



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Erie County Providing 300,000 Eclipse Viewing Glasses to Residents

Glasses to be distributed through Buffalo & Erie County Libraries and partner organizations
Residents to Get Tips of Safe Viewing of the April 8, 2024, Total Solar Eclipse

Highlights:

- Buffalo and the surrounding area will find itself on the Path of Totality of a total solar eclipse on Monday, April 8, 2024.
- Erie County has funded the purchase of 300,000 eclipse glasses that are now available, free of charge, at all 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries.
- Local officials and eclipse experts are encouraging Western New Yorkers to plan in advance for Eclipse Day, April 8.
- Due to potential traffic/driving/commuting challenges, safety considerations should be made for travel for work, school, and childcare on April 8.
- Our region is fortunate that a partial solar eclipse is occurring this coming Saturday, October 14. On that day, eclipse educational and safety training will be available at the Buffalo Museum of Science, along with free eclipse glasses courtesy of Erie County.

Buffalo, NY – The countdown is on for the total solar eclipse coming on Monday, April 8, 2024. At a press conference held today at the Buffalo Museum of Science (BMS), Erie County Executive **Mark Poloncarz** and local eclipse partners shared important safety information about the eclipse, as well as what western New York residents could potentially expect on April 8 next year.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the moon and sun align, casting a shadow on the Earth. On April 8, Buffalo and the surrounding area will experience the so-called Path of Totality – the path of the Moon's shadow along the Earth, which will leave the area along the path in darkness for a few brief moments when the Sun's corona is visible.

Eclipse partners, including the County, Buffalo Museum of Science (BMS), and Buffalo Eclipse Consortium (BEC), warn that while a total solar eclipse can be a life-altering moment, looking directly at the Sun with the naked eye in the time leading up to and after totality could lead to vision damage or even blindness. To avoid this danger, securing eclipse-viewing glasses from reputable sources is critical for eye safety.

During the media event, County Executive Poloncarz announced that the County has funded \$100,000 for the purchase 300,000 eclipse glasses for distribution to county residents through the 37 branches of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System (B&ECPLS) and community partners.

"Erie County has a front row seat for the upcoming eclipse and we want everyone to be as prepared as possible to enjoy the celestial show safely," said **Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz**. "While eclipse glasses will be a must for safe viewing, this event will also draw thousands of visitors to our area so we will be prepared for potential traffic issues and will keep a focus on public safety as well. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness a stunning natural occurrence and we want all to enjoy it."

"The Library System is pleased to partner with the Science Museum and Erie County to be the main distribution point for the free eclipse glasses," said **B&ECPLS Assistant Deputy Director Dorinda Darden**. "All of the

libraries as well as the Bookmobile and Library2GO van now have the special glasses; and we are offering two per person. Visit www.BuffaloLib.org to see locations and hours.”

The grant from Erie County was used by the BMS to purchase the glasses. Additionally, a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo provided the funding for the Science Museum to hire a part-time Eclipse Coordinator to oversee the distribution of glasses to the libraries and community organizations, and coordinate eclipse programming at the Museum and through outreach programs.

“Our focus over the next six months is to help the community to get ready for the April 8 eclipse by coordinating the distribution of glasses and offering educational and safety programming and training,” said Holly Schreiber, PhD, Chief Scientist for the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences. “Major cities along the Path of Totality for the 2017 eclipse experienced gridlock traffic for hours. In learning from their experiences, we are encouraging local residents to stay at or close to home to view the eclipse, or somewhere they can stay comfortably before, during, and after the eclipse.”

Schreiber added that the Museum has created a landing page at sciencebuff.org/eclipse that anyone can access for eclipse information, which is accessible from a QR code printed on the glasses purchased with the County’s generous funding.

The BMS is part of the **Buffalo Eclipse Consortium** (BEC), a local volunteer group of astronomy professionals, enthusiasts, and educators, focusing on making eclipse viewing safe for western New Yorkers. In addition to the BMS, **BEC members Mark Percy** (Williamsville Schools) and **Mike Humphrey** (Buffalo Astronomical Association) were on hand to share additional safety information.

