



Office of the County Executive

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

February 4, 2022

Honorable Helene E. Weinstein
Chair – Ways and Means Committee
New York State Assembly
Room 923 LOB
Albany, NY 12247
wamchair@nyassembly.gov

Senator Liz Krueger
Chair – Finance Committee
New York State Senate
Room 446 CAP
Albany, NY 12248
fiancechair@nysenate.gov

RE: Executive Budget 2022 – 2023

Dear Chair Weinstein and Senator Krueger:

Please accept this letter as my testimony regarding the proposed Executive Budget for New York State fiscal year 2022 – 2023. Governor Hochul's approach to the Executive Budget is refreshing and evidence of a new and essential collaboration among state and local governments. It embraces innovation and applies a lessons-learned approach to policymaking.

Monroe County is in the Finger Lakes Region and is bordered on the north by Lake Ontario. Included in the County are 19 towns, 10 villages, 21 school districts, two component BOCES, and the City of Rochester. It is home to eight colleges and universities, including two major research universities. We are blessed with two excellent health care systems that have worked tirelessly during the pandemic. Their collaboration and partnership has been essential.

With resources provided by the Federal CARES Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, and the American Rescue Plan Act, we have been able to supply residents and businesses with PPE, offer grants to small businesses, provide COVID testing and vaccination sites, and other important services.

With Federal funds, Monroe County and the City of Rochester collaborated to initiate a rental assistance program, administering approximately \$44 million in combined Federal emergency rental assistance funds. On November, 15, 2021, I certified to the Commissioner of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) that our program had committed all of its rental assistance funds. Since then, Monroe County has received approximately \$450,000 in reallocated federal funds. *If the state legislature should increase funding for state administered emergency rental assistance programs, we urge that you specify that residents of Monroe County shall be authorized to participate in the program.*

As Monroe County continues to recover from the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, investing in educational, cultural, recreational, and health care infrastructure should be prioritized alongside investments in public health, public safety, and workforce development.

Revenue Matters

Sales Tax: I support the Governor's proposal to end the diversion of the local sales tax to support the Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) program for towns and villages.

However, I am concerned with the proposal to make permanent the diversion for distressed health care facilities program. New York State controls health care policy and regulates health care facilities, and since the state income tax is more progressive than the local sales tax, I believe it is better suited for health care investments.

Moreover, local sales tax has been approved by local governments to support local operations. Monroe County will find this a particularly challenging burden since the County receives approximately 30% of local sales tax proceeds from the sales tax sharing program, and the entire diversion must come from this share. This places considerably more pressure on Monroe County's capped property tax than other counties. *Our request is that the legislature allow the diversion for distressed health care facilities to expire as was contemplated when it was first enacted.*

Sales Tax Permanency: *The County supports the Governor's proposal to make the 1% portion of the County Sales Tax permanent.*

Enhanced Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (eFMAP): Federal law requires each state to share eFMAP funding with local jurisdictions that also contribute to the payment of Medicaid expenses with local tax revenue. New York counties and New York City are among the jurisdictions entitled to a proportionate share of federal eFMAP funds.

New York State's practice has been to remit 80% of eFMAP funds to the counties and NYC and the remaining 20% upon reconciliation of the actual experience. The last time Monroe County received any part of the 20% retained by the state was in SFY 2016-2017. *We estimate that outstanding eFMAP obligation to Monroe County to be approximately \$31 million. We ask that the legislature construct a schedule to reconcile the amount owed to Monroe County and enact a schedule for repayment.*

Capital Requests

Frontier Field: Frontier Field is a 25-year-old stadium in need of New York State funding to meet Major League Baseball's (MLB) recently issued facility standards for Minor League Baseball stadiums. These upgrades will keep the Stadium up to date in a competitive market. The combined cost of these improvements is approximately \$27 million. *The County's request is for the state to invest one-half of the \$27 million cost.*

Frontier Field is home to the Rochester Red Wings. Professional baseball has been played in Rochester since 1877 and the current franchise started playing in the International League (now the Triple-A East) as early as 1885. It is the oldest franchise in baseball's minor leagues and one of only six professional baseball teams to play in the same city and the same league continuously and uninterrupted since the 19th century.

In 2020, MLB took over the minor leagues, eliminated 40 teams, and imposed new stadium condition requirements that must be completed by the beginning of the 2025 season. Twenty-five years of wear and tear combined with exposure to difficult weather conditions have taken a toll on the stadium. To remain competitive the stadium needs reconfiguration and replacement of seating, restroom upgrades, scoreboards, and other facilities. More about the upgrades and plans for the stadium are included in the attached Schedule A.

Seneca Park Zoo: Monroe County embarked on a transformational 10-year expansion of the Seneca Park Zoo in 2018. The project will increase the Zoo's footprint by more than 20%, improve guest services, allow the Zoo to add new species, and provide best-in-class habitats.

Already, we have added an African savannah exhibit for giraffes, zebras, white rhinos and ostriches. We have also opened Cold Asia habitats, providing a new home for snow leopards and the addition of red pandas. The Trail Side Café, a \$5 million project, now under construction will replace old and outmoded concession facilities and provide a comfortable location for indoor and outdoor dining and education programs.

In 2022, construction on a new Front Entry Complex that will house ticketing services, guest services, and a gift shop, will commence. In 2023-24 work on the final design and construction for the Tropics exhibit will begin. This exhibit will be at the heart of the Zoo and replaces the now demolished Main Building that housed most of the Zoo's animals dating back to 1931.

Completing the 2018 Seneca Park Zoo Master Plan will require an additional investment of \$84.5 million. The County is requesting New York State support for half of the project costs. More about the Seneca Park Zoo project can be found in the attached Schedule B.

Strong Memorial Hospital's New Emergency Department & Patient Tower Project: As the County Executive for a region that entered the COVID-19 pandemic with an acute bed shortage unlike any other part of the state, I am grateful for the inclusion of a \$200 million set aside for emergency departments modernization as part of the \$1.6 billion investment in health care infrastructure in Governor Hochul's Executive Budget.

