

For Immediate Release
Contact [Erin Kelly](#), Director of External Relations
716.800.2280

**Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) Awarded \$1,000,000
for West Side Bazaar Expansion by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation
*Puts the Capital Campaign in the Homestretch for Fall Opening***

June 8, 2023. WEDI has been awarded \$1,000,000 from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation for its expansion of the West Side Bazaar on Niagara Street. This launches the capital campaign into its final, public phase or the homestretch to the new Bazaar's opening this September.

WEDI has been raising capital campaign funds to [build the new Bazaar](#) since March 2021. The original Bazaar on Grant Street was incubating 11 small retail and restaurant businesses when it was closed by a fire in September 2022.

"This gift from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation is significant because of the level of its generosity but also because it demonstrates belief in the need for our project. Finally, it signifies our \$11.5 million campaign is now in its homestretch," said WEDI Executive Director Carolynn Welch. "I invite our supporters and customers who value the Bazaar as a destination for food and shopping, as a small business incubator, and as an environment where diversity thrives to join the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and the [other venerable WNY institutions](#) by supporting our capital campaign and to help us meet our fundraising goal so we can open this fall. Make this place yours!

The Bazaar on Grant Street was, and the Downtown Bazaar (recently opened) in the Theatre District is a popular shopping and dining destination for locals and visitors from all over the nation and the world. When it opens in fall 2023, the new West Side Bazaar at 1432 Niagara Street will quintuple in size and provide space for 20 restaurant, retail, and professional services businesses, a test/rental kitchen 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.

"With the upcoming Bazaar, WEDI is set to create a powerful economic impact and offer invaluable opportunities for entrepreneurs to thrive, bringing diversity and strength to the region's restaurant and retail sector. We're proud to support the West Side Bazaar, one of Buffalo's-community gems and a 'must-go' destination for Buffalo residents and visitors alike," said Jim Boyle, VP of Programs and Communications at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

The West Side Bazaar is WEDI's small business incubator, the most public-facing initiative of WEDI's economic development program as a [Community Development Financial Institution](#) (CDFI) microlender that serves women, minorities, refugees, immigrants, and others who don't qualify for loans and business support provided by traditional banking and financial institutions and who might otherwise turn to predatory lenders for funding. The WSB has incubated more than 50 small businesses.

Since its founding in 2006, WEDI has helped thousands of multi-language learners to succeed in school and hundreds of entrepreneurs in WNY to run small thriving businesses.