



March 26, 2025

## Upward Mobility Initiative

**Advancing Residents' Upward Mobility by Fostering Dignity and Belonging, Economic Success, and Power and Autonomy**



Upward Mobility Initiative

# Agenda and Housekeeping

- Part One: Overview of the Framework and Deep Dive into the 3 Part Definition of Upward Mobility from Poverty
  - **Martha Fedorowicz**, Director of Technical Assistance, Upward Mobility Initiative, TTA IDEA Network Co-Chair, Research to Action Lab, Urban Institute
- Part Two: Insights from the Field
  - **Alexis Weaver**, Policy Program Manager, Research to Action Lab, Urban Institute
  - **Christopher Rush**, Collective Impact Manager, Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
- Part Three: Extend Q&A and Discussion (2:15-2:30 p.m. ET)
- **Please use the chat function as questions arise during the presentation**
- **Today's presentation will be recorded and shared!**



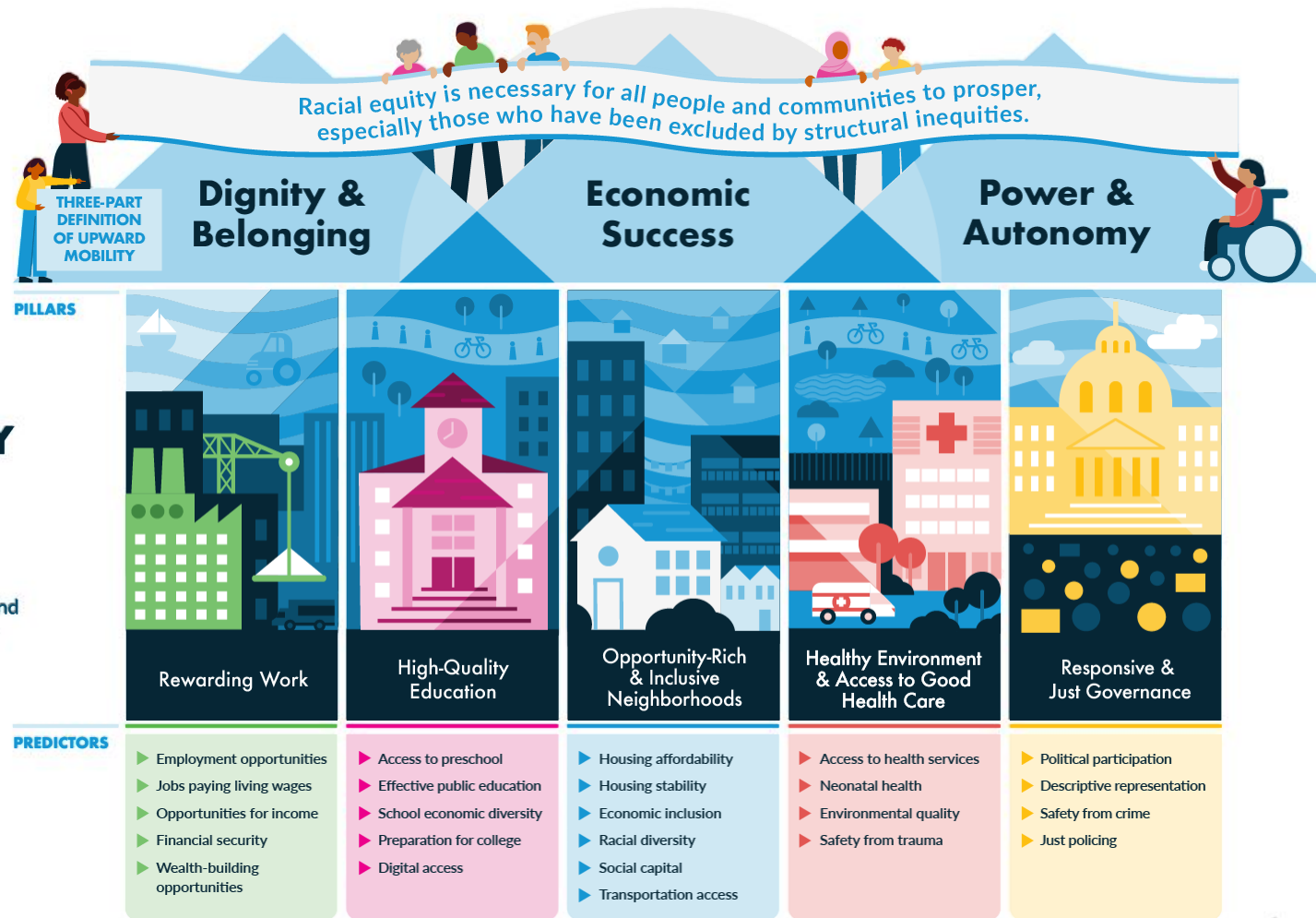
# Part One

## Overview of the Framework and Deep Dive into the 3 Part Definition of Upward Mobility from Poverty



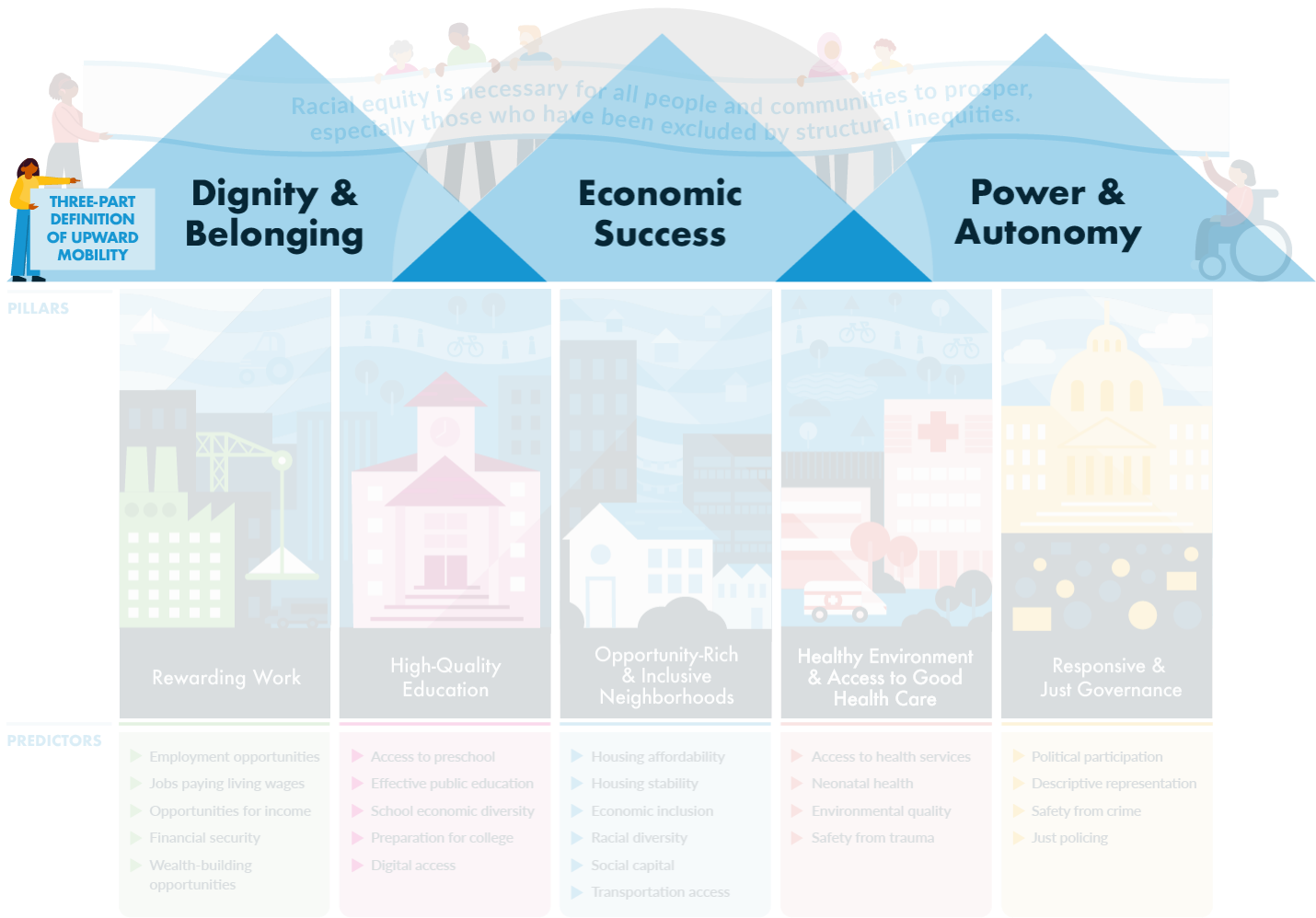
# UPWARD MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

The Urban Institute's evidence-based foundation for community efforts to expand prosperity and narrow racial inequities.



