



EXECUTIVE ORDER #021

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIVE WELL ERIE TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the economic renaissance in WNY is real and has resulted in the lowest unemployment rates Erie County has seen in over 40 years and population growth in the county; and

WHEREAS, despite such low unemployment, some residents in WNY continue to struggle; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County issued a report entitled, “A Profile of Financial Hardship in Erie County,” which indicates that 64% of all jobs in WNY are paying less than \$20/hour; and

WHEREAS, the report further indicates that 41% of Erie County residents struggle to make ends meet, citing in part the high cost of child care and challenges in affordable housing and public transportation; and

WHEREAS, across the nation stagnant wages further create financial challenges for American families; and

WHEREAS, to better understand the problems Erie County residents are facing, Erie County conducted a community wide survey with more than 1,500 responses and found that:

- 20% of all Erie County residents reported they do not have enough money to provide the essentials for everybody in their family, and more than 30% of seniors have difficulty meeting their monthly expenses. 22% of seniors in Erie County reported that they are not satisfied with the amount of activity in their lives;
- Participants reported Bullying (53%), Mental Health (39%) and Drug and Alcohol Abuse (37%) as the top three health concerns for children;
- Insufficient activities for children in the summer and after school (71%), lack of more affordable child care (52%), and improved public education (48%) were cited as the top three ways our community can be more supportive of children;
- 25% of working families reported that they are not saving for retirement;
- 31% of working families indicated that they worry a lot or a great deal about not being able to afford their mortgage or rent in the future; and
- 22% of working families reported being more than \$50,000 in debt (not including mortgage).

WHEREAS, Erie County has developed a comprehensive strategy called “Live Well Erie” to address these challenges; and

WHEREAS, Live Well Erie is organized around a single vision—the new Erie County will leave no one behind; and

WHEREAS, Live Well Erie is a strategy to support three populations: Children, Working Families, and Seniors; and

WHEREAS, Live Well Erie uses five guiding principles to focus on nine long-term goals across the three populations; and

WHEREAS, one of the Live Well Erie guiding principles is to focus on the social determinants of health, namely those factors beyond health behaviors, that contribute to overall

health and wellbeing of a population—factors like safe housing, access to educational and employment opportunities, social supports, and financial stability; and

WHEREAS, Erie County government is well-positioned, through its many departments, libraries and community college, to focus on the social determinants of health as a way of improving health outcomes and the overall quality of life for Erie County residents; and

WHEREAS, Live Well Erie employs partnerships with over 40 organizations to develop and implement over 30 specific community strategies to make meaningful improvements in people’s lives so the Live Well Erie vision of leaving no one behind can be realized; and

WHEREAS, Live Well Erie applies 16 data indicators to monitor progress towards each of the long-term goals over the next decade, with a mid-term review to occur in 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK C. POLONCARZ, Erie County Executive, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Erie County’s Charter Sections 301 and 302, do hereby order as follows:

1. The establishment of a Live Well Erie Task-Force to be co-chaired by one representative from Erie County and one representative from a Community Partner;
2. That the Commissioner of Erie County Department of Social Services Marie Cannon serve as the initial Erie County Co-chair of the Live Well Erie Task Force;
3. That the Executive Director of Population Health Collaborative John Craik serve as the initial Community Partner Co-chair of the Live Well Erie Task Force;
4. That any community organization, business, or agency that takes the Live Well Erie Pledge be given a seat on the Live Well Erie Task Force;
5. That the Live Well Erie Task Force be charged with achieving the Live Well Erie goals and monitoring the 16 data indicators to measure progress towards the goals;
6. That the Live Well Erie Task Force divide itself into three working groups—one for each of the three populations, namely Children, Working Families, and Seniors—to support implementation of the Community Strategies as the primary way to help achieve the Live Well Erie goals;
7. That the Live Well Erie Task Force and working groups be empowered to create any additional subcommittees they deem necessary to achieve the Live Well Erie goals;
8. That the Live Well Erie Task Force actively seek and recruit any additional community partners that support the Live Well Erie vision and goals to take the Live Well Erie pledge;
9. That the Live Well Erie Task Force meet quarterly, with working groups and subcommittees meeting more often and as necessary, to conduct business and until such time as the long-term goals are achieved; and
10. That the Live Well Erie Task Force should annually produce a summary of its work which documents progress towards the goals and any noteworthy changes in the data indicators and present that summary to the county executive.

GIVEN, under my hand and the Privy Seal of the County of Erie in the City of Buffalo this ninth day of September, in the year two thousand nineteen.

County of Erie

By: _____
Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive