

2024 Policy Agenda

Local Level Policy Recommendations

Housing Recommendations

HOUSING



Increase affordable housing options throughout Monroe County, focusing on rental housing for low/very low-income households and homeownership for low/moderate-income homeowners.

- Incentivize developers to create mixed income housing developments in all areas of the City and County
- Subsidize renovation of existing properties into high-quality affordable and deeply affordable rental housing
- Explore ways to stabilize rent in local municipalities
- Incentivize landlords to rent to low-income households, including those with subsidies and vouchers to combat implicit bias and income discrimination
- Pursue/continue to pursue “pro-housing” designation in order to be eligible for more state funding to build housing
- Incentivize towns and villages within the County to update their zoning codes to eliminate exclusionary zoning policies and adopt inclusionary policies
- Use the City of Rochester’s Zoning Alignment Project as an opportunity to foster equity and choice, enable inclusive development, and increase the supply of housing that is affordable
- Increase funding for first-time homebuyers programs and repair programs for low income homeowners

Benefits & Income Recommendations

INCOME



Ensure that households have sufficient income to meet their needs through living wages, gradual transitions off of public benefits, and opportunities for savings and wealth generation.

- Work with the state to improve utilization of shelter supplements
- Continuous learning when it comes to implementation of new rules and continuing to ensure sufficient phase-out periods for benefits when income increases.
- Work toward a broad-based Guaranteed Basic Income program that can serve as many individuals and families as possible

Local Level Policy Recommendations

Criminalization & Exploitation Recommendations



Eliminate penalties, fees/fines, and financial practices that exploit low-income people and criminalize poverty.

- Make no further changes to current bail reform laws
- Pass the End Predatory Court Fees Act
- Explore opportunities to reduce costs of basic needs in low income neighborhoods
- Further regulation of rent-to-own entities
- Explore the NY Public Banking Act
- Explore opportunities to provide low income families with low-cost savings accounts, seed funding, and otherwise build financial assets

Child Care Recommendations



Invest in more flexible and affordable child care and school-age care options for all families.

- Work together with local partners to develop an awareness/information campaign to encourage more individuals to successfully become legally exempt providers
- Increased investments into youth employment programming

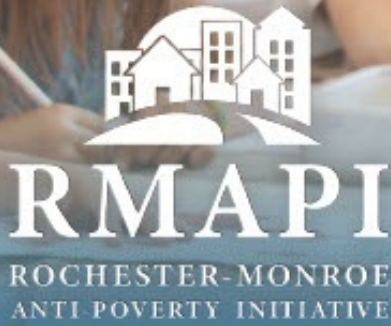
Mental Health Recommendations



Increase access to culturally responsive and affordable mental and behavioral health services.

- Continue to build upon important work happening to bring mental health services into schools and R Centers
- Continue to invest in the Person in Crisis (PIC) team to speed up response times and limit contact with police for people experiencing mental health crises
- Increase funding and support for peer-to-peer supports and teen mental health safe spaces
- Invest in the Healer's Village Initiative to train existing mental health providers in culturally responsive approaches





2024 Policy Agenda

Federal Level Policy Recommendations

Housing Recommendations



Increase affordable housing options throughout Monroe County, focusing on rental housing for low/very low-income households and homeownership for low/moderate-income homeowners.

- Create more funding tools to incentivize and subsidize building all types of affordable housing
- Utilize state and federal funding to keep existing housing affordable
- Maintain and increase HUD funding for local housing authorities
- Enable wealth building investments
- Explore credit repair opportunities through federal financial guidelines

Benefits & Income Recommendations



Ensure that households have sufficient income to meet their needs through living wages, gradual transitions off of public benefits, and opportunities for savings and wealth generation.

- Maintain and increase HUD funding for local housing authorities
- Increase SSI and SSDI at the federal level
- Revisit benefit calculations and implement mechanisms for updating these amounts annually based on realistic cost of living calculations
- Continuous learning when it comes to implementation of new rules and continuing to ensure sufficient phase-out periods for benefits when income increases
- Update how SNAP benefits are calculated so that we can get higher benefits to more people
- Pass a new expanded federal Child Tax Credit
- Work toward a broad-based Guaranteed Basic Income program that can serve as many individuals and families as possible

Federal Level Policy Recommendations

Child Care Recommendations

CHILD CARE



Invest in more flexible and affordable child care and school-age care options for all families.