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The Three-Part Definition





## The Three-Part Definition & Structural Racism: Housing Example

Barriers to homeownership may also create more residential instability and thus, less social connectedness and feelings of rootedness.

Barriers to homeownership, devaluation of homes in neighborhoods of color, and residential segregation have led to less ability to build wealth, greater financial burden, and less economic success for people of color.

Discriminatory lending practices, residential segregation, and intentional redlining may limit someone's ability to feel that they can make choices about their life and accomplish their goals.



## The Three-Part Definition & Structural Relationship: Health Example

Poor health and wellbeing can impact someone's ability to form relationships.

Poor health caused by the inequitable placement of healthcare services and increased exposure to environmental contaminants in communities of color, can lead someone to miss work more frequently and thus lose opportunities to make a consistent living or cause them to spend a large share of their income on addressing health challenges.

Poor health and wellbeing can impact someone's ability to cope with stress and have the positive mental health needed to feel that they can make the right choices.

# The Three-Part Definition & Disability Equity



TOPICS | [STORIES, DATA TOOLS, BLOGS](#) | [EVENTS](#)

URBAN WIRE

## Embedding Disability Equity into Efforts to Advance Upward Mobility

[Alexis Weaver](#), [Susan J. Popkin](#)

December 6, 2024



(iStock/Getty Images)

A [recent analysis](#) by the Urban Institute found that while many communities across the US have committed to dismantling barriers to prosperity, every community could do more to support residents' upward mobility from poverty.

Urban Institute's [Upward Mobility Framework](#) can help local leaders in these communities understand and improve key conditions related to people's economic success, dignity and belonging, and power and autonomy. Evidence shows these are critical to a person's ability to rise out—and stay out—of poverty.

# The Exemplars Research

- To understand how successful interventions have increased economic success, power and autonomy, and belonging
- To provide practitioners with tangible examples of programs that could demonstrate all 3 parts of the definition



[PLANNING GUIDE](#) [ACTION PLANS](#) [DATA](#) [METRICS & EVIDENCE](#) [REPORTS](#) [BLOG](#) [ABOUT](#)

RESEARCH REPORT

## Boosting Upward Mobility: Exemplars

By [Mary Bogle](#), [Martha Fedorowicz](#), [Keith Fudge](#), [Kriti Ramakrishnan](#), [Laura Sullivan](#)

June 15, 2020

[DOWNLOAD REPORT](#) 

(1.38 MB)



Although the challenge is daunting, programs and policies being implemented across the US have demonstrated success in supporting people's upward mobility. Researchers examined six interventions that have been shown through rigorous evaluation to boost economic and social mobility. By exploring these programs, they aimed to better understand how successful interventions have increased economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community. They also examined how more proactive application of the mobility dimensions might help to scale what is successful about each exemplar across varied places and even to the level of systems reform.

*This report was updated June 29, 2020, to incorporate information received after publication. On page 18, the number of children served annually by the Educare model is 3,800, not 2,700. The Educare model also serves adults, but we cite the number of children to match the data reported by the project site, Educare Central Maine. On page 27, 3,800 children are 0.1 percent of the nationwide target population of children under 5 in poverty, not 0.07 percent.*

# The Exemplars

**Nurse Family  
Partnership**

**Educare**

**YouthBuild**

**CUNY-ASAP**

**Moving to  
Opportunity**

**Family Rewards**



## About Us



A national network of early childhood champions, we are early learning and care programs partnering with urban, suburban, rural and tribal communities to transform the lives of thousands of young children.

## Educare

Economic  
Success

### Children

Uses research-based curricula to improve educational outcomes



Educare children have strong language ability and retention, which could lead to better longer-term educational outcomes and future earnings.

### Parents

Schools are open for 8+ hours per day and children are required to attend at least 6 hours per day.

Parent network is supportive when parents need help with a ride for their children



Parents of Educare children may experience increased labor force participation from steady, reliable, year-round childcare, and more reliable supports.

### Teachers

Supports equitable, high-quality educator development and invests in teach training.

Works to create a positive environment for teachers.



Educare teachers may stay in their jobs longer leading to more stable employment.

## Educare

Power and  
Autonomy

### Children

Teaches children coping mechanisms that help children to self-regulate their behavior.



Parents report that their children have improved behavior at home.

### Parents

Uses the Touchpoints model which establishes that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children.

Uses the “Pathways to Success” family progress tool to support parents in setting goals for themselves and their family.

