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Rochester Area Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes Team Up to Co-Lead Aging Alliance

For the past 10 years, aging service providers, along with representatives from the City of Rochester and Monroe County, and funders, have been working together to provide guidance and focus to promote the value and well-being of older adults.

This informal consortium, called Monroe County Aging Alliance, now is a joint initiative of Rochester Area Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes with Patricia Campbell and Leanne Rorick named co-directors.

Campbell has worked in the aging field for decades, most recently as senior director in the Community Foundation's Community Programs department overseeing grantmaking in aging, health, and basic needs.

Rorick is principal of Leanne Rorick Consulting and consults for United Way. She is also a research assistant for Cornell University's Institute for Translational Research on Aging, where she provides training to long-term care facilities for the Institute's "Improving Resident Relationships in Long Term Care" project.

Campbell, in her role at the Community Foundation, initially convened local leaders in the field to set an aging agenda for the community. These meetings allowed organizations providing or supporting aging-related services to understand existing systems and structures that impede successful aging, identify strategies to create a community where people age well, share what they were working on, find opportunities to collaborate, and pinpoint gaps that needed to be addressed.

This group's activities have carefully laid the groundwork for various initiatives. For example:

- In 2019, the City of Rochester and Monroe County applied to join AARP's Age-Friendly Network, which began a five-year initiative to move toward a more age-friendly and livable community.



- An August 2021 *Poverty In Later Life* report looked at poverty among older adults living in the City of Rochester. It found that one in five city residents lives below the official poverty measure; the number of poor older adults in the city is increasing; and the poverty rate is highest for Latinx older adults — twice the rate of black seniors.
- In the Summer/Fall of 2021, Alliance consultants worked with Monroe County Departments and the New York Academy of Medicine to collaborate on improving the county's Health Across All Policies aim — a focus that incorporates improvements in social opportunities such as housing, food access and transportation, into positive health results.
- In December 2021, the Alliance released a “Creating a Community for a Lifetime: An Action Plan for an Age-Friendly/Livable Rochester and Monroe County” report, with recommendations to achieve a more age-friendly community. The plan, funded in part by the City of Rochester and Monroe County, was informed by Monroe County older adults, providers, and community partners.
- In 2023, the Alliance will team with the Gerontological Society of America to lead a Reframing Aging Initiative in Monroe County, a long-term social change endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the many ways that older adults contribute to society. This initiative will guide our community's approach to ensuring supportive policies and programs for people of all ages in Monroe County.
- Through 2024 and beyond, the Monroe County Aging Alliance will engage dozens of community partners, including government offices, community-based organizations, and businesses, to carry out the recommendations to create a more age-friendly Monroe County.

To learn more about the Monroe County Aging Alliance, visit monroeagingalliance.org.