



City of Rochester • County of Monroe

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor and County Executive Mark One-Year Anniversary of RASE Report

Rochester, NY – With gratitude for the 200-plus community volunteers whose recommendations shaped the historic March 2021 Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) report, Monroe County Executive Adam J. Bello and Rochester Mayor Malik D. Evans recounted their administrations' RASE-related work and shared their plans to engage the broader community in future implementation.

"Today, we recognize the one-year anniversary of the RASE Commission's recommendations, which captured our community's collective vision for racial and structural equity," said County Executive Bello. "Since March of last year, and despite COVID and other challenges, we are proud of the progress made by the teams at the County and City Hall."

"My administration remains committed to the bold ideas in the RASE recommendations," said Mayor Evans. "But this effort is bigger than County and City government. There is much more to be done by many others across our region. I want to thank the Commission's co-chairs, members, working groups and many others who took part in completing this monumental report."

The RASE Commission, launched in August 2020, was led by three Commission co-chairs, 21 Commissioners and 200 volunteers who committed seven months to developing a comprehensive report. The end result was delivered to the community in March 2021: it contains more than 200 recommendations designed to unravel systemic inequities in laws, policies and initiatives across the region.

Over the past year, the City of Rochester has committed more than \$76 million in federal funds, in addition to efforts included in its annual budget, for projects aligned with the RASE report. This includes the creation of a Racial Equity Tool encourage every City department to develop their budget submissions with a racial equity lens. In addition, the City raised its minimum wage for City workers to at least \$15 an hour; developed a targeted Business Revitalization Grant program; expanded the RPD Office of Business Intelligence; and is pursuing plans for a Guaranteed Basic Income pilot program.

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Following recommendations from the RASE report, Monroe County over the past year created a local Minority and Women-owned Business (MWBE) Certification program and set utilization goals for most county contracts — construction, professional and nonprofessional services — at 12% for Minority Business Enterprises and 3% for Women-owned businesses. The county also increased its minimum wage to \$15 per hour, expanded workforce training programs to increase advancement opportunities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) county employees and initiated a wide-scale redesign of the Department of Human Services to decentralize programs and find ways to work with community-based organizations to bring services directly into neighborhoods. Additionally, the county sought significant input from traditionally underrepresented populations while developing plans to invest \$144 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding in our communities.

While both leaders remain committed to continuing their administrations' efforts to implement RASE recommendations, they also voiced the need for additional support from the community at large. To expand participation and to track the community's progress, they announced the next phase in RASE efforts.

Dr. Seanelle Hawkins, CEO of the Urban League of Greater Rochester, will lead community-wide implementation of RASE recommendations, and will guide the efforts of Cedar Grove Institute for Sustainable Communities, a nationally recognized social science firm that provides guidance in the growth of diverse, prosperous and self-reliant communities. Cedar Grove's contract will be paid for by a \$50,000 commitment from the City of Rochester.

The Mayor and County Executive will each commit team members to the community implementation team, which will also create a dashboard to track ongoing progress.

"We want to make Rochester a thriving and attractive community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed," Mayor Evans said.

To participate in implementing the RASE Commission's recommendations, and for more information and regular updates, visit www.rocrase.com.

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