



PUSH BUFFALO
ANNUAL REPORT
2018

429 Plymouth Avenue, Suite 1 Buffalo, New York 14213
716-884-0356 | www.pushbuffalo.org



A WORD FROM PUSH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAHWA GHIRMATZION

As I look back on 2018, I am reminded of how much our community environment affects our health and welfare, and that we must protect the Earth while we protect those who are most affected by its deterioration. At PUSH, we continue to center the people and planet in every aspect of our work and community revitalization planning.

A person's environment, education, place of work, and home are inextricably linked in terms of health outcomes. This shows up in our community as environmental racism, and you can understand this by looking at the people who are first being impacted by environmental degradation, who live closest to toxic pollutants, and who are also the sickest -- it's the poor working class people in our beloved community.

I am grateful and honored to be working alongside the incredible human beings who make up PUSH Buffalo's membership, board, staff and supporters. We are here to steward an equitable framework designed by community residents' needs to build affordable and healthy homes, create safe and sustainable jobs, and push for policy that recognizes the intersection between racial, economic, and environmental justice. We believe that to do our work in a truly effective way, we must center investment in the people that are at the lowest rung of the economic ladder. We have seen that by investing in people who have been the most disenfranchised by our political and economic systems, we all rise.

PUSH's model gives those people the opportunity to be a part of the community development and design process. What we have learned is that the people closest to the problem have the best solutions to our most pressing societal challenges. That has been the key ingredient to the success of PUSH Buffalo. And it will continue to be far into the future.

In love & solidarity,



A WORD FROM PUSH BOARD CO-CHAIR NICOLALITA RODRIGUEZ

Although 2018 brought about much to celebrate, what I am most proud of is how we have centered healing amidst some of the most difficult times in our organization and community. We have created space to listen, work together, take mindful moments and to celebrate, just as we have created space to scream and cry as we have come to collectively understand, there is no wrong way to heal.

It has become clear that creating space for healing is not only a means of survival but that it is integral to a just transition. PUSH spent much of 2018 radically accepting our areas of growth, enduring those growing pains, and helping one another to do the same. Growth is never easy. However, I am looking forward to another year of transformation, transition and healing for us all.



PUSH Buffalo's mission is to:

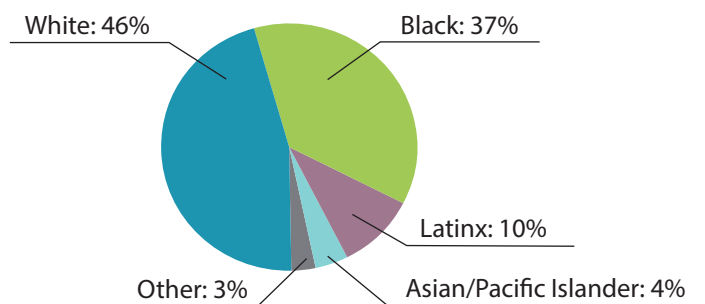
- Mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing;
- Expand local hiring opportunities; and
- Advance economic and environmental justice in Buffalo.



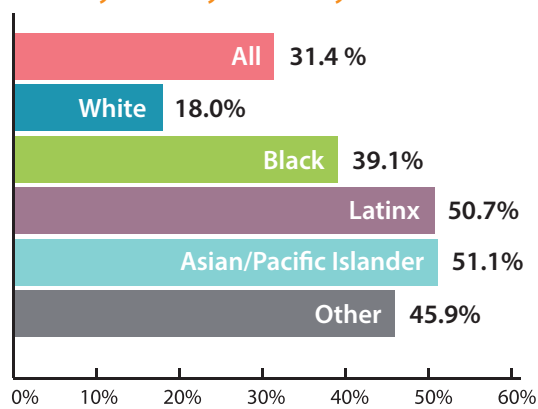
PUSH Board members Maxine Murphy, Carl Nightingale, Ramone Alexander, and Nicolalita Rodriguez.