I ask that the Legislature support the Governor's proposal and specifically support \$50 million for Strong Memorial Hospital's \$640 million Emergency Department (ED) and Patient Tower project. This project has significant support from our entire Rochester-area Assembly and Senate delegations, City of Rochester Mayor Evans, and key local business and economic development leaders.

As the region's safety-net hospital and source of specialized care, it is of enormous consequence and benefit to patients in Monroe County and the Finger Lakes Region, but also to the residents of the Southern Tier, Central, and Western New York regions.

Strong's ED has long outgrown its original design and has seen a 66% increase in patients since 2001. Even with a temporary engineered structure adjacent to its ED, all rooms are doubled or tripled up, beds are staged in corridors to accommodate increasing demand, and admitted patients can wait hours to be placed in a hospital room. It is critical that Strong increase the size of its Emergency Department and overall in-patient bed capacity to remain functional and meet community demand.

This will be the largest project in the University of Rochester's 171-year history and is estimated to produce more than 6,700 construction jobs and 1,800 permanent jobs.

Health Care

Local Health Departments (LHDs): LHDs have been at the frontlines in the battle against COVID, and they are essential partners, managing fast-evolving health care challenges. The Governor has proposed increasing the base grant for LHDs to \$750,000, or \$1.30 per capita. The Governor has also proposed allowing LHDs to claim up to 50% of personnel costs, including fringe for state aid reimbursement. *Monroe County supports Governor Hochul's proposals for LHDs.*

Medicaid: Governor Hochul has proposed a restoration of the 1.5% across-the-board cuts to Medicaid enacted over the last several years, as well as increasing this restoration by an additional 1%. *While Monroe County welcomes the restoration and increase, Medicaid costs, particularly for Monroe Community Hospital, the County's nursing home discussed in more detail below, remain a significant challenge.*

Rebuild the Healthcare Workforce: COVID-19 and its variants have placed the health care workforce under extraordinary stress. Retirements, career changes, illness, competition from for-profit nursing services, and other matters have significantly reduced the workforce. This is particularly true for long term care facilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, long term care has suffered the most significant workforce losses and remains the slowest to recover.

Early in the pandemic, Monroe County took two important steps to stabilize and expand its healthcare workforce. In cooperation with the Civil Service Employees Association, the principal union representing staff at Monroe Community Hospital, the County increased wages for approximately 300 certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and other direct care staff.

Looking to the future, the County provided funding for its innovative MPOWER program. MPOWER partners with Monroe Community College to provide academic training, and eight long term care facilities and home care providers (including Monroe Community Hospital) to provide clinical training. The program provides a career path, a job guarantee, and

an opportunity to move up the health care career ladder, all without cost to the student. More than 300 Monroe County residents have participated in the program.

For these reasons, Monroe County strongly supports the Governor's proposal to rebuild and grow the healthcare workforce by 20% through expanded health care training, education, and recruitment of healthcare and direct support professionals; as well as the proposal to provide \$1.2 billion for healthcare and mental hygiene worker retention bonuses; and \$500 million for cost-of-living adjustments to help raise wages for human services workers.

Health Care Transformation: *Monroe County supports the Governor's plan to establish a new \$1.6 billion capital program to fund health care facilities, including nursing homes.*

Long Term Care - Skilled Nursing Facilities - Monroe Community Hospital: Monroe County owns and operates Monroe Community Hospital (MCH). MCH is a fully certified residential health care facility, providing long-term care for individuals with complex health conditions requiring higher levels of medical and nursing care. MCH proudly provides assistance to the underserved and under-resourced residents of our community and accepts a significant number of residents who have exhausted their acute care needs and require an altered level of care. The pandemic and staffing shortages have reduced the current census from over 500 to approximately 400

Medicaid is the primary or sole payer for ninety percent of the residents at MCH. MCH provides long-term care and rehabilitation services for residents of all ages, from children to aging adults. Nearly three-quarters of MCH residents use wheelchairs, and the majority have complex medical and psychological needs requiring extensive medical, nursing, and professional care.

Based on the current Medicaid reimbursement rate and the current census, the cost of caring for Medicaid supported MCH residents significantly exceeds the reimbursement rate. The Medicaid rate increase proposed by the Governor will not erase this deficit. The County has included \$8 million in its 2022 to budget to cover the anticipated deficiency.

While we applaud the Governor's proposed Medicaid adjustment, it will not address the full financial challenge faced by our publicly-owned long term care facility serving residents with challenging medical and mental health needs. Moreover, well-intended policy changes, implemented in response to dreadful consequences of the pandemic, are adding to costs without the benefit of a comprehensive plan for long term care, or its relationship to home care and our hospital systems. In some instances, these cost are changing the trajectory of the long term care system not as we might rationally desire, but as the financial stresses of the current system dictate. We support efforts to reexamine the long term care system with the objective of supporting a system that best serves the growing population of older adults.

Long Term Care – Staffing: Monroe County fully supports efforts to provide residents of long term care facilities with a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment. Health care staffing

was challenging before the pandemic and is even more challenging today. Monroe County has increased healthcare worker wages and supported our MPOWER education and training program discussed above to retain existing staff and recruit new staff. These efforts are paying off as, they are gradually improving staffing.

However, in the midst of the current crisis and with evidence of the shortage of healthcare workers, legislation signed into law last year placed additional staffing requirements on long term care facilities. The staffing labor pool for healthcare workers is shallow and shows little hope of improvement in the near term. The remaining option is to regulate the facility census to match the available workforce. Hence, despite MCH's certification for 566 beds, the current census is only approximately 400.

During the Omicron surge, regional hospital beds were and remain at a premium with many beds occupied by patients ready to be discharged to a long term care facility or residential rehabilitation facility. Despite MCH's unoccupied long term care beds, MCH could only make additional beds available with the assistance of National Guard personnel provided at Governor Hochul's direction.

