Buffalo Poverty Reduction Blueprint

A Roadmap for Reducing Poverty in the City of Buffalo

Prepared for Mayor Byron W. Brown by Deputy Mayor Donna M. Brown
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I. Introduction

High levels of poverty in the City of Buffalo continue to persist despite significant economic development in the last several years. With recent data by the U.S. Census Bureau listing Buffalo as the third poorest city in the nation, it is imperative that a comprehensive and strategic approach be put into place to address this situation. This report is designed to be a blueprint for strategic planning and action to reduce the level of poverty in Buffalo and assure that all of Buffalo's residents share in future economic growth.

This document, the Buffalo Poverty Reduction Blueprint, is based on a comprehensive review of poverty data, best practices across the nation and discussions with community leaders and experts in the field.
The central findings of our data and trend analysis are:

- High poverty levels in Buffalo persist, with those in poverty ill equipped and ill prepared to benefit from past, present, or future economic growth
- Poverty is a regional issue, with the number of county residents outside the City of Buffalo living in poverty growing by 52.5% between 1990 and 2007, according to the U.S. Census. At the same time, the number of residents in the City of Buffalo living in poverty decreased by 11.8%
- While the absolute numbers of residents living in poverty in Buffalo decreased, the poverty rate (measuring the proportion of residents living in poverty) increased from 26% to 28.5% due to Buffalo's declining population. Outside Buffalo, Erie County's rate grew from 12% to 14%
- Female heads of household are the highest group in poverty and the slowest to move out
- Research from the 2007 American Community Survey shows that 42% of the children under the age of 17 in Buffalo live in poverty
- Educational attainment affects the likelihood of living in poverty
- "Serving the poor" is not the same as "helping people out of poverty" – each demands a different set of services and strategies and both are necessary to sustain the health and wellbeing of our city and its residents
- While the core issue of poverty is a lack of sufficient economic resources to take care of basic life needs, the causes and consequences of poverty are varied and often entrenched. There are no easy or quick "silver bullet" solutions to poverty. Over the past 40 years, hundreds of billions of

dollars have been spent nationwide on single-focused, time-limited, and uncoordinated programs with underwhelming success in moving people out of poverty

- More and more public and private programs that focus on the causes or consequences of poverty now require coordinated service planning and delivery as a basis for funding. Service coordination is considered a "best practice" and essential to assuring that core life supports, such as housing, food, transportation, child care and health care are *all* in place and stabilized so low-income families may pursue the training, education, and employment that leads to self-sufficiency

Goals

Based upon what has been learned, the desire to build upon successful youth and neighborhood-building initiatives, and the immediate prospect of significant federal economic stimulus help, we believe the City of Buffalo can and should focus immediate attention and action on the following goals to reduce poverty:

1. **Increasing educational attainment** by increasing our literacy and high school graduation rates paving the way for accessing employment opportunities and higher education
2. **Providing pathways to jobs** by improving levels of workforce skills and education; matching workforce to employment needs and directing career paths to job opportunities
3. **Creating an environment that fosters economic opportunity and success** through increasing financial literacy, savings and asset building; expanding programs for family preservation and services to seniors, and increasing youth crime prevention programming
4. **Building quality neighborhoods in which to live, work and raise a family** by creating safe neighborhoods with affordable housing, eliminating blight, and preventing homelessness
5. **Engaging the community in a comprehensive and coordinated approach to reduce poverty,** by aligning efforts and resources and promoting a shared vision
6. **Maximizing resource development through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding**

Bringing people out of poverty at its most basic level means helping them get and keep jobs with sufficient income to support themselves and their families. Jobs are the cornerstone of this blueprint, buttressed by

social, training and educational programs that support the ultimate goal of assuring that all of Buffalo's residents have an opportunity to work and thrive. This blueprint calls for the creation and expansion of programs that reward those who work hard to graduate from high school or G.E.D. programs, and not dropouts. The blueprint addresses the special circumstances that single mothers face in pursuing training or education that might lead to a better future while struggling to keep pace with the daily challenges of maintaining a home, a job, and raising children. And, the blueprint focuses on breaking the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty by targeting new and expanded community-wide support to children and youth born into poverty.

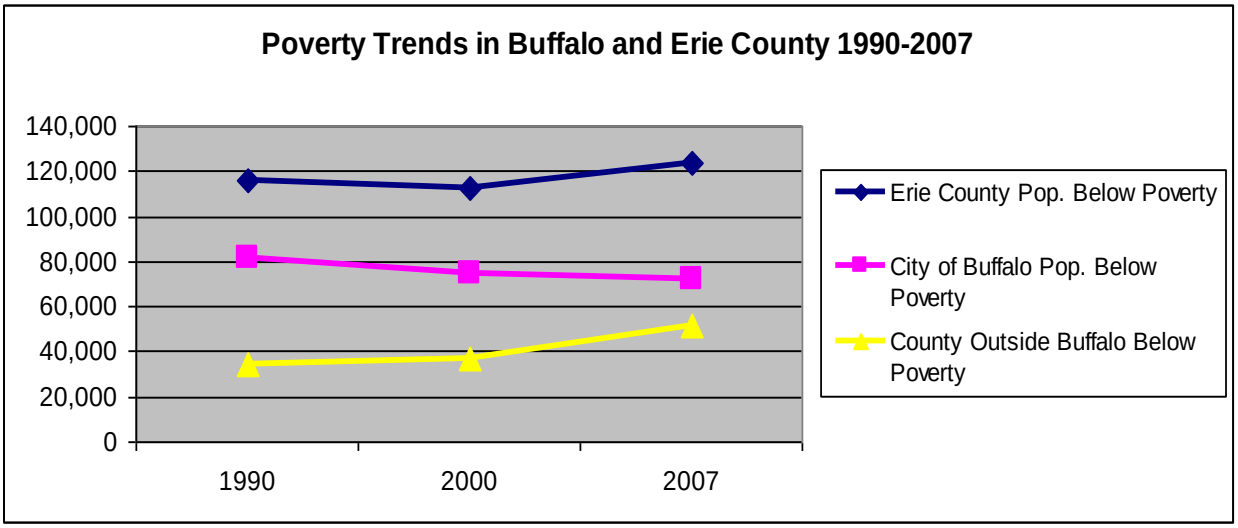
Poverty is a Regional Problem

Reducing poverty must be placed higher on the list of regional priorities. According to a Brookings Institute study for Miami, *"A growing body of research suggests that the fates of large cities and their metropolitan areas are intertwined – they grow together or decline together."*[1]

While there is the perception that poverty is an issue for the city, but not the region, U.S. Census data indicates that poverty is growing throughout Erie County. The number of county residents in poverty increased from 115,613 in 1990 to 123,888 in 2007, yielding a corresponding increase in the poverty rate for Erie County residents from 12% to 14%.[2] <u>This increase was not due to more City residents among the poverty ranks.</u> Although the percentage of Buffalo City residents in poverty increased over the period 1990 to 2007, the absolute number of individuals in poverty in the City of Buffalo declined from 81,601 to 72,005, reflecting the declining overall population. Thus the increase in the number of Erie County residents in poverty from 1990 to 2007 was fueled by growth in poverty outside the City of Buffalo.

[1] Brookings Institute

[2] U.S. Census



Erie County directs substantial funding, from federal, state and county resources, toward fighting poverty. The County is responsible for many social service programs including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Workforce Investment Board, Food Stamps, Medicaid, Child Support, Day Care, Home Energy Assistance, Health Services, Senior Services and Youth Services. For example, the County invests over $7 million on various nutrition programs for the elderly, and the County receives $1.5 million in federal funding as the Designated Area on Aging. The 2009 County budget for Youth Services was $10.9 million,[3] compared to the 2009 City of Buffalo Youth Services Division budget of $1.7 million.[4]

Many more millions of dollars flow through county-based child and family services. The challenge for all governments spending money to address the symptoms of poverty is to also provide the leadership to address the root causes of poverty.

Moreover, regional growth is tied to development of a skilled workforce. While economic development strategies can create the conditions for business growth, and thus job growth, other strategies are needed to ensure a skilled labor force is prepared for modern employment opportunities. With substantial numbers of our residents with low levels of income and educational attainment, initiatives to alleviate poverty through education and job readiness will benefit the region and its economy as a whole.

[3] Erie County Budget Books A and B

[4] City of Buffalo FY 2008-2009 Adopted Budget Detail

Out of Crisis Comes Opportunities

With the nation facing the deepest economic downturn in decades, we are realistic that long-term poverty reduction will take time and require the economy to recover sufficiently to provide employment opportunities. We are one city among many in the nation struggling with this issue. Nonetheless, with the passage of the national economic stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, significant resources for education, job training and job creation, as well as neighborhood building are now available.

The opportunity to secure resources contained in the federal stimulus plan, the largest federal investment in national employment since the great depression, must be acted upon quickly and aggressively to prevent more of our families from falling into poverty, prepare those in poverty to take advantage of emerging employment opportunities, and bring to Buffalo the large scale infrastructure improvement programs that will create jobs, improve our neighborhoods, and position our city for a brighter future as the nation emerges from recession.

The national economic stimulus package presents Buffalo with an enormous opportunity to transform our city both structurally and socially. With billions of dollars targeted to New York State, Buffalo, if well organized and aggressive, could bring significant resources to the community for public works projects, creating thousands of new jobs along with resources to better educate and train our neediest residents to qualify and acquire these jobs. **The release of this blueprint is timed to coincide with the opportunity before us.** It is designed to serve as a roadmap for public officials, policy makers, and community leaders in acquiring federal and state resources that will help lift our residents out of poverty with jobs, job training, education, and opportunity.

II. Mobilizing the Community to Reduce Poverty: Establishment of a Community Anti-Poverty Taskforce

Now is the time for the City of Buffalo and its surrounding jurisdictions to mobilize the entire community to think through how we might use this imminent infusion of new federal funds to link and enhance our efforts, speak with one voice, move with one vision and plan, to reduce poverty that persists and grows in our city and region.

Toward that end, it is recommended that the Mayor convene a regional task force of key public and private stakeholders to develop a coordinated five year strategy to reduce poverty in the City of Buffalo.

Modeled after the Mayor's successful Anti-Flipping Taskforce, we recommend that the taskforce convened by the Mayor establish four work groups to focus on each of the goals of the proposed poverty reduction initiative to engage the community in a comprehensive and coordinated approach to reduce poverty. – 1) Increasing educational attainment; 2) Providing pathways to jobs; 3) Creating an environment that fosters economic opportunity and success; and 4) Building quality neighborhoods in which to live, work and raise a family.

Each work group should be comprised of representatives of public and private entities in the city, county and region that are key stakeholders in the particular goal to be achieved:

- Increasing educational attainment: Mayor's Office and City government managers, Buffalo city school system, Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), county government, Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Read to Succeed Buffalo, Community Action Organization, University at Buffalo and other university/college officials, community-based literacy programs, representatives of key employers, United Way, representatives of community and faith-based organizations, representatives from state education agency and higher education board, consumer representatives (low-income families)
- Providing pathways to jobs: Mayor's Office and City government managers, Buffalo city school system, BOCES, county government, WIB, UB and other university/college officials, Chamber of Commerce or other business associations that represent regional employers, 1-3 major employers

in region, key union representative(s), representatives from New York State Department of Labor and Empire State Development Corporation, consumer representatives

- Creating an environment that fosters economic opportunity and success – Mayor's Office and City government managers, county government, city school system, Urban League, United Way, major service agencies and providers (health care, transportation, food and nutrition, child care, housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment), representatives from U.S. Attorney's Office (Weed and Seed), higher education representatives, representatives from adult and juvenile justice systems, mentoring groups (Big Brother/Big Sister), youth activities programs (Boys Clubs/Girls Clubs, Police Athletic League) representatives from community and faith-based organizations, consumer representatives
- Building quality neighborhoods in which to live, work and raise a family: Mayor's Office and City government managers (especially blight removal), law enforcement officials, housing officials, private sector housing developers, local bank and housing financing authority representatives, public and private homelessness prevention programs, local Neighborhood Watch representatives and other neighborhood leaders, community organizations (faith-based, recreational, civic associations), consumer representatives

Each work group should be charged with developing a five year plan to accomplish each of the four poverty reduction goals. Specifically, each work group should:

- Identify the specific conditions and needs in the city that must be addressed to accomplish this goal
- Identify current resources and programs that are or could contribute to meeting needs
- Identify gaps in the nature and number of services and supports that are needed
- Identify populations and geographic areas for which services and supports must be provided in order to achieve the poverty reduction goal
- Prioritize populations and geographic areas to be served based on need, current service/support opportunities and other readiness considerations
- Identify immediate and long range actions that need to be taken to achieve the goal and the entities that will be responsible for planning and implementing those actions
- Gain commitments from public and private entities to take action(s), including specific commitments of time and resources (human and financial)

- Identify barriers (financial, legal, logistical, human resource) that must be overcome to achieve the goal and strategies to overcome those barriers
- Identify program and service coordination that must take place to achieve the goal and develop an initial strategy to establish and maintain that coordination
- Identify a limited number of immediate program improvements, expansions, or realignments that can be made to begin to better address poverty needs in the community and reduce the incidence of poverty and create a plan to achieve those immediate improvements (i.e. items to include in new or revised public and private programs and budgets, increased public and private fund-raising through advocacy for federal, state, and foundation fiscal allocations and grants)
- Identify how progress toward achieving each poverty reduction goal can be measured and reported as part of an overall accountability system for the poverty reduction initiative, including specific performance measures, milestones and outcomes for families, neighborhoods, the city and region

It is recommended that the Mayor assure that all taskforce and work group activities actively involve participation of the broader Buffalo community:

- All taskforce and work group meetings should be open to public participation, providing opportunities at each meeting for members of the public to address taskforce or work group members
- Taskforce and work group meetings should be held in venues conducive to citizen attendance and participation, such as neighborhood schools or recreation centers. Every effort should be made to conduct one or more meetings in every affected city neighborhood

The taskforce should present to the Mayor its strategic plan to reduce poverty in Buffalo as soon as possible in order to quickly begin work to stem ever worsening poverty conditions caused by the economic downturn and take full advantage of new federal funding opportunities.

Once developed, approved, and launched, the strategic plan will provide the City of Buffalo and other authorities throughout the region a framework for future activities and initiatives, and a compelling case for securing federal and state support for regional recovery.

Implementation and Accountability

A formal, community-wide, collaborative structure will be essential to direct, manage and implement the strategic plan for reducing poverty that will be developed by the recommended community-wide taskforce. Working with city government support, the taskforce will be charged with:

- Prioritize areas for implementation
- Set appropriate baselines and targets for measuring success
- Identify resources and leverage resources for greater impact, and where appropriate, redirected to produce outcomes needed
- Continue to engage new stakeholders
- Build public awareness by working in collaboration with media outlets to launch a clear and aggressive public communications campaign and community-wide dialogue surrounding poverty and its solutions.

III. The Brown Administration's Record

Over the course of Mayor Brown's Administration, helping those in need has been a top priority and the Administration's record of achievement and commitment is well documented.

Conservative budgeting has enabled the Administration to find the resources, even in tough fiscal times, to invest in critical programs and a culture of accountability and efficiency has reduced wasteful spending and allowed the Administration to strengthen its priorities and identify programmatic initiatives and reforms to strengthen its efforts to alleviate poverty. Key to this has been CitiStat Buffalo.