BUFFALO, NY BY THE NUMBERS*

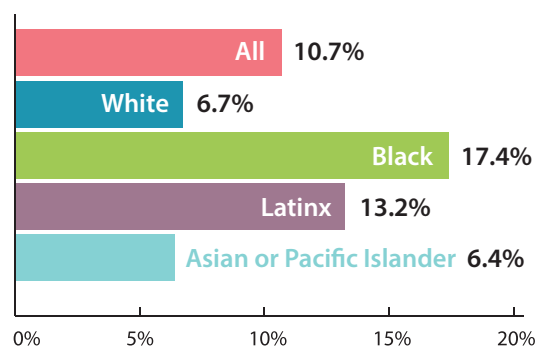
Population: 259,574 in 2017



Poverty Rate by Ethnicity



Unemployment Rate by Ethnicity



Inequitable Housing Costs

- 60% of Black renters and 61.4% of Latinx renters spent more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing costs compared to 44.9% of White renters.
- Close to 32% of homeowners of color spent more than 30% of their household income on housing costs in 2015, compared to 16.9% of White homeowners.

*Source: PolicyLink, *Advancing Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Buffalo*. Online at <http://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/advancing-health-equity-and-inclusive-growth-in-buffalo>.

OUR TOP 10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2018

- 1 Completed construction and moved into our new home and community hub at School 77.
- 2 Developed New York State's first 100% affordable 64-kw community solar system on the roof of School 77.
- 3 The PUSH Street Team canvassed the entire 14213 zip code, hitting over 20,000 doors. Through canvassing and events, we connected with over 700 new community members.
- 4 Acquired 6 properties for the Green Development Zone Land Bank, including 3 vacant homes and 3 vacant lots.
- 5 Trained 12 youth on green infrastructure and sustainable landscaping during a 12-week summer program.
- 6 Trained over 50 people in at least one of a dozen environmental workforce certifications.
- 7 Placed 17 people in construction jobs with the PUSH Hiring Hall and/or private employers.
- 8 Advocated for social equity and affordability principles to be included in New York State energy policies.
- 9 Launched PUSH's first voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaign. Registered over 100 immigrant and refugee voters and reached out to over 2,000 people.
- 10 Continued changing the conversation around anti-displacement, anti-gentrification, and affordable housing in Buffalo. Helped turn November into Buffalo's Anti-Displacement month.

WHOSE STREETS?



Street Team

The PUSH Street Team is dedicated to having a daily presence in PUSH's organizing zone through door knocking, one-to-one meetings, and phone calls. Comprised primarily of young immigrants and refugees, the Street Team connects with the community by speaking with Buffalo residents, building relationships, and recognizing the intersectionality of all the issues we work on.

In 2018, the Street Team knocked on thousands of doors on Buffalo's West Side, as well as other places in Buffalo, like the East Side and Black Rock. They made phone calls to members and PUSH allies throughout the year, encouraging them to come out to our events and trainings, as well as vote in the General Election.

Anti-Displacement Policy Network

In 2018, PolicyLink's All-In Cities initiative selected 10 cities for the inaugural cohort of the All-In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network. Leaders from these cities -- including local elected officials, city staff, and community leaders -- worked together on strategies to fight displacement and build inclusive, prosperous cities. PUSH Buffalo anchored the Buffalo Team, along with Open Buffalo, the Partnership for the Public Good, and City officials.

This network has provided us with the opportunity to not only advance our own work, but to capture and share our innovative community-driven development practices with communities across the country.

Coalition Building

The Crossroads Collective is a local just transition initiative co-chaired by PUSH and led by frontline communities that seeks to dismantle the dominant extractive economy and replace it with a living and regenerative economy that values climate and environmental justice, deep democracy, dignified and cooperative work, and the sacredness of our beloved community. Crossroads is demonstrating that the difficult work of building an intersectional movement ecology here in Buffalo is both necessary and possible. In 2018, Crossroads partners ran campaigns to win transit equity, food justice, community-controlled development, energy democracy, and the preservation of frontline arts and cultural institutions.

Climate Justice/100% Buffalo/Energy Democracy

As a founding member of the NY Renews coalition, PUSH continued to fight for passage of the New York Climate and Community Protection Act, the most progressive climate justice legislation in the country, while also joining forces with members of the Energy Democracy Alliance to demand adoption of more equitable energy policies by the Public Service Commission.

