

'State of Black Rochester' Outlines Disparities

In an effort to better understand the racial and ethnic disparities in our community, the African American Giving Initiative of Rochester Area Community Foundation commissioned a book to provide that overview.

The State of Black Rochester 2013: Education + Employment = Equity, a 140-page paperback, is a compilation of essays from prominent community leaders and experts and includes current data compiled by ACT Rochester. Proceeds from sales of the book will be used for the Giving Initiative's future grants in our community.

"It is extremely helpful to know where we have been and what continuing challenges we face as the Giving Initiative and the entire community decide what to support in order to make the greatest impact," says Dana K. Miller, vice president for advancement at the Community Foundation, who wrote the preface and a summary chapter for the book.

The book, modeled on the National Urban League's State of Black America, includes essays written on the following topics:

- **Economic Development**, by Matthew Augustine, CEO of Eltrex Industries and Biodrill Technical Solutions, and Clayton H. Osborne, formerly of Bausch & Lomb and Monroe County, who is president of True Insights Consulting, LLC;
- **Education**, by Bolgen Vargas, superintendent of Rochester city schools;
- **Health in our Region**, by Wade S. Norwood, director of community engagement at Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency;

- **Criminal Justice**, by Rochester Police Chief James M. Sheppard;
- **Philanthropy**, by Mary-Frances Winters, president of The Winters Group, Inc.
- **Structural Inequality**, by James H. Norman, president and CEO of Action for a Better Community and chair of the Rochester Initiative for Structural Equality (RISE) coalition; and
- **A Data Overview**, by Ann M. Johnson, director of ACT Rochester and ACTRochester.org.

The book opens with a foreword by Jennifer Leonard, president and CEO of the Community Foundation. A chapter on the implications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act for minorities, written by Kathleen Rand Reed of Washington, D.C. and an associate editor of Rochester's About ... *Time Magazine*, also was included.

In the books' summary chapter, Miller writes that "the challenges preventing people from taking advantage of opportunities can be described in four words: availability, access, awareness, and ability. ... Our mission should be maintaining or increasing the availability and access to opportunities while also finding ways to significantly improve awareness and ability."

The hope of the Giving Initiative is that the community will use information in *The State of Black Rochester 2013* to guide decisions on budgets, spending, philanthropy and development opportunities, Miller says.

Publication of this book was made possible by a \$10,000 grant from Rural/Metro Corporation and a \$6,000 grant from the Community Foundation.

The African American Giving Initiative, formed in 2011, provides an opportunity for people in the community to combine financial resources and have a say in how the available grant

money should be distributed. A group of nearly two dozen people aligned with the Initiative's mission – to make a positive change in problem areas experienced most strongly within the African American community – have been regularly meeting to discuss ongoing issues, recruitment of new members and plans for the book. Membership levels start at \$1,000 a year.

Jim and Carlyne Blount, publishers of *About ... Time Magazine*, assisted with editing, page design and publishing. The book was printed locally by Panther Graphics.

The State of Black Rochester 2013 is available at Mood Makers Books in Village Gate, The Library Store at the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, Writers & Books, and Baobab Cultural Center for \$19.95. Print and e-book versions also can be ordered through Amazon.com.