Parent Ambassador program trains parents in advocacy and leadership



Parents have better relationships with teachers and feel empowered to lead their families.

### Teachers

Is working to expand supports for staff well-being. They also acknowledges that early childhood staff are often the lowest paid professionals in the education sector (and are often parents themselves) and are advocating for more equitable pay.



Teachers may experience better mental health and well-being.

## Educare

Dignity  
and  
Belonging

### Children

Provides opportunities for children to socialize with other children at an early age.

Children attend more cultural activities (like concerts and museums) than Head Start children.



Children have improved relationships with their parents.

### Parents

Provides access to reliable childcare.

Parent Ambassadors are more involved in their community and the issues that affect their families.

Parents report feeling like a part of a community with other parents.



Increases their ability to participate in community and civic life and broaden social networks. Increases social capital.

### Teachers

Addresses staff retention challenges and invests in teacher training.



Educare teachers may feel more valued in their roles.

# Common Attributes Across the Exemplars

- They all intentionally offer some form of material assistance to participants
- They focus on building on human capital
- They tailor their services and supports to participants' goals
- They boost acceptance and reduce stigma

How might you assess your programs for alignment with the 3-part definition?

## Boosting Upward Mobility: A Planning Guide for Local Action (Step 7)

[Project Home](#)

[Step 1: Our Approach to Upward Mobility](#)

[Step 2: Use Mobility](#)

[Step 3: Ensure Your Local Government Is Ready to Undertake This Work](#)

[Step 4: Build Your Coalition for Systems Change](#)

[Step 5: Develop an Initial Understanding of Local Mobility Conditions](#)

[Step 6: Build a Fuller Picture of Mobility Conditions in Your Community](#)

[Step 7: Determine Your Strategic Actions](#)

[Step 8: Develop Your Measurement Plan and Consider Sustainability](#)

[Step 9: Finalize and Release Your Mobility Action Plan](#)

[Step 10: Sustain Momentum](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

### Step 7: Determine Your Strategic Actions

The goals of Steps 5 and 6 were to gather quantitative and qualitative information to create a fuller picture of conditions in your community that block or promote mobility from poverty and advance equity. In this step, we will guide the Mobility Action Plan team in selecting your strategic actions:



Figure 15: The process for selecting strategic actions for the Mobility Action Plan

This step is quite intensive, so it may be helpful to host a day-long retreat or a series of meetings over the course of several weeks. The Project Manager should

### STEP SEVEN / DETERMINE YOUR STRATEGIC ACTIONS

#### Upward Mobility Program Assessment

This assessment can be used to help local government stakeholders understand whether their programs embody the principles and factors that evidence shows boost mobility from poverty.<sup>18</sup> As you use this assessment, please remember this is **not** a program evaluation tool and will not tell you whether your programs are boosting mobility from poverty. Places interested in understanding the answer to this question might consider engaging evaluators or internal research teams to design and execute an impact evaluation. This assessment is also not a budgeting or prioritization tool. Keep in mind that one program is insufficient for boosting mobility from poverty. Rather, places seeking to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity must be prepared to make transformative, systems-level changes. The goal of this assessment is to understand whether your program environment is suitable and to what extent it can bolster mobility from poverty and advance equity.

#### How to Use this Assessment

Select a program that your jurisdiction operates that is intended to support mobility from poverty and equity. Respond to the series of questions below and write down your responses in the spaces provided. Terms in **bold** text are defined in the key terms box just to the right of where the term is used. Once you are finished responding to the questions, review your responses to identify areas of strength and elements your program might be lacking. You can find additional resources about each of these question groups at the end of the document.

Program Name:

Operating Department:

better outcomes for the people in your community who need them most.

► Access the complete PDF resource

▼ Supplemental resources

Access the supplemental resources referenced as part of the Step 7 PDF:

- [Creating a Community Vision Statement](#)
- [Creating a Theory of Change](#)
- [Upward Mobility Program Assessment](#)
- [Selecting Strategic Actions for your MAP](#)

# Questions?



# Part Two—Lessons From the Field

## Featuring Rochester, Monroe County, NY



# The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI)

## Who is RMAPI?



A **coalition** of the willing, comprised of individuals with lived experience and organizations working together to alleviate poverty in our community

- Focused on *Systems Change*
  - Using the Collective Impact Model
  - Theory of Change is inspired by Urban Institute's Upward Mobility framework.