Another perplexing irony is that MCH has more than enough staff to satisfy the total nursing direct care hours its current census demands, but that total has an insufficient number of CNA hours. In other words, the law does not allow MCH to substitute CNA hours with more skilled nursing hours despite the lack of available CNAs.

Finally, the Department Of Health's draft regulations, currently in the approval pipeline, provide that facilities that fail to achieve required minimum staffing levels in either category will face financial penalties ranging from a maximum of \$2,000 to a minimum of the \$300 per day. The minimum penalty will apply even if DOH finds that extraordinary circumstances, including an acute labor supply shortage, exist.

We agree with **Leading Age New York's** assessment of the proposed regulations and the potential impact of the new law and the draft regulations. *Given these circumstances, Monroe County asks that the legislature:*

1. *Suspend the application of the Chapter 156 of the Laws of 2021 and DOH's proposed regulations until the availability of qualified personnel in the region reasonably equates to the regional need for qualified health care professionals.*
2. *Permit long term care facilities to meet the direct patient care hours with nursing and other professional staff working directly with patient's should the shortage of CNAs persist.*
3. *Support Governor Hochul's workforce development proposals for healthcare workers.*

Maternal Health: The Governor has proposed an annual commitment of \$28 million to address systemic inequality and create a safer birth experience for mothers and families across the state. The program will provide access to holistic and prenatal and post-natal care. *I support this effort.*

Infrastructure

Governor Hochul's infrastructure proposals bring a new dimension to essential long term planning. I will focus on two areas critical to our safety, economy vitality, human services, and the delivery of public services.

Transportation – Highways and Bridges: The Genesee River flows north to Lake Ontario through the center of Monroe County. The Erie Canal cuts through the County from its eastern border to its western border. These waterways demand a considerable number of bridges. The County, alone or with others, maintains 548 bridges and culverts in Monroe County, 1,500 lane miles of highway, hundreds of traffic signals and thousands of highway light fixtures, related devices, and services. The State, the Canal Corporation and local municipalities own and maintain many additional bridges and lane miles. They must all be functioning and in good condition for the community to thrive.

I applaud the Governor's proposal for a new statewide NYSDOT capital plan for highways, bridges, rail, aviation, and Upstate transit. Our local transportation network is dependent on reliable and resilient integrated state transportation systems. We ask for your support. I also thank the Governor for maintaining CHIPS and Marchiselli aid at the 2022 level, and support the continued funding of the PAVE NY and BRIDGE NY programs.

Housing: Governor Hochul has proposed a new comprehensive \$25 billion five-year capital plan for housing to replace the expiring plan. The new plan's goal is create or preserve 100,000 affordable homes, including 10,000 homes with supportive services. As we experienced with the last Housing plan, predictability is an important component for a successful capital-intensive program. In addition to providing a vital funding stream, the new plan encourages the use of imaginative construction and management systems that may serve to reduce the costs of providing this essential housing.

I support the provisions that will provide for new or rehabilitated housing units, supportive housing for the spectrum of citizens in need of such services, pathways to homeownership, low-income senior housing, and a program that would engage innovative strategies to reduce construction costs, including the use of modular-net-zero housing production, and construction using 3D printing.

Economic Development

Governor Hochul has proposed an extensive list of Economic Development programs and actions for the 2022-2023 budget year. I support these programs and urge their approval, including the following:

Regional Economic Development Councils: The Finger Lakes Region has had the benefit of a successful Regional Economic Development Council. The Council leadership and

staff understand the local economy, are responsive to local needs, and provide excellent communications. *The Council has been an asset to the Region, and I wholeheartedly endorse the Governor's proposal to extend and fund the program.*

Workforce Development: I have already noted support for the Governor's healthcare workforce program. We are also experiencing workforce shortages in other areas of the economy. The New York State Department of Labor's Jobs Board for Monroe County lists 12,200 jobs that are unfilled.

We welcome the Governor's proposal to provide up to \$350 million in work force development programs and her commitment to overhaul the programs, including specific improvements to the MWBE program. We also support the creation of new Office of Workforce and Economic Development in ESD to coordinate statewide efforts.

Child Care: The Governor notes in the Executive Budget Briefing Book that the Labor Market was tight during 2021. I already mentioned the 12,200 job openings in Monroe County. While there are many reasons for this shortage of available workers, one that is repeatedly mentioned is lack of affordable child care. We recognized this at the height of the pandemic and made temporary adjustments to our reimbursement policy to keep qualified daycare providers in business. On January 31, 2022, I announced additional enhancements to Monroe County's Child Care subsidy program that will make care more accessible and affordable for families and provide greater economic certainty for child care providers. The program is described in Schedule C.

The Executive Budget increases the eligibility for subsidized child care from 200% of the Federal poverty level to 300% over three years; provides \$125 million annually to maintain child care services when rates go up in 2022, and provides \$75 million to support child cares worker wages. *While I support these Executive commitments, providing available and affordable child care will continue to be a challenge.*

ConnectALL – Broadband Access: Monroe County initiated a broadband task force that is focused on the delivery of affordable, effective, and high speed internet service to all, including the economically disadvantaged. The pandemic experience has proven that effective access to high speed internet is the key to educational and economic success. *We strongly support the Governor's initiative to commit \$1 billion in new public and private investments to bring affordable broadband access to urban and rural areas statewide.*

Restore New York Communities Program: As a former town supervisor, I am keenly aware of the challenges of dealing with vacant or abandoned properties. *Therefore, I recommend the legislature approve a \$250 million appropriation for this program.*

Community Based Optional Preventive Services: *I thank the Governor for level funding the Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) program at \$12.1 million and urge the Legislature to support this program as well as provide \$2 million in the FY 2022-23 NYS Budget for Mt. Hope Family Center.*

Public Safety

One of the by-products of the pandemic has been the growth in crime, particularly violent crime. Our community has experienced a critical spike in gun violence with record numbers of deaths. This is a critical challenge that requires our focused attention. We must do all that we can to keep our homes and streets safe.

