



Rochester Center for Collaborative Leadership ROCLEADS.ORG

A charitable resource dedicated to Rochester.

Since the **Rochester Center for Collaborative Leadership** (referred to as “the Center” or as “RocLeads”) began taking shape in 2019, it’s been distinguished by its mission: ***to organize regional resources to build and support the capacity and impact of progressive public leaders, collaborations and nonprofits dedicated to antiracism in Rochester, NY and Monroe County, NY.***

The Center is not a 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 national model of racial equity.***
- the principle that ***the purpose of public leadership is change***; if change doesn’t occur, then leadership isn’t happening.

Background: A 2020 study of US census data ranked Rochester as one of the two or three poorest and most racially segregated communities in the nation. Our schools are among the most segregated and we rank #2 in overall poverty. Racism, poverty and residential segregation have challenged Rochester leaders for generations and the evidence suggests that our leaders and institutions have not figured out how to sustainably meet these challenges.

The ***Rochester Center for Collaborative Leadership*** is founded to build local capacity to convene, develop and support Rochester leaders differently than we have before. The Center will organize and develop resources that provide services intended to develop and support public sector leaders and collaborations that are dedicated to remedying racism, poverty and the negative impacts of residential segregation in our region in practical, coherent and sustainable fashions.

A series of interviews and conversations with dozens of Rochester- area civic leaders in 2019 gave rise to the observations underlying the establishment of this Center: Rochester has plenty of well-intentioned leaders, plenty of organizations established with important civic missions, and plenty of training centers and consultants that have set up shop to support the development of these leaders. *What we’re missing is authentic collaboration among these leaders, clearly understood mutuality among the leaders and across those missions, and neutral and respected vehicles for collecting and connecting leaders with each other and with training and development resources that can help them make sustainable and accountable change happen.*

Programs: We are launching the Center with three programs.

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

The ***launch-phase*** of any public collaboration critically predicts its likelihood of success. 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 on questions and conversations that bridge racial and ethnic differences, focus on developing shared goals, and building collaboration. These 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 in the 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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