Upon taking office in 2006, Mayor Brown began design and implementation of CitiStat Buffalo, a management accountability program to establish the highest level of transparency, accountability and workforce efficiency necessary to deliver the best possible services to the residents of Buffalo. Each city department regularly comes before a review panel comprised of the Mayor and his senior leadership team with the objective of assuring regular review, accountability, reliability and productivity in the delivery of city services. Citizen participation and transparency are optimized by televising each CitiStat meeting and including an "Ask CitiStat" component, where any citizen can call, write in, or email comments, questions and concerns that will be addressed at these publicly aired meetings.

Since its inception, CitiStat Buffalo has analyzed every city department thoroughly, identified areas in need of improvement, and initiated programs and mechanisms to improve city services.

Many of the strategies the Brown Administration presently deploys to alleviate poverty in the City of Buffalo were strengthened by CitiStat Buffalo deliberations, for example: tripling the number of children completing the Mayor's Summer Reading Program and youth employed through the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program; adding a winter employment component to this program; digitizing medical records for the delivery of city substance abuse services, creating Spanish speaking positions to better serve this important population, and enhancing services to seniors.

Current City Supported Initiatives to Alleviate Poverty

Currently, the City of Buffalo is engaged in a wide variety of programming targeted toward those in need of public assistance through its various city offices, primarily the Department of Community Services and Recreational Programming, the Department of Economic Development Permits and Inspection Services, the Division of Citizen Services within the Office of the Mayor, the Buffalo Police Department and other initiatives.

A. Department of Community Services and Recreational Programming

The City of Buffalo's Department of Community Services and Recreational Programming is responsible for advancing opportunity and improving the quality of life in the City of Buffalo through the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan of human services. Its divisions include substance abuse, employment and training, youth services, senior services, citizen's rights and community relations, re-entry, contract and compliance and administration. Additionally, the department is responsible for the delivery, administering and monitoring the Community Development Block Grants. The City of Buffalo contracted with 100 Community Based Organizations in the amount of $6,507,717 through Community Block Grant – Public Service between 2006-2009 to provide services in the following areas, literacy and education programs, employment, housing, counseling, youth development case management preventative services, health education and senior services.

- **Youth Services**

1. Mayor's Youth Employment Program: provides training and employment opportunities to City of Buffalo youth, between the ages of 14 – 21, of which at least half the participants are at or below poverty. Youth receive training in financial literacy, pre-employment skills, and life-skills. The youth employment program participation increased significantly from 1,200 youth in 2005 to 3,173 youth in 2008. Since 2006, the program has seen nearly $1.7 million in investments from the City of Buffalo.

2. Reading Rules! Kids Summer Reading Challenge: is designed to increase literacy levels of students entering grades 1-9. Youth participants are from the Buffalo public, charter and parochial schools. Under the program, participating youth are required to read 7 books and submit a summary of each book read. The number of students completing the program has increased significantly from 500 students in 2006 to 1,200 students in 2008. Upon completion of the program, these youth are invited to an awards ceremony where the students are recognized for their achievement.

   Participation in this program reinforces and bridges academic learning throughout the summer. In 2008, Mayor Brown awarded six scholarships totaling $11,500 to program participants. Since 2006, the City of Buffalo has invested approximately $80,000 in this program to further academic success among these students.
3. Youth Counseling Program: offers free individual, group and family counseling to City of Buffalo youth between the ages of 7 and 20 who are displaying signs of at risk behavior. Between 2006 to present a total of 11,493 youth have received counseling services. The Division of Youth also provides referrals to partner agencies to assist the youth and their families who are experiencing difficulties.
4. Anti-Crime Program: incorporates education, referral services and community mobilization as strategies to positively address youth crime prevention. This educational program is designed to assist youth in recognizing activities that constitute a crime and its consequences. Youth, parents and/or caregivers participate in the workshops. There were 110 workshops attended by 1,971 youth and 756 parents and/or caregivers.
5. Pathways Curfew Initiative: crime prevention and case management initiative focused on youth ages 11 – 17 who reside or attend school in some of Buffalo's poorest neighborhoods, zip codes 14211, 14214 and 14215. These areas contained nearly 40% of juvenile arrests in the City of Buffalo in 2006-2007. Through March 2009, 280 youth were redirected by police during curfew hours. Through this program, youth who are identified in need of services and/or curfew

violators are referred to a partner agency where case management services are provided.

6. Code of Conduct: collaborative effort of the City of Buffalo Department of Community Services, Buffalo Police and Erie County Probation Department. The Code of Conduct program which serviced 3,970 youth between 2006 to present, addresses the needs of at risk youth for violent behavior by promoting empathy toward victims and non-violent conflict resolution, providing information to increase self-awareness of warning signs of violent behavior, reviewing effective communication techniques, utilizing activities designed to foster norms against violent aggression, and encouraging alternative behaviors and a healthy lifestyle.
7. Youth Court: training program that combines youth leadership development with juvenile justice, involving youth in the community in the decision-making process for sanctioning their peers who have violated the rule of law or engaged in problem behavior. The program is a youth driven, voluntary alternative to traditional juvenile court and school disciplinary proceedings. From its inception in 2007 to present, 71 participants have graduated from the program.
8. Buffalo Police Athletic League (PAL): is a city affiliated non-profit that improves the immediate and future quality of life for the youth of our city and surrounding communities through educational, recreational, cultural, environmental, and prevention programming. The PAL provides children with leadership, direction, and opportunity by affording them structured, supervised, and organized activities, opportunities, and programs in a climate where they can accomplish individual and common goals; enabling them to become responsible, successful adults.

- **Office of Senior Services & Disabled Parking Permits**

1. The Office of Senior Services utilizing its three vans provides round trip medical transportation recreational transportation (prevents social isolation) and grocery shopping assistance to local supermarkets to seniors residing in the City of Buffalo. Between 2006-2009, 7,332 seniors received round trip medical van transportation, 4,728 seniors received transportation for recreational activities and 12, 700 seniors received transportation for grocery shopping. The City of Buffalo has invested over $230,000 for these transportation services to help area seniors better manage their fixed incomes. The investment was made in the purchase of two vehicles, salaries of van drivers, maintenance and gas for the operation of the vehicles.
2. The office administers the File of Life program, which assists seniors to properly identify their medical needs in the event of an emergency.
3. The office administers the Mayor's Senior Citizens Discount Card. Through heightened marketing, the discount card program has grown to 5,195 participants in 2008, as compared to 236 participants in all of 2005 – 2007.
4. The office operates three senior centers throughout the City of Buffalo, providing services to coordinate various activities at each location. Between 2006-2009, 1,700 seniors have received and participated in lunch programs, recreational activities, health forums, financial literacy programs, benefits and insurance counseling, totaling 311,879 units of services and/or activities participated.
5. The Office of Senior Services also provides information and referrals for senior who walk in or call in to the senior administrative offices and/or centers. These activities include issues deal with housing, legal, social services senior case management and employment. Since 2006, the Division has responded to 161,399 inquires.
6. Lastly, the office provides information services to seniors through the publication of a monthly newsletter with a distribution of 3,000 per month. Between 2006-2009, 126,300 newsletters have been distributed.

- **Division of Substance Abuse Services**

  In the past three years, the City of Buffalo has committed $ 360,000 for treatment services to assist citizens in overcoming addiction. In *2006*, 800 patients were seen, generating 15,695 service units; in *2007*, 864 patients were seen, generating 16,153 units of service; in *2008,* 934 patients generated 17,714 service units. Numbers for 2009 are expected to exceed those in the past due to the economy and the increase in substance use.

  The Division provides a variety of services for adolescents, young adults, seniors and families. These services cover as wide range of needs and are listed below:

1. Programs for domestic violence/anger management issues
2. Services from licensed clinical social workers and certified counselors
3. Access to vocational and education programs
4. Access to the division's medical doctor and registered nurse for physicals, medical care and referrals at three clinics strategically located throughout the city of Buffalo
5. Use of family and group counseling services
6. Assistance with advocacy and referral services
7. medical assessments
8. physical examinations
9. annual medical follow up and evaluations

- **Employment & Training**

  The Buffalo Employment and Training Center is a "One-Stop Career Center" that has provided job search, job and job placement services to13,445 job seekers since 2006. The BETC has also provided 1,132 job seekers with training vouchers to upgrade their occupational skills from 2006 to present.

  The BETC is part of a community network of services and resources designed to help job seekers realize their employment goals. All of BETC's services are free

and can be used by any job seeker who wants to find a new job, move to a higher paying job, or get training to upgrade their skills.

BETC's job search resources include:

1. Access to Job boards and electronic job banks
2. Career planning and labor market information
3. Postage for mailing resumes
4. Use of copiers and fax machines and telephones for job search purposes
5. Access to over 40 "state of the art" computers with high speed internet access for use in checking job openings and emailing resumes to employers
6. The Center also offers on-going Computer Training classes in three "State of the Art" Computer Labs including training in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Publisher, and Keyboarding Skills
7. Job Search Workshops to help job seekers prepare for their job search including Job-Finding Tips that Work, Interview Techniques, Resume Writing and Resume Review, Career Planning, and Job Search Using the Internet
8. Six Career Counselors are used to help match job seeker strengths and interests to a career path, help identify occupations that are "in-demand" locally and help job seekers plan the steps needed to prepare for and attain their career goal, including enrolling in skills training programs
9. Four Job Coaches who help job seekers develop a resume, prepare cover letters, use the internet to find job openings, and structure a job search

- **Re-Entry**

  The City of Buffalo is committed to the successful acclimation of its recently released prisoners and parolees. In partnership with multi-layered human service agencies, employment and training programs, businesses and state agencies, the City of Buffalo re-entry initiative provides:

1. Pre release vocational assessments conducted at Orleans Correctional Facility on a weekly basis, or within a week of an inmate's arrival into Orleans' Re-Entry Unit

2. Post release vocational assessments with counselors of the Re-Entry Unit within a week of release, allowing for orientation of BETC and a more in-depth, comprehensive assessment

3. Pre-employment skills training, ranging from individual facilitation to job clubs sponsored at BETC and workshops given through the Re-Entry office

4. Job Placement based upon experience, industry demand and existing labor markets

5. Case management that begins at Orleans Correctional Facility and continues even after an individual has completed his 180 cycle with the Re-Entry Unit after his first day of employment

6. Follow-up services through the Re-Entry Unit's vast network of providers and through the partners of the Erie County Re-Entry Task Force. Follow-up with each client continues for 180 days after the first day of employment and includes contact with the employer(s)

7. Referrals in substance abuse treatment, education, training, housing, mentoring and financial literacy through over 100 community based organizations

Since inception, 187 individuals have participated in vocational assessment, 121 have completed pre-employment skills training, 42 have been referred to vocational training, 6 have been referred to education/GED programs and 23 have secured employment.

- **Office of Contract Administration**

  The office works with not-for-profit agencies throughout the City of Buffalo, funded through Federal Community Block Grant (C.D.B.G) and Housing Opportunity for People with Aids (H.O.P.W.A) and Emergency Shelter Grants.

  The agencies provide:

1. literacy and education programs
2. employment
3. housing counseling
4. youth development
5. case management
6. preventative services
7. health education
8. senior services

- **Office of Contract Compliance**

  The Office of Contract Compliance strives to improve relations with contractors, enhance economic development and promote compliance with city, state and federal laws pertaining to contracts bid out by City of Buffalo departments.

  The Office of Contract Compliance advocates compliance with prevailing wage, for public contract to establish a level playing field for minority and women's contractors competing for contract in the Technical, Public Works and Professional RFP bid out through the City of Buffalo.

  To support this, several measures have been taken, including:

1. The use of bilingual monitors to investigate and monitor public works projects and contractors to ensure the following of laws and regulations

2. The Office of Contract compliance also works closely with the agencies entrusted with enforcement of these laws and regulations

3. The Office of Contract Compliance monitors a "Section **3** program" that provides job training, employment and contract opportunities for low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods

   The Office of Contract Compliance has monitored 43 City of Buffalo contracts for $52,000,000, in addition to 8 federally funded projects for $19,000,000 in 2008. The Following are some of the projects:

   - City Hall Mansory Reconstruction Phase II - $2.96
   - Replacement of Squaw Island Rail Bridge - $1.7M
   - Bailey and Genesee Fire Station – $3.2 M
   - 700 Block Main Street Project - $1.6 M
   - Resurfacing of City Pavements Group 686 $2.6 M

B. Department of Economic Development, Permits, and Inspections (EDPIS) and the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA), and the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation (BERC)

This city department and these agencies are engaged in a variety of programs and activities targeted toward improving the physical condition, the neighborhoods and environment, in which those living in poverty struggle.

- **Mayor Brown's "5 in 5" Demolition and Rehab Program**

  To curtail neighborhood destabilization, increase safety and promote development citywide, Mayor Brown introduced the "5 in 5" Demolition and Rehabilitation Program. This progressive initiative set a goal to demolish 5,000 unsalvageable

structures in 5 years. Since 2006, the City has invested over $45 million to demolish over 2,000 properties.

- **Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Program**

  In 2004, Buffalo commenced a Lead Hazard Reduction Program grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that continued through 2008. This endowment has allowed the city to pursue elimination of childhood lead poisoning by assisting property owners with rehabilitation activities that sufficiently address lead hazards in their homes.

  The City's lead grant, coupled with its Housing Improvement Program's HOME funds, invested a total of $1,495,884 to enhance the housing stock and better the health of our residents by ensuring that lead evaluations were completed making 147 units lead safe and code compliant.

- **HOME Funds**

  In an effort to "prime the pump" for residential development, HOME funds were leveraged to assist Belmont Shelter Corporation produce 29 rent-to-own units in Masten Park as part of its East Side Housing-I development and NRP Group's 50 units for the East Side Housing's Phase II in Midtown. Cazenovia Recovery's Amherst Station building will provide a desperately needed 24 units of affordable rental housing.

  Additionally, 35 residential dwellings were brought into code compliance using Federal HOME funds.

  Also leveraging HOME funds to produce livable places were:

  Artspace's 1219 Main Street—60 units

  Matt Urban Center's Crescent Village homes—10 units

  St. John Baptist Church's Fruitbelt homes—5 units

  HOME Inc.'s Main Ferry building—10 units

OSP's Sycamore Village homes—24 units

Bethel CDC's 121 Woodlawn Avenue—1 unit

Bethel CDC's Bethel 2 home 105 Woodlawn Avenue—1 unit

Bethel CDC's Bethel 3 homes—5 units

Bethel CDC's Performing Arts New Housing—5 units

New Opportunities CDC's HOZO Phase2 Homes—28 units

BURA's HOZO Phase 4 homes (Kane, Mortimer & Walnut Street)—11 units

BURA/ Belmont Shelter's Block by Block Home Improvement Program—48 units

BURA/ Belmont Shelter's Block by Block Rehab Program—10 units

Regan Development's Packard Building—40 units

Oak Street building—29 units

- **Federally Supported Funding for Housing Programs**

  Emergency HOME Funds totaling $1.4 million assisted 140 homeowners with major emergency repairs to mechanical system and structural repairs to their roofs, furnaces, water/ sewer lines, electrical panels, hot water tanks and water meters.

  The Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) provides a safety of support to those facing homelessness through a continuum of care that begins with prevention of homelessness, client outreach, client linkages to service providers, transitional housing for the homeless and finally, permanent housing options. To date, 424 families have been assisted (202 in 2006 and 222 in 2007).

  Through ESG funding, the City provides legal services at foreclosure auctions and in Housing Court as well as rental and utility payments for those facing a short-term sudden loss of income.

  An allocation of $400,000 for weatherization projects will assist 50 homeowners with energy efficiency measures.

  The City of Buffalo also provides housing and case management for persons with AIDS through the CDBG program.

