



Office of the County Executive

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

July 16, 2021

The Powerbrokers of Rochester
C/O Dr. Seanelle Hawkins
President & CEO Urban League of Rochester
265 N. Clinton Ave.
Rochester, NY 14605

Dr. Hawkins & Fellow Powerbrokers:

On behalf of my team and Monroe County, I would like to thank the Urban League of Rochester for providing a forum for our community's powerbrokers to gather, share ideas, and push our community toward equity and justice. We value your commitment to interrupt racism and ensure the thorough and detailed work from The Commission on Racial And Structural Equity (RASE) moves from the page into practice.

Our team appreciates the opportunity to share more details around the implementation of the RASE Report (Report), and our continued efforts, both prior to and since the release of the Report, to break down structural and institutional racism in Monroe County. The incredibly supportive response the Report has generated in the community, has energized our team to keep doing this important work.

In order to be successful, we need the support and trust of the community. Your letter is clear in its expectations: moving forward, we must hold ourselves accountable, ensure our plans for implementation are transparent and accessible, and involve the community every step of the way. In this response, we will outline our three phased collaborative implementation plan, provide detailed updates on current programs and initiatives, and discuss future efforts to address racial and structural equity in Monroe County and the City of Rochester.

Phased Collaborative Implementation Plan

Our phased and collaborative Implementation Plan (Plan) contains three phases 1) Principle Review; 2) Community Leadership; and 3) Long-Term Implementation Plan. Our Plan embraces collaboration and inclusion by seeking to establish partnerships and strengthening relations across governmental structures and the community. It will be supported by the following Values and Guiding Principles:

- **Transparency:** *Integrity of implementation processes*
- **Fidelity:** *Continued commitment to supporting Commission's Charge and adherence to established timelines*

- **Accountability:** *Clear attainable and measurable outcomes*
- **Sustainability:** *Continued impact beyond report implementation*

As we move forward toward implementation, we anticipate a timeline that would allow us to begin one phase per quarter in 2021:

- RASE Report Released (1st Quarter: January 1 - March 31) ***COMPLETED***
- Phase I: Principle Review (2nd Quarter: April 1 – June 30) ***COMPLETED***
- Phase II: Community Leadership (3rd Quarter: July 1 – September 30)
- Phase III: Long-Term Implementation Plan (4th Quarter: October 1- TBD)

Phase I: Principle Review was completed on time at the end of the second quarter. During this phase, internal leadership teams from the County and the City worked together to conduct a cursory review of the recommendations outlined in the Report. This team was charged with: (1) determining which recommendations fall within the authority of the County/City; (2) reviewing these recommendations and determining prioritization, appropriate timeframe, and responsible party; and (3) identifying external and internal partners and resources. This information will be made available in the near future through a dashboard accessible on the RASE website (<https://www.rocrase.com/>).

Phase II: Community Leadership is currently in progress. During this phase, we will actively engage community stakeholders, organizations, and leaders, who will serve as champions for and take ownership of the recommendations outlined in the Report determined to be outside the authority of the County or City. This phase will also encompass the continued planning and implementation of Phase I recommendations.

Phase III: Long-Term Implementation Plan is expected to begin on or around October 1, 2021. The County is committed to creating a long-term implementation plan that is transparent, accountable, and sustainable. To be successful in this commitment we will need to work with the City of Rochester. This means working with Malik Evans and his Administration, as he will almost certainly be Rochester's next Mayor. I have had preliminary conversations with Councilmember Evans, and have committed to working together to establish a long-term implementation plan for this Report.

Updates on Current Programs and Initiatives

The Powerbroker discussions suggested, *“establishing ‘quick wins’...would both boost the morale and faith of the community in its government, and also attract additional public and private funding.”* Evidence of this was shared by highlighting the efforts of the City of Rochester and Monroe County to establish a \$15 per hour minimum wage. It should also be noted that Monroe County has also made a \$15 per hour minimum wage requirement for any businesses wishing to contract with Monroe County.