The Governor has identified several programs that Monroe County supports. I believe that solving this problem requires not only close collaboration among our public safety community, but the intense commitment, partnership, and funding of health, mental health, and educational agencies, alongside the local human services agencies that support and deliver services. Given the severity of this current crisis, we must be willing to examine and consider modifications to recent changes of law.

The Governor has several proposals focused on crime prevention. Recent events involving guns acquired by theft or illegally imported into New York State, including the gun used in the tragic deaths of NYC Officers Rivera and Mora emphasize the importance of this strategy. *Hence, I support the following initiatives:*

- 1. Understanding where guns involved in criminal activity came from and how they arrived, may help stem the flow of additional illegal guns into the state. I support the Governor's initiative to increase funding for tracking these guns and funding for New York's Crime Analysis Center Network.*
- 2. Increase in funding for Community Stabilization Units that assist local law enforcement. These units have been effectively deployed in our community.*
- 3. Increased funding for the Gun Involved Violence Elimination Initiative (GIVE) to help solve non-fatal shooting cases.*
- 4. Increased engagement in youth-centered programs and reductions to recidivism.*
- 5. Increased SNUG funding to expand hospital-based and street outreach programs to provide wrap-around services for youth, job-readiness and work-placement training.*
- 6. Funding for regional needs in the aftermath of gun violence.*
- 7. Additional funding for the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes (SCAHC) program.*

Opioids and Addiction - Substance Abuse Services:

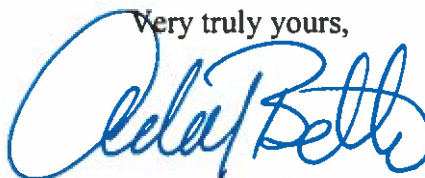
Solving the substance abuse crisis requires the committed and coordinated efforts of our health care, mental health, public safety, and human services agencies. The challenges are

complex and the failure to execute a coordinated plan with robust funding will result in more lives lost, diminished human potential, family distress, increased criminal activity, and economic loss. The Governor has proposed to increase the Office of Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) funding by \$402 million (56%). This appropriation will improve access to addiction treatment services, remove barriers to treatment, develop new and innovative treatment models, and increase the number of treatment facilities. The proposal also envisions a public health approach to improve harm-reduction services, health monitoring, and evidence-based community interventions to fight the opioid crisis. *I believe this to be the robust program that is essential to meeting the addiction challenges confronting communities across the state. I ask for your support for the program.*

Conclusion

I respectfully submit these comments as my testimony regarding the proposed Executive Budget for the 2022-2023 New York State fiscal year. I ask for your support regarding the matters outlined above. I am available to answer any questions you may have. You may also contact Bob Bergin, the County's legislative representative.

Very truly yours,

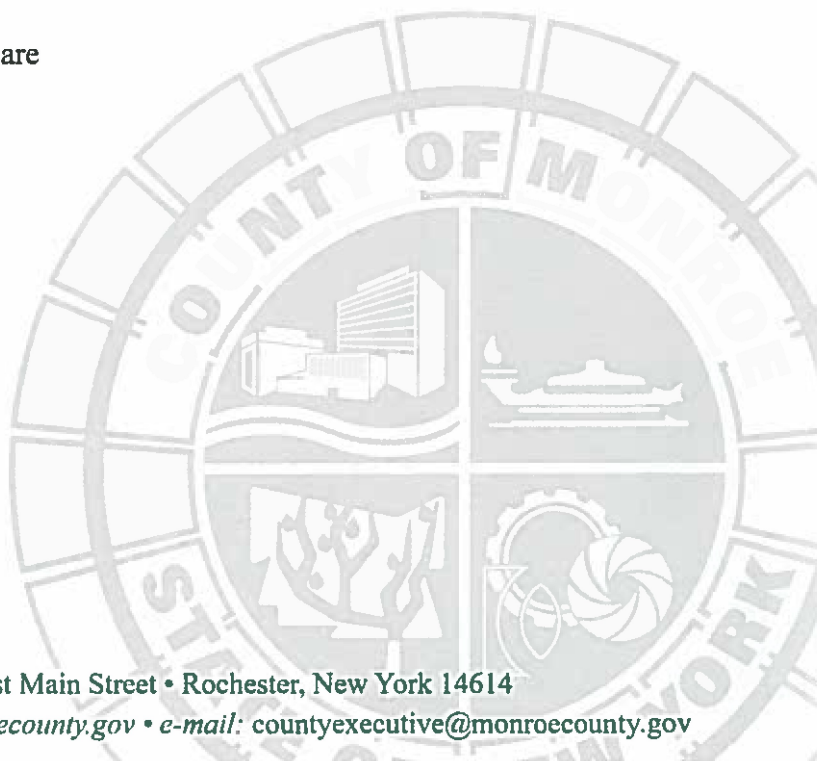


Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive

Attachments:

- Schedule A – Frontier Field
- Schedule B – Seneca Park Zoo
- Schedule C – Monroe County Child Care

Robert Bergin
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Schedule “A”
Frontier Field

An aerial photograph of Frontier Field, a baseball stadium. The image shows the green field, the reddish-brown infield, and the seating areas. The stadium is surrounded by parking lots and some commercial buildings. The text "02" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

02

FRONTIER FIELD

Frontier Field, and the Rochester Red Wings Minor League Baseball team are an important cultural asset to Monroe County, and keeping the team in Rochester for years to come is a top priority.

The Future of Frontier Field

The Triple-A East (formerly International League) Rochester Red Wings have played at the Monroe County-owned Frontier Field since its construction in 1997. It is one of only six professional baseball teams to play in the same city and the same league continuously and uninterrupted since the 19th century. Unlike other minor league teams, the Red Wings have had long and harmonious relationships with their Major League affiliate. They were the top minor league affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals for 32 years, the Baltimore Orioles for 42 years and the Minnesota Twins for 18 years. In November, 2020, the Red Wings became the new affiliate of the Washington Nationals.



