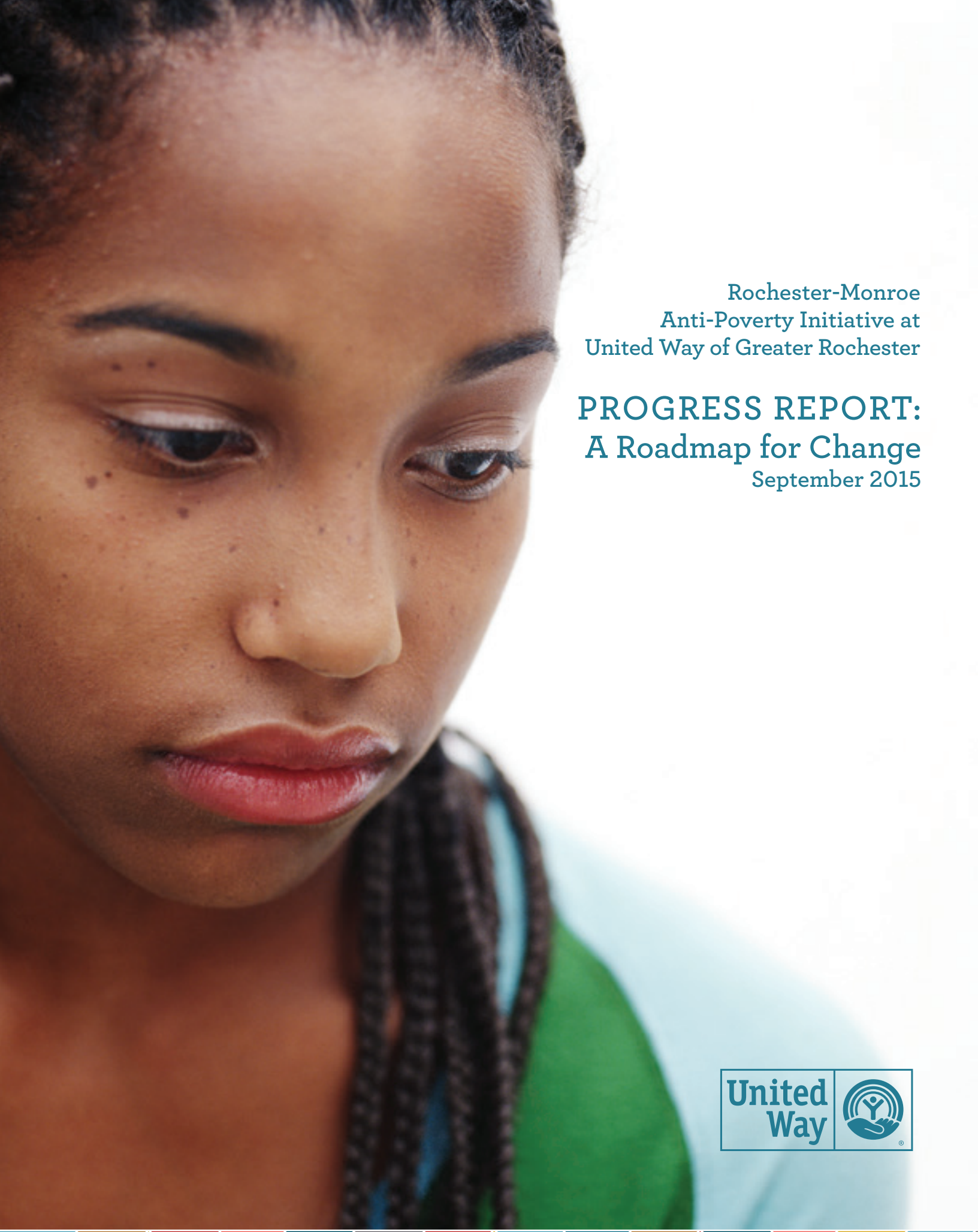

Rochester-Monroe
Anti-Poverty Initiative at
United Way of Greater Rochester

PROGRESS REPORT:
A Roadmap for Change

September 2015

United Way

Together as a community, we can ensure that every child and family has the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic mobility is a reality.

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LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

To the Rochester and Monroe County Community:

Despite an array of traditional anti-poverty programs and investments to raise families out of poverty, the Greater Rochester region still faces a devastating and accelerating poverty crisis.

The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) is working to move the community in a bold new direction to address poverty, through a comprehensive, integrated system of social supports that empowers families as they move out of poverty and into opportunities to succeed. Building the system will require that we view the issue through the lens of the structural racism that plagues our institutions and communities and the trauma induced by poverty.

To successfully deal with the issues surrounding poverty, the people most affected must be willing to partner in creating and implementing the solutions. Without their participation and willingness to ensure equal access to equitable solutions, such an effort cannot be successful. We are confident that this initiative will achieve results because it involves people impacted by poverty directly. It also represents an unprecedented collaboration among public, private and non-profit leaders and a strong partnership with New York State and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The following document provides an update on RMAPI's initial work and the findings of RMAPI's workgroups. **It is important to note that this is a progress report, not a panacea to the poverty epidemic.** Rather than offering a list of programs and funding requests that will solve the crisis, this report lays the foundation for RMAPI's future work and for future investment in the initiative.

We are proud to lead this effort, and we thank the hundreds of people who are working on this initiative and the community as a whole for its tremendous support of our work to date.

Together as a community, we can ensure that every child and family has the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic mobility is a reality.

Sincerely,

Hon. Joseph Morelle
Majority Leader
NYS Assembly

Hon. Lovely Warren
Mayor of Rochester

Hon. Maggie Brooks
Monroe County Executive

Fran Weisberg
United Way President & CEO

Dr. Leonard Brock
RMAPI Director

We are proud to lead this effort, and we thank the hundreds of people who are working on this initiative and the community as a whole for its tremendous support of our work to date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) is an unprecedented community-wide effort to reduce poverty in the Rochester and Monroe County region by 50 percent over the next 15 years. This initiative involves the efforts and input of nearly 1,000 people in the region, including more than 200 volunteers on committees and workgroups, more than 800 community members who attended a town hall meeting or have participated in surveys, and most importantly, the people this initiative is intended to benefit—individuals impacted by poverty.

RMAPI is led by New York State Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, and Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks and convened by United Way of Greater Rochester. The Initiative's work aligns with Governor Andrew Cuomo's Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force, made up of members of 20 state agencies working with local public, private and non-profit leaders to address poverty in Rochester.

RMAPI is unique in its collaborative, community-driven, data-informed, and transparent approach—including active participation from persons impacted by poverty. This report is the first milestone of the initiative's long-term, multi-year effort to reduce poverty by:

- Laying the foundation for a neighborhood-based, integrated system of social supports.
- Recognizing and mitigating the personal and societal factors that get in the way of persons breaking free of poverty—in particular, structural racism and the effects of poverty-induced trauma.
- Addressing the additional compounding challenges of the concentration of poverty in the City of Rochester.
- Increasing access to quality employment and opportunities for advancement.
- Addressing gaps in services related to access, awareness, capacity, effectiveness and/or integration.
- Effectively linking to the economic and employment opportunities that are taking root in Monroe County, such as the Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI).
- Providing adult mentoring to help people navigate the system of social supports system so individuals can set and meet short- and long-term goals.

GOAL

Reduce poverty in the Rochester and Monroe County region by 50% over the next 15 years

Nearly 1,000 people in the region, including more than 200 volunteers on committees and workgroups, more than 800 community members and most importantly, individuals impacted by poverty.

Initial Focus

RMAPI workgroups were formed in early 2015 to focus on eight key drivers of poverty: Education, Health & Nutrition, Housing, Jobs, Justice System, Safe Neighborhoods, Childcare and Transportation. Workgroup members identified specific barriers that keep people impacted by poverty from achieving self-sufficiency and developed 33 recommendations for addressing poverty-related barriers in the Rochester-Monroe region.

In the short-term, RMAPI is focusing its efforts on addressing the needs of the working poor to help them move from and stay out of poverty. Initial implementation will involve:

- **Systems Design** – Designing a comprehensive, integrated system of social supports. Work on the design for the new system will be coordinated with the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge planning effort. The City of Rochester was one of 16 cities chosen worldwide to receive assistance from IBM in analyzing poverty data and developing solutions.
- **Adult Mentoring/Navigating** – Establishing an adult mentor/navigator role across the systems of support that helps working poor individuals to overcome barriers and acquire the resources, knowledge and skills necessary to attain and retain a living wage job and break the cycle of poverty.
- **Early Childhood Support** – Ensuring early childhood support that provides both high-quality, affordable, accessible and flexible childcare that parents need to engage in community, economic mobility and wellness-related activities, and in-home parent training proven to give new parents the skills to succeed as their children's first teachers.

A Phased Approach

This progress report highlights RMAPI's first phase of work and workgroup strategies, which lay the foundation for achieving long-term objectives. During the next phase of work, RMAPI will further refine the preliminary recommendations and put forth solutions with key milestones and measures, as well as necessary policy changes needed to accomplish these goals. RMAPI's approach to implementation will be strength-based, building on current community assets and leveraging existing resources. Longer-term recommendations, such as those associated with child education, are fundamental to achieving RMAPI goals and will be the focus of subsequent phases.

Key next steps will include creating teams to support the design and implementation of the recommendations and continuing to coordinate efforts with New York State. In conjunction with the work of the IBM Smarter Cities team this fall, the Upstate Revitalization Initiative brings a unique opportunity to attract resources to the area that the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council has named the "Pathways to Prosperity." The URI provides RMAPI an opportunity to leverage these short-term initiatives for the long-term goal of building a coordinated system of supports that is neighborhood-based, trauma-informed, and addresses the biases and challenges of structural racism.