These wins not only bolster morale, but also have a real and significant impact on many of our citizens. As noted, when Monroe County established a \$15 per hour minimum wage, for county employees and contractors directly impacting 680 County employees including full-time, part-time, seasonal and temporary employees. Of the impacted employees, 56% are women and

28% are women of color. Additionally, this commitment represents an investment of \$1.8M a year in our workforce, and that number increases to \$2.5M when combined with additional raises that will occur to avoid wage compression.

In addition to minimum wage increases, highlighted below are updates related to Monroe County's efforts to address structural and racial equity. Combined, these efforts seek to address the goals of expanding economic opportunities, increasing cultural competence, ending inequitable practices, embedding services in communities, and demonstrating accountability to increase equity.

In March 2021, the County created the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI). This office has hired key staff and quickly commenced its important work on initiatives that will expand economic opportunities and increase cultural competence within Monroe County. ODEI is charged with working across county departments to implement sustainable strategies to increase the attraction, retention, and promotion of people from diverse backgrounds, conduct organizational assessments, educate staff and community, and develop a diversity data dashboard. Two major initiatives being addressed by this office are establishing a process for Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) certification and addressing language access.

MWBE is a priority focus of the ODEI, and a specialist has already been hired to expand the scope of the current MWBE practices per the Gantt Law signed earlier this month. The ODEI is responsible for developing a MWBE certification process, outreach programs, and opportunities to increase diversity in vendor contracts throughout Monroe County.

The ODEI has hired a Language Access Compliance Specialist to ensure language access for Limited English Proficient populations. The Language Access Specialist will oversee the implementation of a County-wide plan and will work with each department to establish a budget, tools, resources, and procedures to meet the language needs of the staff and community.

Monroe County has led the way to ensure our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community has access to vital emergency information. We introduced and passed a local law to ensure that all outlets who deliver emergency information utilize an ASL interpreter, who is available in real time, to deliver critical messages. We continue to make efforts to be more inclusive of ASL interpretation, Spanish language translations, and captioning for County communications.

Training a culturally competent workforce makes Monroe County a more welcoming and attractive workplace that is supportive of a diverse staff that reflect the community we serve. In order to attract and retain this talent, we must also put into place supports and opportunities for growth. Leading us in this effort is Monroe County Hospital (MCH), where we have created new mechanisms for training, mentorship, and promotion.

We have hired a Nurse Recruiter, as well as a Lead Clinical Instructor to assist us with building and training a diverse workforce. These positions will enable MCH to host its own CNA training program. We have also partnered with the Rochester Black Nurses Association (RBNA) to create a mentorship program. The RBNA mentorship program established in 2021, welcomes nursing candidates from all backgrounds to apply. Selected mentees are paired with mentors who have demonstrated success and passion for the nursing profession, to help guide them through the process of becoming a CNA, LPN, or RN.

We identified a need to create upward mobility within the system by establishing internal mechanisms for promotion that encourage our existing employees to continue to grow with us. To do this, we established career ladders at MCH that allow individuals to start in our CNA training program and work their way to high level nursing jobs.

Our Office of Mental Health (OMH) is actively seeking to end inequitable practices and increase access to care with special attention to BIPOC populations. In an effort to increase access to mental health and social emotional support services, OMH has partnered with agencies and advocated for additional New York State funding and services for our community. Part of this effort has been around improving community awareness of local crisis services by creating and disseminating a local crisis service list available in both English and Spanish at:

English: <http://www.monroecounty.gov/files/mh/MC-CrisisServices.pdf>

Spanish: https://www.monroecounty.gov/files/mh/MC-CrisisServices_Spanish.pdf

We have expanded our crisis mental health services with the expansion of the Forensic Intervention Team (FIT), which now includes 24/7 coverage throughout the County. Staffing will increase by 25 positions moving from three to 28 individuals including 20 master level clinicians. FIT will respond to crises and connect citizens to treatment and community resources.