Upward Mobility Initiative

# Theory of Change Systems Outcomes



## Opportunity-Rich Neighborhoods

The housing system offers affordable, safe, and desirable options

Residents have choices in safe, reliable, and high-frequency transportation

Public safety systems are effective and residents report feeling safe in their neighborhoods

Employers create opportunities in underserved neighborhoods

Governments ensure neighborhoods have well-maintained infrastructure



## Quality Education & Skill Building

Education systems graduate students college- and career-ready

Career pathways connect students to employment opportunities

Skill-building programs effectively engage residents outside of the K-12 setting



## Rewarding Work & Financial Security

Employers pay living wages and provide benefits that enable stability

Employers center equity in policies and practices, especially for entry- and mid-level employees

Employers address common barriers to employment

Banking and financial systems engage residents with affordable products and services

Predatory and exploitative fees, fines, and services are eliminated

Financial systems provide resources to BIPOC-owned businesses



## Quality Health & Social Care

Consistent healthy, affordable food options are convenient to all people

Health care and social care systems coordinate internally and externally to eliminate inequities in outcomes

Behavioral, health, and social care systems are culturally responsive and reflective of the populations they serve

Governments eliminate environmental hazards that impact health

Families have access to convenient, affordable, quality child care



## Accountable, & Responsive Government

Public safety systems eliminate disproportionately punitive policies and practices

Government policies are designed for equitable outcomes

Public safety, government, and legal/court systems are responsive and just

Government exhibits cultural and linguistic competence in their interactions with residents

Governments eliminate environmental hazards that impact health and ensure sustainability and resilience against climate change impacts



## Dignity, Inclusion & Belonging

Civic institutions make it easy for community members to engage and influence decision-making

Social networks and social institutions intentionally increase diversity along socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic lines

Community leaders share information and resources equitably within and across all neighborhoods

Educational systems actively cultivate social capital and networks

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# How might we employ 100 Black Men into family sustaining jobs?

## Current Employment Initiatives

Theory of Change Pillar	System Outcomes	Mobility Metric	Strategic Action	Progress	Lead	Next Steps
Rewarding Work & Financial Security	Employers center equity	N/A	Retention & Career Accelerator (RCA)	First cohort starts March 2025	Rochester Works	RW provide updates to WG. Provide insight where necessary
Quality Education & Skill Building	Skill-building programs engage residents	N/A	Community Connection	Planning Guide complete	EWG	Confirm host organization. Pilot begins in Spring

# Men on the Move: Feb. 28th

- 65 participants
- 25 employers, 10 educational vendors
- Free headshots, 50 suits given away
- Mini pilot that showed ways to engage men of color with opportunities for advancement



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# Civic Influencer Launch: A Transformative Start!

- The Civic Influencer Launched on Wednesday, March 12, 2025
- Equip and upskill individuals for meaningful civic participation.
- Participants feel **confident to engage, advocate, and take action** at any level of leadership.
- This was just the beginning—we're building momentum!





The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) has developed a list of policy priorities for 2025 aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty by shifting power to enable upward mobility for all families. Our decisions and actions will center on those who have been historically disadvantaged by racism, trauma, and community disinvestment.

## Policy Priority 1



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

- Construct and renovate rental housing at all price points and subsidize/incentivize new construction of deeply affordable rental housing
- Support inclusionary land use and zoning policies/practices
- Stabilize rental housing by limiting rent increases and preserving existing low-cost, quality rental housing
- Help renters stay in their homes through increased public funding for housing subsidies and vouchers and access to legal representation
- Ensure fair access to affordable homes, mortgages, credit, and funding for repairs for homeowners of color in order to address the racial wealth gap and increase housing and neighborhood stability

## Policy Priority 2



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

- Maximize the impact of public benefits by making them more accessible and facilitating smooth transitions off of them
- Increase public benefits based on inflation and current costs of living
- Address rising food insecurity through increased SNAP benefits and universal school meals
- Broaden access to Guaranteed Basic Income
- Strengthen tax credits for low-income families including the federal- and state-level child tax credits and the earned income tax credit
- Implement a living wage standard that ensures earned income is sufficient to meet essential living needs and build wealth



## Policy Priority 3



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

- Eliminate predatory fees, fines, and financial practices in systems that exploit people experiencing poverty
- Ensure low-income communities have fair access to credit, banking, and financial systems
- Prevent rollbacks to existing bail reform laws
- Eradicate punitive policies and practices in legal and public safety systems that disproportionately harm low-income and Black and Brown families and communities