INTRODUCTION

More than 50 years after President Lyndon Johnson declared the War on Poverty, Rochester, New York faces a crisis. Among comparably-sized U.S. cities, Rochester has:

HIGHEST

The highest rate of childhood poverty (50.1%)

HIGHEST

The highest rate of extreme poverty

SECOND-HIGHEST

The second-highest rate of poverty in the nation

The poverty statistics for Monroe County, especially in the City of Rochester, are appalling. Almost one third of the population lives below the poverty line. Of these, half live in extreme poverty—meaning that the household income is half of the federal poverty level. But most shocking is the fact that one out of every two children in Rochester lives in poverty.

A 2013 report by the Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester served as a wake-up call to Rochester and Monroe County's growing poverty and highlighted the concentrated, multi-generational nature of the issue in the city. In the area known as "The Crescent," more than 60% of residents live in poverty. This extreme concentration of poverty manifests itself in limited local employment, housing blight, food deserts and the isolation of the residents of these neighborhoods.

The Response

In response, Rochester and Monroe County's public, private, and non-profit leaders have come together in an unprecedented way to address this issue, forming the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) **to reduce poverty through a collaborative, community-driven, data-informed and transparent approach.**

New York State Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren and Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks lead the initiative, which is convened by United Way of Greater Rochester. The Initiative's work aligns with Governor Andrew Cuomo's Opportunity Agenda, which created the state's Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force.

RMAPI's vision is that **every child and family will have the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic mobility is a reality.** Two overarching goals guide the group's efforts to achieve this vision:

1 REDUCE POVERTY[1] BY:

50%	30%	15%
IN 15 YEARS	IN 10 YEARS	IN 5 YEARS

2 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES THAT ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT[2]

[1] Poverty as defined by the Federal Poverty Level.
[2] Measurable targets are being defined by the RMAPI Data Team and will be available in a future progress report.

THE PROCESS

In March 2015, RMAPI leadership assembled a Steering Committee to oversee the Initiative and serve as the liaison to Governor Cuomo's Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force, an interagency group of members of 20 state agencies working with local public, private and non-profit leaders to address poverty in Rochester. The Steering Committee appointed workgroup co-chairs, individuals with experience in each of the key areas described below.

In May, after a robust community-wide recruitment process, workgroup co-chairs selected individuals from a list of more than 400 interested community members to serve on workgroups focused on six key areas: Education, Health & Nutrition, Housing, Jobs, Justice System and Safe Neighborhoods. Each workgroup represented a diverse cross-section of the Rochester and Monroe County communities, with the active involvement of more than 200 people in total.

From May through July, workgroups developed recommendations for their specific area of focus. In July, two additional workgroups were formed to tackle barriers that early in the process were identified as cutting across all of the key areas: the availability, affordability, and accessibility of (1) Childcare and (2) Transportation.

Workgroups were charged with identifying assets and barriers that currently exist in the community, developing recommendations for their specific area of focus, and establishing key success measures. Each workgroup included the active participation of people impacted by poverty, as well as cultural brokers who ensured that the voices of those experiencing poverty were heard and given equal influence in the process.

Recommendations were developed and prioritized with strong community engagement, with the objective of achieving a high level of acceptance from persons impacted by poverty. In addition, RMAPI established a Systems Design Team to merge the 33 individual recommendations into a unified plan, identify common themes and recommend next steps for a phased implementation approach.

WORKGROUPS

Workgroups were charged with identifying assets and barriers that currently exist in the community, developing recommendations for their specific area of focus, and establishing key success measures.

WORKGROUPS FOCUS

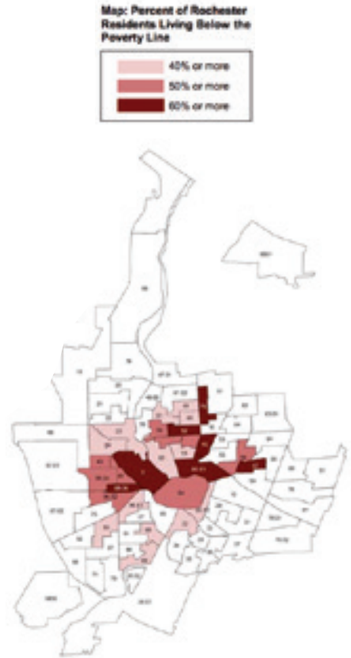
Education
Health & Nutrition
Housing
Jobs
Justice System
Safe Neighborhoods
Childcare
Transportation

FINDINGS

Barriers

The RMAPI workgroups prioritized specific barriers that must be overcome for people impacted by poverty to achieve self-sufficiency. The barriers described by the workgroups include:

- **Lack of community development (social and infrastructure) in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.** This includes a lack of affordable housing, jobs near where individuals live and healthcare clinics, as well as limited incentives for housing developments and limited nutritious food options.
- **Inequality caused by structural and institutional racism, or from racial, ethnic, social or gender bias,** which can be experienced explicitly or implicitly, including harsher treatment by the justice system, unfair landlord and policing practices, disadvantages resulting from segregation and the concentration of poverty and neighborhood gentrification.
- **Impact of poverty-induced trauma.** The social, psychological, physical and mental health effects of poverty range from being unable to meet basic needs to neighborhood violence.
- **Lack of knowledge, skills and credentials to get or maintain a job.** This includes a lack of work experience, a gap in education or skills, a criminal record and the need for help navigating the system overall.
- **Limited access to or eligibility for public and private supports, services and programs.** This includes access to affordable childcare, early childhood development, extended day and year academic and other programming for children and youth, civil and criminal legal representation, quality affordable housing, food education and nutrition, and opportunities for quality employment and career advancement.
- **Insufficient community capacity for childcare and transportation.** This includes a lack of accessible public transportation and a lack of affordable childcare that corresponds with the hours that parents work, including evenings and weekends.
- **Public and private policies, regulations and practices,** such as mandated justice sentences; inefficient or ineffective food subsidy, transportation, and housing policies; immediate loss of childcare or other subsidies as wages increase; and the inability to get a high school diploma after age 21.



CONCENTRATED POVERTY

Within Rochester's "Crescent" almost all neighborhoods face extreme poverty as illustrated on the map above.

Image source: Ed Doherty, the Rochester Area Community Foundation

Common Themes

Three common themes consistently arose from all of the work groups: (a) Build and Support Our Community, (b) Address Structural Racism, and (c) Address Poverty-induced Trauma. These themes will serve as the basis for design principles undergirding all of the initiative's work and will be addressed in all implementation planning activities.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

A common theme expressed by people impacted by poverty is the desire to continue residing in their current neighborhoods. The condition, however, is that these neighborhoods meet their needs. These needs include quality affordable housing, access to nutritious foods, neighborhood safety, youth development, crisis service alternatives to arrest, community health campuses, local business development and job opportunities, transportation infrastructure and neighborhood community centers that connect individuals to appropriate education, training and other support services.

STRUCTURAL RACISM

Structural racism can be defined as a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It points to dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic, and political systems in which we all exist.[3]

We know that poverty disproportionately affects Blacks/African Americans and Hispanics in the City of Rochester.[4] At issue are the ongoing effects of structural racism and bias, which continue as a major barrier for Blacks/African Americans and Hispanics as they attempt to break free of poverty.

POVERTY-INDUCED TRAUMA

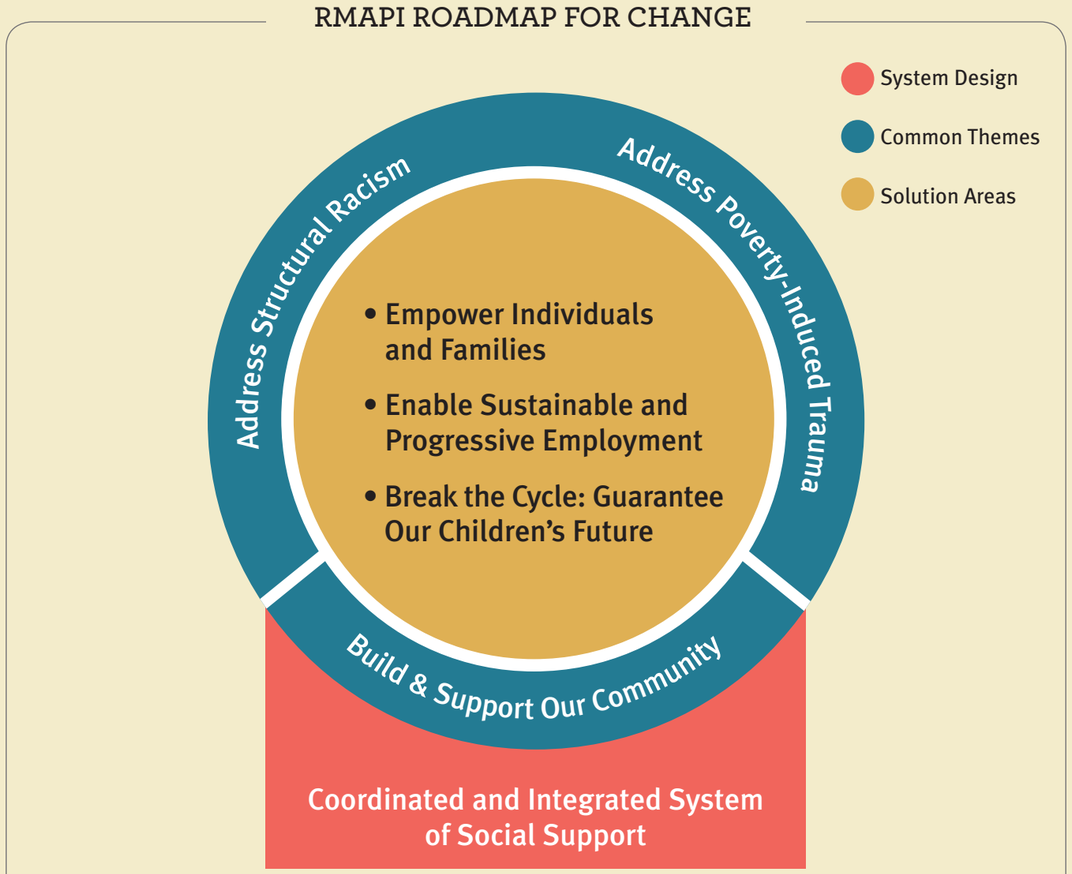
Multiple studies of both children[5] and adults living in poverty suggest that the ongoing and continuous nature of stress arising from threats to well-being negatively affect cognitive function/executive functioning skills; in some cases this can result in barriers to performance, developmental progress and goal attainment. "First, poverty creates powerful stresses that swamp our thinking and create a 'bandwidth tax' that decreases the quality of the decisions we make. And second, the stresses associated with poverty can alter the way the brain develops in children who are subjected to them."[6] **For African Americans and Latinos who are living in poverty, structural racism and poverty-induced trauma compound one another, and the impact is exponential.**