We were fortunate to receive a Finger Lakes Performing Provider System grant to include peers to our FIT team, and will place a special focus on BIPOC populations. We are convening bi-weekly meetings with the mobile teams to collaborate and continue to build relationships with the four crisis teams (FIT, Person in Crisis team, Rochester Community Mobile Crisis from URMC, and the Crisis Outreach Team from Rochester Regional Health System) who are helping our citizens daily.

OMH is also sponsoring the Youth Behavioral Health Pilot, organized by the System Integration Project under the United Way. The Youth Behavioral Health Pilot focuses on increasing collaboration, communication, and connection for families by working together with families, CPEP, Mobile Crisis, and the Child & Youth Single Point of Access at MCOMH. There are countless initiatives, partnering, and advocating for our community.

We continue to invest in our Improving Addiction Coordination Team or IMPACT. This year, we are investing \$200,000 in a research supported pilot program that expands IMPACT by hiring peer outreach workers that have navigated the system themselves. They will work directly with overdose survivors in community hospitals to build support systems that work based on their own lived experiences.

The Report also focused on a desire to Embed Services in the Community, with a goal to decentralize services and embed them in trusted agencies throughout the community. We appreciate the willingness of community providers to work with us as we moved in the direction of moving services out of 691 St. Paul Street and 111 Westfall Road into trusted community organizations. These organizations act as our partners in this change process; many of you are indeed represented by signatories of this letter.

One of the priorities outlined in this year's State of the County was our effort to change our perspective on human services and how they are delivered. This year, we will launch the first phase of a systemic redesign of services that will meet both the short term and long-term goals of those we serve. We will accomplish this by switching from a transactional model to one that will embed our services in community agencies, creating a continuum of wrap-around services for individuals and families.

Monroe County will also invest \$1.4 million to support the transformation of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to a person-centered, community-based, integrated service delivery model. Under this model, the future state of DHS will be created with the pervasive input of impacted community members and community service providers, leveraging the practices of collaborative community engagement, in accordance with NYS Social Service Law Rules and Regulations.

Services provided at DHS will be reimagined, creating an integrated cross-sector delivery system that supports a person's transition from in crisis, to stable, to thriving. By partnering with the Systems Integration Project on this effort, DHS will be fully aligned and immersed in the wider community's vision and activities aimed at improving the health and economic wellbeing of individuals and families, especially individuals that are vulnerable and/or impacted by poverty.

The first phase of this redesign will focus on immediate need services and will align with current legislative and regulatory compliance under both Federal and State oversight entities who direct Monroe County's governmental structures. The goal is to rethink and overhaul protocols, procedures, and processes as it relates to access to the Department of Human Services. There will be a particular focus on creating a system that reflects the interest of the community that is inclusive and seeks to dismantle the structural inequities that exist within the current delivery system.

We have initiated this model through an Eviction Prevention Pilot Initiative (EPPI) pilot program in 2020, then expanded the pilot in 2021 bringing in the City of Rochester as a partner to use that same system of delivery with EPPI 2.0. This program distributed eviction prevention funding to Monroe County households by using a network of community providers. To date this effort has distributed over \$10M and impacted approximately 2,000 households.

We will continue to use this approach when we partner with Anthony Jordan Health Center, and Monroe County's Veterans Services. We will embed Veteran Service Agency support at Anthony Jordan to screen veterans during healthcare visits. A staff member in our Veteran's Services Agency will meet those veterans on site, and work to get them all of the benefits they have earned. We believe this placement will have a significant impact on veterans of color.

All of these changes, depend on a team that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. The best way to achieve that is to have a diverse team that reflects our community. While we have made progress, we recognize that there is important work to be done internally. That is why our Department of Human Resources is working with our ODEI, to track our workforce diversity

numbers and assist in recruitment, particularly around recruiting, retaining, and promoting individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latinx.