Frontier Field seats 10,840 spectators for baseball, and the Red Wings annually draw hundreds of thousands of people to Downtown Rochester, supporting local tourism, creating additional foot traffic downtown, providing access to a safe outdoor activity for residents and families in the region. The stadium is also used for a variety of community activities including concerts, movie nights, charity events, festivals and high school sporting events and has hosted both professional hockey and professional soccer events. Frontier Field, and its associated events, annually draw an audience in excess of 450,000.



Modern professional stadiums have a lifespan of approximately 31 years, however Monroe County's intent is not to build a new stadium, but rather to make improvements that will extend Frontier Field's life for another 25 or more years.

**Frontier
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Two important factors have made upgrades at the Frontier Field imperative. The first is Major League Baseball's (MLB) reorganization of minor league baseball. The second the wear and tear on the 25-year old facility and need to make improvements to secure its place as viable facility.

• **Minor League Reorganization- Mandatory Stadium Improvements**

In 2020, Major League Baseball (MLB) reorganized Minor League Baseball by eliminating 42 franchises; limiting each MLB team to four minor league teams; reorganizing the minor leagues; regulating minor leagues operations; and establishing new mandatory standards for stadiums in which MLB affiliated minor league teams may play.

MLB officials have identified stadium deficiencies that require significant fixes to visitor and home clubhouses; a new hitting and pitching building; secure parking areas for players; outfield padding replacement; security facilities and other items. All minor league stadiums must eliminate deficiencies by 2025 and work must be begin immediately to accommodate an off-season construction schedule.

These mandatory stadium improvements will cost \$12 million and without them the Red Wings may be required to find another home in another community.

• **Aging and Competiveness Improvements**

After nearly 25 years of service in our challenging climate Frontier Field's basic infrastructure needs restoration and upgrades to meet customer expectations. The proposed improvements will

improve the customer experience; incorporate concepts that generate new revenue opportunities within the ballpark; and maintain the facility as a viable business entity and landmark venue for the greater Rochester metropolitan area.

While maintaining its historic integrity, the objective is to re-invigorate the facility to be on the leading edge of minor league facilities. The proposed improvements are similar to those recently completed, with State assistance, at the

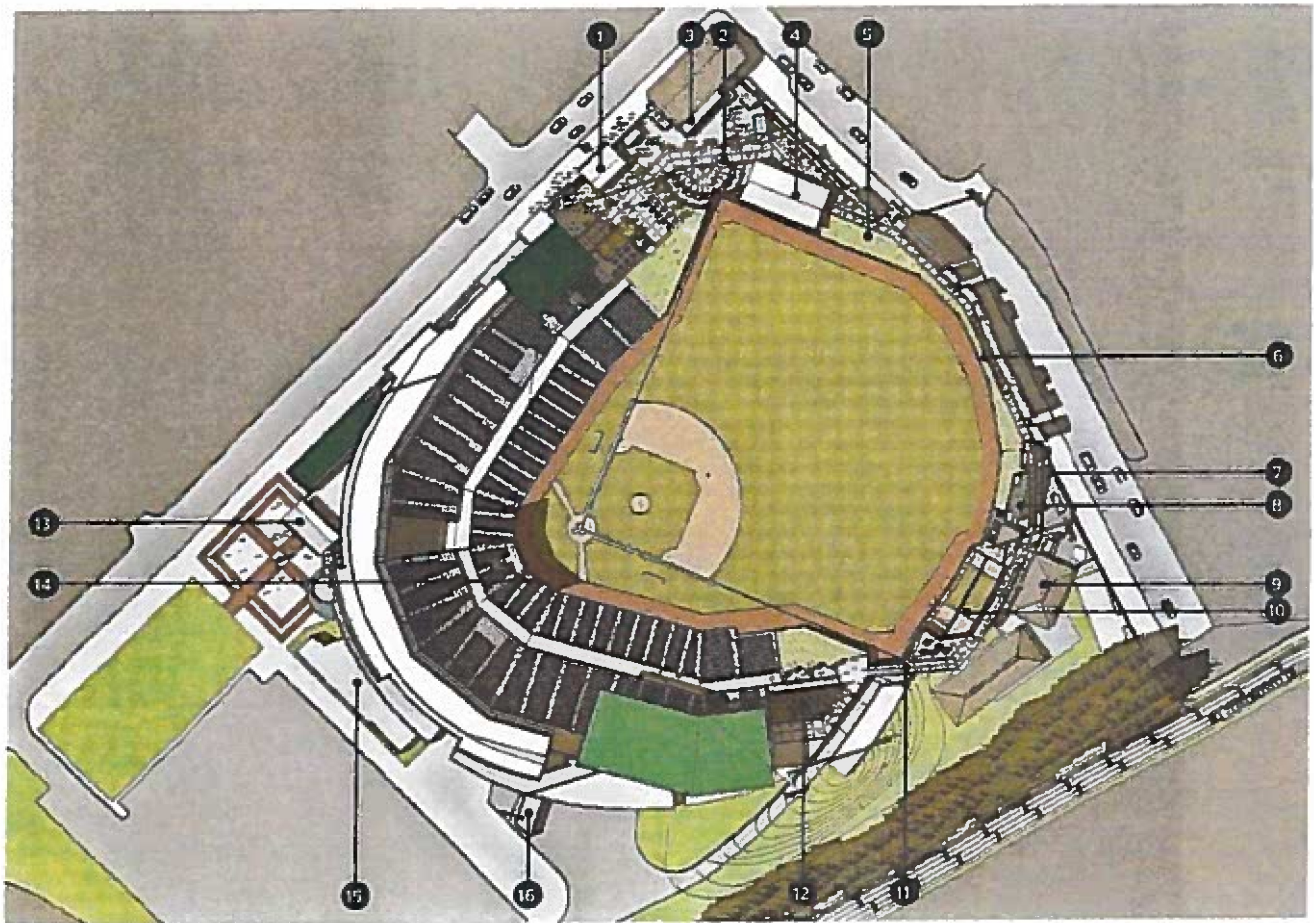


Triple-A NBT Bank Stadium in Syracuse.