[3] From The Aspen Institute: http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/rcc/RCC-Structural-Racism-Glossary.pdf
[4] From RACF Poverty Report Update 2015-0108, p 5. Poverty rates are very high for African Americans (nearly 40%) and Hispanics (over 44%). Asians in Rochester have a poverty rate of 29.5% and Whites 23%. African Americans now constitute slightly more than half the poor population of the City of Rochester.
[5] Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Greg J. Duncan, "The Effects of Poverty on Children." *The Future of Children*, 7 no. 2 (Sum-Fall 1997) 55. "This research supports the conclusion that family income has selective but, in some instances, quite substantial effects on child and adolescent well-being. Family income appears to be more strongly related to children's ability and achievement than to their emotional outcomes. Children who live in extreme poverty or who live below the poverty line for multiple years appear, all other things being equal, to suffer the worst outcomes. The timing of poverty also seems to be important for certain child outcomes. Children who experience poverty during their preschool and early school years have lower rates of school completion than children and adolescents who experience poverty only in later years."
[6] "Rethinking Poverty," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Fall 2014)

In addition to the common themes that emerged organically through the workgroup process, RMAPI will approach implementation using two additional lenses: the unique circumstance of concentrated poverty, and the need for increased access to quality jobs and career advancement.

RMAPI Roadmap for Change

The RMAPI Roadmap for Change, depicted in the diagram below, is made up of System Design, Common Themes and Solution Areas.



Coordinated and Integrated System of Social Supports

Throughout the workgroup process, the need for a system design to resolve many of the barriers and challenges impacting people in poverty became increasingly evident. Under the current system, individuals and families are often on a "poverty treadmill" (i.e., the "benefit cliff," where a small increase in salary can cause a steep decline or loss of benefits.) The solution is the creation of an integrated, coordinated system of social supports that integrates sectors—human services, education and health care—to eliminate the barriers that prevent individuals and families impacted by poverty, especially those living in multi-generational poverty, from achieving self-sufficiency.

Solution Areas

The workgroup recommendations revealed three logical solution areas: (a) Empower Individuals and Families, (b) Enable Sustainable and Progressive Employment, and (c) Break the Cycle: Guarantee our Children's Future. (See pages 13-14 and Appendix C for additional details.)

A

EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Numerous conditions can prohibit or distract individuals and families from engaging in activities that will lift them from poverty, despite a strong desire to do so. This solution area includes recommendations to empower people by addressing needs such as childcare, affordable housing and transportation, as well as providing access to healthcare services and the skills necessary to obtain a high school diploma after age 21.

B

ENABLE SUSTAINABLE AND PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYMENT

The job market in the Rochester/Monroe region has gone through a dramatic transformation over the past decade, with a significant number of manufacturing jobs being replaced by lower-paying occupations. Finding and obtaining a living wage job has become increasingly difficult despite the existence of such jobs in certain skills areas. This solution area includes recommendations to help people identify, prepare for, and pursue a pathway to a living wage job. Recommendations range from establishing access to an adult mentor/navigator to incentivizing private, public and non-profit employers to commit to hiring people impacted by poverty. In addition, recommendations call for providing a skills development pathway during employment to enable career progression over time, and providing community-based services that help individuals identify their interests and strengths, and connect to education and job opportunities.

C

BREAK THE CYCLE: GUARANTEE OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

This area includes recommendations for neighborhood centers that offer more intensive and comprehensive services to address the educational and social-emotional needs of the whole family. Recommendations also include the need for youth development programs that incorporate culturally responsive role models; further investment in child education initiatives that address the impact of poverty on children's learning, including those that provide a rich learning environment through racial and socio-economic integration; the development and coordination of programs beyond the traditional school day/school year; and the establishment of quadrant advisory boards.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the 33 recommendations advanced by the workgroups was reviewed using the same criteria. (See Appendix B for details.) The result was the identification of the areas described below as the immediate next steps for implementation planning.

SYSTEMS DESIGN

Designing a comprehensive, integrated system of social supports, in coordination with the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge planning effort.

ADULT MENTORING/NAVIGATING

Establishing an adult mentor/navigator role across the systems of support that helps working poor individuals to overcome barriers and acquire the resources, knowledge and skills necessary to attain and retain a living wage job and break the cycle of poverty.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORT

Ensuring early childhood support that provides both high-quality, affordable, accessible and flexible childcare that parents need to engage in community, economic mobility, and wellness-related activities, and in-home parent training proven to give new parents the skills to succeed as their children's first teachers.

We have an intimate understanding of the conditions that would need to be met within our community in order to achieve the RMAPI goals, and we are committed to undertaking a strength-based approach to implementation that builds on current community assets and leverages existing resources.

NEXT STEPS

To date, a significant amount of RMAPI's work has focused on systems analysis, including identifying goals, barriers to meeting those goals, strategies for addressing the barriers and metrics for measuring actual progress in achieving the goals. We have an intimate understanding of the conditions that would need to be met within our community in order to achieve the RMAPI goals, and we are committed to undertaking a strength-based approach to implementation that builds on current community assets and leverages existing resources. Future work will focus on designing a system that meets these conditions. By system, we mean:

A holistic, comprehensive, integrated system of social supports rich with neighborhood-based services designed to empower families as they move out of poverty and into opportunities to succeed. There will be no wrong door of entry, as people will be directed to the most helpful resources regardless of where they first engage in the system, and existing resources will be utilized whenever possible.

Systems design activity will result in:

- A continuum of state, regional and community-based resources, services, and referral agencies that work together seamlessly to meet the target population's needs—with respect and encouragement rather than penalty—throughout their journey to self-sufficiency
- Aligned policies across State agencies to support the desired outcomes
- A systematic means of measuring outcomes, assessing systems performance and providing accountability to those served
- An integrated data system that provides a single point of entry to services, integration and coordination across service providers, and centralized data capture so that individuals and families do not need to supply their information for each needed service

Within the context of the above described system, RMAPI has established the following short-term goals targeted for completion by the end of 2015, along with associated action details.

1 DEFINE THE GOVERNANCE APPROACH

a. Define the RMAPI decision-making structure and process

b. Engage in ongoing evaluation for evolving the RMAPI organizational design in terms of structure, capacity and expertise to support the systems design and implementation phases

2 CHARTER RESOURCE TEAMS TO DEVELOP PRINCIPLES IN THE AREAS OF STRUCTURAL RACISM, POVERTY-INDUCED TRAUMA AND COMMUNITY BUILDING THAT WILL BE APPLIED ACROSS ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Form and charter resource teams

b. Resource teams develop principles to be embodied in all recommendation implementation

c. Resource teams ensure that the work of RMAPI is aligned with that of groups currently engaged in addressing structural racism (e.g. FR=EE, Unite Rochester, YWCA)

d. Resource teams consult with recommendation implementation teams (see below) to ensure the principles are appropriately translated into action

3 INITIATE IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS TO COMPLETE THE DETAILED DESIGN OF THE INITIAL RECOMMENDATION AREAS

a. Form and charter an Adult Mentoring/Navigating implementation team

b. Form and charter an Early Childhood Support implementation team

c. Each implementation team is responsible for converting the design principles developed by the resource teams described above into specific actions

d. Work with neighborhood-, community- and faith-based leaders to build a community alliance aimed at sustaining grassroots support

4 SPECIFY REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF SOCIAL SUPPORTS

a. Coordinate with the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge[7]

b. Ensure knowledge transfer of RMAPI findings

c. Identify and plan opportunities for ongoing collaboration

5 DEVELOP AND COORDINATE A POLICY AGENDA WITH THE STATE

a. Form a team to develop a policy agenda that identifies regulatory/policy changes and ways the State could work differently with Rochester/Monroe County public, private and non-profit agencies and organizations to help people get off the "poverty treadmill". The scope of policies will include but not be limited to the areas described in the Preliminary Recommendations section of this document. This allows important, strategic policy work supporting all recommendations to proceed and be synchronized with opportunities to influence all levels of government

b. Policy agenda team coordinates government requests at the federal, state and local levels

6 DEVELOP A FUNDING MODEL TO ENSURE INITIATIVE SUSTAINABILITY

a. Identify fiscal sponsors from the public and private sectors

b. Develop a funding process that maintains strategic alignment between New York State and local government funders

c. Establish partnerships with local and national foundations that may, and likely will, have an interest in supporting the implementation of Initiative recommendations

d. Create a local funder team led by key staff from the City of Rochester, Monroe County, the United Way of Greater Rochester and local foundations that will meet with the New York State-identified representatives from the Anti-Poverty Task Force to develop a high-level plan of action

e. Establish the links between categories of funds and the policies and regulations that guide them

[7] The City of Rochester was awarded a Smarter Cities Challenge Grant from IBM in May 2015. This technical assistance grant provides a remarkable opportunity for IBM to place a team in our community to help begin the design of this system. One of the anchoring features of the system will be an integrated, seamless database that allows for "no wrong door" for those seeking services.

