



Assemblymember Demond L. Meeks



Spring 2026

Community Newsletter

From Rochester to the Capitol: Assemblymember Demond Meeks Carries Community Concerns to Albany

ALBANY, NY — Fresh off a four-stop January town hall tour that spanned from the Lyell and Joseph Avenue libraries to the town of Gates and the Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, Assemblymember Demond Meeks (D-137) has officially returned to the New York State Capitol for the 2026 legislative session.

Armed with direct feedback from his constituents, Meeks is translating neighborhood frustrations into legislative action. “The people of Rochester aren’t just looking for a representative; they’re looking for a voice in the room where decisions are made,” Meeks said upon his return to the Assembly chamber.



A Legislative Agenda Rooted in the Community

The transition from community centers to the halls of power is where Meeks—an organizer by trade—does his most critical work. This year, his legislative priorities are defined by five key bills that aim to provide economic relief, protect homeowners, and reform the justice system.

1. Economic Justice: The Progressive Income Tax (A1281)

Hearing concerns about the rising cost of living at the Lyell and Joseph Avenue libraries, Meeks is pushing for a more equitable tax structure. This bill would impose a progressive income tax on high-income earners, ensuring that the wealthiest New Yorkers contribute more to the state’s essential services, which in turn provides relief for working-class families in Rochester.

2. Sentencing Reform: The Marvin Mayfield Act (A1297)

A major topic at the Boys and Girls Club was the cycle of incarceration. This bill seeks to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences, allowing judges to consider the specific circumstances of an individual’s life and potential for rehabilitation rather than being forced to hand down rigid, “one-size-fits-all” prison terms.

3. Life-Saving Access: The First Responder EPI Act (A4719)

In response to community health concerns, Meeks is championing the “Epinephrine Preparedness Initiative.” This bill would create a bulk purchase program for epinephrine (EpiPens) for first responders and municipalities, ensuring that these life-saving tools are affordable and available to local emergency crews when seconds count.

4. Homeowner Protection: The Deed Protection Act (A9554)

Following reports of housing scams discussed during his town halls, Meeks introduced this act to fight deed theft. The bill prohibits financial institutions from taking possession of a property if the loan was obtained through deed theft, adding a vital layer of security for Rochester homeowners—especially seniors—who are often targeted by scammers.

5. Urban Revitalization: Expanding Brownfield Credits (A10200)

To spark growth in neglected areas of the 137th District, Meeks is working to expand the eligibility of the Brownfield Redevelopment Tax Credit. By reducing population requirements for site eligibility, this bill makes it easier to clean up and repurpose contaminated industrial sites in Rochester, turning “eyesores” into new housing or business opportunities.

Assemblymember Demond Meeks Hosts January Town Hall Series to Tackle Rochester’s Pressing Issues

ROCHESTER, NY — In an effort to ensure the voices of the 137th District are heard at the start of the new legislative session, Assemblymember Demond Meeks hosted a series of four town halls throughout January. The meetings served as a direct bridge between Albany and Rochester, allowing constituents to speak face-to-face with their representative about the issues hitting closest to home.

The series, titled “Meet with Meeks,” moved across key community hubs to ensure maximum accessibility for residents in the city and the town of Gates.

A Grassroots Approach to Governance

For Assemblymember Meeks, these meetings were less about speeches and more about listening. By holding the sessions at the Lyell Branch Library, Lincoln Branch Library (Joseph Avenue), Gates Public Library, and the Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, the Assemblymember met residents in the spaces they already frequent.

The feedback gathered during these four stops is intended to shape Meeks’ legislative priorities for the remainder of the year. By hearing directly from those impacted by state policy, the Assemblymember aims to advocate more effectively for resources.



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Rochester Community Events

April: Innovation & Earth Month

The Great NYS Flea (April 19, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM):

A revamped community-wide flea market featuring hundreds of vendors selling vintage goods and collectibles. Held at the Rochester Public Market (280 North Union Street).

Imagine RIT (April 25, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM):

A free festival showcasing innovation and creativity. The entire RIT Campus (One Lomb Memorial Drive, Henrietta) is filled with interactive robotics, art projects, and tech demos.