In September 2018, the PUSH Energy Democracy Committee mobilized over 300 people for a local Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice day-long event on September 8th at the Canalside district in downtown Buffalo. The event was supported by Crossroads partners and succeeded in raising awareness of local climate impacts and solutions.

OUR STREETS!

GOTV

We want all political candidates to pay attention to our community and their needs, and one way to do that is to help our community become engaged citizens who vote. In the summer and fall of 2018, we launched and carried out PUSH's first-ever get out the vote campaign and through the power of the Street Team, registered over 100 low-propensity voters. We held three voter registration trainings and have plans to have an even bigger impact in 2019.

Banking Equity

In 2018, PUSH worked with community partners to ensure that Northwest Bank and KeyBank follow through on the community benefit agreements that they executed in 2017. We have been organizing local economic development organizations and are paying close attention to where the money is flowing as a result of these agreements. PUSH Organizers now have leadership positions in the Buffalo Niagara Community Reinvestment Coalition and help the Coalition with strategy. The Coalition is doing testing to make sure the banks are making good on their agreements. Both Northwest and KeyBank opened branches in disinvested neighborhoods, which is a huge victory, but there is more work to be done.

Housing Justice

PUSH is organizing at every level of government and directly with developers to combat gentrification and stop displacement in Buffalo. We continue to fight for Inclusionary Zoning as year after year we see luxury housing paid for with taxpayer dollars while many of our members struggle to find a decent place to live.

By working with Public Accountability Initiative and other partners, we helped expose the cost of development on tax payers by highlighting the 485-A tax break and the local abuses of the program. We are working to stop the program and divert the resources to low-income homeowners facing tax reassessment and affordable housing. We also held the Second Annual Anti-Gentrification Summit to deepen the understanding of leaders around the city to gentrification's intersectional impacts.

Tenant Advocacy

Tenant Advocacy is an important part of anti-gentrification and housing justice work, as the people of our neighborhood are most affected by slumlords who are driving their displacement. House flippers and slumlords control a large amount of the housing stock and are quick to evict and slow to fix. PUSH Tenant Advocate Aminah Johnson is available at School 77 to help tenants stay in their homes and improve their housing conditions. In 2018, Aminah was in housing court with dozens of tenants over the course of the year. We held several protests and met with Judge Carney to advance our agenda for just cause evictions.

Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice event at Canalside.



SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOL 77

In Summer 2018, PUSH completed construction on its new headquarters located at the former Buffalo Public School 77 on the West Side. Representing the culmination of multi-year community organizing and planning processes, School 77 is an example of a mixed-used just transition project that maximizes community benefits. The project features 30 units of energy efficient affordable housing for seniors, a community gymnasium, and community meeting spaces. The building is also a home base to Peace of the City and Ujima Theatre Company, Inc., which will open a black-box performance space at School 77 in Spring 2019.

School 77 is a beacon for sustainability, energy democracy, and green jobs. It includes a green roof and eco-landscaping features, which absorb rainwater and curb combined sewer overflows. A 64kw community solar facility was installed on the roof and deeply discounted renewable energy credits will be offered to tenants in the building. PUSH Community Hiring Hall workers installed each of these systems while earning a living wage.



Green roof and outdoor space for School 77 senior residents.



MEET AMINAH JOHNSON

Aminah Johnson—artist, activist, and advocate—has been with PUSH Buffalo since 2006. Our reigning “O.G.” met PUSH co-founders Aaron Bartley and Eric Walker while she was walking home, down on the corner of Breckenridge and Hoyt, where the two were knocking on doors on behalf of the nascent organization. Aminah joined them to canvas door-to-door and together, the trio started screening films for the community at 271 Grant Street about the Black Panthers and Martin Luther King Jr. so that people could see that, “when you show up in numbers, you get results.”