7 DEVELOP AN APPROACH FOR RMAPI MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

a. Develop a systematic means for measuring, assessing, and reporting on Initiative progress and outcomes

b. Complete metrics and targets for self-sufficiency goal

c. Support the governance process by providing a means for allocating and holding Initiative participants (design and implementation) accountable to commitments

8 IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY JOBS AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

a. Engage in a thorough examination of the working poor using the standard of self-sufficiency

b. Use the concept of empowering the working poor to better inform strategies for creating opportunities to move out of poverty

c. Conduct a workforce study of the working poor that includes an examination of the types of jobs held, employers, pay and demographic information, e.g. place of residence, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.

d. Develop relationships and strategies with the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council that will ensure access to employment and upward mobility in specific organizational structures, from entry level to higher levels of management

While the local community will certainly continue to drive RMAPI goals and strategies, the strong partnership with New York State will help to ensure open channels of communication and, where possible, joint support for the implementation of RMAPI recommendations.

The rigorous system design process RMAPI has engaged in to date has clearly demonstrated the need for well-developed poverty alleviation strategies. These strategies would coordinate state and local authority in a seamless process that will amend any and all necessary rules, regulations, policies and practices in order to promote well-being and increase self-sufficiency, while eliminating those policies that inhibit success. The strategies also represent a call to action to multiple sectors—public, private, and non-profit—as well as those experiencing poverty to take responsibility for defining, creating and engaging in the conditions necessary to address poverty in the Rochester and Monroe County region.

The ultimate goal is to enable every child and family in the region to have the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic stability—and economic mobility—is within their grasp.

CONCLUSION

Reducing poverty in Rochester and Monroe County will require a long-term effort and can only be successful if it addresses the barriers keeping individuals and families from moving out of poverty and toward economic stability: structural racism, poverty-induced trauma and other factors that keep people on the "poverty treadmill." RMAPI envisions breaking down these barriers by creating a comprehensive, neighborhood-based system of social supports. This will be aptly characterized as a "no wrong door" system where people impacted by poverty get the support and services they need regardless of where they enter.

Today, the Rochester and Monroe County region is known as having the highest childhood poverty rate among comparable cities. The ultimate goal is to reverse this trend and to begin to enable every child and family in the region to have the opportunity to live in a stable environment where the promise of economic stability—and economic mobility—is within their grasp.

APPENDICES

Rochester-Monroe
Anti-Poverty Initiative

September 2015

APPENDIX A: THE ROCHESTER-MONROE ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVE (RMAPI) WORKGROUP PROCESS

RMAPI's workgroups (Education, Health & Nutrition, Housing, Jobs, Justice System, Safe Neighborhoods, Childcare and Transportation) developed 33 recommendations for identifying and addressing the root causes of poverty in the Rochester-Monroe region as determined by workshop participants. Recommendations were developed and prioritized with the objective of achieving a high level of acceptance from persons impacted by poverty.

Members' efforts began with a two-hour orientation session to establish a shared understanding of RMAPI and to obtain an overview of what to expect in workshops. Workgroup co-chairs established goals and identified examples of barriers to achieving goals and assets that could be applied to achieving goals within each subject area *(See Appendix B for metrics for achieving goals)*.

Each workgroup utilized a consistent framework of bridges to self-sufficiency to define goals that depict what self-sufficiency looks like. In a workshop format, the 25-member workgroups were facilitated through a process to identify barriers to achieving those goals, prioritize the four most critical barriers, identify community assets which could be used to remove the barriers and finally, to recommend the solution their group believed best addressed that specific barrier. Where known, workgroups were asked to identify existing programs (in Rochester or elsewhere) that addressed some or part of the recommendations.

Following the workshops, members assembled teams to review recommendations and provide any needed refinement to ensure clarity and completeness without changing the meaning of the recommendations. They also ensured all recommendations were complied with a standardized structure and format. The RMAPI team then constructed and deployed a survey to obtain broad community feedback on critical barriers identified in workshops, with results enabling quantitative analysis and identification of any gaps.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the workshop participants had expertise or relevance in the domain and were involved directly or indirectly in providing services, referrals or resources to people impacted by poverty; 25% were those who have experienced poverty. Since the proportion of people who have experienced poverty was smaller, specific measures were put in place to ensure that their perspectives and priorities were equitably comprehended within the workshop processes, as described below.

Throughout the process, the Initiative engaged cultural brokers to bridge the various differences that existed among the participants, such as race, geography and socioeconomic status. Cultural brokering is the act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural systems for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change.[1]

The cultural brokers ensured that the voices of those experiencing poverty were heard, understood and given equal influence in the recommendation and decision-making processes. Workshop facilitators looked for instances where there was collective agreement by those who have experienced poverty in areas of barriers and recommendations that were different from the rest of the workgroup. In such cases, this resulted in raising the priority of the barriers prioritized by persons impacted by poverty, and including recommendations that would not have made the final cut if a standard prioritization process was followed. In effect, there was a safety net to ensure that the overall group did not overwhelm the insights of this smaller group.

[1] Mary Ann Jezewski, 1990, from Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development

In addition, members of the cultural broker team joined the Systems Design Team. Cultural brokers also helped facilitate the process to assure workgroup recommendations aligned with target population needs. Nineteen (19) community members from the workgroups participated in a sub-group to rate and rank recommendations.

Community Input: Insights Study, Town Hall, Survey and Website

RMAPI conducted a qualitative study in May 2015 to gain insight into barriers and recommendations to consider from people who would benefit from systematic changes in social services support.

This study involved personal, one-on-one interviews with 24 people impacted by poverty, 11 service providers/ case workers, as well as six community meetings at the Boys and Girls Club, Urban League, Community Place, YMCA, the Monroe County Department of Social Services and PathStone Corporation.

Participants were recruited at community centers, through the faith community and by United Way partner agencies. They were contacted and screened to be appropriate for the interview if they had children, were working or participating in WEP, receiving social services and available for one-hour interviews. Participants met the interviewer either at their homes or at community locations. Low-income participants in the study received financial support for providing their input, and they were offered transportation and childcare, if needed, so they could fully participate *(See Appendix E for an executive summary of the study)*.

On July 15, 2015, RMAPI held a town-hall meeting to gain additional input from the community at large. The nearly 200 people who participated in this public meeting shared their thoughts on issues driving poverty that need to be resolved. Participants also were asked to complete a brief survey to find out the three major problems in their lives that keep them from progressing, the main areas with which they have the largest issues and suggestions for how they can help address poverty in our community *(Town hall meeting notes are available online at: http://www.uwrochester.org/pdf/RMAPI7.15.15TownHallNotes.pdf)*.

From this process, several themes quickly emerged. These include the need for an integrated and streamlined social-support infrastructure; ways to actively address structural racism and trauma; mentoring; flexible and affordable childcare; strong neighborhoods; and access to affordable and nutritious food. Education for adults and children was identified as a gap that must be made a priority given the correlation of education levels to poverty.

In August, RMAPI launched a public survey enabling the broader Rochester and Monroe County community to offer ideas on how to uplift and support the needs of individuals and families impacted by poverty *(Survey results are available online at: http://www.uwrochester.org/Resources)*.

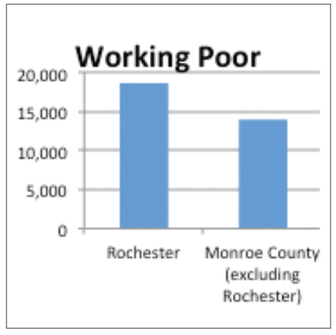
RMAPI has engaged the community further and ensured transparency by posting documents and meeting notes on United Way of Greater Rochester's website (uwrochester.org) and by encouraging visitors to sign up for regular updates and to find out how to get involved.

Initial Target Population

Initially, the group is focusing on assisting the working poor in their efforts to move out of poverty.

Various definitions exist for the working poor. The U.S. Census Bureau has defined working poor as "people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force but whose incomes fell below the poverty level." Currently, the Census Bureau determines poverty levels based on a family's total income compared to one of 48 poverty thresholds, which vary based on family size and ages.

For purposes of its Phase 1 work, RMAPI defined working poor as a person age 18 or older, with an income-to-poverty ratio of 0 to 100 percent, in the labor force (those employed and unemployed who worked full time, part time or seasonally and looking for a job during the last year).



For example, a working poor family in Rochester and Monroe County could be composed of a single mother with three children ages 4, 8 and 12 years old, who makes an annual salary of $26,000 per year.

The group estimates there are 32,600 working poor in Monroe County (including 18,700 in the City of Rochester). Of these, most are younger than 35 years old, the majority have a high school degree or less and three-fourths pay rent. Single women head 61 percent of working poor households, and two-thirds of them have children and see childcare as a major need.

Across the board, the majority of the working poor are far from self-sufficient, with many exceeding the optimal self-sufficiency threshold of no more than 30 percent of their household income going toward rent.

Best Practice Models

The Initiative explored best-practice models for combating poverty. Two primary examples are:

Crittenton Women's Union (CWU) in Boston adopted a model that allows families to assess their strengths, set goals to achieve economic success and overcome the obstacles presented by poverty. In CWU's Bridge to Self-Sufficiency theory of change, a person's advancement from poverty to economic self-sufficiency is likened to crossing a bridge supported by five pillars: family stability, well-being, education and training, financial management and employment and career management. RMAPI adopted this concept by organizing workgroups around its own tailored set of pillars, or domains. RMAPI's domains are Education, Health & Nutrition, Housing, Jobs, Justice System and Safe Neighborhoods. (Note that two additional domains—Childcare and Transportation—were added later.)

According to the Crittenton model, participants must attain defined objectives in each of the pillars to "cross the bridge" and reach economic self-sufficiency. Personal coaches support program participants as they set and reach goals. This nationally recognized framework bolsters families by helping them develop life skills essential to long-term economic security.

RMAPI also needed to establish a common language for describing progress through the levels of achievement within each pillar and ultimately a person's progression out of poverty. For that, the group adopted the language of Family Foundations' 1,000 in 1,000 program in Jacksonville, Florida. This four-stage model identified the progression out of poverty, from Crisis, to Stability, to Growth and ultimately to Self-sufficiency. At the Crisis stage, individuals or families lack basic needs, such as housing and food, and do not have access to physical or mental health services. When basic needs are satisfied, people are at the Stability stage. Moving to the Growth stage means people are beginning to build social, human and financial assets and have some discretionary money. At the Self-sufficiency stage, people are much less dependent on the system; they might own a home and have an opportunity to work at or even own a business.

