

Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

Mohawk Valley Opportunity Agenda Strategy

June 2013

Overview

The stated vision in the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan is “To Create a vibrant future by promoting and sustaining a diverse, integrated, and dynamic economy that capitalizes on technology and innovation to drive collaboration, inclusiveness, and efficiency in all endeavors; that is regionally networked and globally connected; that will cultivate, attract, and empower skilled workers; and that will foster an entrepreneurial spirit and the renewal of our communities, while preserving and building upon our abundant natural, cultural, and geographical resources to secure a rewarding and affordable quality of life for all.”

The core of this vision is to encourage and nurture thriving individuals and vibrant places. To help realize this vision, the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council established Goal Two in its Strategic Plan -- Workforce and Education Alignment -- as an integral strength and building block for our future. The MVREDC is dedicated to ensuring that all of the Region’s residents have the opportunity to acquire a level of education essential to meaningfully contributing in, and benefiting from, participation in the region’s diverse economy.

Education has the power to renew communities and to lift individuals and families from poverty into life-sustaining jobs. Our proposed Opportunity Agenda will focus on supporting improved outcomes for the Mohawk Valley’s residents along the entire education pipeline, including: increasing high school and college graduation rates for low-income, minority and first-generation college students; and promoting the career advancement and economic security of low-income individuals and families.

The Mohawk Valley Opportunity Agenda will continue to leverage the regional collaboration standard based on a shared set of specific goals. The Agenda will draw from the wealth of information and research generated by New York State and by the region’s public agencies, foundations, civic institutions, think tanks and community-based organizations. It is envisioned that long-term partnerships will be formed to advance the Opportunity Agenda and will drive systemic change that will positively affect all Mohawk Valley residents.

Call for Projects

Successful projects will be able to identify essential needs through a fact-driven approach; and to demonstrate that investments in their proposed solutions will produce rapid, measureable gains and desirable, sustainable long-term results that can be scaled and replicated. The Mohawk Valley Opportunity Agenda investments are designed to expedite positive, practical educational outcomes for underserved individuals currently in the education pipeline. Sparking the mobilization of our educational, nonprofit, philanthropic, business and governmental communities to align resources and increase efficiency and effectiveness (Strategy 5) will ensure the overall success of the Mohawk Valley’s educational pipeline. Investments will focus on building results-driven regional networks and delivery systems rather than focusing on a single locality or increasing the capacity of a single organization or program.

Priority Initiatives for the Opportunity Agenda will include:

- Supporting the construction of a strong, fundamental educational foundation aimed at families living in poverty to improve student success and a reduce early and long-term achievement gaps
- Keeping students and families on track for high school completion and graduation by reducing summer learning loss, increasing high school graduation rates; increasing student and parent participation in the educational process.
- Increasing post-secondary attainment to drive greater wealth creation across the region, state by creating more opportunities for employers and employees, helping “to secure a rewarding and affordable quality of life for all.”
- Supporting supplemental education leading to permanent employment through an increase of on-the-job internships and training, and job shadowing programs that lead to permanent employment.
- The Mohawk Valley REDC encourages potential applicants to apply for Consolidated Funding Application support for programs that promote graduation and supportive education leading to permanent employment, such as on-the-job internships and training, and job shadowing programs.

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