



# HIGH ROAD & DEMOCRACY SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS

2024





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# FELLOWSHIP INFORMATION

*Application Deadline: February 10, 2024*

## Program Basics

Fellows work June 3, 2024-July 26, 2024 earning a living wage for 300 hours (\$4800 total). Students are given a sproject/experience with their host organizations, working 7.5 hours per day, Monday through Thursday. Every Friday the students, as a group, are immersed in the city life of Buffalo with neighborhood walking tours, field trips, cultural experiences, and discussions with guest experts and civic leaders. Friday's are also forums for learning from each other by sharing weekly journals, project experiences, research and other accomplishments. There are specific skill-building opportunities and once/week Fellows get to hear from High Road Alumni. Group housing arrangements are facilitated for those interested. A mandatory one credit pre-course will take place the second half of Spring 2024 with the following dates. Please note in your application if you are unavailable any of the dates:

- Saturday, March 23, 9:30-3pm
- Wednesday, April 10, 4:30-7:30pm
- Tuesday, April 16, 4:30-7:30pm
- Thursday, April 25, 4:30-7:30pm

## Place

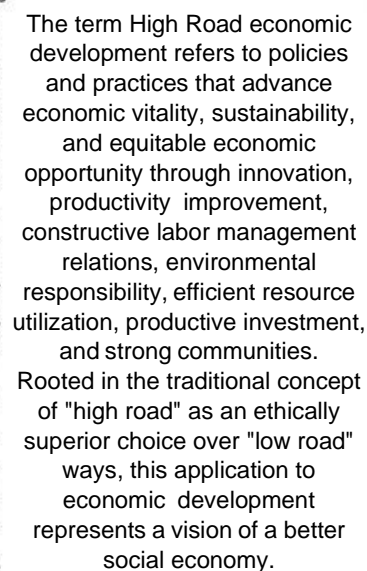
Cornell ILR's extension history begins with Buffalo. Since 1946, ILR has played a vital role in the region, working in partnership with businesses, unions, government, education and community organizations to build an economy that works for all. High Road Fellowships were launched in 2009 as a new way to connect students with practitioners who were driving change in the local economy. Undergoing dynamic reinvention, Buffalo is home to a rich array of creative community leaders and organizations tackling rust belt challenges.

## Community Partner

Each student is placed with a host organization affiliated with the Partnership for the Public Good, a civic organization made up of over 300 community partners promoting more equitable and sustainable economic development in Greater Buffalo. PPG produces action research and policy recommendations on pressing local, regional and state concerns. Students gain hands-on experiences working with organizations in the vital nonprofit sector of the economy where job creation, neighborhood revitalization, and the greening of the economy are everyday reality.

## Student Criteria

High Road Fellows are Cornell undergraduates interested in grassroots democracy and how individuals can help create a more equitable economy. It is a competitive application process.



The term High Road economic development refers to policies and practices that advance economic vitality, sustainability, and equitable economic opportunity through innovation, productivity improvement, constructive labor management relations, environmental responsibility, efficient resource utilization, productive investment, and strong communities. Rooted in the traditional concept of "high road" as an ethically superior choice over "low road" ways, this application to economic development represents a vision of a better social economy.

# PROSPECTIVE HIGH ROAD FELLOWSHIP PLACEMENTS AND PROJECTS

The logo for 1199 SEIU, featuring the text "1199 SEIU" in yellow on a purple square background.

## 1199 SEIU

2421 Main St. Suite 100 Buffalo, NY 14214 | <https://www.1199seiu.org/>

**About:** With over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida, and Washington, DC, 1199SEIU is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in the nation. Since our founding in 1932, our mission has been to stand up for quality healthcare, good jobs and social justice for all.

### **Project: “Day-to-day Internal Organizing Work and 2024 Election Preparation”**

The day to day experience of the fellow will vary, but projects will focus on the following: 1. New organizing campaign to identify and strategize to win NLRB elections at nursing homes in WNY. 2. Plan and prepare for 2024 nonprofit cycle contract negotiations. 3. Assist with 2024 political election work. 4. Day to day union internal organizing work- grievances, labor management meetings, member meetings, new employee orientation, etc.

## Belmont Housing

1140 Jefferson Ave Buffalo, NY 14208 | <https://www.belmonthousingwny.org/>

**About:** At Belmont, we believe that lives are changed when families and individuals have a safe, healthy, and affordable place to live and grow.

### **Project: “Cooperative Alternatives to Stable Housing”**

Research the means for administering Cooperative Housing from an economic and individual perspective. Interview community leaders, cooperative experts, and financial lenders to inform research. Collaborate with Belmont’s HUD Certified Housing Counselors to create an educational path for community members of Buffalo to cooperatively purchase 1–4-unit homes. The final work will be collaborative in product. However, we expect there to be some sort of final research report and/or curriculum built collaboratively with staff to offer to community members. This research project can be used to support upcoming advocacy with Housing Counseling agencies nation-wide and local, state, and federal policy. Buffalo is one of the most racially and financially segregated cities in America. Specifically, there is an atrocious disparity of sustainable, affordable housing for low-income families. Cooperative Housing brings an incredible opportunity for families to immediately access home ownership when combining resources. This model has seen great success in European cities and has been used in some cities in the US. However, a robust movement for cooperative options for home ownership is on the rise. Buffalo could be on the forefront of a major move towards Housing Justice in the US.

## **Center for Self Advocacy**

1021 Broadway, Buffalo, NY 14212 | [https://www.center4sa.org/about\\_us](https://www.center4sa.org/about_us)

**About:** We help people with developmental disabilities work, advocate within their community, and have an independent and productive lifestyle.

### **Project: “Let's Connect / Self Advocacy in Action / Legislative Outreach”**

This year, we are looking for someone to assist us in the implementation of our Let's Connect digital equity program. Additionally, this person will assist in other community advocacy related activities. Some examples of this include the area Disability Pride celebration, assisting at the Self Advocacy regional conference, outreach to local legislators on disability access, and assisting CSA in its monthly episode of Self Advocacy in Action (TV show). Our goal for this internship is to engage people around the area of disability rights and to have them learn through doing about the specific issues and challenges of disability access, legislative and community outreach. We also would like our candidate to get a better understanding of the Self Advocacy movement.