In the short-term, RMAPI is focusing its efforts on people at the stability stage of poverty—the working poor, as defined earlier, who can benefit the soonest from interventions. Addressing the needs of people at the crisis stage will be a longer-term initiative, as necessary changes will take more time and are more complex.

Shorter-term implementation will involve establishing a mentor/navigator or coach role across the systems of support to assess a person's current state, help a person establish personal goals and incentives, create a personal family plan to achieve mobility, guide individuals and families through betterment and the development of assets and measure outcomes. Personal, social and structural barriers will be identified on a person-by-person basis, and goals will be research-focused, evidence-based and outcomes-oriented. Throughout the process, coaches and mentors/navigators will advocate on behalf of individuals and families in poverty at all levels of the system.

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDATION EVALUATION CRITERIA SELECTION

Each recommendation was evaluated in terms of its relative *Benefit* on and required *Effort* to achieve the RMAPI goals. The table below conveys the Benefit and Effort criteria. The *Community building* criteria was added based on feedback from a group of about 20 persons impacted by poverty convened to provide input on the completeness and prioritization of this criteria.

	Criteria	Description
Benefit	**Secures basic needs**	Improves the security of basic needs (safety, food, shelter and health management) for individuals and families such that they can pursue/ maintain employment.
	Secures supports beyond basic needs	Improves supports or infrastructure (such as transportation, childcare and financial services) which facilitate steady employment.
	Promotes economic independence	The degree that the recommendation supports increased total household income (e.g., through higher wages/employment, decreased debt, supportive benefit policies).
	Asset building	The degree that the recommendation contributes to increasing the individual & family ability to build assets (e.g., own car or home, bankable savings, debt reduction).
	Multi-generational impact	The degree that the recommendation removes economic barriers across generations (e.g., quality childcare, quality education).
	Community building	The degree that the recommendation stabilizes neighborhoods and creates the environment for people to stay after emerging from poverty.
Effort	**Probability of success**	Degree to which the recommendation is likely to deliver the intended result if implemented (e.g., evidence-based research, promising practices).
	New investment needed	The degree that new investment (e.g., Human effort, technology) is needed to implement the recommendation (comprehends potential to leverage existing assets to reduce investment burden).
	Participant acceptance	The degree that the people impacted by poverty are likely to adopt the recommendation (e.g., participant motivation and ability).
	Stakeholder alignment	The degree that critical stakeholders (non-participants) are likely to adopt and support the recommendation (collective will, capacity and implementation willingness).
	Time to benefit	The time from recommendation approval/resourcing to measurable benefits attained.

This same group of community members provided input that was used to establish a quantitative measure of relative importance for criteria.

- For the Benefit criteria, the community members ranked *Secures basic needs, Secures supports beyond basic needs, Promotes economic independence* and *Community building* higher than *Asset building* and *Multi-generational impact*.

For the Effort criteria, community members rated *Participant acceptance* as the most important criteria, followed by *Probability of success* and *New investment needed* as having moderate relative importance followed by *Stakeholder alignment* and *Time to benefit* as having lesser relative importance. The *Time to benefit* was an unexpected insight gained from community members reflecting that the quality or perceived effectiveness of solutions was more important than how quickly the benefits could be realized.

APPENDIX C: WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
(Organized by RMAPI Roadmap for Change)

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Build and Support Our Community

Problem 1:
Individuals and families living in high concentrations of poverty lack accessible, affordable, food and food literacy. In addition, scientific research confirms that poor eating habits and low access to healthy food are associated with increased risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and obesity. These illnesses, along with the effects of hunger, reduce "pathways out of poverty" by inhibiting educational attainment and workplace productivity. The working poor suffer disproportionately from food-related illness.

Recommendation 1: Health and Nutrition: Food as Medicine
Improve community health with expanded access to and increased demand for healthy foods as a result of community-wide nutrition counseling, physician prescriptions and financial supports. Key strategies include:

- Funding the development of and reimbursing healthcare providers in the use of a standardized tool to screen at-risk individuals for food insecurity and follow through with nutrition/benefit referral services (aligned with DSRIP/FLPPS priorities as part of the Medicaid redesign process)
- Enabling healthcare providers to encourage healthy eating as both prevention and medicine through incentive programs
- Increasing funding for programs that incentivize low-income individuals to purchase nutritious foods
- Increasing availability of community-based food literacy and nutrition education programs and incentivizing participation in these education programs through increased nutrition assistance benefits (SNAP/WIC)
- Increasing funding for and help accessing current nutrition assistance benefits (SNAP/WIC)

Problem 2:
Rochester suffers from a lack of financial support for community organizing. Being in poverty creates a survival lifestyle that insulates families and individuals. This results in the lack of community involvement in addressing community problems and improvement opportunities.

Recommendation 2: Safe Neighborhoods: Community Organizing to Promote Safety

- Provide community-organizing skills training to neighborhood residents to promote sustainability and growth of community organizing efforts and also so residents build relationships among one another and with stakeholders.
- Identify indigenous/natural leaders existing in the neighborhood.
- Provide long-term, sustainable and non-competitive funding that is relevant to community needs so that each neighborhood has paid staff members devoted to community organizing, which will include promoting and enabling extensive collaboration among residents and multi-sector stakeholders.

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 3:
Residents of low-income areas face many economic, social, emotional and familial barriers in addressing their academic/educational needs. The cumulative effects of these barriers quite often lead to education being set aside in order to address more immediate and pressing needs/concerns. Organizations that provide and promote training and education in Rochester often operate in silos, do not always collaborate with one another and are not neighborhood-based. This lack of local social support from family, friends and role models prohibits educational advancement.

Recommendation 3: Adult Education: Neighborhood Community Center
Establish neighborhood-based community centers equipped with trained navigators (preferably residents from the targeted neighborhood) trained to connect individuals to appropriate education, training and other various support services. Key strategies include:

- Positioning centers to serve as a hub for education and training information/resources in neighborhoods
- Staffing centers with people who have actually lived or are currently living in the neighborhoods and have experienced educational success
- Training the staff (navigators) to provide customized/individualized case management (education and career counseling, assisting with trade/job placement, guidance regarding current local job placement trends) as well as assessing/connecting individuals to appropriate education, training and support services
- Planning the neighborhood centers to provide education and computer training that is designed to accommodate a standard work schedule by offering classes/trainings evenings and weekends
- Making education more accessible via better linkages to supports that can assist individuals in completing education and training programs

Problem 4:
National statistics show that 89% of the people taken into custody are under the influence of some substance. It is estimated that locally 20 persons arrested each day would be candidates for crisis services. With no available alternative other than bringing the person to jail, the judicial system is focused on punishment and mandated sentences (including fees and fines) instead of connecting people to alternatives and needed services. The unintended consequence is that people with an arrest record cannot qualify for student loans and their prospects for attaining gainful employment are severely diminished.

Recommendation 4: Justice System: Crisis Services as Alternative to Arrest
Establish a crisis center staffed with professional service providers, intercepting the person before they enter the criminal justice system and addressing the individual's needs at the point of crisis. Key strategies include:

- Leveraging pending arrest/jail time as an incentive for the individual to stay connected to the needed services
- Ensuring supervision resources are present to control presenting behaviors and insure the individual stays for treatment. The responding officers would only be required to stay until the individual is admitted into the crisis center
- Funding the 'crisis center' with the savings from not incarcerating individuals and potentially preventing them from getting criminal records which ultimately require more social supports in the longer term

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 5:
Insufficient jobs/employment opportunities, especially in or in close proximity to impoverished neighborhoods, limit upward mobility and neighborhood wealth creation.

Recommendation 5: Jobs: Creating Neighborhood Wealth
The goal is to use the creation of new worker-owned co-ops in impoverished neighborhoods that offer services that are needed in the neighborhood and generate assets for the neighborhood. This provides living wage jobs within the neighborhood in order to create healthy communities that people want to live in. This would encourage home-ownership and neighborhood stability and growth. Key strategies include:

- Identify and organize business mentors and consultants to provide needed expertise
- Conduct a neighborhood needs assessment for local business
- Identify anchor businesses/institutions that will support the new business development creation of jobs
- Provide tax incentives to the business sector to locate jobs areas of concentrated poverty
- Identify/create micro-lending programs to provide needed capital infusion
- Increase civic engagement (taxpayers and business-owners)

Problem 6:
As interest in a neighborhood grows and outside resources are added to the area, rents get higher, pushing out indigent residents who cannot afford to stay. The working poor want to invest in housing in their communities but cannot afford to do so when paying 50-90% of their income on housing.

Recommendation 6: Housing: Creating Neighborhood Stability (Gentrification)
Protect long-term residents of neighborhoods from displacement caused by gentrification. Key strategies include:

- Creating funding opportunities that support the working poor via a housing subsidy targeted to them (e.g., the STAR program with additional flexibility and increases in aid to the working poor) coupled with a rent cap to protect against predatory rental practices
- Offering low-interest, flexibly structured loans (proximate to low income neighborhood residents)
- Enacting local countywide legislation that protects the working poor from income based discrimination in a way that mirrors a protected class

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 7:
Predominant land use pattern in development throughout our region is car-dependent. Land use and transportation are linked. The primary factors are: 1) there is a lack of quality, accessible infrastructure in place for people living in poverty to walk or ride their bikes to work, school or local businesses, 2) adjacent land uses may not be designed to support walking, bicycling and public transportation, and 3) jobs and services may not be located within walking/biking distance as a consequence of incomplete community development.

