



Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

December 15, 2025

RE: City of Buffalo Transition and Transformation Fund

To whom it may concern:

Buffalo stands at a critical inflection point. The City of Buffalo faces significant financial hardship that threatens both residents' quality of life and the progress our community has achieved in recent years. Philanthropy and the private sector have an important role to play and it is my pleasure to share with you some emerging details about a new fund to be held at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. The fund is called the *City of Buffalo Transition and Transformation Fund* and is intended to support the City of Buffalo with key objectives around efficiency, innovation, and talent. It will receive contributions from philanthropic and corporate donors.

Mayor-elect Sean Ryan approached the philanthropic and private sector with a request to create such a collaborative fund because of the City of Buffalo's severe fiscal constraints. Funds like this are used nationwide to bolster municipal resources as local governments adopt new approaches, tools, and practices to work more effectively. Among the realities Mayor-elect Ryan shared with us was a long-standing lack of investment in the City's technology, equipment, operating systems, quality controls, data management, workforce and more. Although resources for investments in such improvements are short, we believe the opportunity for return on investment is great and can serve as an essential ingredient in helping the City of Buffalo deliver quality services to our community.

To access resources from the *City of Buffalo Transition and Transformation Fund*, the Mayor of the City of Buffalo may make written requests sent to the Community Foundation. The grant committee for the fund has agreed to consider requests consistent with the following focus areas:

- **Efficiency:** There is a need to engage professional consultants to evaluate operating systems, mapping workflows, identifying data needs and pinch-points, recommending changes and more. Engaging consultants in this way can add valuable expertise, speed, and bandwidth to departments currently operating in a severe fiscal deficit. As such, we understand that resources from the fund may be used to maximize efficiency by engaging outside expertise and implementing recommendations.
- **Innovation:** Collectively, we understand that innovation, creativity, and the pursuit of best-practice models elsewhere in the country are critically important to improving City services for residents. Certainly, it is standard for the philanthropic and private sector to identify best practices around the country and pilot small changes in our respective organizations. As such, we recognize that the fund may be used to

support the exploration of new, creative, and innovative ideas worth piloting in our community.

- **Talent:** Effective leadership is always an essential ingredient to any successful transformation and without effective leadership, investments made in efficiency and innovation may be at risk. As such, we acknowledge the need to support the recruitment and retention of top talent to fill essential positions in the government.
- **Other:** We further acknowledge that the City of Buffalo may identify other needs still to be determined. We will consider such requests provided they strengthen the City of Buffalo's services and operations, benefit our community, and/or lessen the burdens on the government.

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo was founded in 1919. Our mission is to connect people, ideas, and resources to improve lives in western New York. Over the course of our century-old history, we have often fulfilled this mission by pooling resources in times of critical need. This was true in 2018 when we formed a pooled fund of philanthropic and corporate donors to align private sector resources with public sector investments in East Side Avenues projects. It was also true during the Covid-19 pandemic and again in the aftermath of the racially motivated mass shooting in 2022. As is always the case, these pooled funds were successful at supporting our community during critical inflection points because they were built on collaboration, partnership, and a commitment to our common goals and shared future.

It is with this long and successful history that we now establish the *City of Buffalo Transition and Transformation Fund* to add small but necessary capital to the public sector at a critical time—one in which scarce resources are outmatched only by shared hope and cooperation. Over the course of our history, we have seen time and time again that when partners from all sectors come together, small investments can make an outsized impact. Once granted, it is our expectation that city officials will take responsibility for ensuring resources from this fund will likewise make a notable impact.

The Community Foundation has been pleased to work with our government partners at all levels on major initiatives for many years. Now, we look forward to our ongoing partnership with the City of Buffalo. We do this because we believe that it is in cooperation and partnership that we can achieve our vision of a vibrant and equitable greater Buffalo region where every individual thrives!

Gratefully,



Betsy Constantine
President and CEO