Flower City Challenge (April 26):

A half-marathon and 5K race that winds through the city's parks and historic neighborhoods, starting and ending at Parcel 5 in Downtown Rochester.

Food Truck Rodeo Kickoff (April 29, 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM):

The first "rodeo" of the year. Over 30 food trucks gather for a massive block party with live music at the Rochester Public Market (280 North Union Street).

May: Peak Bloom & Cultural Festivals

Clean Sweep Saturday: 20th Anniversary (May 2, 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM):

Celebrate 20 years of neighborhood beautification! Volunteers gather at Innovative Field (One Morrie Silver Way) for a light breakfast and a free t-shirt before heading out to various city project sites.

Rochester Lilac Festival (May 9–17): North America's largest free festival of its kind. Ten days of music, food, and 500 varieties of blooming lilacs at Highland Park (South Avenue and Reservoir Avenue).

Flower City Days at the Market (May 10, 17, 24, 25, & 31): Giant horticultural sales where local growers sell bedding plants, shrubs, and perennials. Held at the Rochester Public Market (280 North Union Street).

Memorial Day Parade (May 25): A commemorative march honoring fallen service members, stepping off at 10:30 a.m. from East & Alexander and proceeding west along Main Street to Fitzhugh Street.

Rochester Greek Festival (May 28–31): A celebration of Greek culture featuring traditional food, music, and dance on the grounds of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (962 East Avenue).

June: Transition to Summer

19th Ward's 2026 Square Fair (June 6): Join us at Aberdeen Park on Saturday to celebrate the 61st Annual Square Fair with food, fun, and community spirit of the 19th Ward.

Harborfest (June 18–21): A festival celebrating the opening of the summer season on the lake. Features volleyball, car shows, and free carousel rides at Ontario Beach Park (50 Beach Avenue, Charlotte).

Rochester International Jazz Festival (June 19–27): Nine days of world-class music across 20 venues. The festival is centered in the East End District (Gibbs Street and East Avenue).

Juneteenth Celebration & Parade (June 13): A celebration of freedom featuring a parade and community festival at Dr. MLK Jr. Park (353 Court Street).

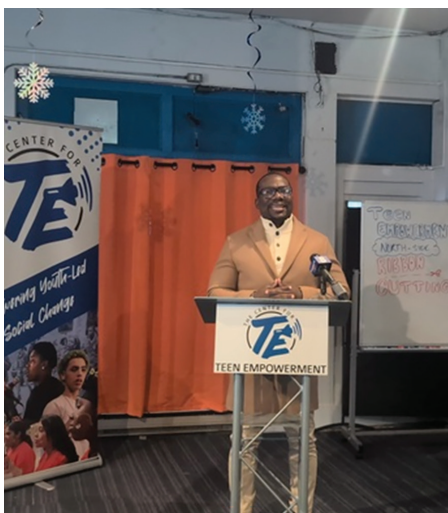
Rochester Food Pantries: Essential Resources for Families in Need

Rochester offers numerous food pantry locations serving all neighborhoods. These pantries provide free groceries, fresh produce, and supplemental items to individuals and families facing food insecurity. Below is a comprehensive list with contact information:

Pantry Name	Address	Contact
Baden Street Settlement	13 Vienna Street	(585) 325-4910
Barakah Muslim Charity	584 Jefferson Avenue	(585) 325-2621
Charles Settlement House	71 Parkway	(585) 277-0810
The People's Pantry	555 Avenue D	(585) 325-4950
Dimitri House	102 Union Street N	(585) 325-1796
Zion Hill Baptist Church	250 Dr. Samuel McCree Way	(585) 328-4660
Rochester Family Mission	388 Tremont Street	(585) 436-7523
House of Mercy	285 Ormond Street	(585) 546-2580
Trillium Health	259 Monroe Avenue	(585) 545-7220
Cameron Ministries	648 Cameron Street	(585) 254-2697
Veterans Outreach Center	447 South Avenue	(585) 546-1081
Gates Presbyterian Church/SWEM Community Services	1049 Wegman Road	(585) 235-4491

Most pantries operate on a walk-in or appointment basis and provide additional services such as clothing, hygiene products, and referrals.