*People with disabilities and/or knowledge of disability history are highly encouraged to apply. People who are bilingual are also highly encouraged to apply.*

## **Central Terminal Restoration Corp.**

495 Paderewski Dr. Buffalo, NY 14212 | <https://buffalocentralterminal.org/>

**About:** The Central Terminal Restoration Corporation (CTRC) is a 501c3c non-profit organization driven by a mission to develop the Buffalo Central Terminal – a majestic historic landmark – as a lasting cultural and economic hub for the community. Founded in 1997 by dedicated preservationists, the CTRC has cared for this living landmark for 20 years with the steadfast and generous support of scores of volunteers.

### **Project: “Buffalo Central Terminal Community Connections”**

The High Road Fellow will assist CTRC staff with community engagement and communication to continue to develop strong and genuine relationships with the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood and the broader Western New York community throughout the development of the historic Buffalo Central Terminal. Each year the CTRC hosts a calendar of free community arts and culture events outdoors on the Terminal’s lawn. We leverage these events as an opportunity to explain the work being done to reuse the historic Buffalo Central Terminal and get the community involved in the project. In 2023 the CTRC used simple survey tools to get feedback from the community on how we should improve our green space.

The High Road Fellow will work with CTRC staff to create survey and community input tools, design marketing/communications materials, and engage community members at Terminal events. The work of the High Road Fellow is threefold: 1) they will help to get the word out about free arts and cultural events at the Terminal, 2) they will speak directly with community members to collect their input on the reuse of the Buffalo Central Terminal, and 3) they will help to demystify the complex redevelopment of the Buffalo Central Terminal.

The High Road Fellow’s work will largely be an experience of working to build community ownership and input into a large, complex historic preservation project. They will be able to build hard and soft skills related to community engagement and communications, including survey tool development, simple graphic design, using social media as a tool, press release writing, how to simplify complex ideas into digestible information for the public, how to talk to community

members, and more. They will gain insight into the Broadway-Fillmore community and collect unique stories from our community members along the way.

At the end of their experience they will be able to present the story of how they developed an engagement strategy all the way to how they implemented it.

Community Engagement is a critical piece of the equitable development strategy that we have at the Buffalo Central Terminal. We have worked to build community engagement into each phase of reuse, from the visioning and planning phase to construction and development. As a regional historic landmark, we are dedicated to leveraging the reuse of the Terminal to improve community quality of life, create community wealth building opportunities, and so much more. To reach those goals, we must engage with our neighbors, develop a new vision of the future together, and really create a shared sense of ownership over the Buffalo Central Terminal.  
*Looking for someone with strong communication skills and understanding of DEI.*

## **Center for Exploratory & Perceptual Arts (CEPA)**

617 Main St, Suite 201, Buffalo, NY.14202 | <https://www.cepagallery.org/>

**About:** CEPA promotes photographic and related media artists of all levels, supporting the arts community through exhibitions, education, and critical public access to image-making resources. CEPA provides individuals, schools, and nonprofits with workshops, classes, and community spaces that are accessible to all ages, abilities, and incomes.

### **Project: “CEPA Teaching Fellowship”**

The High Road Fellow will have the opportunity to work with CEPA’s Arts Education Department, which was recognized by the Obama White House for its programming. They will be responsible for teaching a week-long youth summer class, which they will develop with assistance from CEPA staff based on their skills and interests. They will also be responsible for assisting with CEPA’s community outreach programs, marketing/promotion, as well as researching curriculum and activities for CEPA’s educational programming. CEPA’s most notable community outreach program is the Mobile Darkroom, a light-safe tent designed to be taken into the community to introduce youth and adults alike to alternative processes. The fellow would work to promote the Mobile Darkroom to the community, schedule events for community organizations, and work the events.

Their final product will be a week-long class for students aged 8-12 or 13-17, as well as a series of activities/assignments to become part of CEPA’s general curriculum. For example, last summer, a fellow researched a series of photo tours around our neighborhood, mapping photogenic sites and researching their history. The fellow will also have the opportunity to make their own photographic art as they research and develop content for their class and others.

As a community-based organization, part of CEPA’s mission is to leverage the inherent accessibility of photography and similar lens-based media to empower historically underserved audiences through critical access to image-making resources and expertise. We offer free and affordable programming to be as equitable and inclusive as possible because we believe enrichment through art is an essential facet of life and community.

*Ideal candidates should be interested in photography, art, and gallery/museum work.*

## Clean Air Coalition

371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202 | <https://www.cacwny.org/>

**About:** The Clean Air Coalition builds power by developing grassroots leaders who organize their communities to run and win environmental justice and public health campaigns in Western New York.

### **Project: “Clean Air Coalition - Project and Campaign Support”**

Clean Air is engaged in a community air monitoring initiative with NYS DEC to deploy a network of PurpleAir monitors throughout Erie and Niagara County, with priority for NYS Disadvantaged Community areas, as well as to organize, engage, and educate residents about topics related to air quality and monitoring. We anticipate much broader community engagement and deployment of monitors in 2024 as the project progresses. We also hope the fellow will help us host initial public engagement meetings EPA Community Brownfield Assessment grant.

Our Cornell Fellow will assist us with these projects and help us address related public health and environmental/climate justice inequities. With this project, we are hoping the public will have greater knowledge and interest in issues of air quality and be able to identify potential local sources of air pollution directly harming public health.

## Colored Girls Bike Too

1353 Jefferson Avenue, Buffalo, NY, 14208 | <https://www.facebook.com/groups/httpslinktr.eecoloredgirls biketoo/>

**About:** Colored Girls Bike Too is a Black Women-Led, radical cycling organization that uses the bicycle as a tool to advance racial equity and justice, through mobility justice and healing justice advocacy to systematically change our transportation systems, urban spaces, and our health care systems, to collectively transform communities of color into livable, safe, healthy and walkable urban spaces that support the healing and liberation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous women (cis and trans), and GNB folks, and where all Black, Brown, & Indigenous folks, of all abilities, can freely, fairly, & fearlessly move.