- **Partnerships with Community Housing Development Organizations**

  Since 2004, the City of Buffalo has invested over $3.1 million in the acquisition and rehabilitation of properties, turning vacant, boarded eyesores into homes for low and moderate-income families.

- **Environmental Justice**

  Those in poverty often live near brownfield and other contaminated sites. Mayor Brown has acquired nearly 500 acres of remediated brownfields, primed for development and opportunity.

- **Foreclosure Prevention Assistance**

  Before the city disposes of property through its In Rem process, intensive counseling, financial literacy, and foreclosure assistance to help individuals successfully navigate the banking and regulatory systems. The City has committed over $317,000 to fund fair housing and mortgage foreclosure.

- **Business Assistance Programs**

  Business Assistance Programs provide incentives to businesses relocating to or expanding in the City of Buffalo. Such programs are vital to job creation and sustainability.

  The Renewal Community (RC) is a partnership among federal, state, and local governments, local businesses and community organizations enacted to stimulate economic development for a designated area's most distressed neighborhoods. Eligible businesses can take advantage of the following benefits through December 31, 2009: wage credit, increased Section 179 deduction, zero % capital gains rate and the Commercial Revitalization Deduction (CRD).

  The New York State Legislature established the Empire Zone program to create new jobs and encourage private investment within the designated zones. Benefits include wage tax credits (WTC), investment tax credits (ITC), employment

incentive credit (EIC), sales tax rebate, utility rate discounts, and real property tax exemptions.

The BERC provides loans for Minorities and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE's) who have traditionally found it difficult to obtain financing from traditional sources. Supporting MWBE's adds jobs to the economy as businesses, previously deterred from start-up or expansions, are able to hire employees.

The BERC has applied for the (State of New York) New Markets Tax Credits Program, which will encourage economic development in poor communities spurring job creation in segments of the city where large blocks of the City's poor reside.

C. Division of Citizen Services

In addition to assuring citizen requests and concerns are addressed in a timely, accurate, and professional manner through the City of Buffalo's new 311 Call and Resolution Center, the Division of Citizen Services is charged with improving city neighborhoods and communities through the activities of the city's Save Our Streets, Anti-Graffiti Clean City, and Quality of Life taskforces, Weed and Seed program, the Mayor's Impact and Clean and Seal teams, Operation Clean Sweeps Neighborhood Initiative, Citizen Participation Academy, the Fair Housing Office, and the Mayor's Livable Communities Initiative.

- **Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center**

The Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center is tasked with providing Buffalo residents with access to city services, city information and non-emergency police services with the highest possible levels of customer service and satisfaction. From January 2006 – March 2009 there were 319, 121 calls made to the Call and Resolution Center from residents.

With increased access to information, citizens are empowered and take ownership of their neighborhoods and community ills because they feel they have the ability to get things done.

In an effort to alleviate social problems and eliminate blight the services provided through the 311 Call and Resolution Center affords citizens an opportunity to be good stewards of their neighborhood and an avenue to inform city government of concerns to remedy.

Through development of the 311 Knowledge Base, a mechanism of the Call Center with the ability to catalogue activities, as residents call in to report concerns they may also receive information and increase awareness on a variety of current events and undertakings occurring throughout the City of Buffalo, including programs they may access to help improve their standard of living.

- **Buffalo LeaderShape AmeriCorps**

  The City of Buffalo Division of Citizen Services and the Department of Community Services collaboratively, over the course of 3 years, will provide Buffalo LeaderShape AmeriCorps with their federal grant match of $198,000.

  This program, housed at the Father Belle Center at 104 Maryland St., has placed 96 out of school young adults, ages 17 to 24 in a year of full-time rigorous service during which they work in diverse teams to address societal needs, particularly in schools and neighborhoods, with program vacancies still available. If the AmeriCorps member does not have a high school diploma, part of their service hours are dedicated to the attainment of their GED. To date, there have been 8 participants enrolled in the GED program, and 10 past participants who are now enrolled in college. $132, 200 in educational awards have been provided to participants upon completion of the program to assist in college expenses.

  Graduates of this program assist the City of Buffalo in vacant lot remediation, neighborhood clean-ups and clean sweeps, graffiti removal, and also put their idealism to work as tutors and mentors to school children, operating winter warming centers, reclaiming public spaces, and organizing after-school programs, and school vacation camps. Participants also manage and volunteer for civic engagement programs for elementary, middle school, and high school students such as the Mayor's Reading Rules program, supervision of students in the

Mayor's Summer Youth Employment program, and vacant lot remediation with the Save our Streets and Weed and Seed programs.

- **Anti-Graffiti & Clean City Programs**

  The anti-graffiti and Clean City Program provides education to the public on graffiti prevention and removal as well as clean city beautification initiatives. From 2006 through 2008, 723 service requests for graffiti removal were recorded by the Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center. The volume of requests increased from year to year largely in part to increased public awareness of graffiti and the Anti-Graffiti Clean City program, through outreach at Block Club meetings and community events. Citizens now know they can call 311 and services will be rendered. In 2008, there were 262 properties and 233 signal boxes where graffiti removal techniques were utilized.

  This includes working with 21 community-based organizations and businesses to beautify vacant city green space with gardens, tree plantings, and implement Operation Good Neighbor, where volunteers and city workers help elder and disabled citizens in need to keep their property free of snow during winter months. Requests for snow removal are processed through the Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center, where during winter months from 2007-2009 there were 472 service requests received and 214 households serviced to date.

- **Buffalo Weed & Seed Program**

  The Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office has provided $500,000 in grant funding to the City of Buffalo for their Weed and Seed Initiative from 2006 to 2009, with the City of Buffalo providing administration and staffing as a funding match.

  Buffalo Weed and Seed represents a dynamic strategy for making Buffalo's inner-city neighborhoods a healthy safer place to live. Working together in collaboration with law enforcement, public agencies, local educational institutions, community and grass roots organizations, this program helps to remove blight and crime and

rebuild neighborhoods. It is important to note that the Weed and Seed initiative, as stipulated by the U.S. Department of Justice, is a strategy not a comprehensively funded program. The community benefits as Weed and Seed sites are expected to produce and develop innovative and locally-relevant collaborations. These collaborations help communities remove crime and blight by introducing special federal and local law enforcement efforts followed by an intense neighborhood restoration and prevention/intervention regimen.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office, previously allocated funding over five years (1996-2001) to the city of Buffalo to support an initiative known as Buffalo Weed & Seed. Originally focused on high crime neighborhoods in the Masten and Fillmore districts (Eastside), Weed & Seed was previously granted additional funding (2001-2006) allowing the program to expand into neighborhoods located in the Niagara and Ellicott districts of the City of Buffalo (Westside). It's newest site (Lower Eastside) was granted to the City of Buffalo in August 2006.

The program is diligently working to implement a five year strategy that mobilizes community residents, federal, state and local offices; law enforcement agencies and criminal justice initiatives with social service providers, private sector entities and community efforts. Overall, its goal is to successfully implement four fundamental principals: collaboration, coordination, community participation, and leveraging resources. This is accomplished through a series of core components, law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention and treatment, and neighborhood restoration.

By strengthening ties between law enforcement and city residents, the initiative has helped reduce crime rates in target areas by nearly 25 percent. In addition, resources have been channeled to a network of "Safe Havens," community-based organizations that offer a variety of youth and adult services, coordinated in a highly visible, accessible facility that is secure against crime and illegal drug activity.

Current East Side Safe Havens include:

- YMCA/William-Emslie
- Lt. Col. Matt Urban Center/Polonia Hall
- CRUCIAL Human Services
- Delavan-Grider Community Center
- International League of Muslim Women
- Saint Columba/Brigid Teen Center
- There's None Like You Family Community Outreach Program.

West Side Safe Havens include:

- Arts Alive
- Ashbury Shalom Zone
- West Side Community Services
- The Boys and Girls Club
- The Massachusetts Avenue Project.

Helping ensure the long-term sustainability of these organizations will make it possible for residents to access needed services, develop relationships, find opportunities, and enhance skills well into the future.

Weed and Seed engages the neighborhood throughout five year's in a way that is designed to reduce crime and develop activities for residents and youth as well as coordinate neighborhood cleanup and beautification projects. These activities include the Mayor's Winter/Summer Youth Program, which provides work opportunities for youth during the summer months and internships during the winter months for college students, and the Weed and Seed National Youth Council, which has provided youth representatives an opportunity to represent the City of Buffalo nationally at the organization's annual conference.

During the summer of 2008 Weed and Seed sponsored five (5) community events to inform the target area residents of the programs and services sponsored by the City of Buffalo's Weed and Seed Initiative.

The Buffalo Weed and Seed target area encompasses Police District C. The target area boundaries work west from Jefferson Avenue, then eastward along William Street to Bailey Avenue, northward on Bailey to Sycamore Street, and westward along Sycamore to Jefferson Avenue.

Buffalo Weed and Seed has provided financial literacy workshops to 637 community residents in conjunction with the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) and HSBC. Working with sixteen (16) community partners (CBOs, FBOs, Colleges and Universities and Correctional Facilities), provides 6-10 five hour adult financial literacy workshops per year (2006-2009).

- **Mayors Quick Response Teams**

  Mayor Brown's Quick Response Teams are dispatched as a first responder to quality of life issues throughout the City of Buffalo. The Clean & Seal Crew cleans, secures and boards up vacant homes and assists in vacant lot maintenance. There were 4,573 Properties boarded-up in the City of Buffalo from 2006 – 2008. The crew annually cleans 10 bridges and 8 sidewalks surrounding parks, community centers, and traffic curves.

  The Mayor's Impact Team (including staff from the Departments of Public Works; Economic Development, Permit & Inspection Services; Police; Buffalo Sewer Authority and the Division of Citizen Services) cleans properties along with numerous streets throughout the city each year, and also serves orders to vacate for the City's Housing. From 2006 - 2008 the program has cleaned 600 streets and 2,500 residential properties, and served over 900 orders to vacate. The team also annually cleans 10 viaducts, 9 bridges, 4 pedestrian bridges, and sidewalks surrounding 4 current and former fire stations houses.

  Both Quick Response Teams also assist in the City's snow removal efforts; together these teams clean bridges, walkways and viaducts every time it snows and play the leadership role in the Division's "Clean Sweeps".

  Supervision of the Mayor's Junior Impact Team is also tasked to this department through a collaborative effort with the Buffalo Employment and Training Center,

where youth ages 14-24 have an opportunity benefit from solid work experience, financial independence, job readiness skills and development, and a greater sense of civic pride in the community. The Mayor's Junior Impact Team focuses on cleaning commercial districts and NFTA bus shelters on these strips by rotation and through complaints from the Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center for litter removal and snow removal. Assigned clean-up rotations are given to the team within the following commercial areas: Elmwood, Hertel, Delaware, Main, Tonawanda, Ontario, Jefferson, William, Fillmore, Bailey, South Park, Seneca, Niagara, Grant and Broadway. Since winter 2009, 37 commercial strips were cleaned and 21 service requests from the Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center regarding cleaning bus shelters were responded to.

- **Citizen Participation Academy**

  Each year, 25-30 city residents engage in an 8 session educational program designed to maximize their potential as community builders. The curriculum includes educating participants on city government structures, services, and policies, providing contact and interaction with public officials, and engaging participants in hands-on civic and community activities and discussions surrounding vital issues in our area. Since its inception in 2006, there have been 4 Academies with 106 participants having completed this program.

- **Office of Fair Housing**

  The City of Buffalo Fair Housing Office was established to assist individuals in securing the suitable housing accommodations of their choice and to eliminate impediments that lead to discrimination in housing.

  The City of Buffalo has taken direct actions to stem the practice of discrimination in housing by contracting with local Fair Housing Agencies that assist in its efforts to serve the local community with obtaining equal housing. In 2006, 673 calls were responded to residents. Since 2007, concerns in this area are now managed by

the Office of Strategic Planning in conjunction with grant programs available to home owners.

- **Save Our Streets**

  The Justice Department provides a federal grant of $134,536 to the City of Buffalo to operate the Save Our Streets program that investigates illegal drug activity and uses city statutes and laws to evict tenants who are committing illegal acts from rental homes and works with homeowners to process evictions due to illegal or drug activity in residential properties.

  The City of Buffalo's Save Our Streets Task Force also performs "Clean Sweeps" in conjunction with Buffalo Police and Federal Law enforcement aimed at targeting homes and streets where quality of life issues are being violated. This task force is comprised of various law enforcement, private sector and government agencies throughout the region. From 2006 – 2008, 55 clean sweeps were executed, with 21 projected to begin Spring 2009.

  Last year, the Save our Streets Clean Sweep Task Force conducted 21 Clean Sweeps, going into each City Council district to accomplish the following:

  - 29 drug houses were identified and shut down
  - 40 houses were identified for demolition
  - 506 homes were baited for rodents
  - 204 tons of debris were removed
  - 112 smoke detectors were given to residents who did not have them
  - 466 code violations were discovered and addressed

  The Save Our Street's Program also offers free landlord training programs aimed at educating Landlords on their rights and finding out ways that would help them become better landlords, which would ultimately help to improve the housing stock and quality of life in the City of Buffalo. From 2006 – 2008, there were 8 sessions completed with a total of 261participants.

In addition, now tenants are offered a Tenant Education Training aimed at assisting them in becoming better tenants, and improving their personal finances, and organizational and community enrichment. Workshops are offered in the following areas; Community Development and Block Club Involvement course, Lead Prevention Techniques and testing information, Budgeting, Financial Literacy and Credit Repair, Home Ownership Opportunity Information, Employment and Training Information, 311 Usage, Substance Abuse & Re-Entry Information, General Maintenance and Upkeep, and Family Sufficiency Grant Information. Case Management services are provided to tenants and property owners on an individual basis. Problem properties are added to Save our Streets caseload daily. Since 2006, 62 Notification letters mailed to out of town problem property owners, 210 Landlord notification meetings scheduled with local property owner's/managers regarding problem properties, 77 Evictions, and 49 Warnings were granted. Also in conjunction with the Buffalo Police Department, data is collaboratively collected totaling 480 Evictions as a result of narcotic search warrant executions, and 634 Bawdy Inspections Schedule via Hanson to alert Law Department and Inspectors of Activities of Drug/Nuisance Homes. In an effort to alert updated whereabouts or perpetrators to the proper law enforcement authorities, all results are sent to Police Commissioner, Police Chief and Deputy Commissioner.

- **Mayor's Livable Communities Program**

  The Mayor's Livable Communities Grant is afforded annually to incorporated grassroots community based organizations and block clubs in an effort to assist with visual and physical neighborhood improvement projects through the elimination of blight and aesthetic enhancement of vacant properties, improved access to public transportation, and conservation of environmental and natural resources. Since 2005, 134 grants totaling $141,737.73 have been awarded through this program.

D. Buffalo Police Department

The Buffalo Police Department is actively engaged in programs and partnerships to Make city neighborhoods safer and keep kids out of trouble.

- **Mayor Brown's Zero Tolerance Anti-Crime Policy**

  The policy has accounted for a 12% reduction in overall crime since 2006 and in two years, the policy has accounted for a 50% decrease in homicides.

- **New Law Enforcement Position**

  There are 108 new police officers are patrolling city neighborhoods**,** in addition to the creation of Chief of School Safety and Security. This chief developed a first-ever School Safety Operational Plan between the Buffalo Police Department and the Buffalo Public Schools.

- **Reinstatement of City Curfew**

  Linked to Mayor Brown's reinstatement of the city curfew, the the new Pathways Curfew initiative, which provides prevention, intervention and case management to youth under the age of 17 who are in violation of the City of Buffalo's curfew ordinance.

