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Adam Bello, Monroe County Executive
Mayor Lovely A. Warren, City of Rochester

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Friday, October 9, 2020**

COMMISSION TO HOST VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION ON HUMAN & SOCIAL SERVICES

(Rochester, New York) - The Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) will host its second virtual Zoom Community Listening Session from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 14.

The Human and Social Services working group of the Commission invites community members who have interacted with our human and social services system to share their experiences.

RASE is working to identify policies, laws, and practices that promote institutional and structural racism. Commission members will recommend actions to the Rochester City and Monroe County governments, so this is an opportunity for community members to influence local laws and policies.

“Local governments spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year on human and social services,” said RASE Commissioner Mitch Gruber. “Our working group is eager to examine these programs to ensure they meet the needs of our community, and do so in a racially equitable manner. That requires us to hear from individuals who have lived experience with human and social services.”

Commissioners Karen Elam, Director, the Levine Center to End Hate at the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester; Mitch Gruber, City Councilman and Chief Program Officer, Foodlink; and Bruce Popper, Vice President, Retired, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, will lead the virtual Community Listening Session.

The Human and Social Services working group wants to hear from people that have received financial assistance through TANF or Safety Net, food assistance through SNAP, or health care through Medicaid, and from those that have been involved with the child welfare system (Child Protective or Preventative Services or foster care). What was your experience like? Did programs and staff members help you? Were you treated with respect? What worked well, and what could be improved?

Those interested in participating in the Community Listening Session can join the Zoom conference by signing up at www.rocrase.com/events. Spanish language and ASL services will be provided. The event will also livestream on the RASE Facebook page [at www.facebook.com/ROCRASE](https://www.facebook.com/ROCRASE) for those who simply wish to watch.

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