

# UNLOCKING YOUR BUSINESS POTENTIAL: AN OVERVIEW OF INCENTIVES AND FUNDING PROGRAMS



**Laura Fox O'Sullivan**  
Director, Finger Lakes Regional  
Office; Executive Director,  
Finger Lakes Regional  
Economic Development  
Council

Laura Fox O'Sullivan is the Director of Empire State Development's Finger Lakes Regional Office and the Executive Director of The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council. Prior to joining Empire State Development, Laura served as the President of the region's first food business incubator, The Commissary, and as Vice President of the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation. She holds a Bachelor's in History of Art and Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's in Urban & Environmental Planning & Policy from Tufts University. As an urban planner and native Rochestarian, Laura has keen interest in working to facilitate this region's economic development. She lives in the Highland Park neighborhood with her husband, two daughters, and many pets.



**Ana Liss**  
Director, Monroe County  
Planning & Development;  
Executive Director, COMIDA &  
MCIDC

Ana J. Liss is the Director of Planning and Development for Monroe County, NY, and serves as Executive Director of the Monroe County Industrial Development Corporation (MCIDC) and the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency (COMIDA). COMIDA and MCIDC provide tax incentives, loans, workforce training, and rebates to support business and job growth in the county. Ana also leads the Monroe County Finger Lakes APEX Accelerator, assisting entrepreneurs in securing government contracts. Previously, Ana held positions in economic development, corporate relations, and journalism. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania and has been recognized as a "Rising Economic Development Star."



**Joe Sayre**  
Sr. Economic Development  
Specialist, RG&E

Joe Sayre joined the economic development department at RG&E and NYSEG in 2022, where he manages and implements various programs to support economic growth. These programs include grants for infrastructure and energy efficiency, assistance for manufacturers, start-ups, and entrepreneurs, and the revitalization of main streets and business corridors. Joe works closely with local, regional, and state partners to attract and retain businesses in the NYSEG and RG&E service territories. With a background in business operations, development, planning, and financial management, Joe earned his bachelor's degree at SUNY Brockport and his MBA at the Simon Business School. He is actively involved in several organizations and enjoys exploring the region for the best chicken wings and IPAs while cheering for the Buffalo Bills.



**Thaddeus Schofield**  
Director of Business  
Development, The City of  
Rochester

Thaddeus (Thad) Schofield is the Director of Strategic Business Development in the City of Rochester's Neighborhood and Business Development Department. With over 25 years of experience, Thad has been instrumental in the growth and development of entrepreneurial and mature companies in Rochester. He has played a key role in significant development projects, such as ESL Federal Credit Union's headquarters and attracting businesses to downtown Rochester. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Thad and his team quickly established a program that assisted nearly 550 businesses to stay open. Thad's expertise lies in helping businesses gain financial access, complete real estate transactions, and form strategic partnerships. He holds an MBA from the University of Rochester and a BS in Marketing from Niagara University.