  This is a collaborative effort of:

  - Buffalo Police Department
  - Department of Community Services
  - Youth Services Division
  - Community Action Organization (CAO)

E. Other City Initiatives

Property taxes and various homeowner fees such as sewer and water fees can strain household economies. These fees are regressive and, when unaffordable, can ultimately lead to foreclosure and loss of home.

- **Property Tax Reduction**

For three straight years, Mayor Brown has lowered the property tax rate by a cumulative 10%, helping keep people in their homes and lowering household expenses.

- **Keeping City Fees and Charges Stable**

  Upon taking office, Mayor Brown committed not to raise homeownership fees and charges, such as the user fee, and sewer and water charges.

  Honoring this promise, Mayor Brown has managed to impose the necessary economies and efficiencies to keep these fees and charges at 2006 levels.

IV. Poverty in Buffalo

According to the U.S. Census 2007 American Communities Survey, Buffalo is the third poorest large city in the United States with 28.7%, or nearly a third, of our adult population living below the poverty line[5]. Given the current economic climate with continuing job loss and increasing unemployment rates, there is concern that a new class of families will live in low income situations in addition to those that have been deeply rooted in poverty for decades.

Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Directive 14, the Census Bureau's Poverty Definition uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. [6] For example, as the following table shows, the poverty threshold for a family of four in Buffalo is $21,203; those below this income level are considered to live in poverty. Yet, the measurement guidelines for poverty levels are outdated and do not literally address what income is needed to cover minimum living expenses. While the poverty level for a family of four is calculated as $21,403, the Census Bureau also calculates that a family of four needs minimum expenses of approximately $23,055 which leaves an income gap to be filled by supportive services and asset building strategies.

Poverty Thresholds for 2007 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years

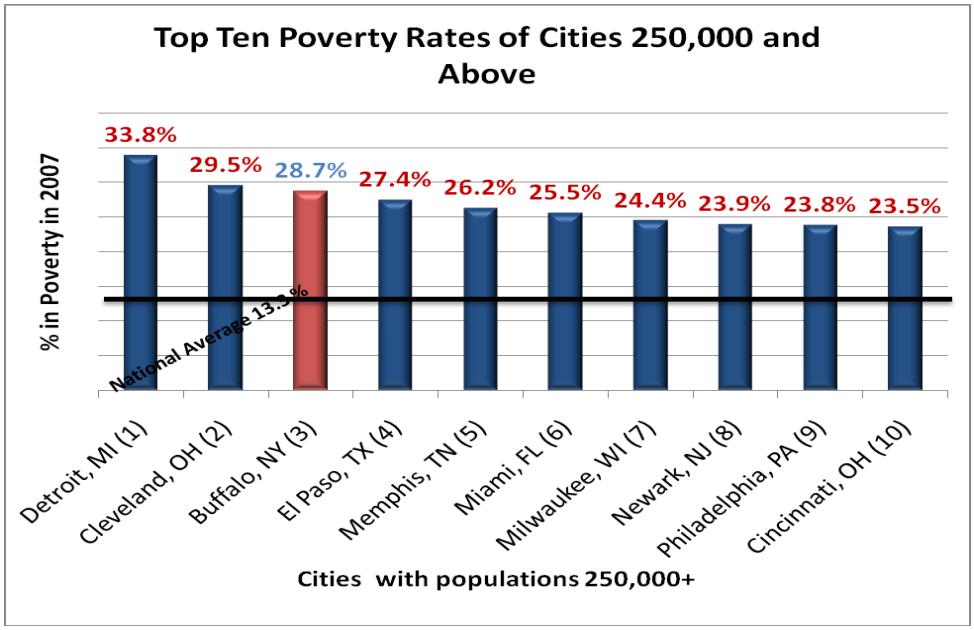
Size of Family Unit	Weighted Average Thresholds	Related children under 18 years								
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	8 or more
One person (unrelated individual)	10,590									
Under 65 years	10,787	10,787								
65 years and over	9,944	9,944								
Two people	13,540									
Householder under 65 years	13,954	13,884	14,291							
Householder 65 years and over	12,550	12,533	14,237							
Three people	16,530	16,218	16,689	16,705						
Four people	21,203	21,386	21,736	21,027	21,100					
Five people	25,080	25,791	26,166	25,364	24,744	24,366				
Six people	28,323	29,664	29,782	29,168	28,579	27,705	27,187			
Seven people	32,233	34,132	34,345	33,610	33,098	32,144	31,031	29,810		
Eight people	35,816	38,174	38,511	37,818	37,210	36,348	35,255	34,116	33,827	
Nine people or more	42,739	45,921	46,143	45,529	45,014	44,168	43,004	41,952	41,691	40,085

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

[5] U.S. Census Bureau

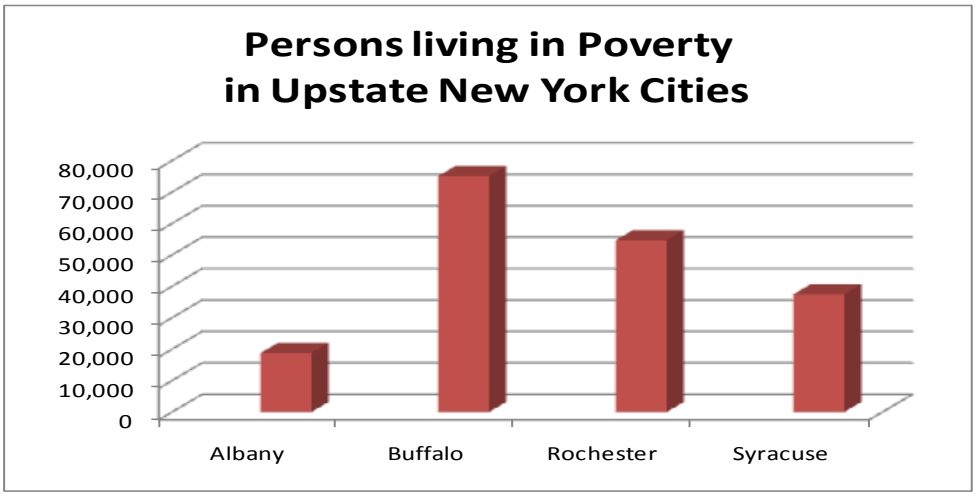
[6] U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Communities Survey, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2007/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf

In terms of the proportion of citizens living below the poverty line, in 2007, Buffalo was surpassed only by Detroit, which had a 33.8% poverty rate and Cleveland with a 29.5% poverty rate[7].



Source: 2007 American Communities Survey

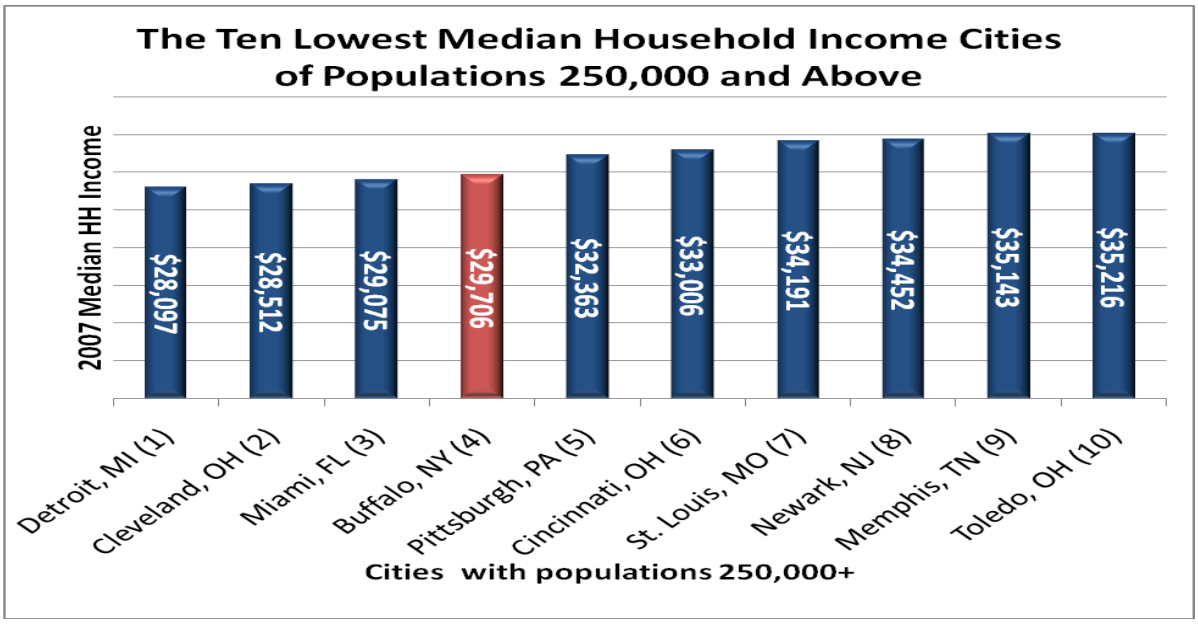
Given its high national ranking, it follows that Buffalo would also be home to the largest segment of residents among the upstate New York "big" cities living below the poverty line.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

[7] U.S. Census Bureau

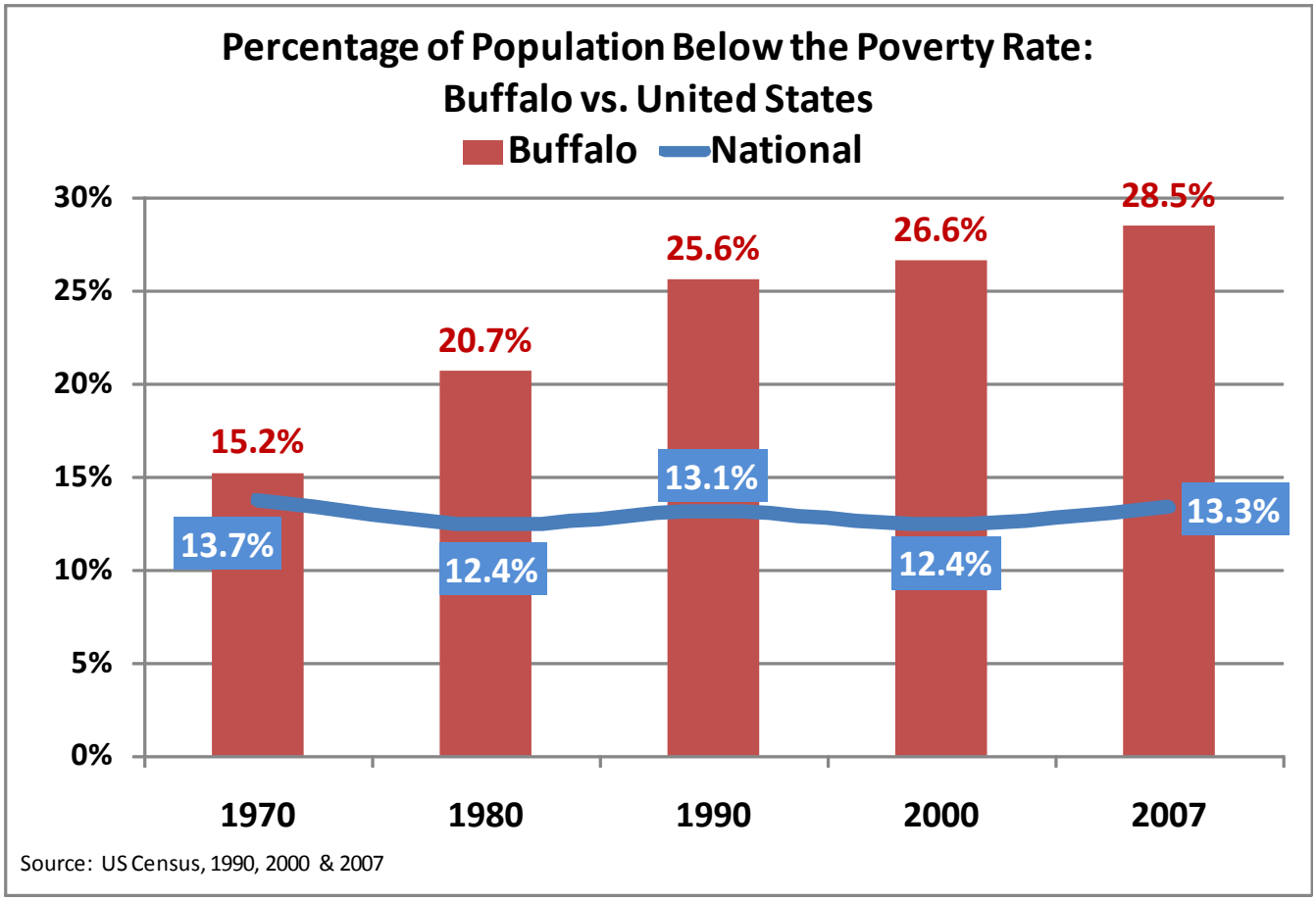
The U.S. Census Bureau reports Buffalo's median income for 2007 as $29,706, which ranks our city as the 4th lowest income city among large cities nationally. And most alarming, 42% of Buffalo's children live in poverty. High poverty rates are also reflected in homelessness and in Buffalo with over 2,000 men, women and children sleeping on the streets nightly.[8]



Source: 2007 U.S. Census, American Communities Survey

[8] Homeless Alliance, Poverty Report 2008

The change in poverty rates usually mirrors that of the current cycles within the larger economic fabric. When the economy is strong, poverty will decrease and when the economy is in a downward spiral poverty numbers will increase. Despite some economic advancements nationwide, since the 1970's Buffalo's poverty increased, presumably due to the decline of the manufacturing base and the flight of more affluent citizens to the suburbs.[9]



[9] U.S. Census Bureau

Key Factors that Affect Poverty

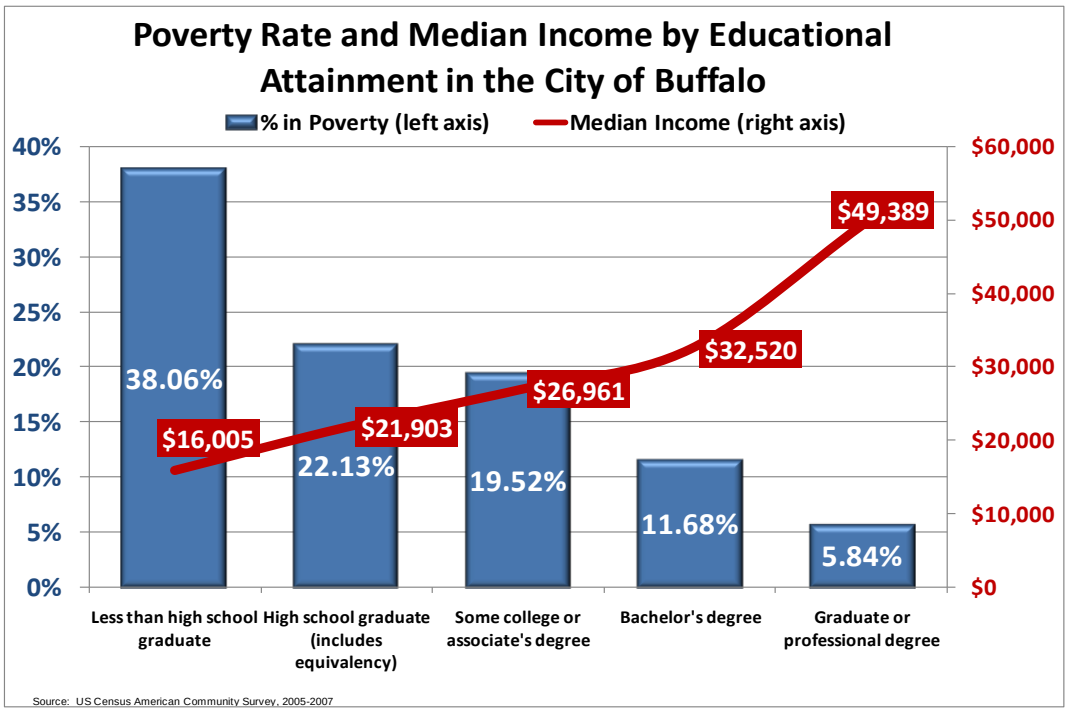
Poverty in Buffalo and across the United States is affected by four key factors: Education, Jobs, Social Environment and Neighborhoods. In addition, a major barrior to addressing poverty is a lack of coordination of services to benefit individuals in poverty.