Recommendation 7: Transportation: Complete Communities: Livable Infrastructure for Everyone (LIFE)
Create a framework to coordinate regional planning and decision making with respect to land use, transportation and economic development. This framework will consider the impact of decisions on people living in poverty. The benefits and burdens of these decisions would be shared regionally to minimize competition and create a more cohesive community. The framework will also consider the tenets of a Complete Community. These tenets hold that 1) residents can live, work, move and thrive within the local community, and 2) the community possesses integrated, multi-modal transportation networks that connects residents to varied housing options, retail and employment opportunities, education, healthcare facilities and other services. This network includes access to affordable, safe and convenient public transportation and safe, inter-connected and well-maintained bicycle and pedestrian facilities (trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, bike racks, etc.). Investment and economic development decisions would seek to enhance regional economic prosperity through coordinated efforts that make training, jobs and education accessible to all.

Address Structural Racism

Problem 1:
While the United States has made progress to ameliorate the legacy of legalized racial discrimination via the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act), many communities remain segregated and plagued with significant areas of concentrated poverty (Regional Economic Community Action Program-RCAP). As a result, equal, non-discriminatory housing access is not a reality in the community because of social prejudice, including systemic racial, gender, sexual and ethnic biases.

Recommendation 1: Housing: Race, Poverty and Access to Affordable Housing
Begin a funded campaign that develops a cross-cultural and cross socio-economic mainstream effort targeted to dismantle the thoughts, attitudes and behaviors that exclude people who live in poverty from access to quality, safe, equitable, affordable housing in a location and type of their choice. Key strategies include:

- Advocacy for a bill that will prohibit landlords from discriminating based on source of income (S3702, 2011)
- Targeted educational outreach that promotes the value of inclusive communities and recognizes the strength that comes from diversity

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 2:
Inherent biases and structural and interpersonal racism result in harsher disposition and treatment in the justice system, including arrest and incarceration disparities in substance use, and incarceration vs. alternatives to incarceration disparities in sentencing.

Recommendation 2: Justice System: Institutional and Structural Racism
Eradicate the institutional and structural racism that causes harsher treatment for people of color in the justice system. Key strategies include:

- Ongoing racial justice training done universally across the justice system
- Race data collection to ensure accountability and transparency to the Greater Rochester community
- Increased collaboration between community leaders of color/cultural brokers and the justice system, e.g. judges, District Attorney, police, etc.
- Increase communities of color participation in the justice system through employment representation at every functional level

Problem 3:
Cannot impact education without addressing structural racism. As structural racism is addressed, families will have fair and equal opportunity to be lifted out of poverty, thereby enabling them to attain educational success.

Recommendation 3: Adult Education: Institutional and Structural Racism
Recognize, understand, address and remove current and historical institutional and structural racism in the area of education. Key strategies include:

- Ongoing, comprehensive professional development for everyone in a position of power – acknowledge/sign pledge for all
- Challenge leaders to demonstrate that they have learned/understand this issue and take a plan of action
- Advocate for and influence educational policies driven by a variety of research
- Focus on education to move out of poverty—reduction of dependency and increase in empowerment.
- Pursue equity for educational systems, programs, curricula and tools to achieve results
- Educational staff that is reflective of children they are teaching
- Educating young people from the start about the results of poverty. Increase family literacy programs
- Achieve financial investment/commitment to enable these plans

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 4:
The City has a lack of planned and intentional programs to improve police-community relations that are culturally responsive and include community residents as leaders in the development and implementation of these programs.

Recommendation 4: Safe Neighborhoods: Police-Community Relations
Reduce racial disparity issues in the City of Rochester and make City policing equal to policing in suburban communities. Key strategies include:

- Training recruit classes and provide ongoing training to youth and community-based agencies, with a focus on empowering teens to become agents of institutional and social change
- Reassigning SROs to a role that involves engaging, recruiting, and educating students primarily, and secondarily involves responding to situations that are punitive
- Organizing Youth Officer Teams to connect with and build relationships with organizations on the ground working with youth, families, and other community members
- Utilizing Crime Prevention Officers to work with the Youth Team and develop Neighborhood Watch Programs

Ensure Trauma-Informed Interactions

Problem 1:
70% of RCSD children have experienced trauma. Trauma and the continuous pressures of meeting the obligations of daily living while impacted by poverty (gaining access to needed services and economic pressures) prevent individuals, parents and providers from addressing health and nutrition needs.

Recommendation 1: Health & Nutrition: Preventing and Addressing Trauma Across Generations
Minimize family/child/community trauma through prevention, early identification and trauma-informed care that is culturally responsive. Key strategies include:

- Home visitation: Expansion and integration of effective home visitation and parent support programs
- Education: Trauma-informed, culturally responsive education for all children at home via home visitation and parent support. Trauma-informed educational approach begins at pre-conception and continues across generations, including empowering every woman in her sexual and reproductive choices
- Classroom and school climates that support healthy student interaction with learning (including safety, mental health, self-image, reduced gang presence in classrooms)
- Trauma-informed system that can be activated at multiple points (home, teachers, counselors, school nurse, neighbors, pediatricians)

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 2:
Witnessing and experiencing violence is traumatic and has a demonstrated effect on brain development, emotional regulation, and overall decision-making functions, impacting life opportunities and outcomes. It is also a learned behavior, with violence in the home spilling out into our streets and neighborhoods. Without eliminating violence in the home, the ability for individuals to engage with any of the poverty intervention strategies is severely limited.

Recommendation 2: Safe Neighborhoods: Preventing and Addressing Violence and Trauma in the Home
Develop a multi-pronged effort whereby domestic violence and child abuse and neglect are culturally unacceptable, there are no wrong doors to reach out for services 24/7 and all community touch points (e.g., schools, community-based organizations, faith groups, neighborhood block groups, social clubs, businesses), recognize the prevalence and effectively respond to traumatic events, which prohibit success in employment, education, health and safe neighborhoods. Key strategies include:

- Education: Require healthy relationship skills and child abuse prevention skills taught yearly in schools and reinforced in the neighborhood environment by training neighborhood resources and supports to identify, respond and refer to services
- Ensure crisis response is appropriately staffed, trauma-informed and culturally responsive (e.g., immediate victim advocacy, 24/7 services provided by first responders and providers, trauma units and public and private institutions and facilities operating through trauma-informed lens)
- Offer post-crisis support to victims and their families to address long-term impacts of trauma. Perpetrators of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect are held accountable and required to attend evidence-based intervention and rehabilitation programs to disrupt cycle of violence

Problem 3:
We have a serious problem with safety and instability in the schools that stems from trauma and intense poverty. As a result, students are not able to fully engage in their education because of personal trauma and challenges relating to overall wellbeing.

Recommendation 3: Children's Education: Mobile Community Resource Teams
Enable families to attain the skills and knowledge needed to realize self-sufficiency and remove barriers for children to be able to succeed in their chosen educational/vocational path. Do this by creating a team of experts representing resources needed by families such as health, mental health, financial literacy, DHS, housing, school violence/bullying, judicial systems, etc. to comprise a consistent and responsive Mobile Community Resource Team. This team is able to coordinate efforts to address issues and concerns to address the social, emotional and economic disparities facing our children and families. Key strategies include:

- Mandatory trauma-informed training for all staff (includes everyone who interfaces with children), implementing a checklist/inventory of behaviors that indicate trauma
- Whenever performance or behavioral problems are observed, shared, or experienced, the source of trauma is investigated
- Make restorative practices available to all that need them
- Identify a position to work with education administration staff to coordinate this effort
- Establish a wrap-around, coordinated system working as a team as opposed to working in silos

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Empower Individuals and Families

Problem 1:
Lack of flexibility in childcare service hours limits a family's ability to achieve well-being and self-sufficiency, inhibiting job searching, adult education and/or training. Families are not able to reach self-sufficiency without adequate childcare and subsidies.

Recommendation 1: Childcare: Flexing Our Community Childcare MUSCLE! (Multiple, Unified, Systems Collaborating, Leading to Employment—and Self-Sufficiency)
This recommendation provides funding to support the expansion and further development of non-traditional childcare services to meet the needs of Rochester's families. Key strategies include:

- Advancing a fully integrated childcare information system so stakeholders have access to the necessary information supporting parents'/guardians' ability to obtain flexible childcare
  - Funding the expansion/further development of non-traditional childcare services (e.g., hourly care, part-time care, drop-in care, walk-in care, program/training based care and childcare provi ded seven days per week)
- Creating locally controlled funding streams with incentives for providers to begin and/or increase the number of non-traditional childcare slots
- Mitigating the impact non-traditional childcare hours have on childcare ratios, staffing and business expenses

Problem 2:
The lack of affordable, quality and geographically accessible childcare is a barrier to education, employment and community involvement and access to services.

Recommendation 2: Childcare: Access to Affordable Quality Childcare Options
Ensure every family has access to a variety of affordable, quality options at a location that is convenient to them through a comprehensive system of financially supported, evaluated and regulated care. Key strategies include:

- Creating a mechanism to identify and map childcare options currently existing and complete a gaps analysis to identify areas in need of additional childcare support
- Developing criteria for quality child care and a plan to elevate providers along a plan of continuous improvement to achieve quality status
- Evaluating childcare providers according to already established quality criteria (Note: This information is currently maintained through Child Care Council)
- Clarifying the community definition of affordability—from eligibility standards, copayment responsibility and point of transition off the "system" (The Department of Health and Human Services sets 10% of income as the benchmark of affordability for spending on childcare; single parents spend 25% or more of median income on center-based childcare)
- Collecting and analyzing data - who is being served across all systems (DHS, UPK, Head Start); who is not being served

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 3:
Obtaining affordable housing is a challenge, but maintaining housing is equally a challenge for low-income households. Challenges such as poor credit history, limited knowledge of tenant responsibilities, dealing with landlord issues and effectively managing finances can put housing residency at risk. As a result there is a lack of quality, culturally responsive programming, including education and training, to help people in poverty obtain and sustain quality, affordable housing.