Johnson is the second daughter of four, the mother to four step-children and one biological son, and the wife of Ismail Johnson. Her formal career started when Barbara Merriweather-Sims, the first African-American woman to serve as a

Buffalo City Judge and a housing and women’s rights advocate, asked if she would like to work at her law firm. She could not refuse.

At PUSH, Aminah fields countless calls from tenants who have had problems with the quality and conditions of rentals in neighborhoods throughout the city, tackling our housing crisis one slumlord at a time. She is a true advocate: outspoken and fair; kind, tireless, and real.

Aminah is an artist in many media: jewelry-making, sculpture, sewing, fabric art, and painting. She’s active in strengthening PUSH’s relationships within the neighborhood and hopes to bring back those movie nights! And as Aminah likes to say, “I’ll make the popcorn.”

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GRANT STREET NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The Grant Street Neighborhood Center serves over 60 people every day, most of whom are youth between 10 and 20 years of age. Our open, safe and productive space provides daily activities and programming infused with opportunities, building critical consciousness through participatory education. Youth come in to do homework, use one of our 10 computers, play board games, read books, or play on our PS3.

We currently run three programs out of the GSNC:

- **Guy Talk** seeks to bring men together in an open, safe and productive atmosphere, free of judgment and condemnation to express what we all encounter in life. We desire to become men of leadership, confidence and critical thinking.
- **Girl Talk** provides space for girls to be open with their ideas and share thoughts, views, and struggles. We encourage and uplift young women to express themselves without being judgmental. At Girl Talk we aspire to become positive, productive leaders who are equipped with the tools to succeed in all aspects of life.
- **West Side Studios** is a media arts education and workforce development project partnership between Squeaky Wheel and PUSH Buffalo that provides year-round, quality out-of-school opportunities for West Side residents ages 13-19. This program provides hands-on experience in digital media arts, fine-tunes production skills, and creates a pipeline to employment.



Celebrating International Women's Day at the Grant Street Neighborhood Center.



MEET PHAW MU NAR

Phaw Mu Nar, PUSH's Street Team Manager, is a 27-year-old woman who came to Buffalo, New York as a refugee from Burma in 2009 when she was around 15 years old. She continues to be deeply involved in her Karen community (a cultural group from Burma) on the West Side of Buffalo.

Phaw graduated from Lafayette High School and then Houghton College where she studied Psychology. While at Houghton, she needed a part time job, and a tutor connected her to PUSH Buffalo's Organizing Team at the Grant Street Neighborhood Center. Street Team Manager Christian Parra interviewed Phaw and invited her to train and be a part of the PUSH Street Team because he recognized her strength and leadership potential. Now Phaw is helping train and grow the Street Team.

Phaw wants to see more diversity on the Street Team and welcomes all who want to help in the community. She also wants to build closer relationships between all people at PUSH and the wider community. Phaw likes photography and media – she wants to tell stories about culture and community through interviews and digital platforms such as YouTube.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PUSH's affordable housing arm, Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company, Inc. (BNSC), transforms dilapidated homes and vacant land into affordable housing and other community assets with member input throughout the process. Our Property and Maintenance team keeps our buildings safe and maintained for our tenants.

In 2018, BNSC acquired 6 properties for the Green Development Zone Land Bank, including 3 vacant homes and 3 vacant lots. BNSC also worked hard on the opening of School 77 and helped PUSH, Peace of the City, Ujima Theatre Co., Inc., and 30 senior residents move into our new home. We continued Training House construction at 236 Normal Ave. and finished up planning for the WASH Project, a community laundromat, arts center, and 9-unit affordable housing project that is now under construction.



PUSH GREEN

PUSH Green has been working to make homes and small businesses in frontline and environmental justice communities more comfortable and healthier, reduce energy burdens, address climate change, and create local jobs since 2011. PUSH Green's industry-certified community energy advocates engage local residents through 1-on-1 conversations, tabling at events, and workshops to increase energy system literacy and connect them with New York State programs that reduce energy burdens.