1. Education

Poverty is related to literacy and educational attainment. Among adults at the lowest level of literacy proficiency, 43% live in poverty. Among adults with strong literacy skills, only 4% live in poverty. [10] In Buffalo, with almost 30% of adults reading at or below a 5th grade level, literacy is a key factor to address poverty.

Census Bureau information indicates, that of the 161,368 residents in Buffalo above the age of 25, approximately 35,000 or 21.5% live at or below poverty. Of these individuals, 11,291 individuals, or 35%, lack a high school diploma. Of the 50,706 Buffalo residents who have a high school diploma but no college, 22.1% live below the poverty level. For those 44,757 who have some college up to an associate's degree, 19.5% live at or below the poverty level and, finally, for those who acquired a bachelor's degree or higher, only 9.1% lived at or below poverty. This figure shows that the lack of educational attainment is related to the incidence of poverty and the lack of potential for building wealth.

[10] Reder, Stephen, ed. The State of Literacy in America. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 1998.



Source: 2007 American Communities Survey

As this figure shows, 38% percent of those lacking a high school diploma or GED live below the poverty line. For those with high school diplomas or GEDs, the poverty level is 22%.

Based on the recent update data provided by the New York State Department of Labor, completing high school reduces the likelihood that one will end up in poverty by over 50%. In Buffalo, completing high school reduces the likelihood that one will end up in poverty by about 42%. If one attains a Bachelors degree or better, the chances of ending up in poverty drops by almost 85%. Creating and developing an educated workforce is essential in the stainable and consistent reduction of poverty.[11] The level of educational attainment is based on the early educational foundation a child receives, both pre-k and in elementary school. Our children are "starting out behind the curve". 60 percent of 4th grade students are not meeting

[11] Department of Labor, 2008

New York State learning standards. Of the students entering high school between 2003 and 2004, only 48% graduated with a high school diploma in four years.[12]

2. Jobs

Not only is the unemployment rate a factor to be addressed, but the quality of jobs is an issue, in terms of whether an employed person has a living wage from which to sustain a family. In the state of New York, 41% of working families are classified as low income, or earning below 200% of the poverty income threshold.[13]

The aging population is creating other challenges for the economy and the labor force. Within the coming years, workers will be retiring from the workforce faster than new workers will be entering. The county continues to lose population as there are not enough people moving into the area to replace those that leave. And, while this will lead to a shortage of skilled labor, we must be prepared to address the educational shortages that affect many of our residents and will prevent them from accessing employment opportunities.

Accordingly, the area faces the problem of replacing retirees from the 540,000 jobs. There are two pools of potential workers to address this void: employees in other positions and people currently not in the labor force.

The demographic changes in the population create opportunities for everyone with the appropriate skill levels. Graduation from high school is the minimum skill level necessary to participate in the labor force. The more skills a person acquires, the more opportunities they will have.

Fewer than half of adults without a high school diploma participate in the labor force. The unemployment rate of non high school graduates is twice that of graduates. Over their lifetime,

[12] Buffalo Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability

[13] "Working Hard, Still Falling Short," The Working Poor Families Project, 2008

high school graduates will earn over $250,000 more than those that do not complete high school.[14] A key component of any poverty strategy must include strategies that increase educational achievement and skill levels.

As John Slenker, Western New York Region Economist for the New York State Department of Labor states in his most recent labor report update, "The economy of Erie County has been and will continue to be affected by two major trends, the shift from a manufacturing based to a service based economy and the aging of the baby boom generation. The labor force must adapt to these changes to successfully compete in the world economy."[15]

The overall number of jobs has remained relatively stable over the last decade averaging 540,000 jobs in the Buffalo Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).[16] Big shifts have occurred in employment across industries. Manufacturing employment has declined and services have expanded. While this is a national trend, it has impacted Erie County to a greater extent because the county has had a greater reliance on manufacturing than the nation as a whole. The skill sets necessary to participate in the workforce have also changed. Across all industries, higher skill levels are needed.

3. Social Environment

Approximately 8,000 children in the City of Buffalo five years old or younger are being raised in a family living below the federal poverty line. On whole, 42% of all children in Buffalo live in poverty.

A 2007 study by the Harvard School of Public Health and Center for the Advancement of Health identified Buffalo-Niagara Falls as the metropolitan area with the "worst indicators of neighborhood environment for Non-Hispanic black" children and the second worst indicators of

[14] New York State Department of Labor

[15] New York State Department of Labor

[16] New York State Department of Labor

neighborhood environment for Hispanic children. The rankings were based on a summary indicator accounting for factors of neighborhood poverty, proportion of households headed by single mothers, homeownership, proportion of adults without a diploma and unemployment. [17]

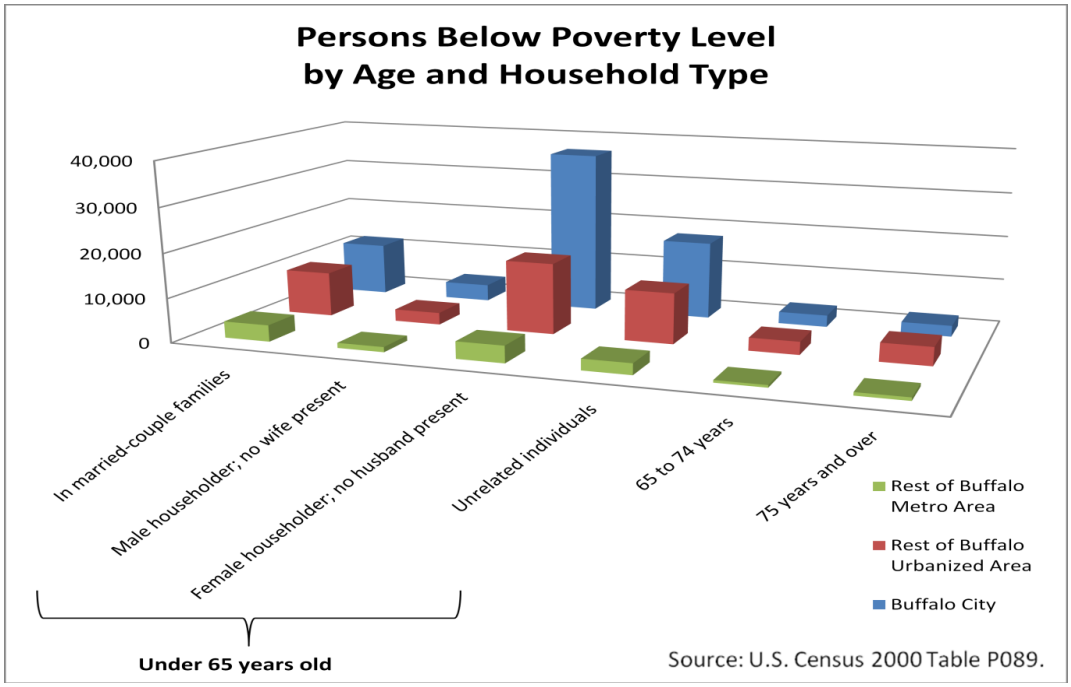
The poverty rate for single female-headed households in Buffalo is 57% percent as compared to 19.5% percent for married couples with children. From 2000 to 2007 poverty levels for all Americans increased from 12.4% to 13.3% within which time frame the largest and most startling increases in the rise of poverty were for households led by single females, which rose from 28% to 30.7%. And, upon examining the trends over a 37 year span between 1970 and 2007, poverty levels have grown by approximately 95.1% as a whole for this identified population.[18]

The largest group of people living in poverty in the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo urbanized area is single mother households whose householder is under the age of 65. Households under the age of 65 comprised of unrelated individuals represent the second largest group of people living in poverty.[19]

[17] "Children Left Behind: How Metropolitan Areas are Failing America's Children," diversitydata.org, 2007.

[18] U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Communities Survey.

[19] U.S. Census 2000.



Prepared by Wende Mix, PhD, Buffalo State College

Additionally, poverty is disproportionate by race. The poverty rate for African Americans and Hispanics is higher than the city average of 28.7%, with 36.7% percent of African Americans and 43.5% of Hispanics living in poverty (where minorities have self selected "African American only or Hispanic only for census responses).

Finally, the unemployed are not the only people in poverty. The Working Poor Families Project reports that, nationally, 22.2% of working families are on jobs which pay wages below the poverty threshold. The working poor lack the earnings necessary to meet their basic needs," [20] and they generally do not receive the assistance which would help to stretch that paycheck. As David A. Hansell, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary Assistance has stated, "If people actually receive all the benefits and entitlements that they deserve and are eligible for, that can have a tremendously powerful effect in stretching a paycheck."

The *Workpays NY* program guidebook estimates that:

[20] "Still Working Hard, Still Falling Short," The Working Poor Families Project. Roberts and Povich, 2008.

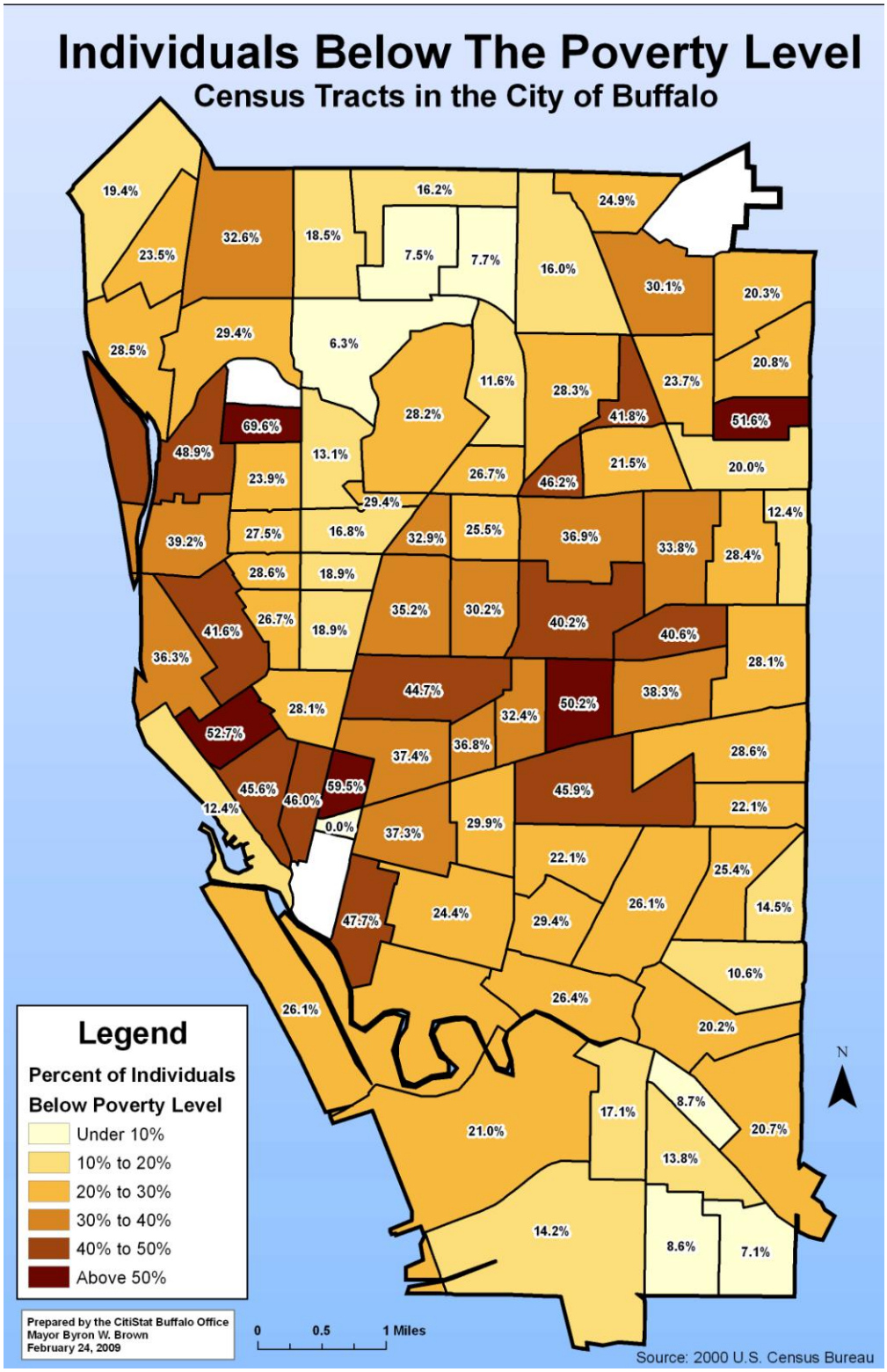
1. As of 2006, (the last year for which federal statistics are available), about 52% of eligible low income working households in New York are not receiving Food Stamps benefits.
2. Approximately 400,000 children and an additional 900,000 adults are currently uninsured even though they qualify for public health insurance.
3. The IRS estimates that about 20-25% of low-income working New Yorkers, or about 300,000 households, who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) do not claim them.[21]