### **Project: “CGBT Holistic Mobility Hub”**

Colored Girls Bike Too, proposes to design and develop a Holistic Mobility Hub on Jefferson Avenue or within the surrounding area. Our Holistic Mobility Hub is rooted in equitable investment strategies that: emphasize anti-racist solutions; prioritize multi-sector approaches; deliver intentional benefits; build community capacity; are community-driven at every stage; and establish paths toward wealth-building. Our Holistic Mobility Hub is grounded within this framework to contribute to creating a more equitable and just urban and transportation planning process in Buffalo. It also creates a model that ensures that Black, Brown and Indigenous residents, community organizations, and leaders secure the necessary resources to address the most urgent needs in the community, related to clean transportation and urban spaces, which include: Development of East Side neighborhoods, and commercial corridors; Redesign and repairing sidewalks and streets; Development of green infrastructure on residential streets to protect the population against vehicular emissions and other airborne pollutants that create health hazards; Offer opportunities for community/BIPOC owned and controlled modes, like e-bikes or electric cars; and Provide capacity-building resources and technical assistance for BIPOC-led mobility-focused organizations and businesses that work to create culture change around clean transportation options.

*Ideal candidate would have research skills and understanding of BLM, and all things related to racial justice, equity, mental health, restorative justice, racism, capitalism. Etc. (its ok not to be an expert, but to be open to learning).*



## **Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo**

726 Exchange Street, Suite 525, Buffalo, NY, 14210 | <https://www.cfqb.org/>

**About:** For more than a century, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has enhanced and encouraged long-term philanthropy in the Western New York community. A 501 (c)(3) organization, the Community Foundation's mission is: Connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York. Established in 1919, the Community Foundation has made the most of the generosity of individuals, families, foundations and organizations who entrust charitable assets to the Community Foundation's care.

### **Project: "Research to Support Leadership Initiatives"**

The Community Foundation convenes people across the community who have an interest in changing systems to improve lives. These leadership initiatives address issues such as achieving racial equity, creating career pathways for youth, and improving WNY's climate resilience. The initiatives also require research to support the groups' decision making. We anticipate our High Road Fellow providing research for one of these initiatives, potentially climate resilience where we plan to work with government, non-profits and higher education to identify the highest priority needs and attract federal and state funding to meet those needs. All our Community Impact leadership initiatives are part of a larger campaign or coalition. Each of these initiatives are led by committees comprised of community members and staffed by the Community Foundation. We consider High Road Fellows as full members of the team implementing the work. High Road Fellows serving at the Community Foundation participate in research projects that include interviews and data analysis culminating in a summary document. The Community Foundation's first goal is to achieve racial equity. We consider equity the "North star" leading our work. All leadership initiatives are intended to ensure that people of color and people from low-income households have the resources, access and opportunity to thrive in this region.

## **Cornell ILR Buffalo Co-Lab, Good DEEDS**

617 Main Street, Suite 300, Buffalo, NY, 14203 | <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/buffalo-co-lab>

**About:** Cornell ILR Buffalo Co-Lab advances an equitable economy and democratic community, collaboratively integrating scholarly and practical understanding to strengthen civic action. Good DEEDS Initiative (Data for Equitable Economic Development and Sustainability) aims to function as a public data repository and, through the HRP blog and quarterly issue memorandum, a public policy forum. Through these interconnected channels, Good DEEDS seeks to:

- democratize geographic, economic, environmental, and social data and provide training on how to use that data;
- generate a set of shared metrics for monitoring change over time;
- conduct original surveys to shed new light on regional workforce, civil society, economic and ecological health, and quality of life; and
- produce original research, memoranda, and reports to advance a High Road policy agenda.

The overarching mission of Good DEEDS is to provide an empirical basis for ensuring that development and community change in and beyond Upstate New York follows the High Road to shared prosperity for all residents, from the present to all future generations.

### **Project: "Understanding Climate Vulnerability and Resident-Led Adaptation Strategies in Buffalo, NY"**

Supported by a two-year design grant from the National Science Foundation, the Global Center for Household Energy and Thermal Resilience ([HEaTR](#)) aims to foster community-driven solutions to the problem of climate vulnerability, focused on housing and domestic space.



From extremes of heat and cold to natural disasters, many of the most glaring health, economic, and social effects of climate change are experienced in and reflected through housing, yet the design expertise of those who live in climate-vulnerable communities has rarely been recognized.

Instead of privileging technological solutions engineered in the Global North and applied to the Global South, HEaTR's approach foregrounds the perspectives, idioms, materials, and socioeconomic realities of those whose homes and communities are on the front lines of climate crisis. Through collaborative, interdisciplinary research, HEaTR aims to become a resource for learning about and sharing solutions to thermal design challenges, from low-cost cooling and insulation using locally-sourced materials, to grassroots heat and cold action plans that leverage social networks to protect the most vulnerable.

During the course of the 2024 High Road Fellowship, one or more fellows will support the HEaTR team's investigation into housing conditions, as well as household- and community-level climate adaptation and energy use strategies, in Buffalo, NY. We anticipate that the fellow(s) will engage in a combination of participant observation, surveying and/or interviewing residents and other key informants, secondary data collection, and mapping activities to help generate a picture of climate vulnerability – and ongoing climate action and adaptation – in one or more study areas in and around Buffalo and Western New York. Possible outputs include story maps that showcase innovative, resident-led climate actions, and/or a narrative report or contributions to a larger report to be coauthored with other members of the HEaTR team. Throughout the course of the fellowship, the fellow(s) will gain new insights into climate vulnerability and resilience in the context of the American Rust Belt. The fellow(s) will also be invited to network with international scholars who are conducting similar research – in collaboration with the HEaTR team – in their home locations (note: the HEaTR team has current partnerships in India, Singapore, and Ghana).

## Field and Fork Network

487 Main St. Suite 200 Buffalo, NY 14203 | [www.fieldandforknetwork.com](http://www.fieldandforknetwork.com)

**About:** Field & Fork Network (FFN) is a food and farming organization that connects communities to innovative solutions that foster a sustainable food system. FFN is building a thriving regional food system. Our focus is on economic development, food access, youth development and healthy neighborhoods. Since 2009, we've been creating more opportunities for local agriculture, providing greater access to food, building healthier neighborhoods and educating the next generation of food advocates.

