rate

Percent on public assistance

Unemployment rate

Percent not in labor force

Percent of population with high school diploma or higher degree

Percent of population with bachelor's degree or higher