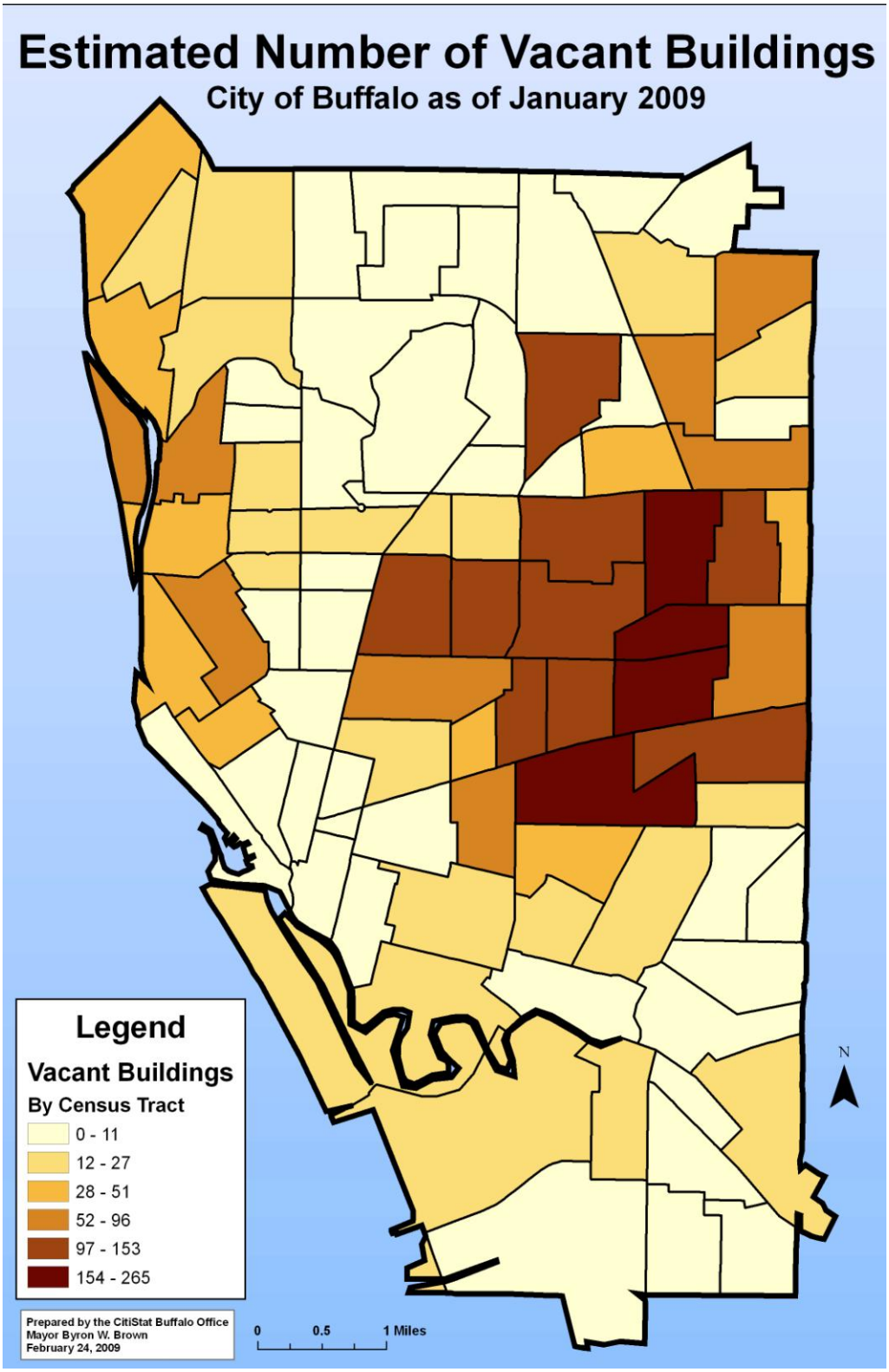
4. Neighborhoods

In Buffalo there are 90 census tracts. Of those tracts 16 census tracts are classified as being in "extreme poverty" which means that over 40% percent of the population lives below the poverty line. [22] In addition, areas high in poverty tend to be high in blight, for which one measure is the number of vacant buildings. Abandoned, unsalvageable structures are a threat to public safety as well as the economic status of neighborhoods.

[21] NYS OTDA 09-INF-02 *Work Pays NY:* Introduction of the *Work Pays NY* Promotional Material and Resource Guide/Checklist

[22] 2007 American Communities Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.


Individuals Below The Poverty Level
Census Tracts in the City of Buffalo
19.4%
23.5%
32.6%
18.5%
16.2%
7.5%
7.7%
24.9%
16.0%
30.1%
20.3%
28.5%
29.4%
6.3%
11.6%
28.3%
23.7%
20.8%
69.6%
28.2%
41.8%
51.6%
48.9%
13.1%
23.9%
26.7%
46.2%
21.5%
20.0%
29.4%
12.4%
39.2%
27.5%
16.8%
32.9%
25.5%
36.9%
33.8%
28.4%
28.6%
18.9%
41.6%
26.7%
18.9%
35.2%
30.2%
40.2%
40.6%
36.3%
28.1%
44.7%
28.1%
32.4%
50.2%
38.3%
52.7%
36.8%
37.4%
28.6%
45.6%
46.0%
59.5%
45.9%
12.4%
0.0%
22.1%
37.3%
29.9%
22.1%
25.4%
47.7%
24.4%
29.4%
26.1%
14.5%
10.6%
26.1%
26.4%
20.2%
N
17.1%
8.7%
21.0%
20.7%
13.8%
14.2%
8.6%
7.1%
Legend
Percent of Individuals Below Poverty Level
Under 10%
10% to 20%
20% to 30%
30% to 40%
40% to 50%
Above 50%
Prepared by the CitiStat Buffalo Office
Mayor Byron W. Brown
February 24, 2009
0
0.5
1 Miles
Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau


Estimated Number of Vacant Buildings
City of Buffalo as of January 2009
Legend
Vacant Buildings
By Census Tract
0 - 11
12 - 27
28 - 51
52 - 96
97 - 153
154 - 265
Prepared by the CitiStat Buffalo Office
Mayor Byron W. Brown
February 24, 2009
0
0.5
1 Miles
N

A February 2009 brief by the Urban Institute notes that "low-income working families who live in distressed neighborhoods need more help with employment, education, safety, and health" and that there are two competing schools of thought regarding policy remedies: locate support services and jobs in the low-income neighborhoods or provide mobility options to place low-income working families near suburban jobs. Importantly, low-income neighborhoods are home to 1/3 of black working poor families, 1/5 of Hispanics but only 3% of non-Hispanic whites. [23] These statistics are amplified in Buffalo given that a 2002 Census Bureau report identified Buffalo as the seventh most segregated city and region for Blacks.[24] Again, poverty is disproportionate by race.

These snapshot statistics offer a glimpse into the levels of poverty within the City of Buffalo which is an economic outcome that we cannot continue to accept. Every year, poverty not only continues to keep thousands of our children and their families from reaching their full potential but keeps the city as a whole from achieving its full potential.

Lack of Coordination: A Barrier to Progress

The Anti-Poverty Task Force in Savannah, Georgia found that the biggest barrier to reducing poverty is the lack of coordination across government agencies, community organizations and business, which various community leaders referenced for this Buffalo plan agree to be the case for Buffalo as well. As the Savannah Task Force's report states:

> Due to the absence of a coordinated systemic support in the community that aid individuals in escaping poverty, a confluence of factors create real barriers to progress. Low income residents use a far larger share of their incomes on basic items, leaving little left over to save. Without savings, families have no safety net and an extremely limited ability to accumulate the money needed to build assets

[23] "Residential Segregation and Low-Income Working Families," Margery Austin Turner and Karina Fortuny, the Urban Institute, February, 2009.

[24] Racial and Ethnic Residential Segregation in the United States: 1980-2000,". Weinberg, Iceland, and Steinmetz U.S. Census Bureau, 2002

and move into the middle class… The key forces behind the trends that affect the community's ability to reduce poverty are:

- High cost of basic necessities to participate in the workforce.
- New employment opportunities moving further out from the city.
- Difficulty in acquiring marketable skills in relationship to the changing local economy.[25]

In addition, other factors are important. While this report acknowledges a number of community conditions such as teenage pregnancy, juvenile crime, and substance abuse that correlate with high rates of poverty, these conditions also depend on a number of other risk factors and require specific, targeted approaches.

[25] "A Poverty Reduction Action Plan for Savannah," April 2005.

V. A Framework for Strategic Planning

1. Challenges to be Addressed

- The challenge of attacking such an overwhelming issue as poverty is to determine how best to focus limited area-wide resources and make maximum use of any new funding that becomes available.
- Comprehensive approaches to addressing the underlying conditions of poverty and barriers to progressing toward self-sufficiency must be implemented over long enough periods of time and in sufficient intensity to allow for progress.
- Basing action plans on poverty statistics alone may exclude many low-income families that are not officially recognized as being poor because federal poverty thresholds are outdated, are weighted using 1955 household expenditure patterns, and are not adjusted geographically.
- Economic and social conditions are constantly changing, especially in Buffalo and especially in time of economic turmoil. Any strategic plan developed by the taskforce has to be viewed as a "living plan" and be open to continuous review and recalibration as required by changing conditions.
- All people, all needs, in all places cannot be addressed at once. Nor does having a lot of single-focused programs serving a lot of different people in various parts of the community add up to poverty reduction. Successful antipoverty work appears to require the synchronizing and targeting of multiple services to families from many agencies and programs. This is very difficult, labor intensive, and may result in reaching and serving fewer families in total at any given time – a public policy issue that will need to be considered and addressed by public officials and stakeholders.
- The ultimate success of the proposed initiative will be the number and percentage of Buffalo families that are helped out of poverty. Establishing an accountability system of performance measures and reporting requirements for an outcome based on multiple interventions from multiple programs over a long period of time will be challenging and require additional examination of "best practice" accountability models for similar initiatives in other cities.

2. Blueprint Use and Content

As indicated, this Blueprint is intended to be a framework for task force discussions and planning for a comprehensive, coordinated initiative to reduce poverty in Buffalo. It is organized around the four factors that most affect poverty (education, jobs, social environment and neighborhood) and how the community might sustain a multi-year initiative in terms of coordination and use of federal stimulus funds and other potential resources.

The Blueprint summarizes a sampling of current city, community-based or county-wide programs that address factors affecting poverty. These program descriptions are intended to provide taskforce members a reference point for their discussions and planning.

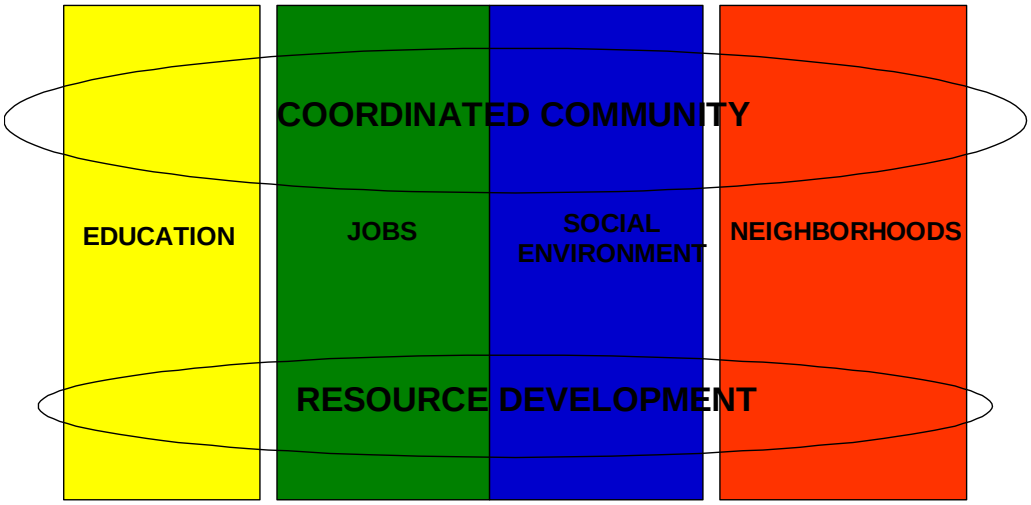
The Blueprint also enumerates some initial ideas for program enhancements that have been suggested by city staff, others interviewed in the process of developing this document and best practices identified from antipoverty initiatives in other cities. In particular, we have drawn ideas from Savannah's Poverty Reduction Initiative and the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. The National League of Cities report, "Combating Poverty: Emerging Strategies from the Nation's Cities" highlights programs from cities including Dayton, New York City and Miami.

3. Recommended Strategic Plan Objectives

The Buffalo Poverty Reduction Blueprint's recommended goals are:

1. Increasing educational attainment
2. Providing pathways to jobs
3. Creating an environment that fosters economic opportunity and success
4. Building quality neighborhoods in which to live, work and raise a family
5. Engaging the community in a comprehensive and coordinated approach
6. Maximizing resource development through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding

Buffalo Poverty Reduction Blueprint



4. Sample of Existing Programs and Suggested Strategies to Address Blueprint Goals

The following is a breakdown by Blueprint goals of a sampling of programs that currently serve Buffalo residents and additional strategies or programs suggested by city staff and others in the community. These programs and suggested strategies are discussed in more detail in the next sections of this document. The list is provided as a summary aide to taskforce deliberations and strategic planning.

INCREASING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

There are a number of existing programs that focus on educational goals that could be expanded to reach more low-income children, youth and adults as part of an overall strategy to reduce poverty. Described below are recommended educational outcomes and for each, a brief description of candidates for program expansion or new initiatives the taskforce is encouraged to consider. It is recommended that any new programs or strategies proposed by the taskforce leverage existing infrastructure and focus as much as possible on neighborhood based service delivery.

Many of the proposed actions described below would be dependent upon partnerships among service providers, businesses, faith-based organizations, the education community and government. The taskforce is encouraged to engage these partners in strategy planning.

Literacy

Literacy is the cornerstone of learning and succeeding in any training or educational setting. Without an improvement in literacy rates, it will be nearly impossible to reduce poverty rates in Buffalo. Without strong literacy skills, children cannot grow into productive, employable adults, and adults will not be able to obtain jobs that can lift their families out of poverty. In addition to including utilization of new federal funds to improve public school education, especially for economically disadvantaged pupils in elementary schools in the strategic plan, the taskforce is encouraged to consider expansion of the following existing programs that are proven to help increase literacy:

- **Read to Succeed Buffalo:** Read to Succeed Buffalo is an established organization that works with the community to develop and implement solutions that address the needs of people across the entire age span. Its programmatic focus is general literacy, as well as financial, computer, health and workforce literacy and aims to transform the current, fragmented system to one that is comprehensive, unified, and measurable. Now in its third year of implementation, this program has brought together over 60 organizations to make systemic changes and improve literacy throughout our community. A citywide strategic plan for literacy was completed in 2006 by over 200 community stakeholders working in 17 different task forces.

- **Buffalo Adult Education Literacy Zones for Out of School Youth:** This program is a comprehensive effort in distressed communities of concentrated poverty or limited English language proficiency. Its objectives are to:
  1) Learn or improve English language skills;
  2) Increase literacy skills;
  3) Access programs that provide pathways to increased opportunities;
  4) Acquire skills necessary to navigate complex systems such as health care, and financial, technology, housing and legal systems;
  5) Access career and technical training.

Improve School Readiness for Infants and Pre-K Children

For example, the taskforce may wish to consider expanding early childhood programs such as Early Head Start and Head Start, operated by the Community Action Organization, or the Women Infant Children's Nutrition Program, Funded by New York State. The Community Action Organization, along with a strong network of partners, provides low income children ages 0-5 with child development services including education, health, mental health, social services, disabilities, transportation and parent involvement. Partners include:

- BOCES (Depew Center)
- Gateway-Longview, Inc. (Friendship and Bowmansville)
- Read to Succeed Buffalo, Inc.
- SUNY and Summit (UB Center)
- Heritage Center Program (Central)
- Memorial Temple (Memorial Temple Site)
- Frontier Universal Pre-K (Frontier Site)
- Buffalo Public Schools Universal Pre-K (Bethel, CAO Classrooms, and Holy Cross)
- Reading is Fundamental (RIF)
- Buffalo Hearing and Speech

Mayor's Next Generation Scientists Program

In partnership with the New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences of the University at Buffalo, Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Hauptman-Woodward Institute, Mayor Brown is establishing a new career pathways program to link some of Buffalo's most disadvantaged students to jobs supported by federal, state, and local investments in creating a life sciences economy in Buffalo

Increase High School Graduation Rates and Improve Opportunities for Higher Education

Improving school readiness is the first step toward improving success in school and increasing high school graduation rates. With improvements in high school graduation rates and better access to a college education, our youth will be better prepared to avoid a life of poverty.

The following initiatives, programs and organizations are targeted toward improving educational achievement and access to a college education:

- **CATS**

  Child & Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS) operates five 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC). The mission of CATS is to enhance student's academic achievement and foster lifelong interests in the arts, recreation and self sustaining life skills". Currently CATS and their Partners serve over 1,220 students and their care givers at Buffalo Public Schools 18, 74, 93, 97 & The Gloria J. Parks Community Center & Lt. Col. Matt Urban Community Center. These sites are in some of Buffalo's toughest and poorest neighborhoods and exemplify the best of what is good about the 21st CCLC program. In addition to Buffalo Public Schools, CATS partners with the UB School of Social Work.