### **Project: “Food Advocacy Agenda”**

Field & Fork Network has been a leader in the development and implementation of local food action plans and regional approaches to improving the food system. The organization wholeheartedly believes that one of the best ways to systemically improve the food system is by addressing and improving food-related policy throughout all levels of government but starting at hyperlocal level. This proposed project will span all levels of government and will provide a future fellow with diverse food policy experience, working both at the local level and bridging to the state and federal level of policy.

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Project Goals:



- Utilize data collected by the 2023 High Road Fellow to update the priorities of the Niagara Falls Food Advocacy Agenda.
- Map policy items that are related to the updated food priorities, including the identification of policy champions and the gathering of information to be used in the development of policy campaigns.
- Assist with an environmental scan of produce prescription programs and voucher incentive programs.
- Assist Field & Fork Network staff in building coalitions around specific, actionable policy items as identified through research and stakeholder engagement.
- Assist with the Healthy Corner Store initiative, as applicable. This initiative aims to bring healthy, affordable foods to local corner stores to increase access to nutritious foods.

The final work product would be: Research report outlining updated food priorities and best practices. Updated Advocacy Agenda for Niagara Falls, including policy language/mapping. Outline of produce prescription and voucher incentive programs and best practices. Outreach plan able to be used by project partners to build coalitions in support of the policy agendas. *The ideal candidate should also have strong research skills and abilities and a general understanding of policy language and issues would be beneficial for this project.*

## **GOBike Buffalo**

313 Broadway, Buffalo, NY 14204 | <https://gobikebuffalo.org/>

**About:** GObike promotes active mobility options, trails and greenways, and complete streets in Western New York. We connect and empower communities through advocacy, education, planning, and engagement.

### **Project: “Stem Cyclist”**

GObike is part of a partnership called STEMcyclist, which will be hosting a summer institute in 2024. STEMcyclists: Black and Brown Youth Transforming STEM via Bikes" is a university-community collaboration designed to engage urban Black and Brown youth in a transformative informal STEM learning experience. The project's goals are to provide young people with a sustainable capacity-building program centered on biking, and to cultivate their STEM identities through a series of place-based activities, including a two-week summer institute and Saturday sessions. The program focuses on the engineering and science of rebuilding bikes, the biomechanics of biking, and uncovering STEM phenomena in the community to reflect the assets of urban, community-based, and youth-informed STEM contexts. GObike's part in the project will involve the hosting and teaching the technical aspects of bike mechanics during the summer institute. The fellow's work will include being part of the implementation of the summer institute, working with the Education Director to overhaul GObikes education curriculum to incorporate aspects of the STEM Cyclist program and bring the curriculum into alignment with New York states curriculum standards.

*Ideal candidate would have some background or experience teaching/education or working with young people.*

## **Jewish Family Services**

70 Barker St, Buffalo, NY 14209 | <https://jfswny.org/>

**About:** JFS of Western New York empowers people to achieve their unique aspirations by offering culturally responsive and individualized care. Since 1862, Jewish Family Services of Western New York has been providing all members of our community with critical health and human services, regardless of religion, ethnicity, cultural background, gender identification, ability, or age.

### **Project: “JFS Community Education Program – Five Years of Results for Refugee Families”**

The fellow will spend their time learning about the work of the JFS Family Support Program over the past five years and synthesizing this information into a 5 year report that highlights how the program has grown, what it has achieved, who it has impacted and how, and where we seek to go in the next five years. This work will culminate in the creation of a 5 year report that will be shared with funders, donors, clients, community leaders, board members, and other stakeholders. JFSWNY is a member of The Refugee Partnership -- a collaborative project envisioned by Buffalo’s five agencies that serve refugees and immigrants. The framework of The Refugee Partnership is rooted in our belief that our community thrives when we collaborate with each other, our community partners, and those we serve to provide quality services and build sustainable systems that support, integrate, and attract refugees and immigrants. Refugees are one of the most marginalized populations in Buffalo. English Language Learners rank below all other learners when it comes to school outcomes in Buffalo Public Schools, and many if not most refugee families and individuals live with long-term effects of complicated trauma. By supporting refugee families to access health and education programming, we are directly contributing to an improved quality of life for a population of people who face multiple barriers to services that many people otherwise take for granted. *Cross-cultural communication skills are a plus. Working with interpreters will likely be a part of the role. No language requirements, but additional language skills common across the Buffalo refugee community (such as Arabic, Burmese, Swahili, Dari) are a plus.*

## **Massachusetts Avenue Project**

387 Massachusetts Ave, Buffalo, NY 14213 | <https://www.mass-ave.org/>

**About:** The Massachusetts Avenue Project works to build a diverse and equitable WNY food system by providing economic opportunities, jobs and leadership development to youth, access to local, nutritious and affordable food and social justice education and advocacy. MAP operates an urban farm, a city-wide Mobile Market, shared-use Commercial Kitchen supporting small scale food entrepreneurs, and a youth training and employment program.

### **Project: “Food Systems Experience”**

The Fellow’s time will be split working on our urban farm (up to 10 hours per week) and in our commercial kitchen (up to 8 hours a week). Some of this time working on the farm and in the kitchen would be taking photos and crafting communications content for social media, our monthly newsletter and other organization documents. The remaining time each week would be spent under the direction of our Development Director helping to create communication content for social media and newsletter, create program surveys, coordinate translation of program materials and disseminate information to community members. Work may also include designing donor cultivation materials, coordinating organization calendar and assisting with



event planning. MAP works with many food system partners including Grassroots Gardens of WNY, the University of Buffalo's Food Lab, Buffalo Go Green, 20 regional farms, health centers, schools, houses of worship and community centers. We also work with coalition partners including the Good Food Buffalo Coalition (GFBC), the Buffalo Food Equity Network (BFEN) and Greater Buffalo Urban Growers (GBUG) on various campaigns and projects to increase food and health equity.

The Fellow will gain an understanding of urban agroecology and regional food systems through their work at MAP. The Fellows work will contribute to building greater food and health equity in Buffalo by helping us to promote, inform and assess MAP's work in the community to increase nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food to food insecure residents, to offer commercial kitchen access to small scale entrepreneurs and to offer cooking and food preservation classes to the community and to the youth in our program. The goal is to give an experience on what a non profit Urban Farm has the potential to accomplish on a grassroots level. *A candidate with access to a video, camera, and computer helps.*

## **Niagara River Greenway Commission**

2136 West Oakfield Road Grand Island, NY 14072| <https://www.niagararivergreenway.com/>

**About:** Reconnect all our Niagara Communities to their waterfront greenspaces with an alternative transportation network, and promote opportunities for active outdoor recreation.