Recommendation 3: Housing: Skills for Housing Success
Having a solid foundation of life skills can greatly increase the potential for households to move to self-sufficiency and thrive. This recommendation involves funding the following activities with the goal of assisting persons in acquiring the skills needed to succeed in a self-sufficient housing situation:

- Developing community-based comprehensive service sites focused on promoting self-sufficiency and stability for neighborhood residents
- Establishing a core life skills curriculum to serve as the foundation and common theme throughout all services
- Educating, training and employing neighborhood residents at sites in leadership and service delivery roles

Problem 4:
Public transportation (transit) service frequency (often 1-hour between buses), route structure (hub and spoke) and a lack of affordable and accessible transportation are barriers to economic mobility and well-being. Another aspect of this problem is that other community transportation service providers are not integrated with the public transit network, including trip-planning services. As a result, the current public transit system is insufficient to provide convenient and dependable access to key destinations (work, childcare) and services (healthcare, food, social, recreation, education, etc.).

Recommendation 4: Transportation: Public High Frequency Cross-Town Managed Transportation
A public transit system optimized to include an integrated network of affordable high frequency corridors providing crosstown service that links to and supports other modes (e.g., bicycling, walking and park-and-ride) and specialized transportation services (the family of services from RTS Access to Medical Motor Services of Rochester and Monroe County to volunteer-provided services to specific population groups)

Note: Implemented as an overlay to the existing RTS route structure. The proposal supports and enhances the value of the fixed route transit system while extending current Information Technology (IT) capabilities with respect to trip planning to provide access to comprehensive community-oriented mobility management services for people with unmet transportation needs.

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 5:
Health providers are not able to provide and consumers are not able to access needed clinical, preventive supportive services due to funding constraints.

Recommendation 5: Health and Nutrition: Health Campuses
Create multiple community health campuses that provide for all residents clinical, preventive and supportive services though a countywide single benefit rate. Key strategies include:
- Securing Federal HPOG to train and employ low income workers in the health care professions
- Interested providers would developing models of team based care that includes prevention and supportive services
- Supporting the NYS Health Act (local delegation)
- Public officials at all levels developing funding streams (SSB, DSRIP, Senate NYS Health Act)
- Interested providers developing site plans for both existing and potential sites
- Developing health campus sites

Problem 6:
The working poor are prevented from improving their employment due to a lack of training/qualifications. There is an under supply of skilled workers in many trades and services. However, financial constraints prohibit adults from pursuing educational opportunities.

Recommendation 6: Adult Education: Access for All
Remove the barriers to education and enable members of our community to access a wide variety of education and training and thereby qualify for economic success. Education includes a very broad array of experiences such as adult literacy, completing requirements for a high school diploma/GED, community college and four-year college, apprentice programs in the skilled trades, career and technical training, etc. This recommendation calls for adult education to be free or affordable. This recommendation also calls for educational access to be available to those with a criminal background who currently are denied entry to many programs and are summarily disqualified from applying for scholarships and other financial aid.

The Problem 7:
More than 65,000 adults in the area do not have a high school diploma, which makes them ineligible for most training programs, jobs and military service. It is unlikely that adults who have not graduated from High School can earn a HS diploma after age 21 and therefore are not as competitive in the job market.

Recommendation 7: Jobs: Public High School for Adults
Provide a free public high school for adults (18-60) who have dropped out of school so that they continue to have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. They can begin working while in school and upon graduation, pursue higher education and/or further their career. Key strategies include:
- Governor's directive and/or legislation
- Form a not-for-profit corporation with Board of Directors drawn from the community to provide the administrative support, curriculum design aligning with Common Core and NYS regulations and a host of other resources to support launch

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Enable Sustainable and Progressive Employment

Problem 1:
A lack of knowledge and ability to navigate needed support services prohibit people from obtaining and maintaining stable employment.

Recommendation 1: Jobs: Mentors for Success
Utilize a mentor model for participants classified as working poor to enable them to acquire the resources, knowledge and skills necessary to attain and retain a living wage job and break the cycle of poverty. Key strategies include:
- Long-term relationship between mentor, peer group and participant
- Strength-based / asset-based model
- Mentors trained to assist with long-term and interim goal-setting targeted at overcoming barriers to placement and retention of jobs which offer or can lead to a living wage
- Access to support services and resources needed to overcome barriers, including experts (e.g. financial management, behavioral health, interim financial supports like childcare subsidies, etc.)
- Incentives or some other accountability instrument to promote progress to goal achievement and retention

Problem 2:
A backlog of unfilled jobs exists in the area and training programs are not aligned with jobs available. As a result, the lack of work experience and awareness of job opportunities are barriers to getting a job.

Recommendation 2: Jobs: Wanna-Job, Gotta-Job
Skills training/job placement organizations would work with employers to identify and document the existing job opportunities and the skills/abilities required to fill them. They would then assess the working poor against this information and develop a plan to provide any necessary training and support to match the employee to a willing employer/job. A key strategy of this recommendation is to secure a 10% job commitment from employers where 10% could be based on size of potential employers and/or percentage of job openings.

Problem 3:
A lack of identification of natural career interests and strengths and inadequate/inappropriate training inhibit preparation for a meaningful and well-paying job.

Recommendation 3: Adult Education: Education and Career Mapping
Create an individualized and comprehensive intake inventory of interest, skill and ability/capacity linked to education and training programs and ultimately to career mapping and job placement. Education and Career Mapping includes the development of a community wide data system for the individual's education and training history that is similar to the complete medical record available through RHIO. A lead agency (to manage the intake, assessment, mapping and placement activities) would be identified through a request for proposals process.

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 4:
Rules and regulations related to funding of social service supports and subsidies create barriers to providing effective services to individuals and families who are working to move out of poverty.

Recommendation 4: Jobs: Rochester Coordinated Services System (Super Waiver)
Request a Super Waiver to repurpose existing funding streams and secure additional funding. Recommend that a request be made to the Governor to approve a set of waivers for state-funded programs to break down funding silos and reduce barriers to eligibility for services and to request a set of similar waivers for federal programs. Key strategies include:

- Creating a team to request waivers from state/federal government
- Compiling a list of funding streams and/or programs and then determining which funding to request waivers for.
- Designating a lead agency or entity (e.g. RMAPI Steering Committee) that will determine new guidelines for how funding will be used if waiver is granted
- Developing a mechanism to ensure guidelines are followed and comply with state and federal reporting requirements that will accompany waiver
- Solving the benefit cliff by restructuring programs to employment (e.g., SNAP, transportation and childcare subsidies)

Guarantee Our Children's Future Success

Problem 1:
Unaddressed social and emotional needs of families living in concentrated poverty negatively impact academic and social well-being of students.

Recommendation 1: Children's Education: Family University
Offer a framework for social networks, provide training/education for parents, comprehensive socio-emotional services, home visiting, mentors (not case managers) and links to early childhood services and extended adult learning. Key strategies include:

- Providing and/or leveraging existing neighborhood-based resource centers in areas of concentrated poverty
- Identifying neighborhood leaders to participate in service planning
- Create a user-friendly database of services and referrals

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 2:
The cycle of poverty, risky behavior and the potential for involvement in the judicial system is limiting the ability of parents, schools and the community to meet the needs of children and youth. There is a lack of early intervention and prevention services for children & young adults (school to prison pipeline) to address this problem.

Recommendation 2: Justice System: A Community That Meets Every Child's Needs
Create and implement youth development programs that will keep youth engaged, incorporating culturally responsive and responsible role models and mentors, which includes parents. Key strategies include:

- Creating opportunities for youth & elders to work together; increase funding for senior mentors
- Expanding the current Buddy system to include K-12 & college students
- Partnering with businesses for buy in
- Parental involvement that provide Continued Education certificates & incentives

Problem 3:
Children growing up in poverty have altered brain structures due to chronic exposure to poverty that impacts working memory, impulse regulation, language and cognitive development/performance. It is critical that schools and educational programs respond differently and intensely to overcome this impact. However, the lack of meaningful early childhood opportunities and/or learning opportunities outside the traditional school day/year inhibits educational success for children living in poverty.

Recommendation 3: Children's Education: Closing Poverty-Driven Learning Gaps
Key strategies include:

- Investing in evidence-based initiatives to address the impact of poverty on children's learning by targeting literacy proficiency and high quality instructional practices
- Investing in the development and coordination of programs and experiences occurring beyond the traditional school day and year promoting all types of learning and development for students in grades PreK-12
- Putting in place mechanisms to measure upward mobility of youth and families in the areas of increased school attendance, parent engagement, student performance and student engagement. Example mechanisms are parent reporting, existing community report cards or development of more comprehensive ones

Problem 4:
As a community, we are not offering enough positive youth development opportunities that provide culturally responsive, safe and diverse activities for children and families living in the City of Rochester.

Recommendation 4: Safe Neighborhoods: Provide Safe Youth Alternatives
Revitalize a framework similar to Neighbors Building Neighborhoods that:

- Partners adults and youth in developing meaningful, city-wide, year-round group activities
- Ensures that all youth workers are certified and receive culturally responsive training, and is supported by neighborhood-controlled, sustainable funding

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 5:
Lack of a socially and economically diverse environment puts the student at an educational disadvantage.

Recommendation 5: Children's Education: Racial, Social–Economic Integration
Drive toward socially and economically diverse schools across Monroe County by:
- Working toward equal pipeline between RCSD and suburban districts by easing access and transferability (relevance and sustainability).
- Incentivizing schools/districts that are racially and socioeconomically diverse (including suburban schools, city schools, and charter schools)
- Ensuring that all students attend a school that mirrors the racial and socioeconomic composition of the County

Achieve a Coordinated System of Social Supports

Problem 1:
DSS policies and procedures are not set up in a way to help community members get themselves and their families out of poverty. These system barriers prevent access to consistent, adequate, healthy food, financial benefits and social support services.