- **Say Yes to Education (Say Yes)**

  Bring Say Yes to Buffalo. Say Yes is a national, non-profit education foundation committed to dramatically increasing high school and college graduation rates for our nation's inner-city youth.

  Say Yes provides comprehensive supports, including the promise of a full college or vocational education aligned with what research indicates is needed to enable every child in the program to achieve his or her potential.

- **College Scholarships**

  Scholarships are required for students living in poverty to access higher education and receive a college degree. In partnership with the Buffalo Public Schools, funding sources in addition to the Say Yes program must be identified. Collaborations are important with area colleges and universities to provide scholarships for youth. In addition, these opportunities for these partners to collaborate with civic, fraternal organizations, foundations and businesses that award scholarships to combine their resources to create a mega scholarship pool must be pursued.

The Law Intern Program of Buffalo

Places teenage high school students, 16-17 years old, who would not otherwise have the opportunity to work in an office, in internships for twelve hours per week, or more if the intern and firm prefer.

Internships would run for six weeks from approximately June 29, 2009 to August 7, 2009, but could be extended at the discretion of the law firm.

The Goal of the Law Intern Program of Buffalo

To provide opportunity to those from diverse backgrounds who would not otherwise be able to work in an office exposed to the legal system.

To provide personal contact and experience for these students who will most likely come from low-income families.

The Benefits of the Law Intern Program of Buffalo

The students can learn to work in an office setting and can fill in for the office runners, mail room personnel, operators, copiers and work on special projects.

PROVIDING PATHWAYS TO JOBS

Develop Skilled Workforce

- **Workforce Investment Board (WIB)**

  Developing and maintaining a high quality workforce is critical to attracting and retaining business in the City of Buffalo. Working through the existing Workforce Development system that is overseen by the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the City of Buffalo trains, prepares and places City residents into high demand occupations. Established under the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is a private sector driven board appointed the Mayor and the County Executive. The WIB is charged with developing, coordinating and overseeing the local, publicly funded workforce development system and the goal of the WIB is to develop and sustain a workforce development system that facilitates economic development and business growth in our community.

  The WIB, in concert with the NYS Department of Labor, has identified occupations that are in demand locally. Of the 25 fastest growing occupations listed for the Buffalo area, 13 occupations are in health care. The healthcare industry is in need of workers who are credentialed to be nurses, technicians, therapists and counselors. In December 2008, the WIB received funding from NYS to implement a pilot project to prepare low-income job seekers for employment in jobs that offer advancement opportunities and career ladders in 37 healthcare occupations starting with the most entry-level occupation and showing advancement to the most technical positions within their organizations. This Career Pathways program targets individuals who are on public assistance or have a family income at or below 200% of poverty.

  With over $3 billion in capital public and private projects underway in Buffalo, a priority of the City of Buffalo is to insure that City residents are trained for and have access to jobs created as a result of these development efforts. In recent years, the WIB has sponsored training in the construction areas and, under the Economic Stimulus Package, the WIB plans to expand

and enhance these training efforts into in Green Construction areas including reuse, retrofitting, weatherization, lead removal and asbestos abatement and energy efficiencies. The City works with the WIB to coordinate City projects in the housing rehabilitation, reuse, weatherization and energy efficiency areas that will be funded by federal stimulus funds, with the WIB's workforce training efforts in construction skills. The goal is to train Buffalo residents in these skill areas, provide them with paid work experiences on training related work projects and place them into long term employment.

The Taskforce should enhance services to the re-entry population, as job placement services have become even more challenged to serve individuals returning to the community after release from the correctional system.

- ***S.T.R.I.V.E Program (Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees)***
  S.T.R.I.V.E. is a targeted workforce development initiative. This national program has a 22 year track record of working with and building capacity of chronically unemployed adults, particularity, but not limited to, African American and Latino men through a long-term (2 year) client support structure. Program success is proven with 3,000 individuals placed in jobs annually with a 70% job retention rate.

Match Workforce Development to Economic Development

Despite our high rate of unemployment, businesses in the region often have difficulty finding workers with the right skill set to fill available jobs. Consequently, a strategy for matching potential workers with potential jobs is required. This will require a close collaboration with the business community with the following recommended steps in place.

- Partner with the Buffalo Niagara Partnership to address their projected "demand occupations" in five regional growth sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics, Back Office/Financial Services, Agribusiness, Medical technologies.
- Refine the design and implementation of job training programs to match employer needs.
- Work to redesign and tailor Middle and High School and post secondary curricula to ensure basic and other relevant skills are taught to fill demand occupations.

Provide opportunities for skills building in the "green economy"

A significant focus on the state and federal levels exists to invest, create jobs, and train individuals in the 'green economy' to:

- Align local job training programs with emerging jobs in the green economy
- Use city assets and capacities to both upgrade building efficiencies and create a worker demand for "green collar jobs."
- Manage the work so those jobs have continuity and can become careers and support entry into energy fields with appropriate training.

Promote Small Business Development

The Small Business Development Center at Buffalo State College and the Women's Business Development Center at Canisius College provide entrepreneurship training and counseling assisting with business planning, financial resource development and other business services. The City should continue to enhance the partnerships with these organizations in order to strengthen the capacity of small businesses to create jobs and fuel the local economy.

Promote Development of Minority and Women Owned Businesses through the BERC and Office of Contract Compliance

- Continue and enhance BERC loan programs for MWBE's
- Continue and enhance contract compliance to insure MWBE's participation in City Public Works contracts.

Utilize Special Designations to Attract Businesses to Buffalo

- Continue use of Empire Zones and Renewal Community designations to provide wage credits, tax credits and investment tax credits, sales tax rebates, utility rate discounts and real property tax exemptions.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Strengthen the Family: Parenting and Family Functioning

Parenting is probably one of the most challenging jobs there is. It can be especially challenging for the parent who is isolated and who does not have reliable supports to assist them. Unfortunately, the stresses of parenthood along with other social and economic problems are leading causes of poverty, abuse and or neglect to children.

The taskforce is encouraged to address the following objectives to increase parenting and family functioning in the context of a poverty reduction initiative:

- Encourage parents/adults living in poverty to envision and plan for a better life for themselves and their children, and identifying first steps toward achieving that vision (i.e. learning new or improved job skills, completing high school or a GED, pursuing English language proficiency instruction, enrolling in vocational or post secondary education, or securing resources to start a small business)
- Help the unemployed find jobs and the employed increase their earnings (i.e. job readiness skills instruction, job search and placement assistance, job retention assistance)
- Help families achieve stability in their daily lives as they pursue a better future (i.e. increasing immediate financial resources available to the family through maximum use of Earned Income Tax Credits, child tax credits, and other entitlements, stable and affordable housing, accessible transportation, safe and affordable child care, food and nutrition assistance, health care services and coverage, and opportunities for respite care)
- Provide extended mentoring/coaching assistance to families as they move from poverty to self-sufficiency (i.e. helping adults learn and apply parenting and life skills, strategies for stress management and problem solving, and capability to access supportive programs and services in their neighborhood and broader community)
- Assure that children living in poverty have one or more caring and competent adults constantly in their lives so that they are nurtured, receive guidance, supervision, education, training and other supports that will increase their prospects for age-appropriate physical, emotional, and cognitive development, reduce the risk of dangerous and unhealthy behavior, and lead toward ultimate economic independence in adulthood

- Focus on special needs presented by Buffalo's growing immigrant population
- Remove barriers to self-sufficiency by assuring timely access to effective prevention, treatment and recovery services for low-income children, youth, and adults (i.e. mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment, supportive housing for the homeless, preventing and reducing gang involvement, reducing the incidence of teen pregnancy, preventing and treating STDs and HIV/AIDS, foster care/adoption and other child protective services, juvenile and adult court diversion and wrap-around service programs, prisoner community reentry assistance)

An example of an existing community-based child protective/family strengthening initiative that could be expanded is the Buffalo Urban League Prevention Services program. Administered through the Department of Social Services, the program is a child abuse prevention program aimed at keeping families together to prevent children from going into foster care. Preventive Services also provides reunification services to families when children are in foster care placement and the plan is to have the children return to the family home. Families who participate in the program are provided with an individual counselor (Case Planner) who provides home-based services to the family. The Case Planner visits with the referred family on a daily or weekly basis (as needed), providing hands on parenting education, family counseling, and support by arranging for access to other services within the community that the family might benefit from (i.e., substance abuse counseling, mental health services, housing, emergency food, clothing, parenting classes, child daycare, court advocacy, etc.) The goal is to provide services specific to stabilizing the family so that the family can remain together.

Keep Individuals and Families in Their Homes

- Through the Western New York Law Center and city partners, increase the home ownership and foreclosure counseling to assist home buyers and existing homeowners in meeting housing needs and prevent foreclosure
- Find means to provide affordable rentals for those who are not ready for home ownership

Connect Families to Social Support Systems

- Make maximum use of existing neighborhood resources, such as public schools, community and faith based facilities, parks and community recreation centers, for year-round after-school, evening, and weekend programs that engage and bring together low-income youth and families (i.e. after-school substance abuse prevention programs, peer support groups, adult supervised youth recreational activities; youth and adult literacy instruction, enrichment classes, academic tutoring and mentoring);
- Promote active participation of low-income families in civic and school associations and events, neighborhood and community governance, and other community and faith-based programs and activities that foster and reinforce a sense of neighborhood connectedness and support.

Increase Financial Literacy, Savings and Asset Building

Managing income and assets is a critical component of lifting individuals out of poverty and eventually building the wealth required for financial stability, education, and economic advancement.

- Convening the currently funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) agencies to develop a coordinated strategy to achieve unified outcomes in reducing poverty in the populations that are being served. Organizations would include standardized literacy and academic programming in alignment with the Buffalo Board of Education's Achievement Plan and Workforce Development Programming focused on occupational awareness, career paths and work experience. The CDBG agencies would serve as the conduit for financial literacy education and incorporate into its case management activities the Self Sufficiency Calculator. Hosted by the Everywoman Opportunity Center, the Self Sufficiency Calculator is a web based tool which allows an individual or family to identify the maximum available social service supports, so that they can better manage their resources. Training for the "calculator" is offered by the Everywoman Opportunity Center and Buffalo State College.
- Creating Assets, Savings & Hope (CASH) Buffalo is an initiative of the United Way to increase stabilization of low income families and individuals. CASH operates the Hope Center at 2495 Main Street. This model is based on the "Pathway to Prosperity" model developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, United Way of America, and United Way of Palm Beach County

The hallmark of the approach is the bringing together or "bundling" of a full range of essential economic supports within a convenient location to help families to build self-sufficiency, stabilize their finances, and move ahead productively. Initial work focuses on helping clients to secure Food Stamps, Medicaid, TANF, and Child Care Assistance and HEAP as well as working family tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Credits, Education Credit and Saver's Credit. CASH utilizes the Seedco EarnBenefit program and the Self-Sufficiency Calculator to assist clients and to train partner agencies in assisting their clients.

Collaborate with and Support Organizations Providing Individual Development Accounts

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)

Organizations within the community are already actively engaged in helping individuals and families to bank and save. Efforts include CASH Buffalo, which leads a number of partner agencies and financial institutions to market matched savings accounts, or individual development accounts (IDAs). These savings accounts enable low-income families to save, build assets, and enter the financial mainstream. IDAs reward the monthly savings of working-poor families who are building towards purchasing an asset - most commonly buying their first home, paying for post-secondary education, or starting a small business. IDAs encourage savings efforts among the poor by offering them 1:1, 2:1, or more generous matches for their own deposits. IDAs reward the monthly savings of working-poor families.

Savings for Education, Entrepreneurship an Down Payment (SEED)

Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship and Down Payment (SEED) is a ten year endeavor to test and educate young people on the importance of savings and overall financial management by promoting matched savings accounts and financial education for children.[26]

[26] United Way of Buffalo and Erie County

Connect Families to Mainstream Financial Services and Financial Stability

- Work with local financial institutions to discuss second chance checking accounts
- Challenge banks to expand or design financial services into the unbanked community
- Examine a checkless, low cost product that meets the needs of unbanked consumers. The structure of many accounts-with high minimum balances and fees is a key factor in keeping the unbanked out of the financial mainstream
- Promote financial education
- Expand access to financial savings and benefits[27]

Promote Participation in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit, providing tax refunds to low and moderate income working individuals even if they did not earn enough money to actually have to file a return and pay taxes. As such, it is considered a supplement to earned wages for this population. Measures to expand access could include:

- Policy changes to target the expansion of the credit and new options for low income workers and low wage earning families as follows: 1) Allow married couples to exclude one-half of a second earner's income when calculating the EITC, thus reducing economic disincentives for low-income couples to marry and for spouses to join the labor force; 2) Expand the EITC for working families with three or more children. These families are twice as likely as smaller families to have low incomes, but they receive no incremental assistance under the current EITC; and 3) Create a new, streamlined periodic payment option that would provide eligible tax filers with a portion of the credits proceeds directly from the IRS throughout the year, as other countries with similar tax credits do.
- Administrative changes to increase access that the city can perform and initiate, without legislation, to expand city resident's access to the EITC: 1)Collaborate with the Center for Budget Policy and Priorities, and United Way to expand increase awareness and participation in the EITC program; 2) Establish a seasonal EITC office in City Hall – staffed with volunteers and graduates of the Mayor's Citizen Participation Academy (CPA); 3) Open City Hall as a

[27] United Way

VITA site throughout tax season; and 4) Conduct Quarterly community information blitzes regarding EITC availability and benefits.[28]

New York State STAR Property Tax Rebates

New York State STAR (School Tax Relief) provides property tax exemptions for anyone who owns and lives in his or her home. Enhanced STAR is available to senior homeowners whose incomes are below a statewide standard. As with the EITC, getting more individuals to sign up for STAR will reduce the tax burden on household budgets.

Encourage Youth Development

The City of Buffalo Division of Youth Services, and its partners, support youth development through educational encouragement, job training, skill-building opportunities, and crime prevention and intervention through the following programs. The taskforce may wish to expand upon existing programs which have demonstrated success; these programs are listed below, but are described in more detail in section V. Brown Administration's Record.

A. City of Buffalo Division of Youth Services

- *Mayor's Youth Employment Program*
- *Mayor's Summer Reading Challenge*
- *Youth Counseling Program*
- *Anti-Crime Program*
- *Pathways Curfew Initiative*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Youth Court*
- *Mayor's Next Generation Scientists Program*

B. Buffalo LeaderShape AmeriCorps

C. Police Athletics Association PAL Program

D. Harlem Children's Zone Program

An innovative program that Buffalo could model after is the Harlem Children's Zone, called "one of the most ambitious social-service experiments of our times," by the New York Times. Children in this community of college-oriented peers and supportive adults are immersed in an enriching environment which counteracts "the street" and antisocial behavior.[29]

Provide Support Services to Senior Citizens

While Erie County is the area's designated Agency on Aging, the City of Buffalo Office of Senior Services & Disable Parking Permits provides the following services to seniors:

- Medical Van Transportation
- Grocery Shopping Assistance
- Mayor's Senior Citizen Discount Card
- Senior Centers
- File of Life Program
- Senior Information Services
- Monthly Newsletter
- Recreational/Leisure Activities
- Holiday Food Baskets and Gift Cards:

Senior Connect

The senior citizen population in Buffalo and County of Erie is growing; as younger family member continue to leave the area seeking employment, many seniors and left isolated and/or stressed with little or no other assistance. Both as an anti-poverty strategy and a quality of life measure to help senior citizens "age in place", a senior citizen/family and care-givers "Family Resource Center – Senior Connect" project merits consideration. The project would provide information, instruction, training, direct assistance and referral, to the isolated seniors and care givers, in an attempt to stabilize their personal environments, improve their

[29] HCG.org

quality of life, and where indicated, provide direct assistance and/or intervention, referral/assistance and/or connections, educational assistance and seminars, and social/leisure intervention where ever possible.