Meeting these objectives will require essential improvements at Frontier Field including replacement of the 25-year-old seats, new elevators, replacement flooring, a wrap-around concourse, a hospitality deck, a new kitchen facility, kids play area, new concourse and exterior lighting, and a new message-score board among other items

The cost of these improvements is an estimated \$14 million.

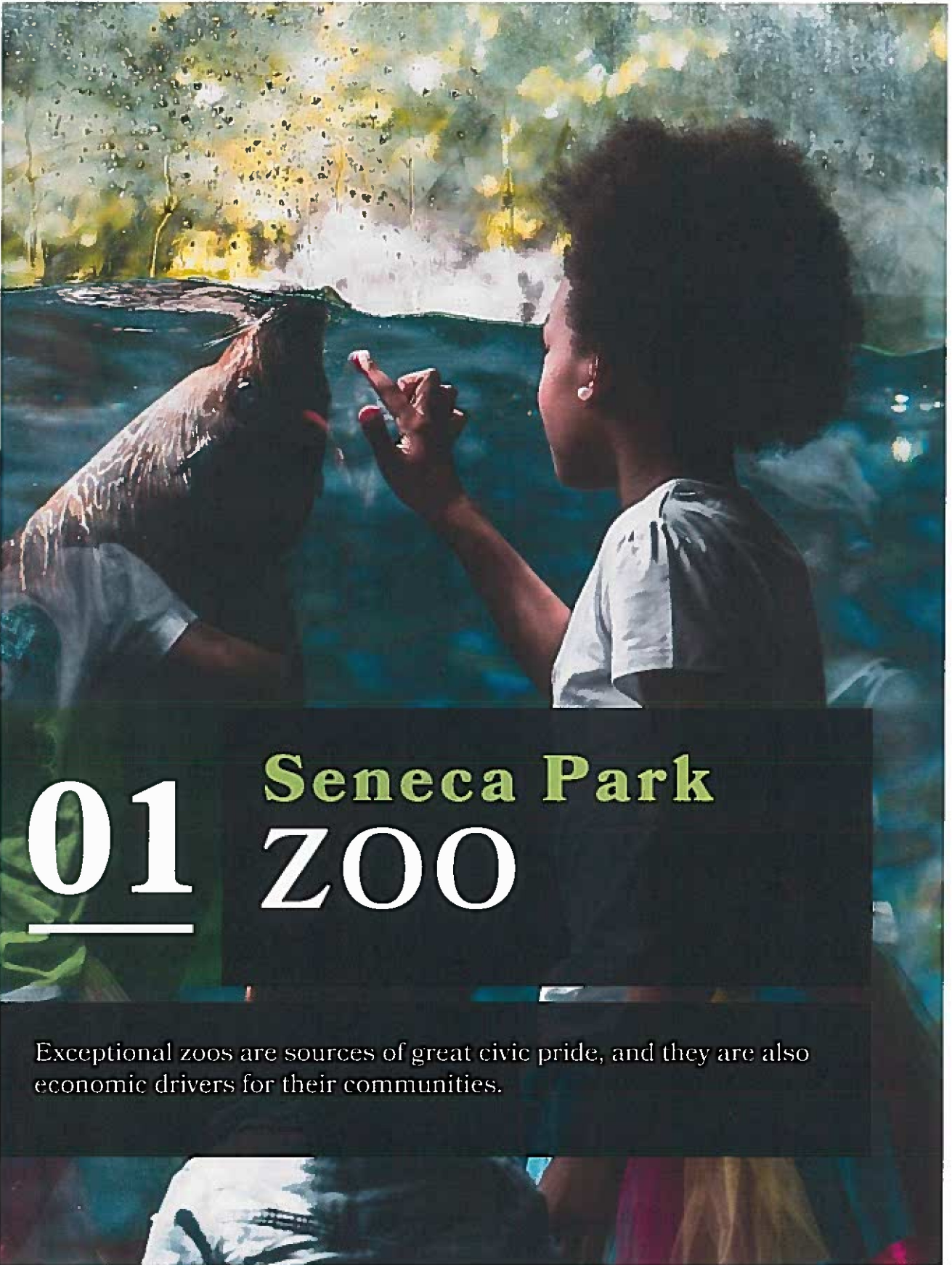
The overall cost of the mandated and aging-competiveness improvements is \$26 million.



Proposed new Frontier Field Stadium layout:

1. Left Field Entry Gate
2. Left Plaza
3. Firehouse Beer Garden
4. Left Field Patio
5. Left Field Seating Berm
6. Batters Eye
7. Kids Area
8. Outfield Restrooms
9. Picnic Pavilion
10. Tiered Bullpens
11. Right Field Pedestrian Bridge
12. Right Field Plaza
13. Home Plate Entry
14. Home Plate VIP Seats
15. Administrative Offices
16. Players Entrance

Schedule “B”
Seneca Park Zoo



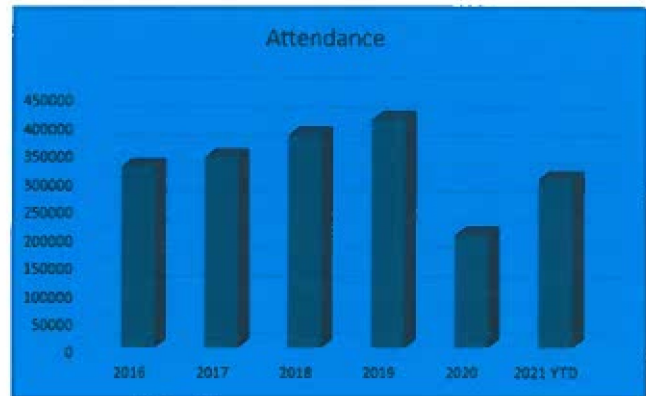
01 Seneca Park ZOO

Exceptional zoos are sources of great civic pride, and they are also economic drivers for their communities.