Assemblymember Demond Meeks Joins Teen Empowerment for Northside Ribbon-Cutting



The Center for Teen Empowerment has officially planted new roots on Rochester's north side with the opening of its newest teen hub at the corner of Magee and Dewey avenues. Assemblymember Demond Meeks joined youth organizers and staff to cut the ribbon on the Maplewood Historic District site, marking a significant expansion for an organization that has served our city for over two decades. This new location is a strategic investment in Rochester's young people, positioned intentionally at an intersection that has seen significant challenges with gun violence. By establishing a presence here, Teen Empowerment is providing a vital alternative, turning a site of past trauma into a space for "real power," healing, and civic leadership.

The Dewey Avenue hub offers paid leadership opportunities, workforce development, and advocacy training, specifically reaching out to disaffected youth to provide them with the tools to break cycles of violence. During the ceremony, Assemblymember Meeks emphasized that this expansion strengthens the community's safety net, ensuring more young people have access to mentorship and safe spaces. From hosting original poetry readings to advocating for legislative change in Albany, the center serves as an intergenerational incubator where youth voices are not only heard but are used to drive public policy. This new chapter reinforces Teen Empowerment's long-standing commitment to organizing and advocating for a more just and peaceful Rochester.

Numbers to Know

Eviction Prevention Resources

- **Tenant Defense Project**..... (585) 504-6195
- **Legal Aid Society of Rochester** (585) 232-4090
- **Rochester City-Wide Tenant Union**..... (585) 210-0705

Emergency Shelters & Transitional Housing

- **Monroe County Department of Human Services**(585) 753-2780
- **Open Door Mission (210 West Main Street)** (585) 423-1825
- **Family Promise of Greater Rochester** (585) 506-9050

Low-Income Health Clinics

- **Anthony L. Jordan Health Center**(585) 423-5800 (Main line)
- **Bethany House (Women/Children)**.....(585) 454-4197
- **Brown Square Health Center**.....(585) 254-6480
- **Clinton Family Women’s Health**..... (585) 922-0260
- **Genesee Health Service** (585) 922-8003
- **Highland Family Medicine**(585) 279-4800
- **Unity Dental at Ridgeway**.....(585) 295-1890
- **Unity at St. Mary’s** (585) 368-3031
- **Woodward Health Center**.....(585) 436-3040

Drug, Counseling, and Recovery Services

- **Open Access: Delphi Rise**(585) 627-1777
- **Helio Detox - Rochester Evaluation Center** (585) 287-5622

East House Care

- **Management**(585) 238-4800 (Main Office)
- **Recovery Houses of Rochester** (585) 802-8709
- **Veteran’s Outreach Center**(585) 546-1081

Emergency & Victim Services

- **Animal Services (Rochester)** (585) 428-7274
- **Child Protective Services (Statewide Intake)**..... 1-800-342-3720
- **Willow Domestic Violence Center**(585) 222-7233 (24/7 Hotline)
- **RESTORE Sexual Assault Services**.....(585) 546-2777
- **Victim Assistance Unit (RPD)**.....(585) 428-6630
- **LIFELINE / 211**Dial 2-1-1 or (585) 275-5151
- **Lifespan (Seniors)**(585) 244-8400

New York State Agencies (Regional Offices)

- **Attorney General (Rochester Office)** (585) 546-7430
- **Department of Labor**..... 1-888-469-7365
- **Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)**1-800-698-2931
- **Division of Human Rights** (585) 238-8250
- **Office of Mental Health (OMH)** 1-800-597-8481

Tips & Reporting

- **Crime Stoppers (Anonymous)**..... (585) 423-9300
- **Poison Control**..... 1-800-222-1222

How to Report a Pothole

The City of Rochester provides two primary methods for reporting pavement defects, including potholes, depressions, and edge defects:

Online Reporting: Visit the City of Rochester’s Service Portal to submit a digital request. <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/departments/department-environmental-services-des/pothole-repair>

Call 311: If you are within city limits, simply dial 311. For those calling from outside the city, use 585-428-5990. Operators are available to log your report and direct it to the Department of Environmental Services.