This project proposes to utilize and train senior citizens as "community connectors" to interact with the targeted, more isolated senior. An outcome of this initiative is some level of community/civic volunteerism and community coordination, preventative activities and classes aimed at developing or re-activating alternative or independent networking skills, and connections for the reduction or elimination of senior abuse, and actual resources, seminars and assistance for better nutrition, health and socialization.

BUFFALO INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORING INITIATIVE

Intergenerational Mentors Center for Excellence is a proposal for city-wide recruitment, training, and development of our human and social capital, buy identifying, engaging, combining, and leveraging the experience and natural relationship ability of our senior citizens, with the troubled, disconnected and misguided lives of our targeted youth.

Intergenerational Mentoring works: (For the Community)

- To help strengthen our communities
- Taps into a unlimited source of Human Resources
- Helps funders and government to maximize limited resources

(For the Youth or Teen)

- Enhances their Life and Social Skills
- Helps improve their Academic/scholastic performance
- Leads to a decrease in truancy, anti-social behavior and potential drug use.
- Helps youth and teens have a stabilized life.

(For Senior Citizens)

- Keeps them active and connected to the community
- Provides a caring relationship that can grow and improve their lives
- Keeps their minds active and stimulates continued learning
- Provides them with a form of emotional support
- May lead to improved health
- The parameters of retirement have changes and seniors want to remain active and involved

NEIGHBORHOODS

BUILDING QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK AND RAISE A FAMILY

Continue Neighborhood Initiatives to Strengthen Quality of Life

- Continue to demolish blighted vacant property through the Mayor's "5 in 5" plan
- Work and build capacity with non-profit organizations such as P.U.S.H. and others to rehabilitate 500 vacant housing units in 5 years
- Enhance use of the NRSA to attract investment to targeted neighborhoods
- Expand the Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Program
- Reform out-dated city zoning codes
- Leverage neighborhood revitalization efforts with area organizations (Brush-Up Buffalo) and banking institutions(HSBC) to rehabilitate owner occupied homes
- Enhance activities within the City of Buffalo Fair Housing Office
- Utilize HOME and HUD Emergency funds to assist low-income home owners with deferred maintenance and emergency repair projects
- Utilize HUD Emergency Shelter grant to provide a continuum of care for the prevention of homelessness and care for the homeless
- Utilize HUD Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) to offer housing and case management for persons with AIDS
- Work with partners to provide home-ownership counseling, foreclosure prevention assistance and to prevent fraudulent house-flipping practices which destabilize neighborhoods.

New Homelessness Initiatives

- Project Homelessness Connect is a model that fuses political and civic will in a one-day, one-stop array of resources to provide hospitality and support while working to eradicate homelessness. Project Homelessness Connect works to welcome homeless neighbors into the life of the community, change the way resources are accessed, and achieve quantifiable results for people experiencing homelessness

Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority

(BMHA) is a housing and redevelopment organization that provides safe, clean affordable housing opportunities for the residents in the City of Buffalo and surrounding communities. The Housing Authority serves 5,901 residents in our public housing, 376 residents' tax credit programs and 2,977 participants in our Section 8 voucher program. In addition, the BMHA has several economic development initiatives underway that will transform declining neighborhoods into bustling residential communities such as the newly opened AD Price I. Its expanded footprint blends seamlessly with the City of Buffalo's New Sycamore Village; Redwood Village located off 290 expressway in the heart of downtown scheduled to open this summer and Kensington Heights a long overdue redevelop project that will transform the skyline for commuters of the Kensington Expressway as well ECMC and surrounding neighborhood, just to name a few of its new initiatives. The BMHA is governed by a 7-member Board of Commissioners.

Its family housing complexes include:

AD Price Phase I, LLC, Douglass Towers, Douglass Associates I and III, Lower Westside Homes, Lakeview on the Park, Ferry-Grider Homes, LaSalle Courts, Shaffer Village, Langfield Homes, Marine Drive Apartments, Woodson Gardens, Redwood Village, Scattered Sites, Kenfield Homes, Jasper Parrish and Commodore Perry Homes.

Its Senior Complexes include:

AD Price Courts, Douglass Associates II, Lakeview Homes, Commodore Perry Extensions, Mullen Manor, Slater Courts, Kowal Apartments, Schwab Terrace, Lyndon B. Johnson, Stuyvesant Apartments, Sedita Apartments, Monsignor Geary Apartments, Kelly Gardens, Camden Apartments, Elmhurst Apartments and Holling Homes.

Capital Improvements: BMHA will be undertaking new construction initiatives thanks to President Obama's Stimulus infusion of additional Capital Funding. The additional Capital Funds will be used to expedite many projects to advance the BMHA's vision of quality choice housing that blend and expand affordable housing within all communities seamlessly throughout the City of Buffalo. The new construction initiatives include:

- Upgrades and amenities of residences and resident community meeting space through-out its family and senior sites to improve the quality of life and the BMHA ability to compete with the private sector.

- Continue the replacement of outdated boiler systems with new energy efficient heating systems at various locations to reduce carbon emissions.
- Extensive site work, including roads, sidewalks, stoops and grounds at multiple locations that will improve its curb appeal.
- Continue the installation of Security Cameras and Site Lighting at remaining locations to ensure the safety of its residents.
- Improve the efficiency of its operations with the merger of our two application programs into Housing Assistance Center to streamline its processes and reduce vacancies in housing complexes; upgrade computer systems and site office space to improve efficiency and service to residents.

RESIDENT SERVICES

Employment and Training: BMHA is committed to providing Section 3 Certification Program for construction, entrepreneurship and human services endeavors within BMHA. It also provides candidates with employment technical support such as employment assistance, for resume writing, interview techniques through our job readiness training, employment referral and job placement. The BMHA serviced 225 participants and placed 86 candidates in full-time employment.

Homeownership Program: BMHA is committed to eradicating poverty through our Section 8 homeownership program. Participants in good standing who are eligible for a home mortgage can select a home of their choice and receive a subsidy for the life of the loan reducing monthly payments to low affordable 30% of adjusted gross income. Its program has a 100% success rate with 12 families to date either purchased a home or approved and seeking a home to purchase.

Self-Sufficiency Initiative: BMHA is committed to encouraging self-sufficiency of our families and City of Buffalo Residents with on-site training programs at three computer labs located within family housing complexes to improve the economic and social environment of the public housing and neighboring communities. It has 20 participants in our public housing program and 25 in our Section 8 program.

Its programs include the following:

- Homeowner
- Microsoft Suite Software Classes
- Job Search via Internet

- Social Security Disability and Medicaid Assistance Advocacy
- Food Pantry and HEAP referrals

Literacy Campaign: BMHA is committed to improving the literacy residents and surrounding neighborhoods through partnerships with Huntington Learning Center, CAO Head Start Program, Bob Lanier After-School Program and EOC Computer Attain Lab all conveniently located within the footprint of its housing complexes. Its computer labs have served 3,230 clients. The US department of Housing and Urban Development recently awarded the BMHA a grant to start an after-school tutoring program that will serve all family public housing sites as well as the surrounding neighborhoods with a maximum of approximately 200 and the program will begin the Fall of 2009.

Better Schools, Better Neighborhoods Challenge (BSBNC)

- This new initiative takes a comprehensive school-centered approach to community building and neighborhood development. It turns the neighborhood into a learning laboratory to create jobs, opportunities and a stable physical environment. With school buildings as a focal point, BSBNC calls upon institutions, organizations and individuals to participate in the rebuilding of inner city neighborhoods. The guiding principle is that distressed neighborhoods are not problems, but rather, targets of opportunity and rebuilding them is everyone's responsibility.
- A collaborative core of initial key partners include: the Buffalo Public Schools, the City's Office of Strategic Planning, UB-CAO Center for Wellness and Neighborhood Development and the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.
- Phase One's East High School site will employ a comprehensive community regeneration approach that strengthens the local economy transforming the surrounding residential and commercial streets into a green technology corridor.

Economic Development to Bring Jobs into Poor Neighborhoods

The Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation has applied for New Markets Tax Credit, an economic development tool specifically designed to encourage development in poor communities. The potential participation of lenders and investors will most assuredly spur job creation and economic development in segments of the city were large blocks of the city's poor reside.

Continue to Enhance Citizen Services Programs with New Emphasis to Assist Residents in Poverty

- Respond to citizen needs through the Mayor's 311 Call and Resolution Center
- Alleviate blight and implement neighborhood improvements through the Mayor's Response Teams
- Beautify neighborhoods through the Anti-Graffiti & Clean City Programs
- Empower neighborhoods through the Buffalo Weed & Seed Program
- Enhance neighborhood safety through Save Our Streets
- Empower grassroots organizations through the Mayor's Livable Communities Grants

VI. Initial Resources Advancing Implementation of the Buffalo Poverty Reduction Blueprint

1. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Economic Investment Act of 2009(ARRA) is an unprecedented opportunity for Buffalo to receive federal funding in areas of Transportation, Workforce Development , Public Safety, Energy Efficient Programs and more. Buffalo will seek every possible avenue through which this funding will be provided, whether direct formula grants, state pass through funding or direct competitive grants.

Due to the timing of the ARRA implementation and the rollout of Mayor Brown's Poverty Reduction Blueprint, Buffalo has an historic opportunity to direct as many "stimulus package" funds as applicable to initiatives that will reduce poverty. It is important to acknowledge that ARRA funding is not designed to fund such initiatives indefinitely, in most cases, the ARRA funds must be obligated within one year and expended within two to three years. Essentially, the city will have to identify alternative sources of funding to continue anti-poverty programming after the 2-3 year period of ARRA funding ceases.

The ARRA funds are to be distributed through several vehicles:

- Direct formula allocations to cities from the federal government
- Competitive grant opportunities from the federal government
- Funding through the State of New York

The City of Buffalo will capitalize on as many of the following opportunities as possible. This list of opportunities was developed from preliminary estimates by the NYS Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Cabinet. Funding opportunities will be more clearly defined as more information is released on the ARRA funding.

2. Jobs

A. Workforce Investment Act Funding

Buffalo will advocate for its fair share of this funding which will be directed to the city-county controlled Workforce Investment Board. New York State will distribute $31.8 million for adult training, $70.2 million for dislocated workers and $72.2 million for youth training.

B. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Competitive Grants

Buffalo will receive $2.6 million formula funding and is eligible to compete for an additional $400 million in competitive grants. To the extent that companies hired for energy retrofits and energy distribution technologies may be encouraged to provide apprenticeships and utilize WIA funding for trainees, this program will also create jobs for unskilled persons gaining construction trade skills and specializing in green jobs.

C. Department of Transportation state-directed stimulus funds

The federal government will distribute $27.5 billion to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and states. As construction jobs are created, companies will be encouraged to partner with the workforce development system to include a worker training component. In addition, the federal government will direct $6.9 billion for transit capital assistance, providing improved public transportation opportunities. Convenient mass transportation is especially beneficial to low income populations which are a heavy component of mass transit ridership.

D. Department of Transportation federal competitive grants.

3. Social Environment Supports

A. Strengthening Families Through Community Development Block Grant Funds

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides federal funds to the City of Buffalo to finance housing opportunities and supportive services to low and moderate income households. For the 2008-2009 program year the City received approximately $22 million annually and will receive an additional one-time CDBG allocation of $4.4 million in economic stimulus funding in the next few months. Annual allocations have been on the decline for several years, thus the opportunity for one time stimulus funding will allow the City

to enhance services to low and moderate income households, with a new alignment according to the anti-poverty plan.

It is recommended that the Mayor utilize both the $4.4 million one-time CDBG stimulus funding and a major portion of its annual CDBG grant to continue support poverty reduction objectives listed in this blueprint. Specifically:

- For the $4.4 million one-time CDBG stimulus funding that will be allocated to Buffalo by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it is recommended that the Mayor direct a portion of CDBG funds that can be used for supportive services to either create or expand community-based programs that: 1) increase literacy among low-income youth and adults; 2) expand services to low-income families engaged in poverty reduction initiatives, including child care, transportation assistance, health care, and stable housing (i.e. rental assistance). For the remaining CDBG funding, it is recommended the Mayor direct that it be allocated to expand the availability of safe and affordable housing opportunities for low income families participating in the poverty reduction program, including the purchase and/or renovation of housing units for occupancy (rental or purchase) by low-income families.

Recommendations of the taskforce may be factored into the competitive process for allocation of CDBG support services funding to meet the goal of creating an environment that fosters economic opportunity and success through increasing financial literacy, savings and asset building; expanding programs for family preservation and services to seniors, and increasing youth crime prevention programming. Finally, the task force recommendations should also be factored into the decision-making process for housing initiatives funded through CDBG annual allocations to the City of Buffalo.

B. Enhancing Pre-K School Readiness Through Head Start

New York State will distribute $130 million in head start funds to organizations like the CAO of Erie County.

C. Homelessness Initiatives

Emergency Shelter Grants estimated at $6.6 million will be directly allocated to Buffalo. This funding may be used for rental assistance, housing relocation, mediation and outreach to property owners, credit repair, security or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, case management, other homeless prevention activities.

Local agencies currently receiving funding that may be eligible for these funds include AIDS Community Services, Compass House, Crisis Services, Group Ministries, Hispanics United, HOME, HomeFront, Legal Aid, Neighborhood Legal Services, Red Cross, and Urban League. Other agencies that might be eligible include Belmont Shelter and WNY Law Center.

4. Neighborhoods and Housing

A. Weatherization Assistance funding for low income families.

$404 million in funding will be sub allocated from the State of New York to eligible entities.

B. Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

$2 billion is available nationwide competitive grants to include housing rehabilitation, demolition and land banks. This will make home renovations more affordable for low income residents.

C. Brownfield Remediation competitive grants of $100 million.

Many contaminated properties within Buffalo are located near low income residential communities. These communities will experience health benefits from a cleaner environment and they will enjoy improved property values of their homes, a boost to their personal assets.

D. New York State will direct $2.25 billion in HOME investment partnerships tied to state low income housing tax credits, with an estimated $14.6 million in formula funding to Buffalo.

E. Justice Assistance Grants.

New York State will sub-allocate $107 million to enhance law enforcement and crime reduction efforts. Safety is essential to improving neighborhoods.

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- Brookings Institution
- Buffalo and Erie County Public Library
- Buffalo Building Trades
- Buffalo City Mission
- Buffalo Employment and Training Center
- Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
- Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division
- Buffalo State College
- Buffalo Urban League
- Calhoun Insurance Agency, Inc. and Lawley Services, Inc.
- Center for American Progress
- City of Jacksonville Florida
- City of New York Office of the Mayor
- City of Savannah Georgia
- Citizens Action of NY-WNY
- Community Action Organization of Erie County
- Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo
- Community Health Center of Buffalo, Inc.
- Dale Carnegie Training
- Erie County Department of Social Services
- Erie County Commission on the Status of Women
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- Massachusetts Avenue Project
- New York State Department of Labor
- NYC Center for Economic Opportunity
- P.U.S.H Buffalo
- Read to Succeed Buffalo
- Senator Antoine Thompson
- South Buffalo Education Center
- State University of New York at Buffalo
- The Father Belle Center
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- WNED TV
- WNY Coalition for the Homeless
- WNY Homeless Alliance