

2022

ADVOCACY AGENDA



How government and employers can work together to create
a more vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive regional economy

The “help wanted” signs are nearly impossible to overlook.

Employers of every size and industry, here in Buffalo Niagara and around the country, are facing unprecedented labor shortages. All these open jobs and lack of qualified candidates – or candidates at all, in some cases – are impacting our region’s economic recovery from the pandemic.

Significant talent challenges existed before COVID-19. In fact, they existed during the height of the pandemic for some employers. But now, as everyone adjusts to the new normal, those pent-up labor pain points have intensified given realities brought on or exacerbated by COVID-19.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership’s employer advocacy has frequently included policy positions on key workforce issues. That focus is more intense and purposeful in 2022 as we look to help employers tackle their systematic talent challenges from a variety of angles – including how government can work with employers to ensure the public workforce system truly works for both employers and job seekers.

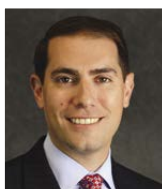
These pages also contain dozens of other ways government – at all levels – can work with employers to create a more vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive regional economy.

Let’s get to work.

Sincerely,




Dottie Gallagher
President & CEO




Grant Loomis
Vice President, Government Affairs

▶ What BNP Members Say About the Talent Challenge

#1 concern: Difficulty finding and retaining qualified talent ₁

77% plan to add additional employees this year ₄

#1 inhibitor to growth: Lack of qualified workers ₂

45% are/will raise salaries to address labor shortages ₅

83% currently have unfilled positions ₃



TACKLING THE TALENT CHALLENGE

JOBS ACT



- Support passage of the JOBS Act to expand Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in quality, short-term education and training programs leading to employment in high-demand industry sectors or careers

EARN & LEARN



- Provide financial assistance to help people access registered and unregistered apprenticeships, credentialing, and other 'earn & learn' programs
- Extend the Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit program

CHILDCARE



- Support creation of and access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality childcare.

BRIDGING THE BENEFITS CLIFF



- Phase out income-based benefits gradually to best assist workers advancing into higher paying positions that eventually lead to economic self-sufficiency and family sustaining wages

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REENTRY



- Reduce legal barriers to employment for formerly incarcerated individuals

HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS



- Double the maximum annual Pell Grant award to make college more affordable for low and moderate-income students
- Increase Tuition Assistance Program awards and income eligibility for students and families
- Increase operational support for the region's SUNY institutions



5,582:

the number of regional manufacturing job postings from 8/21-10/21⁶



New York's labor force participation rate is hovering at ~ 60%⁷

1/4

of postsecondary graduates are in short-term credential programs⁸



There are ~30,000 SLOTS in licensed/registered childcare programs and ~122,000 CHILDREN under 12 in Erie County⁹

27%

of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed¹⁰

\$84,860

median salary for a telecommunications line installer¹¹



▶ LOWERING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COSTS

- Prevent massive UI rate hikes on employers. NYS borrowed \$9 billion from the federal government to fund its unemployment insurance system during the pandemic. Without state action, employers will see steep UI rate increases to pay back this debt. New York should use part of the \$12.75 billion windfall it received from the American Rescue Plan to pay off this debt and protect employers from rate increases.

SINGLE PAYER HEALTHCARE

- Oppose creation of single payer healthcare system in NYS

SMALL BUSINESS TAX BURDEN

- Increase personal income tax exemption for small employers filing via personal income tax
- Reduce corporate tax rate for small businesses
- Expand 0% corporate franchise tax to small manufacturers not currently covered under exemption

EMPLOYER MANDATES


- Block new employer mandates driving up costs
- Limit “emergency rulemaking” authority
- Improve job impact analyses for new regulations
- Oppose efforts to erode employers’ ability to participate in labor negotiations

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY ACT

- Oppose the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act. This misguided proposal would shift the responsibility of recycling packaging material, paper, and plastic products from municipal governments to the businesses that produce those products. If enacted, this bill would discourage manufacturing in NYS and make goods more expensive.