### **Project: "Summer Cycling Promotion"**

This project will create a database and web platform making all cycling events in the Niagara region visible to cycling enthusiasts and the general public. It will involve outreach to all cycling organizations in the region to invite them to participate and post their events. The fellow will promote regional cycling via social media platforms in collaboration with cycling organizations. It would be great to produce a short video showing all elements of our communities having summer fun on bike or hike. We would also like to develop a new cycling event in collaboration with NYSParks Centennial Celebration and GObike to showcase the newly connected Shoreline Trail Greenway from the southern tip of Grand Island to Ft Niagara on Lake Ontario.

Summer '24 is pivotal to the expansion of regional cycling as multiple organizations are bringing long term projects to completion and this work will be meshing with all members of the coalition. NYSParks wants to include a major cycling event in their centennial celebration and we will be working to optimize that event to showcase our shoreline connectivity with safe greenway cycling. With support from our team the fellow will produce: a. web based cycling information resource to inform the public of events and routes to explore in our region. B. directory of all regional cycling related organizations with contacts and a list serve to maintain communication and data flow for years to come. C. social media platforms which can stay up to date and build viewers as they are discovered by wider circles of prospective riders and d. design a large scale cycling event for all ages and skill levels to experience safe cycling with dramatic views along the Niagara River from Grand Island to Lake Ontario including drafting a comprehensive work plan with all details required to repeat and grow the event year after year. *Any experience in web design, social media management, and event programming would be great; an avid cyclist would also be wonderful! Car needed or else be willing to bike 14 miles to placement.*

## **Office of New York State Senator Sean Ryan \*DEMOCRACY SUMMER\***

40 La Riviere Dr Suite 121, Buffalo, NY 14202 | <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/sean-m-ryan>

**About:** To represent and support the 61<sup>st</sup> Senate District

**Project: To Be Announced Soon**

### **Open Buffalo**

1327 Jefferson Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14208 | <https://openbuffalo.org/>

**About:** Our mission is to advance racial, economic, and ecological justice. We do so through skill building, network connecting, and activating leadership opportunities. Our goal is for all communities in Western New York to thrive free from discrimination and poverty. At Open Buffalo, we believe our role is to create an empowered democratic society by training individuals in how to identify problems and create solutions in public policy and public systems. We accomplish this through two categories of programming: Leadership Development and Advocacy & Organizing.

#### **Project: “Open Buffalo’s Ecology Center”**

Extreme weather patterns, super storms, drought, and lack of fresh water are currently causing global displacement; forcing people to find safety in places such as Buffalo, New York. However, Buffalo, in particular, the East Side of Buffalo, grapples with its own toxic legacy of environmental issues, and disinvestment. The East Side of Buffalo, where approximately 85% of Black residents reside, has resulted in one of the nation’s highest rates of racialized poverty for a city its size. As a multi-year development project, our center will be a regional climate asset rooted in environmental sustainability, residential empowerment, and economic development that benefits disinvested community members first.

In 2023, we tasked ourselves with acquiring land and have started engaging with folks who live on the East Side to ensure they're the ones deciding what facilities and programming will be implemented. Our priority in establishing a location is finding 4 to 10 acres of land on Buffalo's East Side within an existing neighborhood and can be accessed by clean mobility options. Encompassing 22,000 sq. ft of indoor facilities and expansive outdoor spaces, Open Buffalo's Eco Center will provide much-needed outdoor green space — positively impacting mental health, physical activity, school performance, and overall mood.

Our goal is to develop neighborhood-level climate resilience strategies, prepare communities of color for new green sector jobs, and utilize community-building strategies that create more just, and joyful neighborhoods for us all. The work is co-led by the Eco Collective; an inclusive, diverse group of 20 local visionaries and ambassadors who will help to craft the strategic direction of the Open Buffalo Ecology Center and move its development from ideation to reality over the course of 2023. While distinct from the other bodies in this group, it includes OB Board and OB Staff representatives in addition to Community Partners. The EC is the primary group of ambassadors for the Eco Center project and gathering place for community guidance and direction.

In our endeavor to develop the Eco Center, we're excited to introduce the Ecological and Climate Resilience Education Campaign, which serves as a precursor to the construction and development of the Eco Center itself. Central to this campaign is the expansion of our ecological justice workshops, aimed at cultivating genuine engagement with residents on pressing issues like climate change, environmental racism, ecological justice, clean-renewable energy, and environmental stewardship.

The High Road fellow will take on a multi-faceted role that involves conducting research on the optimal development and partnerships for the Eco Center. Using data management techniques, the fellow will analyze the provided staffing projections, projected expenses, and potential funding sources to refine our financial plan. Their research will delve into understanding market rates, potential revenue streams, and cost-saving measures for a sustainable Eco Center. Additionally, community engagement is pivotal. The fellow will proactively reach out to community partners and local businesses, soliciting their insights, and gauging their potential involvement in the Eco Center. This might include exploring sponsorships, partnerships, or collaborative events.

The end goal is the creation of the "Ecology Center: Community Impact Report." This comprehensive document will detail the fellow's research, findings, and recommendations, taking into account Buffalo's unique environmental and social challenges. Using visual aids and interactive elements, it aims to cater to a diverse range of stakeholders. By intersecting environmental conservation with social justice, the report will pinpoint areas where systemic inequalities meet environmental challenges. Through this, the fellow's work will shine a light on these intersections, proposing solutions that bolster Buffalo's resilience and equity. The larger vision is to empower marginalized communities in Buffalo, providing them with the tools and knowledge to champion a more inclusive and sustainable city. *Preferred, but not required: Experience in designing infographics or using visualization tools to represent complex data simply. Exceptional writing skills to produce the comprehensive report and the capability to communicate effectively with a diverse group of stakeholders. Prior experience working with communities, especially in an engagement or advocacy role.*



## Partnership for the Public Good

617 Main Street, Suite 300 Buffalo, NY 14203 | [www.ppgbuffalo.org](http://www.ppgbuffalo.org)

**About** The Partnership for the Public Good is working to build a more just, sustainable and culturally vibrant Greater Buffalo through action-oriented research, policy development and citizen engagement. With over 290 affiliated partners, PPG develops an annual Community Agenda of policy planks, hosts a weekly radio show, and produces publications and other resources to give the nonprofit community and citizens a stronger voice in public policy.

