



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

## Senator Sean Ryan Announces Funding For New Kitchens At The Monroe, Celebrates Grand Opening Of Manna At Main

SEAN M. RYAN May 16, 2025

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Senator Sean Ryan presents check for \$700,000 to pay for kitchens at Manna @ Main, May 16, 2025

**BUFFALO** – Today, May 16, 2025, New York State Senator Sean Ryan joined representatives from the Westminister Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) to announce he has secured a \$700,000 state grant to fund the creation of two incubator kitchens in The Monroe, a recently rehabilitated mixed-use complex at the corner of Main Street and Lafayette Avenue.

The announcement was part of a grand opening celebration for Manna @ Main, the newest venture from Manna Culinary Group. The former operators of Manna @ Northland have relocated to The Monroe, where they will utilize both of the kitchens funded by the state grant to expand their popular restaurant and help it serve more customers. The grant is being administered through WEDI, a local non-profit organization dedicated to tackling systemic inequities that affect Buffalo's underserved residents and helping underserved entrepreneurs to launch and sustain small businesses. In addition to the state grant, the new kitchens were made possible by support from the James H. Cummings Foundation, which provided a \$25,000 grant to cover expenses not eligible for state funding.

The Monroe, an \$8.4 million rehabilitation of the former Record Theatre complex, opened in November 2024. It features 17 affordable apartments and 11,400 square feet of commercial and retail space. In addition to Manna @ Main, the building is home to Saffron Kitchen, Fairy Blonde Mother hair and beauty salon, and Record Workshop, a small, shared office and cooking space with a conference room, private offices, coworking desks, and shared administrative support.

**Senator Sean Ryan** said, "The Monroe is the latest of Buffalo's many historic preservation success stories, and a great example of how we can utilize our historic buildings to support Buffalo's future. I was proud to secure \$700,000 in state funding for the kitchens to help ensure that the complex could be a community gathering space where Canisius students and Buffalo residents from both sides of Main Street and beyond can come together for a good meal. Manna has become a staple of the East Side and I have no doubt their new location will be another rousing success."

**Senator April N.M. Baskin** said, "I applaud my counterpart, Senator Sean Ryan, for securing \$700,000 in critical state funding needed to help one of Buffalo's historic sites, The Monroe, operate at its maximum capacity and expand its services to the community. I am also excited

for the growth of one of Buffalo's most beloved restaurants, Manna, as it opens the doors to its new location and continues to nourish the community with delicious food and unforgettable experiences."

**Charles Kreiner, Board President of the James H. Cummings Foundation**, said, "The James H. Cummings Foundation has been a supporter of WEDI for many years. We are excited to be able to assist with the creation of more spaces for new entrepreneurs to move from incubator space into a functional restaurant space in the Monroe. While our contribution may seem small in amount, all restaurants need tables, chairs and in Buffalo, outdoor umbrellas for the patio space. Buffalo is now known for its variety of high quality ethnic and independently owned eateries and we are delighted to ensure there will be more."

**Richard Rogers, Principal at Urban Vantage, LLC**, said, "As a developer of this project and a neighborhood resident, I couldn't be more excited to have a restaurant of Manna's caliber opening in the legacy home of the Record Theatre and offering an attractive outdoor seating option for quality breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

**Carolynn Welch, Executive Director of WEDI**, said, "WEDI is grateful for the support of Senator Sean Ryan and the James H. Cummings Foundation without whom this project wouldn't have been possible. This space will flourish under the expertise of Manna Culinary Group, and in the future as the home to graduate restaurants from the West Side Bazaar."

**Tina Grant-Holt, Dale Holt, and Reginald Ingram, Co-Owners of Manna**, said, "Manna is excited to start this new chapter- we are ready to welcome customers both old and new. We envision Manna as a place where people could gather, connect, and enjoy a truly special meal, and we're thrilled to bring this vision to life in the Monroe Building."