



Our City. Our County. United for Change.

Adam Bello, Monroe County Executive
Mayor Lovely A. Warren, City of Rochester

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, October 28, 2020**

Commission to Host Virtual Community Forum on Business Development

(Rochester, New York) - The Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) will host a virtual Zoom Community Forum, 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 28. The Business Development working group of the Commission is seeking to garner input on policies, practices, procedures that directly affect Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs).

"It is my heart's desire to capture as much community input as possible," said RASE Business Development Commissioner Willie Lightfoot. "While the restrictions around COVID 19 has made it challenging to get feedback, this is a great opportunity for important, community voices to be heard. Information gathered from this session will help us prioritize our goals around identifying new laws, policies, and practices to make our systems more equitable for minority and woman owned businesses, now and in the future. I encourage all to register for this great forum. "

The RASE Business Development working group aims to identify strategies and resources necessary to expand minority and women-owned businesses. The group also plans to provide pathways to networking and negotiation skills in an effort to increase the economic vitality for local MWBEs.

"It is our hope and commitment to identify barriers that prevent opportunities for growth for local businesses of all sizes," said RASE Commissioner Marcus Dunn. "That's why we kindly encourage the community to participate in this meaningful conversation so that we can garner pertinent information and insight on how to create a more just and equitable system so that current and potential business owners can walk in to the industry on a level playing field."

Those interested in participating in the Business Development Community Forum can join the Zoom by pre-registering at www.rocrase.com/events. Spanish language and ASL services will be provided. The event will also livestream on the RASE Facebook page [at www.facebook.com/ROCRASE](http://www.facebook.com/ROCRASE) for those who simply wish to watch.

The Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) is an intergovernmental collaboration of the City of Rochester and the County of Monroe. In acknowledgment of national and local calls for systemic and institutional change, RASE was established to review, identify and recommend changes to local laws, policies and practices that will eliminate inequity across our city and county. RASE has nine working groups focused on encouraging community input to inform the recommendations for systemic change that will support equity in our community.

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