**Project: To be Announced Soon!**



## Providence Farm Collective

5701 Burton Road, Orchard Park NY 14127 | <https://providencefarmcollective.org/>

**About:** Providence Farm Collective (PFC) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization formed in 2019 with a mission of cultivating farmer-led and community-rooted agriculture and food systems to actualize the rights of under-resourced peoples. With entrenched segregation and high rates of poverty and food insecurity in the Western New York region, PFC was founded upon the premise that empowerment through partnership and collaboration across organizations and communities creates a path for agency and self-sufficiency. At the heart of this mission is a holistic sustainability framework that undergirds our vision of empowering just and equitable access to food and farmland. Consequently, in addition to working to ensure the economic profitability and financial sustainability of the organization, PFC is committed to preserving farmland, protecting the environment, and foremost prioritizing social equity, grassroots leadership, and stakeholder decision-making in our programs and operations that empower PFC farmers to realize this vision.

PFC is the only non-profit in WNY that directly empowers refugee and Black communities with access to rural farmland, farming and business education, technical assistance, markets, and the opportunity to farm for income – all while passing important cultural traditions down to younger generations. It is also one of three incubator farm programs in all of New York State, and the only program in Western New York. Providence Farm Collective is home to both incubator farmers, those working to start their own agricultural small business, and community farmers, those growing collaboratively to provide food to meet intra-community food security needs.

### **Project: “Marketing & Community Events Coordination at Providence Farm Collective”**

We nurture community, connection, and belongingness at Providence Farm Collective by sharing our foods, our agricultural heritage, and our cultural traditions, both internally and externally, through tours, volunteer days, tabling events, and community celebrations. At PFC we build equity through our programs of empowerment and creating opportunities for community connections that foster cultural understanding and inclusion. The High Road Fellow participating in this project will be part of a team that includes the Executive Director, the Director of Development & Community, and the Marketing Coordinator. The Fellow will support the team by – 1- Creating content that may include capturing photos, videos, and stories for use in social media, presentations, and assets. 2- Assisting in organizing and running tours, community volunteer days, tabling events, presentations, at the farmers market, at the market stand, and at community celebrations. 3- Assisting in data collection and input, and other administrative duties as needed to support community engagement and events. 4- Assisting in organizing enrichment activities for the summer youth employees at the farm.

The final work product for this project will be the successful execution of PFC events, tours, and celebrations taking place in June and July of 2024. The Fellow will gain valuable experience working at a novel grassroots organization, as a member of a talented team. *A plus, but not a requirement, is a Fellow who speaks either Swahili, Burmese, Karenni, or French. There are no cultural preferences but a curious, flexible, and open mind are most welcome!*

## Say Yes to Education/ Breaking Barriers

1166 Jefferson Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14208 | <https://sayyesbuffalo.org/boys-men-of-color-initiative/>

**About:** The mission of the Say Yes Buffalo partnership is to remove barriers to educational attainment, workforce participation and economic mobility for students in public and charter schools in Buffalo, NY. Our collective impact partnership, centered on racial equity and inclusion, provides a postsecondary tuition promise and cradle to career comprehensive supports to increase the rates of high school and postsecondary completion and the achievement of fulfilling professional employment. The Boys & Men of Color Initiative at Say Yes Buffalo includes working extensively with young males of color through our Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council. Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council is a group of young men of color, 12-24 years in age, creating a unified voice that advocates for racial equity, social justice and policy change. The Council will address the practices and systems that hold back males of color. Through civic leadership training and direct lobbying opportunities, Breaking Barriers participants will learn the importance of advocacy and will develop their personal and collective leadership skills to be able to influence positive change, strengthening and improving life outcomes for boys and young men of color.

### **Project: “Developing a Culturally Responsive Policy Agenda for the Boys and Men of Color Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council”**

Fellow will engage in and learn about the Boys and Men of Color Initiative/ Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council, serve as a positive role model for Youth Leadership Council members, present to Youth Leadership Council members on policy advocacy/why policies impact their lives, develop a policy advocacy agenda that reflects the interests of Youth Leadership Council members, and develop an advocacy plan that the Youth Leadership Council can begin to implement in the upcoming program year. Also, the fellow will contribute to the design and planning of the annual Summer Retreat occurring in August 2024. In the day-to-day operations of our program, we work closely with a wide range of community-based partners to provide additional enrichment opportunities for our young men, including Cities United, The Fatherhood Initiative at Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network, Mayor’s Summer Youth, Project Play, Ladders to the Outdoors, and more. A placement with us would expose a fellow to a wide range of partnering community groups with different missions. High Road Fellow tasks would be: Learning about and engaging in the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council; Engaging in Breaking Barriers meetings and meeting with the young men (every other Saturday in person and virtual Thursday evenings), other field experiences as possible (Juneteenth Parade, neighborhood clean ups, field trips with Project Play/Ladders to the Outdoors, etc.). The fellow would Developing a Policy Advocacy Agenda proposal by: A. Conducting surveys and focus group conversations with Breaking Barriers members about what their policy interests and priority issue areas are, also identify policy areas/topics young men might want to learn more about. B. Researching pressing issues impacting racial equity in Buffalo. C. Mapping out a Breaking Barriers policy agenda proposal—including potential issues of focus, policy advocacy activities, other groups to connect with locally to collaborate on policy advocacy D. Present the proposal to the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council, facilitate feedback session, and refine the proposal based on youth feedback. The fellow will develop a list of all Breaking barriers partnering organizations which can help identify potential policy agenda collaborators. Finally, the fellow will help with the program plan for the annual Summer Retreat, including mapping out weekend activities (retreat is in August after the High Road Fellowship, but they would be welcome to attend after, and can help with planning activities).

By strengthening our ability to train young men in policy advocacy, this fellowship will help create new generations of engaged community activists working to make Buffalo a better and more equitable city.