The makeup of Monroe County according to the most recent census data is: 70.1% White alone (Non-Hispanic/Latino); 16.2% Black or African American alone; 9.2% Hispanic or Latino; 3.7% Asian alone; 2.7% Two or More Races; 0.4% American Indian and Alaska Native alone; and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone.

Race and Hispanic Origin	
① White alone, percent	76.8%
① Black or African American alone, percent (a)	16.2%
① American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)	0.4%
① Asian alone, percent (a)	3.7%
① Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)	0.1%
① Two or More Races, percent	2.7%
① Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)	9.2%
① White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	70.1%

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/monroecountynyork>

The makeup of Monroe County’s total workforce is: 73.9% White alone (Non-Hispanic/Latino); 17.48% Black or African American; 5.32% Hispanic or Latino; 1.55% Asian; 1.04% Two or More Races; 0.21% American Indian and Alaska Native; and 0.08% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.

Race	Total	Percent	Full-time	Part-time
N/A	22	0.43%	7	15
American Indian or Alaska Native	11	0.21%	8	3
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	80	1.55%	55	25
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	904	17.48%	619	285
Hispanic or Latino	275	5.32%	217	58
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0.08%	2	2
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latin	54	1.04%	30	24
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	3822	73.90%	2936	886
Total	5172	100.00%	3874	1298

A full chart of demographic information is attached to this letter for your review. Workforce diversity numbers in Monroe County show breakdowns for (1) All Hires, (2) Management and Professional Hires, and (3) Management and Professional Promotions. Data is broken down by time periods 2010-2015 (Brooks Administration); 2016-2019 (Dinolfo Administration); and 2020-Now (Bello Administration). The data is then further delineated by: County Executive’s Departments, Other Elected Official’s Departments (i.e. Board of Elections, County Clerk, County Legislature, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Sherriff’s Office), and Combined All County Departments.

Significant improvement has been made in diversifying our workforce is through new hires and promotions into the Management and Professional (M&P) titles. New hires for

individuals identified as Black or African Americans and Hispanic or Latino have doubled since 2019, and increased by almost 4 times since 2015, with 20.3% of new M&P's identifying as Black or African American, and 3.1% as Hispanic or Latino. Promotions into M&P have also been more diverse than past administrations with 15.2% of promotions being individuals who identify as Black or African American and 4.3% as Hispanic or Latino.

Government cannot truly serve all of its residents if all of its residents are not represented at the decision making tables. I have deliberately pulled in sharp minds and talent from a diverse candidate pool. For the first time, we have an African American woman serving as a Deputy County Executive, a Latina woman heading the Department of Human Services, the County's largest department, the youngest and first African American woman leading the way in strengthening our mental health system, and included among our firsts are individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Our government works best with a diverse array of lived experiences at its foundation.

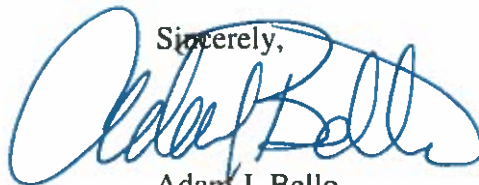
Future Efforts to Address Racial and Structural Equity

We are incredibly grateful to the RASE Commission for the tremendous amount of work they put into producing this Report. Further, that gratitude extends to the signatories of this letter and members of the public who both support this work and will hold Monroe County and the City of Rochester accountable for the implementation.

Partnership will be essential to the long-term equity work that needs to be done in our community. The successful implementation of these recommendations depends on the partnership between the County, the City, and the community. To that end, I spoke with Councilmember Malik Evans to congratulate him, and have started to build a partnership with the incoming Evans Administration.

As we move forward with the implementation of our plan, I will work with the Evans Administration to create a path forward that engages the community and is rooted in transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

Sincerely,



Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive

Atts.