The Future of Seneca Park Zoo

Zoos are places where memories are made. Where we share nature-based experiences with friends and family members. Where people of all ages learn about wildlife and wild places, and the role we all must play in being environmental stewards. Each year in the United States, zoos and aquariums receive more than 183 million visitors – more visitors than NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB annual attendance combined. And 94% of those that visit agree that zoos and aquariums teach people about how we can protect animals and the habitats they depend on.

Annually, hundreds of thousands of people come to Seneca Park Zoo for a safe, recreational and education experience, and leave feeling inspired and hopeful. Pre-pandemic, Seneca Park Zoo hosted more than 405,000 guests in 2019. In 2020, when Seneca Park Zoo was closed for 104 days and then operated with reduced capacity, more than 200,000 guests attended the Zoo as their go-to place for a safe, educational experience with friends and family. This year, with capacity still reduced, Seneca Park Zoo is on track to host more than 340,000 guests.



The Seneca Park Zoo is an important cultural asset to Monroe County and the wider region.

Each year, tens of thousands of Pre-K and school-aged children are served onsite by Seneca Park Zoo's education programs, including ZooCamps, KinderZoo, Expeditions, Animal Presentations, the ZooScholar program, Scout Programs, Trek In the Twilight, Teacher Professional Development, and more. The ZooMobile outreach program reaches tens of thousands of community members of all ages through its presence in schools, day care centers, senior centers, and neighborhood festivals.

The building of the Conservation Learning Center, with four additional classrooms, will enable Seneca Park Zoo to nearly double the number of children and families served by ZooCamps, and will provide adequate space for hosting weekly special needs camps in the summer. The Conservation Learning Center will also provide space for adult learning/lectures year-round, and a wet lab specifically designed for classes from middle schools, high schools, and our local colleges and universities.





Render of front entrance courtesy of CPLteam

Seneca Park Zoo is a welcoming place for all. We now have reimagined an entire new entrance experience and new expansive and exciting animal habitats just within the gates of Seneca Park Zoo. And to become an exceptional zoo, we must focus not solely on animal habitats, but on how we can truly serve the needs of guests and our community. It is one of the few places in our region that truly serves our entire population.



Tropics Complex render courtesy of CPLteam

Seneca Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), and is distinguished by being one of longest continuously-accredited zoos in the country. Seneca Park Zoo and Zoo Society staff play active leadership roles with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, including serving as site accreditors, serving on standing committees, and serving in key roles in Species Survival Plans (SSPs) and SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction) programs. AZA Accreditation standards –both for animal welfare and for the guest experience– are constantly advancing. Maintaining accreditation is crucial to being able to participate in cooperate breeding and animal transfer programs, which provide us with signature species including snow leopards, Masai giraffes, red pandas, Bornean orangutans, and multiple species of lemurs.



The Main Seneca Park Zoo Building was razed in 2018 as a requirement to maintain the Zoo's accreditation through AZA; bringing back the iconic species of orangutans and lemurs requires state-of-the-art facilities surpassing current accreditation standards.

Regionally, Seneca Park Zoo is actively involved in numerous conservation efforts, including the reintroduction of lake sturgeon to the Genesee River, prevention of the extinction of Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, and restoration of native habitat for pollinators such as monarch butterflies. Internationally, Seneca Park Zoo has raised and distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to conservation partners including Polar Bears International, SANCCOB, Snow Leopard Trust, International Elephant Foundation, Red Panda Network, Health in Harmony, and Centre Val Bio. In addition, Seneca Park Zoo personnel have traveled to South Africa, Panama, Manitoba, Uganda, and Madagascar to participate side by side in conservation efforts with our partners.

Behind the scenes at Seneca Park Zoo, animal care and animal health staff are participating in numerous species-saving science programs, collaborating with accredited zoos across the country and the globe to advance scientific knowledge of the animals in our care. This science is directly aimed at ensuring the viability of each species for generations to come.

On grounds, Seneca Park Zoo's goal is for our guests to be inspired by the animals they encounter, and learn how they can become environmental stewards for our planet and for all species. We seek to model and teach sustainable practices, and we aim for guests to leave Seneca Park Zoo feeling hopeful, and having learned at least one thing they can do to live more sustainably. The new buildings, as national models for sustainability, will send a clear message that Seneca Park Zoo is a leader in environmental conservation.

Monroe County embarked on a transformational 10-year expansion of the Seneca Park Zoo in 2015. The project will increase Seneca Park Zoo's footprint by more than 20%, improve guest services, allow Seneca Park Zoo to add new species, and provide best-in-class habitats.

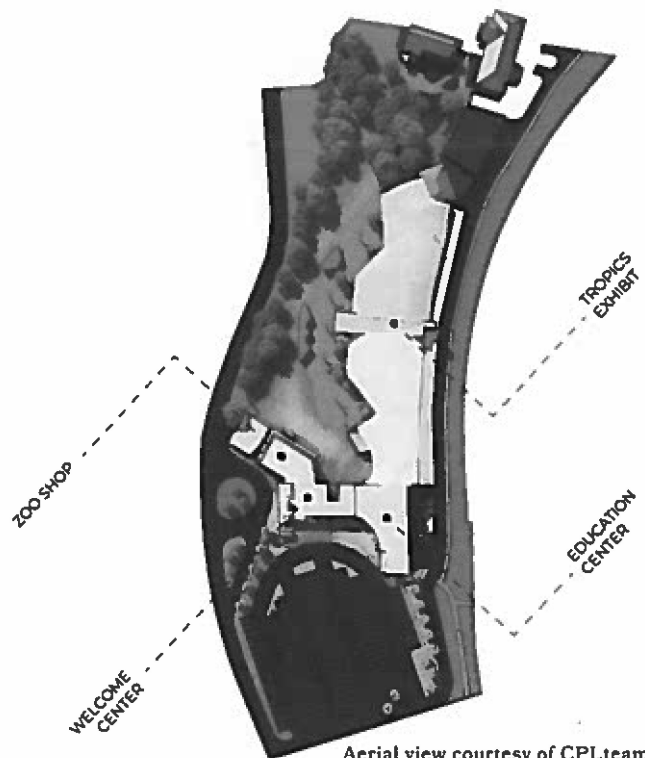


Tropics Complex render courtesy of CPLteam

Completing the 2015 Seneca Park Zoo Master Plan will require an additional investment of \$84.5 million, including \$15.2 million to replace the Front Entry Plaza and \$69.3 million for the Tropics Complex. The County has already committed nearly \$26 million to Master Plan Projects. Prior to the adoption of the Master Plan, the County made several investments that served as the foundation for the Master plan, including an education center, additional parking, a new lion exhibit, a new elephant holding and exhibit area, and improvements to the Rocky Coast exhibit. The total cost of these was \$14 million.