## Shared Mobility, Inc.

640 Ellicott Street #441 Buffalo, NY 14203 | <https://www.sharedmobility.org/>

**About** We believe that affordable, accessible, and equitable mobility is a Human right. We strive everyday to help build innovative shared transportation programs with local partners across the country that help uplift the communities they serve.

### **Project “Empowering Eastside Communities by expanding e-Bikeshare”**

Shared Mobility Inc. (SMI) was founded in 2009 as Buffalo CarShare, the nation’s first social-equity focused shared mobility program. Since that time, SMI has transitioned its focus to creating equitable, affordable, and accessible programming across the shared mobility spectrum. Presently in Western New York, SMI is the operator of the Reddy Bikeshare system as well as our WNY E-Bike Library initiative that provides various community-based programs free access to refurbished pedal-assist e-bikes. SMI is continually working to expand its programming with a community controlled focus with partners nationwide.

Recently, SMI’s Reddy Bikeshare program introduced pedal-assist e-bikes, called Reddy+, to its bikesharing fleet. To help fuel its expansion into underserved communities east of Main Street, SMI is a big table partner in a clean mobility options project funded by NYSERDA and spearheaded by Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC NY).

Multiple partners on the project will be engaging with the public and neighborhood stakeholders on where they would like new stations established on the east side. Our team will organize these inputs and pair it with other metrics like physical space available, bike infrastructure, and proximity to existing stations to help prioritize where new stations should go. The Fellow will work directly with Reddy’s Communications Team to support the e-bikeshare program and educate community members of how e-bikeshare works and improves quality of life.

Our Team envisions that the Fellow will help our team create a toolkit summarizing inputs collected from outreach and engagement in Buffalo’s East Side regarding the bikeshare station expansion portion of the project. The toolkit should also detail the impacts that e-bike access has had on folks living and working on the eastside.

- A. Help organize data and public comments about expanding bikeshare stations on the east side.
- B. Increase our ability to educate the community about how to use e-bikeshare and how it can increase clean mobility options.
- C. Provide our team feedback based on experiences of using Reddy and Reddy+. Personal experience or experiences of other folks.
- D. By increasing Reddy’s capacity to engage the community at a time when new technology (Reddy+) is being added to the system, the Fellow will help the team in three ways.

*Fellows interested in this opportunity should have a background in transportation/mobility, urban planning, community development and outreach, or some other related field.*



## Stitch Buffalo

284 Plymouth Ave, Buffalo, NY 14213 | <https://www.stitchbuffalo.org/>

**About:** Stitch Buffalo is a textile art center committed to empowering refugee and immigrant women through the sale of their handcrafted goods, inspiring creativity and inclusion through community education, and stewarding the environment through the re-use of textile supplies.

**Project: “Stitch Buffalo: Community Impact Evaluation”**

Stitch Buffalo is seeking to gather information about our programs’ impact across the numerous populations and demographics we serve. We would like to develop strategies for collecting information from:

1. Members of the Refugee Women’s Workshop
2. Community Class attendees
3. Retail and Second Stitch (textile art supply) shoppers
4. Volunteers
5. Partner Organizations (Schools, Community Centers, etc.)

Phase 1 of the Fellow’s project will be to familiarize themselves with day-to-day operations at Stitch Buffalo, then coordinate with our staff and board members to develop unique sets of questions tailored to gather needed information from each audience.

In Phase 2, the Fellow will begin coordinating and conducting in-person interviews with select members of the Refugee Women’s Workshop, using the questionnaire developed in Phase 1. (Note: We are currently seeking additional funding to provide each artisan and her chosen interpreter with compensation for their time to participate in this interview.) The Fellow will be asked to communicate regularly with staff and mentors to evaluate and fine-tune this process, particularly during early interviews. The Fellow will also be asked to assist in creating and distributing questionnaires to each of the other audience types identified above. We anticipate that this will be conducted primarily via email, but select in-person/Zoom interviews or site visits may also be required.

For Phase 3, the Fellow will be asked to finalize all questionnaires, document distribution processes (for ongoing use of the questionnaires), and collect all data/responses gathered during Phase 2. This can be in the form of Google Docs, Forms, Sheets, etc.

Establishing these data-gathering tools and processes will aid Stitch Buffalo in documenting the impact of our programs and in fine-tuning our operations based on community feedback. This is especially important for 2024, which will be one of the most significant periods of transition in Stitch Buffalo’s history. We have just completed a capital campaign and will be moving into a custom-renovated space in early 2024—expanding our footprint by nearly 300% and providing the much-needed physical capacity to expand each of our program areas. Concurrently, we will be extending our outreach to refugee women artisans, to textile arts learners of all ages, and to retail customers throughout our region and beyond. Understanding the needs of these community members is critical to our growth, to serving their needs adequately, and especially to building trust among new arrivals to our community so that they can maximize the benefits of our programs. *It would be ideal if the Fellow has a special interest in gender studies or refugee issues. While not required, there would be a high affinity match with an individual who enjoys the textile arts or art in general.*

## **The Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team (BILT)**

371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo NY 14202 | <https://biltbuffalo.org/>

**About:** BILT builds a strong, healthy refugee and immigrant community in and around Buffalo, NY by developing powerful leaders of faith and moral courage to address the educational, social, economic and political needs of the community.

**Project:** Since the establishment of The Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team (BILT), we have worked to improve access to equitable education for English Language Learners (ELLs). Our goals: Understanding ELL students' grade-level and school placement in the Buffalo District. Learning the intersectionality of Limited Language Proficiency and Special Education placement.

The fellow will do research and conduct interviews or do one on one meetings with community members, teachers, and departments involved to get the information needed. The final product will be a report of the findings pertaining the goals of the project. Over the past two decades, Buffalo has become home to many immigrants and refugees. Access to equitable education is vital for economic upward mobility. ELL students must be equitably supported to reach their full potential, which will benefit the socioeconomic status not only of the individual, but also of the city.



