



Contact: Robbie-Ann McPherson
ECIDA Marketing & Communications Director
716.856.6525 ext. 125 office 310.433.7443 cell

Wednesday, April 26, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECIDA Board adopts Opt-in Economic Inclusion Program to encourage M/WBE hires on incentivized projects

Buffalo—The Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) Board of Directors voted Wednesday to adopt an opt-in Economic Inclusion Program, offering enhanced PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) benefit to encourage hiring of M/WBE sub contractors on projects that receive IDA incentives.

"This policy has been in development with our Policy Committee for over a year, and we are very pleased to finally have a vote of approval by the Board," **said ECIDA Board Chair Brenda McDuffie**. "Incentivizing business growth is an important mission of the ECIDA but we need to increase the opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses in the process; this policy is a way of enhancing the community benefits of a project that we incentivize."

ECIDA Board Vice Chair and Policy Committee Chair Richard Lipsitz said, "We have thoroughly discussed the merits and criteria of this policy, and I think we have developed a very well thought-out inclusionary policy that will encourage developers to hire more minority and women-owned businesses on these projects."

The Economic Inclusion PILOT Policy offers enhanced property tax abatements in a term-limited PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program if the applicant agrees to:

- Commit to utilizing and employing M/WBE construction and professional service companies during project construction
- Commit to minority and women hiring and/or job retention goals
- Commit to certain procurement, diversity and inclusion, training and mentorship skills

Compared to the standard ECIDA PILOT schedule, the EIP Enhanced PILOTs offer as much as 25% additional savings per year on future property taxes and extends the PILOT benefits term up to 2 years beyond the standard five, seven or 10 year terms.

"The adoption of this new Economic Inclusion PILOT Policy is another step in creating an Erie County that provides economic opportunity for all," **said Erie County Executive and ECIDA Board Member Mark C. Poloncarz**. "For close to two years, the ECIDA's Policy Committee and M/WBE Working Group have worked to craft one of the first policies that will accelerate the inclusion of contractors, vendors, and employees in economic development projects who previously may have been overlooked. I applaud these efforts."

"I want to thank the ECIDA, the Policy Committee, Policy Committee Chair Richard Lipsitz, and former Policy Committee Member and former Deputy County Executive Maria Whyte for leading this innovative new M/WBE incentive," **said Legislator April Baskin**, who serves on the ECIDA Policy Committee.

"Looking back over the past 40 years of M/WBE policies across this country, it's clear that there needs to be a myriad of investments, mandates, and resources in order to right the wrongs of racial and gender discrimination. This policy is the next step in investments in our M/WBE companies, and the creation of new incentives for new M/WBEs to develop. We have to put our money where our mouths are if we are truly determined to level the playing field. And I am happy the ECIDA has decided to do that today," she said.

The policy is an opt-in benefit, rather than a required add-on to ECIDA policies applicants must abide by or face possible recapture of benefits.

“The Economic Inclusion PILOT will stimulate growth and development in our region, while creating opportunity for those who have historically lacked it. I am pleased that the IDA has chosen to pursue these goals through well-designed incentives, not through restrictive regulations. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership stands ready to help businesses navigate this program,” **said Dottie Gallagher, President and CEO, Buffalo Niagara Partnership and ECIDA Board member.**

The ECIDA will begin offering the opportunity for project applicants to opt-in to the Economic Inclusion Program Enhanced PILOTs after July 1.

For the complete Policy, please visit www.ecidany.com and click on the Policy tab.

The Erie County Industrial Development Agency is a public benefit corporation sanctioned by the State of New York to offer tax incentives to qualified businesses, and is dedicated to furthering economic development, adaptive reuse of qualified properties, job creation and ensuring a thriving business environment in Erie County. The staff of the ECIDA are not employees of the City of Buffalo, the County of Erie, or the State of New York. The ECIDA does not receive operating funds from taxpayer revenues. The ECIDA receives its operating funds by collecting fees from the private businesses that enter into contracts with the Agency.

For more information, visit www.ecidany.com