GIG ECONOMY

- Oppose efforts to overly regulate the gig economy which will drive up costs, limit service access, and stifle innovation




UI rates could
INCREASE \$21
per employee
without state action ¹²

\$\$\$
~\$9.3 BILLION:
NY’s UI Trust Fund
loan balance ¹³

WNY would
LOSE 13,743 JOBS
under single payer healthcare ¹⁴

NYS has the
2ND WORST
state business tax climate
in the country ¹⁵


The EPR Act would add
~\$800 MILLION
in direct costs to businesses
and increase grocery bills by as
much as \$57/month ¹⁶

~300,000
REGULATORY
RESTRICTIONS
on the books in NYS –
second only to CA ¹⁷

▶ ENCOURAGING PRIVATE INVESTMENT

POWER OUR ECONOMY

- Adopt Climate Action Council recommendations that achieve climate goals in a reliable, affordable way while utilizing the state's extensive natural gas infrastructure to transport low carbon fuels
- Oppose efforts to add new taxes on gasoline and other fuels
- Utilize an all-of-the-above sourcing approach that leverages our state's natural resources, creates reliable renewable energy, and prevents steep rate increases

STIMULATE REDEVELOPMENT

- **Brownfield Cleanup Program** – Pass a long-term extension of this highly successful program which currently expires for new projects in 2022. Renewal efforts should ensure remediation and redevelopment are encouraged and support environmental and affordable housing goals
- **Prevailing Wage** – Reform how prevailing wage is calculated
- **Adaptive Reuse** –
 - Incentivize transitioning vacant and commercial office space into housing options
 - Maintain and strengthen Erie County Industrial Development Agency's existing Adaptive Reuse policy
- **Mixed-Income Neighborhoods** – Stimulate development of both market rate and affordable housing to create vibrant mixed-income neighborhoods
- **Scaffold Law** – Reform the Scaffold Law by replacing absolute liability with a comparative negligence standard, allowing liability to be apportioned based on fault – the standard that exists in every state except New York
- **485-A** – Oppose efforts to fundamentally weaken 485-A which has been essential to regional redevelopment
- **Rent Control** –
 - Protect right of property owners to enforce rental agreements
 - Oppose proposals establishing universal rent control

TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

- Support policies encouraging continued network deployment and investment to expand high-speed connectivity
- Oppose state efforts to roll back current federal policies promoting an Internet ecosystem free from layers of burdensome and costly regulation
- Roll back costly state right-of-way taxes making network deployment cost prohibitive



>3X:

The price difference between running on natural gas vs. electricity for a large volume Buffalo Niagara manufacturer ¹⁸



The Climate & Community Investment Act would

ADD 55¢ IN TAXES per gallon of gas. New Yorkers already pay 46¢/gallon in taxes ¹⁹



The Brownfield Cleanup Program sparked **\$1.76 BILLION** in total investments to clean and redevelop WNY properties ²⁰

23% of BNP members see their need for office space decreasing post-pandemic ²¹

\$5K – \$10K added cost per network mile from DOT ROW tax ²²

Scaffold Law **COSTS \$785M** annually for NYS Taxpayers ²³

UNLOCKING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

TOURISM FUNDING

- Create a Tourism Recovery & Improvement District in Erie County to provide a stable and dedicated source of tourism funding to bolster a vital industry decimated by COVID-19, restore tourism and hospitality jobs, and attract people to visit Buffalo Niagara to generate tax revenue for our community

IMMIGRATION REFORM

- Support refugee resettlement in Buffalo Niagara
- Support comprehensive H-1B visa reform that increases the number of high-skilled visas issued and allows Buffalo Niagara to compete for top talent
- Create a place-based visa program allowing holders to compete on the open labor market in designated low-growth regions of the country – like Buffalo Niagara – to infuse skilled immigrants to help reverse demographic decline and revitalize local economies

CROSS-BORDER ECONOMY

- Align U.S.-Canada border crossing protocols to eliminate confusion, reflect current public health data, and encourage cross-border commerce
- Implement border efficiency measures especially enhancements for commercial vehicles crossing the Peace Bridge by placing inspection technology in Canada to derive the benefits of pre-clearance

MWBE CERTIFICATION

- Reform MWBE certification process to guarantee efficiency and responsiveness allowing businesses to make informed and timely bidding decisions