## **Ujima Company, Inc.**

429 Plymouth Ave., Suite 2, Buffalo, NY, 14213 | <https://ujima.squarespace.com/>

**About:** Ujima is a Swahili word meaning “collective work and responsibility” and it is from this tenet that we derive our purpose. Ujima Company Inc. (UCI) is a multi-ethnic and multicultural professional theatre whose primary purpose is the preservation, perpetuation, and performance of African American theatre by providing working opportunities for established artists and training experience for aspiring artists. Ujima continues to use theatre to build the beloved community, shape and reflect our lives, participate in civic conversations, and serve as a vehicle for social change.

### **Project: “Theater for the Previously Incarcerated”**

The fellow will engage in research and join us in constructing an outreach and development plan to engage previously incarcerated individuals in using theater to help process their life experiences and share their stories. The fellow will present the following to our full-time staff: a detailed program implementation schedule, a plan for outreach and communication, and identify/ engage potential collaborative partners. This will take the form of a powerpoint presentation or if the fellow has another creative presentation method they would like to utilize, that can also be explored. *Interested fellows must have excellent verbal and written communication skills as they will be contacting a multitude of outside organizations and presenting original ideas on a weekly basis.*

## **Western New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO**

2421 Main Street, Suite 120. Buffalo NY 14214 | <https://wnyalf.org/>

**About:** The mission of the WNYALF is to improve the lives of and increase the power of working families, bring fairness and dignity to the workplace, and secure social equity.

### **Project: “Learning the Landscape of Organized Labor: A Summer with the Western New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO”**

The High Road fellow will spend the summer learning about the operation and key functions of

an area labor federation. The High Road fellow will have an opportunity to shadow and learn about the wide variety of work our organization engages in, including communications, political action, organizational development and more. The fellow will also have the opportunity to learn about our affiliate unions' work through shadowing collective bargaining and participating in direct actions. By the end of the fellowship, the fellow should deepen their understanding of the area labor federation structure, develop an understanding of the broader labor landscape in WNY, and develop their strategic communication skills.

The final project will involve a deep dive into two of the functions: communications and political actions. The fellow's final work product will be a 2024 Political Scorecard for WNY. The fellow will research candidates in upcoming elections with specific consideration toward their past stances, and support of working people. The fellow's final work product will be used to deepen our understanding of how different candidates may help or hinder working people in the region. The fellow will be able to develop their understanding of organized labor values, strategic communication, and best practices for digital media. The WNYALF wants to ensure that working people in Buffalo have access to the information necessary to make an informed decision at the polls.

## **WNY Law Center**

37 Franklin Street, 2nd floor Buffalo, NY 14202 | [www.wnylc.net](http://www.wnylc.net)

**About:** The WNY Law Center is a nonprofit legal services organization of legal professionals representing low-income people in a full range of civil matters. We engage in direct representation of homeowners facing foreclosure as well as advocacy and education in fair lending, consumer debt issues, preserving housing, and passing on generational wealth. The mission of the Western New York Law Center is to ensure that all members of our community receive the full range of civil legal services including "non-traditional" legal assistance like policy advocacy and legal education.

### **Project: "Small Business Legal Clinic (SBLC)"**

The Small Business Legal Clinic (SBLC) was launched in January 2017 to promote socioeconomic mobility and neighborhood revitalization by providing essential free legal services to low-income small business owners and entrepreneurs from underserved communities at any stage of their business lifespan. Our main goal is to help our clients start and sustain their business by providing them with legal services that would otherwise be cost prohibitive, and by connecting them with our small business partner network who provide business advisement and trainings to ensure their long-term success. Unfortunately, a reality is that a majority of small businesses fail. For our proposed project, we want to collect case studies from past SBLC clients who formed their businesses over two years ago to determine whether they are still in business, and to get a full picture re which are still in business vs. which are no longer in business, broken down by industry, location and demographics of the business owner(s). The objective of the project would be to show the effectiveness and importance of intervening in business startups with sound legal advice.

## Workers United Upstate NY & VT

2495 Main Street, Tri Main Building, Suite 556, Buffalo, NY 14214 | <https://workersunitedupstate.org/>

**About:** No shop is too small and no voice is too quiet to be heard. We will devote our time, energy, resources necessary to educate, advocate, and support our members.

### **About: “Organizing Internship”**

The organizing intern will participate in an ongoing campaign, engaging with worker leaders and assisting the organizing committee and lead organizer in having organizing conversations, drafting leaflets, coordinating and assisting with bargaining, and other duties as needed. The goals are to give the intern an uplifting and insightful experience of a new organizing campaign while giving them the opportunity to assist non-union workers build power in their workplace. The organizing intern will assist with the strategic research the campaign requires, including drafting a report to the organizers and committee encompassing various leverage points and how the campaign can win the right to organize. This work will contribute to a more equitable Buffalo by supporting Buffalo workers who are democratizing their workplace. *Ability to use Canva and Adobe Illustrator a plus but not required; video editing experience helpful but not required*

## DEMOCRACY SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS

Democracy Summer is designed for ILR undergraduate students interested in enhancing democracy through public service. Democracy Summer provides insight on the issues and access to leaders who are addressing major challenges *through government*. It provides a strong grounding in critical thinking, group dynamics, and problem solving. This summer, Democracy Fellows are considered High Road Fellows but their individual projects are coordinated with a specific public official instead of a not-for-profit organization.

One example of a potential Democracy Summer project this summer is to work with a local elected official and coalition on the Frontline Arts Organizations Sustainability Fund. We anticipate being at the implementation phase of the Frontline Arts Organizations Sustainability Fund, which is a \$2.5M seed fund allocation in the City of Buffalo’s federal stimulus funding package for frontline arts organizations and artists. Frontline Arts Buffalo (FAB) was closely involved in seeing that fund proposal through, and we are hoping to use this 3 year spend-down fund as a pilot towards showing the need for the city to invest significantly in the arts and cultural sector. The High Road Fellow will assist with developing evaluation methods and measures that we can use to track impact, and leverage grantmaking in storytelling for us to build momentum around the work.





This painting, titled "Regrowth" (acrylic on paper) was created by Lizzie Taber (High Road '21) for the High Road Showcase.

The engine represents Buffalo's position as a rust belt city and Lizzie's placement with Citizens for Regional Transit. The sky represents the growth and potential Buffalo has.

The 22 Native New York plants associated with spring and early summer represent the 22 High Road Fellows and healthy, sustainable growth.