The future of Seneca Park Zoo includes:

- Seneca Park Zoo members, and tens of thousands of school children and groups which annually use the Seneca Park Zoo as an outdoor classroom.
- New classroom spaces for adults and youth in the Conservation Education Center will allow the Seneca Park Zoo to expand its programming in ways that better serve the needs of Monroe County and our region, such as adding more ZooCamps designed specifically for children with special needs, providing appropriate learning labs for high school and college classes, and creating spaces for adult lectures and other learning opportunities. New event spaces – used as classrooms and program space by day – will provide spectacular views for corporate and private use of the facility.
- Buildings and experiences that serve as a national model for inclusion with features designed specifically to ensure Seneca Park Zoo is a safe and welcome place for all.
- Buildings that clearly exhibit Seneca Park Zoo's commitment to sustainability and conservation, with water recapture, solar panels, and other features that lower the Zoo's carbon footprint.



Aerial view courtesy of CPLteam

- A Tropics Complex that will be the only one of its kind in North America, with a true wow factor drawing new audiences who will be excited to return again and again. The Tropics Complex will feature indoor and outdoor habitats for multiple species of lemurs, Bornean orangutans, and scores of species representing the ecosystems of Madagascar and Borneo. With unique play features, vantage points at multiple elevations, and an indoor rainforest, the Tropics Complex will draw visitors year-round from our region and beyond.
- A Welcome Center, Entry Plaza, and Conservation Education Center designed to meet the growing demand for visitation and for the education and conservation services and programs of the Seneca Park Zoo. These guest-facing buildings will provide stream-lined entry for the public,

Schedule “C”
Monroe County Child Care Initiatives



News from the Office of
Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive



**For immediate release:
January 31, 2022**

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES ENHANCEMENTS TO THE COUNTY'S CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Reduced parent fees, quicker access to services, eligibility guarantees and payments to providers when children are absent make care more accessible for parents and stabilizes revenues for care providers.

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced additional enhancements to the county's child care subsidy program that will make care more accessible and affordable for residents and provide greater economic certainty for child care providers struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the plan, families receive a one-year guarantee of child care with the average family saving almost \$900 a year.

"For many of our working families, child care can be both an economic necessity and a barrier to advancement and greater opportunity," said County Executive Bello. "These common sense changes make it easier for parents to access and afford the quality child care they need to work and provide for their families or pursue educational and other training opportunities. These changes also help struggling child care providers by ensuring they receive more consistent payment, even when children may be absent due to illness or other circumstance."

"Supporting working families is my top priority, and that means ensuring they have safe, reliable, and affordable options to care for their children," said Congressman Joe Morelle. "In addition to helping parents save money, these changes will stabilize revenue for providers and lead to greater workforce participation—but most importantly, they will provide piece of mind for families who are struggling. I'm proud to have secured funding to make this a reality and remain grateful to County Executive Bello for his leadership in making investments that uplift our entire community."

The changes are as follows:

- While the state Office of Children and Family Services requires all counties to cover the cost of at least 24 absences from day care each year, County Executive Bello has opted to cover up to 80 such absences, the maximum number allowable by law. This decision ensures parents can keep their child enrolled in their chosen program while helping stabilize revenues for child care providers. Effective Jan 1, 2022.
- Effective Feb. 1, 2022, Monroe County will decrease the parent fee for subsidized child care to 1%, the lowest allowed under state law. For working parents in the subsidized day care program, this translates to more than \$1.7 million in out-of-pocket savings just this year. More

than 1,800 families will see a reduction in out of pocket costs, with an average annual savings of \$939.

- In partnership with the Child Care Council, the county has enhanced the Department of Social Services' Certificate of Eligibility program that gives parents and guardians faster access to child care services. Parents can show this certificate to a provider of their choice, verifying eligibility for child care subsidies so they are immediately able to begin care in order to start or keep their employment. Effective Jan. 7, 2022.
- Effective retroactively to December 1, 2021, families are guaranteed one year of care, with limited exceptions; children turning 13 during a given year will be able to remain in the subsidized care program through the end of the authorization period. In addition, the "break in need" period – the time a parent remains eligible for subsidies while not utilizing the program due to job loss or other circumstance – has been increased to 3 months; and household income will be allowed to increase up to 85% of state median income (about \$89,226 for a family of four) during the one-year guarantee without affecting eligibility.

"Quality, affordable child care fulfills our society's fundamental obligation to provide for the well-being of our children. It is also an economic necessity: parents can't work when they don't have child care," said Larry Knox, the CEO of The Children's Agenda. "Parents are constantly telling The Children's Agenda about their struggles to afford quality care, having to choose between paying for child care or a job or school or other necessities. These changes in Monroe County will make child care assistance more flexible and affordable, and they keep struggling providers — many of which are small, woman-owned businesses on razor thin margins — open to serve families. We commend County Executive Bello and his administration for responding to our community's needs. Investing in quality, affordable child care now yields returns many times over by supporting the health, education, and lifelong success of our children."

Family Size	85% NYS Annual SMI
1	\$46,397.62
2	\$60,673.82
3	\$74,950.01
4	\$89,226.20
5	\$103,502.39
6	\$117,778.58

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