Pre-pandemic, regional tourism was a

\$2.8 BILLION industry, supporting 53,244 jobs ²⁴



Immigration drove Buffalo's
1ST POPULATION INCREASE
since 1950 ²⁵



Buffalo Niagara immigrants pay \$643 million in taxes & have

\$1.5 BILLION in spending power ²⁶

~3,200 immigrant entrepreneurs in Buffalo Niagara ²⁷

57% of Buffalo Niagara employers were negatively impacted by the U.S.-Canada border closure ²⁸



More than **\$3 BILLION** in NYS government contracts were awarded to MWBE firms for FY 2019-20 ²⁹

▶ MAKING CRITICAL INVESTMENTS

NEW BUFFALO BILLS STADIUM



- Support a healthy, long-term public-private partnership to finance a new Buffalo Bills stadium

DIGITAL DIVIDE



- Bridge the digital divide in a way that provides maximum coverage, affordability, and quality in partnership with the private sector to eliminate broadband inequalities

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING



- Ensure rapid, efficient, and equitable distribution of federal infrastructure funds, especially to Regional Priority Projects, roads, bridges, water infrastructure, and public transit
- Provide funding parity between upstate and downstate as lawmakers develop New York's next multi-year capital plan (NYS)
- Ensure WNY (Region 5) receives its 'fair share' of NYSDOT funding (NYS)

U.S. INNOVATION AND COMPETITION ACT



- Support passage of the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act to boost American's investment in innovation and technology to improve our national security and competitiveness. The Act's creation of regional technology hubs presents a significant opportunity for WNY to leverage its existing assets to build a prime destination for America's top STEM talent.



**\$700 MILLION/
YEAR:**

Economic impact of
Buffalo Bills in Erie County ³⁰



Building a new Buffalo Bills
stadium will create

12,000+ NEW JOBS
over 48 months ³¹

16.3%
of WNY households lack
broadband access ³²



~40%
of WNY roads are in poor or
mediocre condition ³³

90%
of U.S. innovation-sector growth
is concentrated in Boston, San
Francisco, San Jose, Seattle,
and San Diego ³⁴



CITATIONS

1-5, 21, 28: Buffalo Niagara Partnership 2021 Advocacy
& Member Survey

6: Emsi

7, 11: New York State Department of Labor

8: National Skills Coalition

9: Child Care Resource Network

10: Prison Policy Initiative

12, 32: New York State Comptroller

13: U.S. Department of the Treasury

14: Realities of Single Payer

15: Tax Foundation

16: York University

17: Mercatus Center at George Mason University

18: National Fuel analysis

19: The Business Council of NYS

20: New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

22: Industry estimate

23: Rockefeller Institute of Government

24: Empire State Development

25: The Buffalo News

26-27: New American Economy

29: NYS Division of Minority and Women's Business Development

30-31: Buffalo Bills

33: TRIP

34: The Brookings Institution

2022

Regional Priority Projects

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is pleased to support the following Regional Priority Projects advanced by the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and the counties of Erie and Niagara. These projects represent opportunities to invest in initiatives aimed at stimulating our economy, putting people to work, and strengthening the region's tax base.

The historic federal investment in infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law in November of 2021, represents a significant opportunity to secure funding for these initiatives.



Agribusiness Park

Erie County

The 240-acre park will help address the regional need for shovel-ready industrial-zoned property as Buffalo Niagara competes to attract and retain manufacturers, especially food processing companies. With design, planning, and permitting in the final stages, funding is needed to build out the necessary utilities and transportation infrastructure.

Cars Sharing Main Street Completion

City of Buffalo

Funding is necessary to rapidly complete the Cars Sharing Main Street initiative to expedite the full economic development benefits of returning to-way vehicular traffic to Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Completed blocks along Main Street have a new vibrancy and have already attracted over \$50 million in investment.

Niagara County Business Park

Niagara County

To address a lack of shovel-ready development sites, Niagara County will design and construct a 60-acre business park on county-owned land located across from the Yahoo! data center in the Town of Cambria. Investments in transportation and utility infrastructure will prepare the site for private sector development including data centers, warehousing and logistics, and advanced manufacturing operations.

Centennial Park Complex

City of Niagara Falls

Funding is necessary to construct an events campus to help attract visitors to Niagara Falls year-round. The campus would include such amenities as an arena, outdoor amphitheater, and recreational features and be designed to host sporting events, concerts, and community gatherings. The project will boost visitor traffic through Niagara Falls and support the regional hospitality industry.