In 2018, PUSH Green launched the NYSERDA Community Energy Engagement Program, which seeks to increase adoption rates for clean energy products and services in poor and working-class communities throughout

Erie County and Western New York. PUSH Green continued its Warm & Dry on the West Side program, which has completed 28 retrofits, and also helped launch a NYSERDA pilot program that provides residents with free smart thermostats. PUSH Green also implemented NYSERDA's EmPower program that begins with an energy assessment and ends with energy improvement assistance. PUSH Green also canvassed the West Side with Cannon Design and the Street Team to help get the word out about our community solar program, Solar for All.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

PUSH recognizes the synergy that exists between the environmental movement and the movement to create jobs and alleviate poverty in low-income urban neighborhoods. The PUSH Community Hiring Hall operates as a high road employment staffing agency for un- and under-employed workers interested in pursuing careers in construction and sustainability sectors like solar, weatherization, and environmental remediation. PUSH utilizes Hiring Hall labor on its own projects, while connecting them with construction work throughout Erie County.

In 2018, we trained over 50 people in environmental workforce certifications and placed 17 people in construction jobs with the PUSH Hiring Hall and/or private employers. At the 236 Normal Avenue Training House, YouthBuild trainees and other contractors finished installation of the house's mechanical, electrical, heating, and plumbing systems. Trainees also completed the house's insulation and siding, hung drywall, built a fence, and completed some interior framing repair.



Hiring Hall workers installing solar panels on the roof of School 77.



PUSH Blue Environmental Stewardship trainees learning how to install a rain garden.

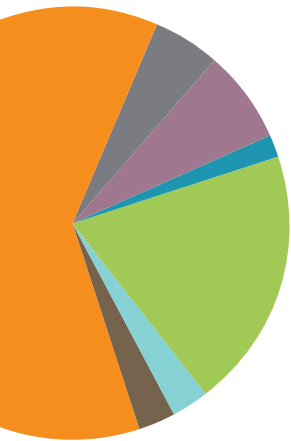
PUSH BLUE

PUSH Blue is a program that creates jobs and addresses Buffalo's water quality issues by installing and maintaining green infrastructure throughout the City. During the summer, PUSH Blue Program Manager Ken Parker led an Environmental Stewardship Training Program and introduced the 12 youth trainees to the basic principles of storm water management & ecological landscaping, and how these strategies fit into Buffalo's vision for protecting our environment and water quality. Through hands-on experience, trainees learned the industry standards of installing green infrastructure (GI), building a rain garden, groundskeeping, growing native plants, and landscape management. Trainees visited PUSH's existing GI installations, helped implement a sustainable landscape plan at School 77, and installed a rain garden at the Training House.

In the fall, PUSH Blue launched its pilot National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP) training course. Four trainees, which included two Hiring Hall workers, took the course and three passed the exam, becoming the first nationally certified GI workers in New York State. PUSH Blue will deliver the NGICP course to Buffalo Sewer Authority workers in Spring 2019.



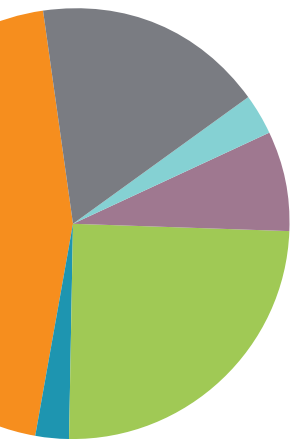
2018 YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT



PUSH Buffalo Income by Category*

■ Grants Income	\$2,501,148
■ Contributions	\$208,075
■ Management Fee Income	\$277,670
■ Tenant Income	\$62,210
■ Passthrough Income	\$798,630
■ Special Events Income	\$104,952
■ Other Income	\$111,174

Total Income \$4,063,859



PUSH Buffalo Expense by Category*

■ Office Expenses	\$114,170
■ Repairs & Maintenance	\$294,796
■ Passthrough	\$958,956
■ Professional Fees	\$105,571
■ Operating Expenses	\$1,744,073
• Community Organizing	\$257,555
• Funding and Development	\$107,200
• Executive	\$135,175
• Finance & Administration	\$286,223
• Grant Street Neighborhood Center	\$82,963
• Hiring Hall	\$117,546
• Planning & Community Development	\$139,574
• Policy & Strategy and Communications	\$176,213
• PUSH Blue	\$115,669
• PUSH Green	\$179,205
• Property Management	\$146,750
■ Other Operating Expenses	\$680,922

Total Expense \$3,898,488



Net Income \$165,371

* PUSH Income and Expense numbers are preliminary, unaudited drafts.

