

## NEWS RELEASE



CITY of ROCHESTER  
Malik D. Evans, Mayor



THE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



## Mayor Malik D. Evans Introduces Partners in City's Neighbors In Action (NIA) Effort

### NIA Grant Applications Now Open

(Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025) – After [announcing the City's Neighbors In Action \(NIA\) initiative](#) in September, Mayor Malik D. Evans today introduced two new partners in funding and implementing NIA grants for city residents interested in improving their neighborhoods: [ESL Federal Credit Union](#) and [Rochester Area Community Foundation](#).

Both organizations join the City in providing \$100,000 in financial support to the initiative, enabling the availability of \$300,000 in small grants of up to \$10,000 each. NIA participants will benefit from a breadth and depth of grantmaking experience and community relationships from the partners, and staff from all three will serve on an application review committee. Rochester Area Community Foundation will hold, manage and disseminate the funds, and the City of Rochester has created four new positions in its Neighborhood Service Centers to help coordinate NIA and help build capacity in neighborhoods.

Applications are now open for the first round of NIA grants at [www.CityOfRochester.gov/NIA](http://www.CityOfRochester.gov/NIA), and must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 28. Grant announcements will be made on Mar. 31. A broad range of projects qualify for NIA grants, including community beautification projects like gardens and public art, neighborhood events, youth and senior programs, environmental sustainability projects, and educational and health-focused initiatives.

“I am thrilled to announce this amazing partnership with such community-minded organizations. ESL and the Community Foundation are stepping up in a powerful way to strengthen our neighborhoods and empower our residents,” said Mayor Evans. “I encourage every city neighborhood to apply for a NIA grant to help fund their vision of improving where they live.”

We're excited to partner with the City of Rochester and Rochester Area Community Foundation to help invest in the prosperity of city neighborhoods and residents," said John Paul Perez, Executive Director, Community Impact, ESL Federal Credit Union. "This program will provide vital support to initiatives that foster connection among neighbors, strengthen bonds, and build vibrant and resilient neighborhoods."

"We align closely with the Urban Institute's definition of upward mobility, which says that neighborhoods need to be inclusive and have ample opportunities in order to make economic success at the individual or household level possible," said Simeon Banister, President & CEO, Rochester Area Community Foundation. "NIA puts residents in the driver's seat to shape their neighborhoods. We're going to have our eyes and ears open throughout this process to learn from residents about what works and what doesn't."

Neighbors In Action (NIA) is designed to empower residents to come together and take purposeful action toward strengthening and improving their neighborhoods. The word "Nia" (pronounced NEE-uh) translates to "Purpose" in Swahili, and is a core principle of Kwanzaa, encouraging both individuals and communities to find and pursue collective goals. Rooted in the tradition of communal growth, the program will serve as a platform for residents to contribute to neighborhood development projects, fostering collaboration and progress throughout the city.

NIA is open to all neighborhood associations, block clubs, and other community organizations in the City of Rochester. NIA partners encourage participation from everyone who is passionate about making Rochester a more connected city whose residents are involved in improving their neighborhoods.

For more information on NIA, visit [www.CityOfRochester.gov/NIA](http://www.CityOfRochester.gov/NIA).

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News Media: For more information, contact City of Rochester Communications Director Barbara Pierce at [Barbara.Pierce@cityofrochester.gov](mailto:Barbara.Pierce@cityofrochester.gov).

**The Administration of [Mayor Malik D. Evans](#) strives to** create a safe, equitable and prosperous Rochester by inspiring hope and delivering opportunity for everyone. Guided by the Administration's [Mission, Vision and Values](#) and the principles of the "[Rochester 2034](#)" [comprehensive plan](#), City employees are committed to providing exceptional customer

service, transparent stewardship, and collaborative leadership to foster a vibrant community that empowers personal, professional and generational growth for all who live, work or play in the city of Rochester.

With more than 100 years of locally owned history, [ESL Federal Credit Union](#) serves as a full-service financial institution to more than 434,000 members and 16,800 businesses. Founded in 1920, the company provides personal banking, business banking, mortgage services, and wealth management services through its locally based 24-branch network; telephone, mobile and online banking; and live chat center. The Rochester-based financial institution employs approximately 950 people in the Greater Rochester area and holds more than \$9.5 billion in assets. Since 1996, ESL has paid out 29 consecutive Owners' Dividends to its members totaling more than \$290 million. Since the creation of its Community Impact initiative in 2018, ESL has reinvested more than \$122 million in grants throughout the community. The company has appeared on Great Place to Work® lists since 2010. ESL Federal Credit Union is headquartered at 225 Chestnut Street, in Rochester, and can be found online at [www.esl.org](http://www.esl.org).

In partnership with generous philanthropists and community partners, [Rochester Area Community Foundation](#) works to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the eight-county region through its leadership and strategic grantmaking. Known as the steward of charitable funds and endowments, the Foundation connects donors with the region's current and evolving needs. As a leading grantmaker, the Foundation is focused on two broad goals: creating an equitable community and strengthening our region's vitality. Since it was founded in 1972, the Community Foundation has distributed more than \$730 million in grants and scholarships.