- Create a permanent child care fund to increase child care worker compensation
- Increase federal funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and other federal funding streams for out of school time programs



2024 Policy Agenda

State Level Policy Recommendations

Housing Recommendations

HOUSING



Increase affordable housing options throughout Monroe County, focusing on rental housing for low/very low-income households and homeownership for low/moderate-income homeowners.

- Create more funding tools to incentivize and subsidize building all types of affordable housing
- Utilize state funding to keep existing housing affordable
- Enact the Housing Access Voucher Program to create a statewide voucher program (S568B/A4021A)
- Increase the DHS shelter allowance to HUD Fair Market Rent (A08061) and make it easier for local districts to apply for and utilize shelter supplements
- Use state funding tools to build more housing in communities with inclusionary zoning policies
- Create financing options for lower income households such as the NY Public Banking Act (S1754) and NY State First Home Savings Program (S6574)
- Maintain/codify funding for the Homeowner Protection Program (S7297/A7636)

Benefits & Income Recommendations

INCOME



Ensure that households have sufficient income to meet their needs through living wages, gradual transitions off of public benefits, and opportunities for savings and wealth generation.

- Increase the SSI Supplement Program at the State level
- Revisit benefit calculations and implement mechanisms for updating these amounts annually based on realistic cost of living calculations
- Continuous learning when it comes to implementation of new rules and continuing to ensure sufficient phase-out periods for benefits when income increases
- Adoption of Universal school meals and Summer Food Benefits for students
- Implement the Working Families Tax Credit (S277A/A4022)
- Expand other existing tax credit programs to serve more households in our state, for example expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to youth workers (A00477) and expanding the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (A1453)
- Work toward a broad-based Guaranteed Basic Income program that can serve as many individuals and families as possible
- Enact the Mothers and Infants Lasting Change (MILC) allowance (A06197)

State Level Policy Recommendations

Criminalization & Exploitation Recommendations

CRIMINALIZATION
AND EXPLOITATION



Eliminate penalties, fees/fines, and financial practices that exploit low-income people and criminalize poverty.

- Make no further changes to current bail reform laws
- Pass the End Predatory Court Fees Act
- Explore opportunities to reduce costs of basic needs in low income neighborhoods
- Further regulation of rent-to-own entities
- Explore the NY Public Banking Act
- Explore opportunities to provide low income families with low-cost savings accounts, seed funding, and otherwise build financial assets

Child Care Recommendations

CHILD CARE



Invest in more flexible and affordable child care and school-age care options for all families.

- Increase support for family caregivers by increasing rates for legally-exempt child care providers to 75% of the family child care rate and to 85% for providers eligible for an enhanced rate
- Include funding in the budget to pilot Family Child Care networks statewide to better support home-based providers
- Direct funding to help child care programs (of all kinds) create more options and further incentivize nontraditional schedules/hours
- Increase rates for child care assistance and create more flexibility in the subsidy system so that subsidies can be used for care when families need it – for example by eliminating minimum wage or work hours
- Create a permanent child care fund to increase child care worker compensation
- Increase overall after-school funding and standardize funding and eligibility
- Increase funding for summer programs while supporting transportation needs of students to increase accessibility
- Increased investments into youth employment programming

Mental Health Recommendations

MENTAL
HEALTH CARE



Increase access to culturally responsive and affordable mental and behavioral health services.

- Fully implement Daniel's Law (S2398/A2210)
- Incentivize more providers to work with children and youth, increase reimbursement rates for pediatric and youth mental health, and provide mental health telehealth services to children and youth
- Create loan forgiveness programs for mental health clinicians serving children
- Support workforce initiatives focused on recruitment and retention of the mental health workforce and new avenues for credentialing mental health professionals, with a specific focus on recruitment and retention of people of color in the mental health workforce
- Fund infant and early childhood mental health consultations as a way of bringing prevention-based approaches and services to children where they need them
- Increase funding for School-Based Health Centers to include mental health services and enable Medicaid reimbursement for school-based services for all children
- Review licensure requirements and reduce barriers for providers to accept insurance
- Increase funding and support for peer-to-peer supports and teen mental health safe spaces