Recommendation 1: Health & Nutrition: Improve Government Policies and Practice
Bring systemic and cultural changes on the federal, state, county and local levels so that someone in poverty accessing DSS would know what to bring and expect and would leave with the necessary tools and resources to get the services they require to become independent and self-sufficient. Key strategies include:
- Resident voice: Evaluate the quality of customer service on a regular basis, establish a DSS/DHS consumer advisory group that meets at least 4 to 6 times per year
- Access: Clear and sufficient processes and personnel to ensure ease of access and quality experience for residents, e.g., DHS will increase accessibility to the public by remaining open evenings and weekends
- Information: A comprehensive electronic record system that includes client history
- Environment: A waiting area that is child- and family-friendly, with TVs, games, resource board, etc.
- Support: All clients will have access to peer navigators and interpreters
- Cultural alignment: Workplace, workforce and collateral materials (including a current resource guide that is culturally responsive, language appropriate and non-discriminatory) that reflect and respect the culture of residents

[2] In Monroe County, Social Services are delivered by the Department of Human Services.

PROBLEM/WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATION

Problem 2:
Overwhelming caseloads and insufficient resources and funding for criminal and civil legal services prevent people in poverty from receiving adequate protections.

Recommendation 2: Justice System: Increase Capacity of the Civil and Criminal Justice Systems
Increase capacity and resources for legal services, mental health, substance abuse, community supervision and other social support services available to the poor and working poor. Key strategies include:
- Co-locating social support service center at the courthouse and/or deploying out-stationed workers
- Reinvesting surcharges to fund mental health and support services
- Pursuing social impact bonds to provide funding for results-based restorative and re-entry services
- Reallocating Division of Criminal Justice Services money to community supervision
- Institutionalizing Office of Court Administration (OCA) funding for civil or legal funding in the state budget

Problem 3:
Between 2000 and 2013, the number of severely cost-burdened low-income households paying more than 50% of their income for rent increased 26% in the City and 45% in the region to approximately 66,000 households of owners, renters, families, individuals and the homeless. During this time, the pace of affordable housing production did not keep up with the need. The fewer than 2000 units that were created were concentrated in the City, limiting housing choice to geographies not necessarily accessible to quality education, transportation, healthcare and support services. Developers aren' t incentivized to build affordable housing in areas with good proximity to employment, education, transportation, etc. nor in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty because such housing would not guarantee a good return on investment.

Recommendation 3: Housing: Monroe Housing Policy/Commission
A countywide affordable housing policy that will serve the needs of the working poor and individuals/households in poverty. The policy will be the framework for determining affordable housing development types, locations and funding and will ensure that a broad range of resident services associated with the housing are effectively coordinated. The objectives of the policy will be recognized and supported by public and private sources of funding. The working poor and individuals in poverty and/or transitioning out of poverty will participate in the design and implementation of the policy. Oversight, management, and implementation of the policy will take place through the creation of a Rochester Monroe Housing Commission or an agreed-upon community process.

APPENDIX D: RECOMMENDATIONS ORGANIZED BY WORKGROUP DOMAIN

Note: See Appendix C for summary descriptions of each recommendation

Childcare

- Childcare: Flexing our Community Childcare MUSCLE! (Multiple, Unified, Systems Collaborating, Leading to Employment — and Self-Sufficiency)[1] (p. 37)
- Childcare: Access to Affordable Quality Childcare Options[1] (p. 37)

Education

- Adult Education: Access for All (p. 39)
- Adult Education: Institutional and Structural Racism (p. 34)
- Adult Education: Education and Career Mapping (p. 40)
- Adult Education: Neighborhood Community Center (p. 31)
- Children's Education: Mobile Community Resource Teams (p. 36)
- Children's Education: Closing Poverty-Driven Learning Gaps (p. 42)
- Children's Education: Racial, Social-Economic Integration (p. 43)
- Children's Education: Family University (p. 41)

Health & Nutrition

- Health & Nutrition: Health Campuses (p. 39)
- Health & Nutrition: Preventing and Addressing Trauma Across Generations (p. 35)
- Health & Nutrition: Improve Government Policies and Practice (p. 43)
- Health & Nutrition: Food as Medicine (p. 30)

Housing

- Housing: Skills for Housing Success (p. 38)
- Housing: Race, Poverty, and Access to Affordable Housing (p. 33)
- Housing: Monroe Housing Policy / Commission (p. 44)
- Housing: Creating Neighborhood Stability (Gentrification) (p. 32)

Jobs and Workforce Development

- Jobs: Public High School for Adults (p. 39)
- Jobs: Mentors for Success[1] (p. 40)
- Jobs: Wanna-Job, Gotta-Job (p. 40)
- Jobs: Creating Neighborhood Wealth (p. 32)
- Jobs: Rochester Coordinated Services System (Super Waiver) (p. 41)

Justice System

- Justice System: Institutional and Structural Racism (p. 34)
- Justice System: Increase Capacity of the Civil and Criminal Justice Systems (p. 44)
- Justice System: Crisis Services as Alternative to Arrest (p. 31)
- Justice System: A Community That Meets Every Child's Needs (p. 42)

Safe Neighborhoods

- Safe Neighborhoods: Preventing and Addressing Violence and Trauma in the Home (p. 36)
- Safe Neighborhoods: Police-Community Relations (p. 35)
- Safe Neighborhoods: Community Organizing to Promote Safety[1] (p. 30)
- Safe Neighborhoods: Provide Safe Youth Alternatives (p. 42)

Transportation

- Transportation: Public High Frequency Cross-Town Managed Transportation[1] (p. 38)
- Transportation: Complete Communities: Livable Infrastructure for Everyone (LIFE)[1] (p. 33)

[1] This is also a common solution element targeted in part or whole for phase 1 implementation.

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY INSIGHTS REPORT/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
Insights from People Living in Poverty
Qualitative Research: Executive Summary
June 9, 2015
uwrochester.org/pdf/uwrmapireport.6.3.15.pdf

Housing/Neighborhood: Families say their rent does not cover their needs in terms of adequate/safe housing, and that landlords can sometimes be unfair or prejudice if they know they receive DSS support. Low-income neighborhoods and simply a lack of choice for housing in Rochester contributes to the cycle of poverty.

- Those impoverished live in concentrated areas and this concentration contributes to gang behavior.
- Children model behavior they see in their immediate environment; they are not exposed to new and diverse community opportunities.
- Many say they do not feel a sense of pride that they want to feel in owning a home. Many do not want to leave the city; yet middle income choices are unavailable.

Recommendation: *An expansion of housing choice, beyond concentrated areas, perhaps into suburban areas, as well as a look into fair housing laws and landlord education/support.*

Transportation and Mobility: Bus passes and access to regular and varied bus schedules, including confidence in knowing they are safe at the transit station, is a top of mind concern for families.

- The ability to accurately plan and execute daily schedules to address the needs of the family (getting to and from work, coordinating day care schedules, school, compliance with meetings, doctor appointments, etc.) is a critical daily need.
- If one small spoke to the transportation planning wheel is compromised, even on a given day, anxiety results. Parents are quick to keep children out of school, skip appointments and in many cases, give up, falling into depression.

Recommendation: *Transportation must be enabled and never compromised.*

Employment and Workforce Training: Many have complaints, or a lack of understanding, about the value of the WEP program placement. There is dissatisfaction with the job market in general and not feeling confident about being able to earn enough money to support their families.

- Individuals do not have an understanding of how their current placement in WEP will help them progress into a job that will pay their bills and help them save money to become independent.
- Many individuals have college degrees (or more training) than what seems to have been in the past. Realistic goals and opportunities for the ideal job need to be outlined and explained.

Recommendation: *Career assessment and appropriate skill matching with Rochester colleges/community training resources could possibly be expanded (minimally, should be re-evaluated). Consider the addition of mentors or coaches who track or meet with individuals and follow them from assessment to placement.*

Financial Literacy: Related to employment is money management. Individuals lack knowledge about budgeting for bill-paying, saving and spending.

- One large check for rent, a loan for education is not teaching the skills of everyday planning.
- Families need lifeskills and the lack of this ability leads to system abuse and a continued cycle of dependency on system.

Recommendation: *Teaching financial skills, programs that offer a different strategy of payout of smaller increments of support (perhaps rewards/savings approach) toward money management is being requested by individuals. Earned Income Tax Credit program, for example, has shown to increase financial literacy.*

Childcare and Education: Regular schedules for childcare are needed; absentee rates at school are putting children behind and force children into tutoring/summer school situations.

- Schools provide much needed structure; kids respond positively but are often needed at home and kept there by parents. Some parents try, but do not see the value of school attendance over the need to have children helping at with siblings.
- Children fall behind an already fast-paced curriculum and require support services, such as tutoring and/or summer school, often repeating grades.
- Childcare schedules often do not meet the needs of shift-working parents who might also be attending classes at night or weekends. Childcare is not covered for those who are unable to work and are at home.

Recommendation: *Continued focus on making good childcare available, and accessible (with as much schedule flexibility as possible) is essential. Parents also need to understand how school will benefit their children. Home visitation programs will support and reinforce this message, among other efforts.*

DSS System Issues: Decentralization of services leads to communication breakdowns and staffing issues.

- Morale is impacted by over-worked staff, heavy caseloads at agency levels.
- There is a need for consistent treatment of clients by staff but training and professional development is lacking.
- Services are spread out throughout the county and clients must navigate a complicated system, dealing with more than one individual at multiple times.

Recommendation: *A more centralized approach, (one-stop) human and physical shop, is likely to improve client access and increase communication. The more integrated the system, the less communication is compromised. Staff needs should be re-evaluated and funded as needed.*

Mental Health/Coping: Self-reported history of childhood trauma impacts adult decision-making negatively and contributes to the inability to break the cycle of poverty.

- Nurse Family Partnership is an excellent support program for single parents.
- Mental health interventions can be made to enable progress of families.

Recommendations: *Research and current anecdotal evidence exists that the Nurse-Family Partnership program should be expanded and is highly effective toward creating much needed emotional support for families and children. It has been shown to break the multi-generational cycle of poverty and should be expanded.*

Other findings:
Programs individuals identify that are working:

- Hillside, PathStone, Upward Bound, Center for Youth
- Community Place, Rochester Works, ABC, Head Start, Urban League

Additional Research Recommendation:
Education, health and law, those individuals who have emerged from poverty: These segments could possibly be explored in more depth. The majority of the interviews were 1:1's with community centers and individuals.

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