Central New York – Opportunity Agenda

The Central New York Regional Economic Development Council’s 5-year Strategic Plan strongly emphasizes investing in economically distressed places and fostering economic opportunities for impoverished populations.

Institutions and organizations across CNY proactively connect low-income residents to economic and civic opportunities every day. The CNY Strategic plan identifies several overarching transformational initiatives to achieve greater equity of opportunity including Say Yes to Education, Municipal Core Reinvestment, Broadband Investment and Food to Markets. In addition, the CNY region is having excellent success linking impoverished citizens with opportunities through the “Skill Train” model for workforce development, and in neighborhoods where comprehensive place-based revitalization projects are underway and supported by anchor institutions.

The CNY Opportunity Agenda will leverage the success of the region’s transformational initiatives along with the region’s best practices in workforce development and place-based revitalization to create more and better economic opportunities for disadvantaged citizens.

The region’s anchor institutions will convene to discuss their individual and collective capacity for community building in areas of concentrated poverty. Successful place-based projects lead by coalitions of residents, agencies and employers will be identified. Best practices that address the cross cutting issues of economic vitality, community engagement, education, skill development, arts, housing, community health and safety will be fortified with resources that may be made available through this process, scaled and replicated where possible.

Creating an effective system for neighborhood-based employment is the most direct strategy for aligning economic investment and economic opportunities. This may include the creation of social ventures and the removal of barriers to employment such as skills training or the lack of available day care. This will serve as the foundation of the CNY Opportunity Agenda. In order to leverage and make these systems sustainable, the CNY Regional Council will continue to advance our transformational initiatives and deliberately enable locally-driven, integrated and place-conscious solutions for improving equity in our region.

The CNY Regional Economic Development Council is being asked to solicit projects throughout the region in round 3 of the CFA process which will begin June 17th and end August 12th. Funding sources in the next round can be located at the following website www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov and click on CFA resource manual. Applications should build on what has been accomplished to date in creating employment opportunities for impoverished neighborhoods. This is a competitive process and applications that will reduce barriers and/or create employment opportunities in economically distressed areas will be scored higher. Some potential projects could focus on:

- Transportation issues
- Skills development and alignment
- Placed-based/Neighborhood-based effort
- Entrepreneurship and social enterprise
- Women and Minority participation
- Education
- Affordable housing
- Child Care/Family Support

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