Attachment: New Hires by Race and Ethnicity

All Hires 2010 to Current

County Executive's Department Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	8	0.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	0.5%	3	0.3%	1	0.1%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	10	1.6%	23	2.5%	30	2.8%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	131	21.4%	233	25.3%	246	23.1%
Hispanic or Latino	33	5.4%	55	6.0%	62	5.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NonH/L)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.3%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	1	0.2%	14	1.5%	19	1.8%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	434	70.9%	589	64.0%	694	65.3%
County Executive's Department Total	612		920		1063	

Other Elected's Department Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	4.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	3	1.1%	5	1.4%	3	1.5%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	8	2.9%	30	8.2%	30	15.0%
Hispanic or Latino	6	2.2%	26	7.1%	13	6.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NonH/L)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	7	1.9%	4	2.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	259	93.5%	297	81.4%	140	70.0%
Other Elected's Department Total	277		365		200	

All County Departments Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	3	0.2%	16	1.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	0.4%	3	0.2%	2	0.2%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	13	1.5%	28	2.2%	33	2.6%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	139	15.6%	263	20.5%	276	21.9%
Hispanic or Latino	39	4.4%	81	6.3%	75	5.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NonH/L)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.3%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	1	0.1%	21	1.6%	23	1.8%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	693	78.0%	886	68.9%	834	66.0%
Grand Total	889		1285		1263	

*Other Elected's Departments include Board of Elections, County Clerk, County Legislature, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Sheriff's Office.

Attachment: New Hires Management and Professional by Race and Ethnicity

M&P Hires 2010 to Current

County Executive's Department Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	2	3.7%	2	3.2%	1	1.6%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	3	5.6%	7	11.1%	13	20.3%
Hispanic or Latino	1	1.9%	1	1.6%	2	3.1%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	0	0.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	48	88.9%	52	82.5%	48	75.0%
County Executive's Department Total	54		63		64	

Other Elected's Department* Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	1	2.7%	3	5.2%	2	5.1%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	3	5.2%	6	15.4%
Hispanic or Latino	0	0.0%	2	3.4%	2	5.1%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	2	3.4%	0	0.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	36	97.3%	48	82.8%	28	71.8%
Other Elected's Department Total	37		58		39	

All County Departments Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
Undeclared	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	3	3.3%	5	4.1%	3	2.9%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	3	3.3%	10	8.3%	19	18.4%
Hispanic or Latino	1	1.1%	3	2.5%	4	3.9%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	3	2.5%	0	0.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	84	92.3%	100	82.6%	76	73.8%
Grand Total	91		121		103	

*Other Elected's Departments include Board of Elections, County Clerk, County Legislature, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Sheriff's Office.

Attachment: Promotions Management and Professional by Race and Ethnicity

M&P Promotions 2010 to Current

County Executive's Department						
Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-2021	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	5	2.0%	6	3.6%	1	2.2%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	16	6.3%	10	6.1%	7	15.2%
Hispanic or Latino	5	2.0%	2	1.2%	2	4.3%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	227	89.0%	146	88.5%	36	78.3%
County Executive's Department Total	255		165		46	
Other Elected's Department*						
Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-2021	
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	2	1.2%	1	0.7%	1	1.9%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	5	3.1%	11	7.4%	4	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino	5	3.1%	2	1.3%	1	1.9%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	3	2.0%	1	1.9%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	150	92.6%	132	88.6%	47	87.0%
Other Elected's Department Total	162		149		54	
All County Departments						
Ethnic Origin	2010-2015		2016-2019		2020-Now	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	7	1.7%	7	2.2%	2	2.0%
Black or AfrAmer (Non Hispanic or Latino)	21	5.0%	21	6.7%	11	11.0%
Hispanic or Latino	10	2.4%	4	1.3%	3	3.0%
Two or More Races (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0	0.0%	4	1.3%	1	1.0%
White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	377	90.4%	278	88.5%	83	83.0%
Grand Total	417		314		100	

*Other Elected's Departments include Board of Elections, County Clerk, County Legislature, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Sheriff's Office.