



A nonprofit dedicated to combatting poverty and racism in Rochester NY by supporting and strengthening aligned civic, nonprofit & community leaders and collaborations.

~ created to unlock the progressive potential of Rochester's public leaders and public initiatives ~

Background: *RocLeads* was born following a string of interviews with local and regional nonprofit and community leaders that began in 2018. Those interviews explored why – with all our talents and resources, after many decades of heartfelt, often well-funded, and passionate efforts to tackle the racial and economic disparities that have plagued our region along with our historic efforts to improve our public institutions and conditions – our city has failed to rise above its shameful national rankings on matters of education, universal access to quality health care, housing, homelessness, and residential segregation.

Many of those interviewed struggled out loud with the question of *what is the value of leadership if it doesn't cause change?* *RocLeads* contends: ***Change is the currency of effective public leadership.***

In 2019, we launched the Frederick Douglass Center for Collaborative Leadership with the following mission: **“The center exists to support and strengthen the individual and collective impact of anti-racism and anti-hate leaders in Rochester – particularly those in civic, community and nonprofit roles that can contribute to building strong children and families....”** In 2022, the center was renamed: the ***Rochester Center for Collaborative Leadership*** retaining the original mission statement. That year we secured the URL ***Rocleads.org*** and adopted the short nickname ***RocLeads***. We secured our 501C3 status in early 2023.

RocLeads is founded to build local capacity to convene, develop and support antiracism and antipoverty leaders in Rochester. We will organize and develop resources that provide services intended to develop and support public sector leaders and collaborations that are dedicated to remedying racial, gender and cultural inequities, poverty and the negative impacts of residential segregation in our region in practical, coherent and sustainable fashions.

RocLeads is not a conventional leadership training operation; the region has a rich diversity of these. Rather, the Center is driven by a vision and a principle:

- the vision of ***Rochester and Monroe County as a go-to national model of effective, collaborative, progressive local leadership; it is these leaders who will make change happen..***
- the principle that ***the purpose of public leadership is change***; if change doesn't occur, then leadership isn't happening.

RocLeads is different than any other leadership organization in our region. Our commitment is to the success and future of Rochester public leaders aligned with our equity and pro-children mission. Among other things, we exist to support and add value to other leadership organizations; to convene, coordinate, catalyze, train and collaborate with leaders and leadership resources that add value and support the success of aligned leadership in our region.

Programs: We've launched the Center with three programs.

1. **Discovering & Aligning for Community Change-Rochester (DACC-Roc)**

The **launch-phase** of any public collaboration – or collective effort to achieve a changed public outcome – critically predicts its likelihood of success. There's a science to doing this successfully. Optimally, it should start by clarifying its shared goal/problem/question; developing shared values and visions; identifying how each participant can best contribute to achieving the shared goal; and establishing shared ownership and commitment to work collectively to achieve it. These steps engage leaders in building a lens of antiracism and racial/ethnic/identity empathy, a focus on developing shared goals, and the disposition to place a high value on collaboration.

These (above) are the functions of the DACC-Roc Program, our keystone community and leadership development program. The Center has sent four experienced Rochester leaders through intense national training in Future Search facilitation (see FutureSearch.net), a significant internationally tested decades old facilitation strategy.

DACC-Roc Initiatives convene and facilitate a strategic collection of leaders, stakeholders and experts through a collective process of discovering their best contributions and aligning them towards solving a problem or achieving a shared goal (i.e., a mutually desired community change).

DACC-Roc Initiatives consist of three stages (pre-planning, conference, follow-through) over a period of several months. Each Initiative is offered in partnership with one (or more) lead organization(s) and is modestly priced so as to cover costs of delivery.

2. **Building a Regional Leadership Development Resource Network**

Launching a well-conceived collective initiative is a good start, but it's not enough. The Center's second program focuses on convening, growing and stabilizing a network of regional experts and resources capable of supporting the leadership development and organizational needs of these and other public sector leaders. We found training, coaching and access to expertise (on topics including collaborative leadership, strategic planning, board development, and DEI) to be persistent needs cited by leaders during the round of interviews that gave rise to the Center.

Our goal is to build an ongoing resource-network (or support-system) among existing and emerging providers to improve and sustain the capabilities of public sector leaders and their organizations/collaborations. This will include experts, trainers, consultants, coaches, scholars and retired successful practitioners already at work in our region as well as those who may be accessible virtually. The center will work in partnership with several key stakeholders in the region to build and stabilize this network.

Prospective models for this program will be *Technical Assistance Roundtables* and *Leadership Development Networks* that can be found in cities around the nation.

3. **Leadership Development/Training**

Easy, predictable, timely and affordable access to high quality professional development training, coaching, counsel and support is essential for building and sustaining a community of competent and impactful public sector leaders and collaborations in the region.

In cooperation with - and in support of - leadership development professionals associated with the Network (above), the Center will incentivize, promote and coordinate delivery of leadership development coaching, consulting and training for current, aspiring and prospective public sector leaders in the region.

We will prioritize the development needs of leaders and collaborations associated with DACC-Roc initiatives (above) and will launch Leadership Seminars & Training Academies for youth, college students, and active community and nonprofit leaders in the region to strengthen current leaders and build a pipeline of competent and impactful rising leaders in our region.

A hybrid strategy of revenue generation and grants/contributions will support the cost of this program.

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Board of Directors: Beatriz LeBron (ch) Aqua Porter Jackie Dozier Hank Rubin (Acting CEO)

Staff: Sasha Mitchell (Project Coordinator) Kim McKinsey-Mabry (Leadership Development Coordinator)

the Rochester Center for Collaborative Leadership (RocLeads) is a 501(c)3 organization

296 River Heights Circle – Rochester, NY 14612

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