



## COUNCIL VP HARRIS LAUNCHES CHILDHOOD POVERTY INITIATIVE

Rochester City Council, via the People, Parks and Public Works Committee, will hold a series of hearings with local childhood advocacy leaders as **City Council Vice President LaShay D. Harris** launches a new coalition-building initiative to fortify the ongoing effort to combat childhood poverty in Rochester.

“Too many children in Rochester have suffered from poverty for too long,” said Vice President Harris, who chairs the People, Parks and Public Works Committee. “It is clear that the City of Rochester needs to do more to combat childhood poverty and find new and innovative solutions that help families afford basic needs like food, housing, tutoring, and extracurricular activities. With the People, Parks and Public Works Committee’s new approach, we can build and strengthen relationships that will be crucial to fighting childhood poverty in our city.”

Dates of the hearings will be announced at a later time. Vice President Harris will call on local experts to take stock of the ongoing effort to reduce childhood poverty within the city and in the broader Rochester area.

Alongside the hearings, Vice President Harris will host a youth session on Nov. 18 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Park. There, Rochester youth will have an opportunity to participate in dialogue with elected officials and advocates, and offer their own ideas and experiences related to childhood poverty in the city.

Additionally, City Council has launched a new survey in collaboration with The Children’s Agenda to better understand the impact of childhood poverty. The survey, accessible at <https://forms.office.com/r/jeN1QJ8SDg>, will take input from city residents on the causes and solutions to childhood poverty to help inform an upcoming report by the People, Parks and Public Works Committee. Residents may also complete the survey in Spanish at <https://forms.office.com/r/CkbrSNx9Gd>.

“We are thrilled to partner with Rochester City Council and Vice President Harris to work toward a better future for children and families in Rochester,” said **The Children’s Agenda CEO, Larry Marx**. “This effort marks an opportunity for our community to renew focus on the solutions for alleviating the concentration of childhood poverty in the city of Rochester.”

As a supplement to the survey, the People, Parks and Public Works Committee has launched an open response page, giving residents and advocacy organizations an opportunity to offer long-form ideas on the causes and potential solutions to childhood poverty. To complete the open response supplement, those interested can visit <https://forms.office.com/r/QQV59K7Lk1>.

Organizations interested in submitting larger documents can do so by contacting [Council@CityofRochester.gov](mailto:Council@CityofRochester.gov).

Looking internally, the People, Parks and Public Works Committee will issue a survey to all departments within the City of Rochester. The internal survey will allow City Council to work with the Evans Administration to take stock of ongoing efforts, successes and challenges in the work to combat childhood poverty in Rochester.

“It is crucial that we work with the Evans administration to ensure our City government is doing everything it can to help struggling families in Rochester,” said **City Council President Miguel A. Meléndez, Jr.** “We will also lean on our partners outside local government to gain new perspective on potential policy solutions that will advance equity and support positive outcomes for our residents.”

Using this three-pronged, holistic approach, the People, Parks and Public Works Committee aims to build new relationships, and strengthen existing ones, to bolster the fight against childhood poverty in Rochester. The Committee’s final report is expected later this year, and will identify potential policies for which City Council can advocate in order to reduce childhood poverty at the City, County, State and Federal level.

“It is my hope that this effort will lead to tangible, actionable policy solutions that will uplift struggling Rochester families and pave the way to a better life for our city’s most underserved children and families,” said Vice President Harris.

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