

Press Release

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***Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) Awarded \$925,000
for West Side Bazaar Expansion
Granted by the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning***

August 15, 2022. On Friday, Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz announced that WEDI will receive \$925,000 for its planned move and expansion of the West Side Bazaar. WEDI has been raising capital campaign funds for [building the new Bazaar](#) since March 2021.

“It’s exciting to receive this level of support from Erie County,” said WEDI Executive Director Carolynn Welch. “We’re grateful for this award and the recognition from the County for the new Bazaar that will be an anchor destination on Niagara Street. It’s a tangible expression of a future where equity is truly possible. More than a business, the West Side Bazaar is a vital cultural hub with demonstrated public appeal.”

The Bazaar is a popular and unique shopping and dining destination for locals and for visitors from all over the nation and the world. When it opens in 2023, the new West Side Bazaar will quintuple in size and provide space for 24 restaurant, retail, and professional services businesses, test and rental kitchens for independent chefs, classrooms, event space, and seating for 200+ patrons. WEDI’s [Economic Feasibility Study](#) projects a significant economic impact through direct and indirect spending, estimated at approximately \$34 million over five years and 250,000 visitors annually.

The West Side Bazaar is WEDI’s small business incubator that launches small retail and restaurant businesses. The incubator is the most public-facing initiative of WEDI’s economic development program that serves women, minorities, refugees, immigrants, and others who don’t qualify for loans and business support provided by traditional banking and financial institutions.

Since its founding in 2006, years, WEDI's proven programming has helped thousands of students and hundreds of entrepreneurs in Western New York to succeed in school and run thriving small businesses. The West Side Bazaar has incubated more than 48 small businesses.

The grant is part of a new \$25 million Erie County Cultural Capital Grant Program announced in Mr. Poloncarz’s 2022 State of the County address. These grants are intended specifically to address capital campaign projects. Find the Erie County Executive’s press release [here](#).

VISION

All residents of Western New York can succeed and thrive in a culturally inclusive community.

MISSION

WEDI strengthens communities through a continuum of educational and financial resources, removing systemic barriers to economic equity for all Western New Yorkers.