BBB & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On November 8, over 300 PUSH supporters and newcomers to the organization gathered at Temple Beth Zion for the 8th Annual Building Blocks Breakfast. As the only fundraising event that PUSH hosts annually, we are proud to share that thanks to our incredible supporters, over \$160,000 of unrestricted donations were raised. Thank you!

Many thanks to our major sponsors: M&T Bank, RP Oakhill, Cannon Heyman Weiss, and Northwest.

Special thank you to our 2018 Development Committee!

- Larry Rubin (*Development Committee Chair*)
- Barbara Bono (*Building Blocks Breakfast Co-Chair*)
- Ellen Daly (*Building Blocks Breakfast Co-Chair*)
- Stuart Angert
- Kevin Campbell
- Linda Kahn
- Holly Mergenhagen
- Bill Wachob



The 2018 Building Blocks Breakfast in full swing.

THANK YOU

2018 Board of Directors

Maxine Murphy (*Board Co-Chair*)
Nicolalita Rodriguez (*Board Co-Chair*)
Carl Nightingale (*Secretary*)
Ramone Alexander (*Treasurer*)
John Buckley
Felicita Cintron
Robert Jahnke
Shirley Sarmiento
Da'Von McCune
Heidi I. Jones

PUSH Community Development Committee

A group of dedicated community members who are tasked with the planning and oversight of all PUSH Buffalo and Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company development projects.

PUSH Energy Democracy Committee

A group of dedicated community members who are committed to create an energy transition from extractive to regenerative energy sources with a strengthening of democracy and public participation. The EDC works to build resilient communities while remembering class, power, accountability, urgency, and the wisdom of Indigenous communities.

PUSH Silver

PUSH Silver is a supportive collaboration of PUSH senior members whose mission is to serve the senior residents of PUSH housing, aided by staff members and potential programs from service providers, in order to help promote the physical, emotional, financial and social well-being of PUSH member adults age 55 or older, their family members, and the disabled or frail; to help them access resources or services; to help maintain their independent living; and promote their wellness and quality of life. Founder Luz Maria Velez, 2nd co-founder Providencia (Provy) Carrion, Robert (Bob) Jahnke, Felicita (Fela) Cintron, and Maxine Murphy.

2018 FUNDING PARTNERS

11th Hour Project	KeyBank Foundation	David Rivera
Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency	The Kresge Foundation	Open Buffalo
Catholic Campaign for Human Development	Local Initiatives Support Corporation	Open Society Foundations
The Chorus Foundation	The M&T Charitable Foundation	People's Action Institute
The City of Buffalo	The National Equity Fund	Pisces Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	New York Immigration Coalition	Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation
East Hill Foundation	New York Renews	Richard W. Rupp Foundation
Empire State Development Corporation	New York State Affordable Housing Corporation	Roche Foundation, Inc.
Evans-Devereux Memorial	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	The Rowboat Foundation
Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing	New York State Department of State	The Solutions Project
The Funders Network	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority	Surdna Foundation
JPB Foundation	New York State Homes and Community Renewal	Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
Joy Family Foundation		U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The Kendeda Fund	Niagara District Common Councilman	

PUSH Buffalo
429 Plymouth Avenue, Suite 1
Buffalo, NY 14213

JOIN THE
MOVEMENT


1. MAKE A GIFT

Visit www.pushbuffalo.org and click "Donate" to make a secure online donation today! Contact us at development@pushbuffalo.org if you have any questions or would like to give over the phone.

2. GET INVOLVED

Become a PUSH member! Email organizing@pushbuffalo.org if you are interested in becoming a member, attending a monthly meeting, or joining a committee.

3. JOIN THE CONVERSATION

 www.pushbuffalo.org



@pushbuffalo



@pushbluewny



@pushgreenwny