Response Times and Standards

The City is committed to rapid infrastructure maintenance. On average, repairs on City-maintained streets are completed within 24 to 48 hours of being reported.

State Highways: For expressways like I-490, I-390, or Route 104, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is responsible. You should report these specifically to the state hotline at 1-800-POTHOLE.

Applications are now being accepted for the Summer of Opportunity Program (SOOP) and RochesterWorks SYEP. These programs offer City of Rochester students (ages 14–20) the chance to gain professional work experience and internships throughout the Greater Rochester community.

Eligibility Overview:

- SOOP: Open to all City residents ages 14–20 currently enrolled in school or a TASC program. There are no family income requirements.
- SYEP: Available to applicants who meet specific residency and income guidelines.

Key Requirements:

- Must reside within the City of Rochester.
- Must be currently enrolled in middle school, high school, or a TASC program.
- Must be between the ages of 14 and 20.

How to Apply:

- Begin the joint application process at <https://app.myoneflow.com/RochesterWorks/OneFlow/>
- Youth residing outside the City of Rochester are encouraged to visit Rocsummeryouth.com for additional regional resources.

May 2 • Rochester Job Fair • Eastview Mall
 7979 Pittsford Victor Road (Food Court Entrance) • **10:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

June 18 • Rochester Career Fair • Marriott Rochester Airport
 1890 Ridge Road W, Rochester, NY 14615 • **5:30 PM – 8:30 PM**

Public Service & NY HELPS: Many state and local government agencies will be present at these fairs. Encourage constituents to ask about the NY HELPS program, which allows qualified candidates to be hired for permanent state positions without taking a traditional civil service exam. Preparation Support: RochesterWorks (located at 100 College Ave) offers free resume assistance and interview coaching for anyone planning to attend these events.

Emergency Contacts and Support Services

Service	Phone Number	Notes
Mental Health Crisis (988)	Dial or text 988	Suicide prevention and crisis support
Willow Domestic Violence Center	(585) 222-7233	Shelter and counseling for abuse survivors
Hope Place Mental Health Hotline	(585) 461-5690	Behavioral health crisis support
RESTORE Sexual Assault Services	(585) 546-2777	Advocacy and counseling
Monroe County DHS	(585) 753-6477	Social services and benefits
COVID-19 Information Hotline	(585) 753-5555	Up-to-date COVID resources
Rochester Police Missing Persons Unit	(585) 428-6630	Reporting missing persons
Monroe County Animal Services	(585) 428-7274	Animal control and shelter
NYS Attorney General – Rochester Office	(585) 423-8042	Consumer protection and legal assistance

SUNY Reconnect: A New Pathway for Adult Learners

A program created through the FY26 State Budget thanks to the leadership of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

SUNY Reconnect provides free tuition, fees, books, and supplies for adults between the ages of 25 and 55 who do not already have a college degree and are pursuing an associate degree in a high-demand field at a SUNY community college.

This initiative was designed to help more New Yorkers access higher education while also addressing workforce shortages in key industries. Eligible programs include:

- Nursing and allied health
- Advanced manufacturing
- Engineering and technology
- Cybersecurity and artificial intelligence
- Renewable and green energy
- Pathways to teaching in shortage areas

Locally, Monroe Community College is playing an important role in this effort. MCC is the only community college in the nation that awards associate degrees in precision optics, a field that is in high demand right here in our region. MCC also offers strong programs in nursing, engineering technology, and advanced manufacturing, all of which are part of SUNY Reconnect.

As your Assemblymember, I am proud to support investments like SUNY Reconnect that remove financial barriers to higher educa-



tion. Programs like this give adult learners the chance to return to school, gain valuable skills, and secure good-paying jobs. At the same time, they strengthen our local economy by ensuring businesses and industries have the skilled workforce they need to grow.

If you or someone you know is interested in going back to school, I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. SUNY Reconnect is already making a difference, with more than 16,000 adult learners statewide applying for the program so far.

To learn more about available programs and how to apply, visit: suny.edu/communitycollege/free-cc

Together, we can continue to expand opportunity, support working families, and build a stronger future for our community.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



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