## Policy Priority 4



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

- Address the shortage of family access to affordable child care by improving compensation and supporting education and training for the provider workforce
- Support family caregivers to provide child care by increasing their compensation and streamlining the process of becoming a legally exempt provider
- Increase the capacity of the child care system to provide flexible options and care for those with non-traditional hours or schedules and children with special needs
- Increase funding for greater access to out-of-school time programs for school-age youth

## Policy Priority 5

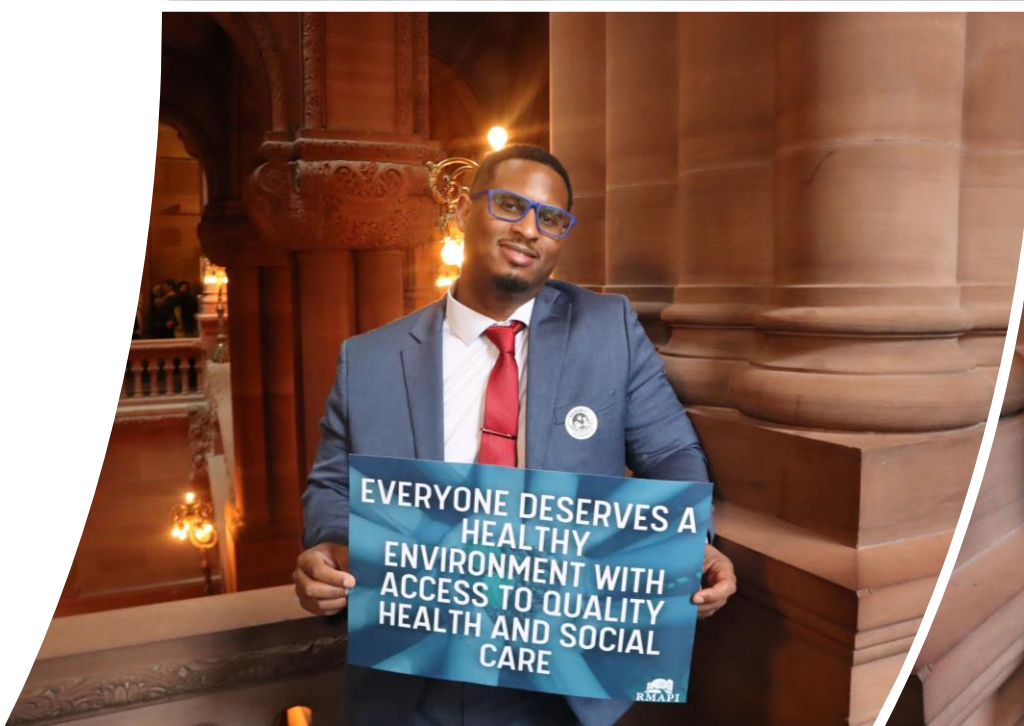


Increase access to culturally and linguistically responsive and affordable mental, behavioral, and physical health services.

- Invest in the mental health workforce by making education and training more accessible, prioritizing cultural responsiveness, and building on communities' strengths
- Ensure access to quality and affordable mental health, physical health, and social care services through increased reimbursement rates and equitable compensation practices
- Prioritize community-based solutions to mental health crises
- Change licensure and insurance regulations to allow mental health clinicians to serve patients in non-clinical settings, make it easier for providers to accept insurance, and reduce out-of-pocket costs for families

# Pathways to Progress: A Day of Action!

- Met with 35 legislators from across the state
- Dropped materials off to 15 others who were not available to meet
- 100+ Attendees
  - 50 from Rochester alone
  - Representation from every WG and SC!



# Lessons Learned

- Be intentional with ensuring a “critical mass” of those with lived experience is engaged in the work
- We must move beyond just workforce development when focusing on economic success
- Poverty is every one's problem, so everyone should be involved, public, private, non-profit sectors
- Data is important, as well as community member stories



# Questions?



# Upward Mobility Resources & Upcoming Webinars

- Visit [upward-mobility.urban.org](https://upward-mobility.urban.org)
- Subscribe to our [newsletter](#)
- Register for future trainings
  - For leaders interested in learning more about using the mobility metrics, register for our workshop on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (April 16, 2025)

**Contact us!** Email [upwardmobility@urban.org](mailto:upwardmobility@urban.org) to reach a member of the team



**Thank you!**

**(Stay on the Line for Extended Q&A)**



# Survey!



Scan me! or  
visit... <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/988c89222a8149828e658e218b47640d>