The BEC shared that on April 8, totality will occur at approximately 3:15 p.m. in the WNY region at the beginning of rush hour and when school buses may be on route. The BEC encourages residents to plan for their 2024 eclipse activities. Due to an influx of eclipse tourists, on April 8 travel could be difficult, or even at a standstill in some cases.

“Consider possible delays in your work commute and travel for school or daycare. If they haven’t already, schools should strongly consider extending their spring break by a day to avoid the possibility of busses being stuck on the roads,” said Percy.

Humphrey added, “One of the advantages of residing along the Path of Totality is that you will be able to view the eclipse from anywhere around western New York with a clear view of the southwest sky, but it’s critically important you have certified eclipse glasses for safe viewing. While there’s always a good chance that we could have clouds that day, it is still not safe to look at any amount of the Sun’s rays without the proper eye protection.”

The BEC also encouraged eclipse viewers to check glasses prior to use and discard them if they are damaged or do not indicate that they comply with ISO 12312-2, the international safety standard for filters for direct viewing of the Sun. “If you are ordering your own glasses, order them now from a reputable source,” Percy added.

The Buffalo Museum of Science ordered the glasses from [Rainbow Symphony](http://RainbowSymphony) and said it took six weeks to receive the first third of the large custom order. The Museum is waiting on updates on the remainder of their order.

Some local organizations are already planning viewing parties for April 8. Both websites for the Buffalo Eclipse Consortium (buffaloecclipse.org) and Visit Buffalo Niagara (visitbuffaloniagara.com) have pages dedicated for groups that wish to publicly list viewing parties around WNY.

The Buffalo Museum of Science received a \$10,000 grant from the office of Assemblyman Jon D. Rivera to support its eclipse outreach programs, half of which is being regranted to the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to support eclipse viewing at Front Park, part of the Olmsted Parks system, in Rivera’s 149th Assembly District.

Assemblymember Rivera said, "A total eclipse is one of the most spectacular events that occurs in nature, and I'm beyond excited to experience it with friends and family on April 8, 2024, right here in Buffalo. With the Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium at Buffalo State University and the Kellogg Observatory at the Buffalo Museum of Science, our city has a rich appreciation for cosmology, which will make being on the eclipse's path of totality that much more powerful and unforgettable. I want to thank Erie County, the Buffalo Museum of Science and the Buffalo and Erie County Library system for donating and distributing eclipse-viewing glasses so that all Buffalonians will have the opportunity to experience this once-in-a-lifetime natural event."

This Saturday, October 14, provides an opportunity for WNY to warm up for the 2024 eclipse with a partial solar eclipse that will occur between 12 and 2 p.m. At its maximum, the moon will cover approximately 20 percent of the sun. The Museum is offering free admission, eclipse activities and safety training from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and, weather permitting, Museum staff will be available to guide guests in safely viewing the partial eclipse in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

While the Museum will be open this Saturday for the partial eclipse, it will be closed on April 8, 2024.

"We want Museum staff to be able to view the once-in-a-generation event on April 8 with friends and family, and to not add traffic to the roadways," said Kathy Leacock, Interim President & CEO for the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences. "We're focusing our work into the next six months to get our region excited and ready to safely participate in the big show from wherever they are on April 8, 2024."

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About Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences manages the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tifft Nature Preserve with the mission of inspiring joyful exploration of science and nature through engaging experiences, unique resources, and exceptional staff. Located in East Buffalo, the Buffalo Museum of Science inspires multigenerational learning through interactive science studios, exhibits, programming, and its extensive collection of more than 700,000 belongings, objects, and specimens. Tifft is a 264-acre urban wetland preserve on reclaimed former industrial land in South Buffalo and serves as the Museum's "living collection". The Preserve offers five miles of hiking trails free of charge year-round, as well as environmental education, stewardship, and outreach. Learn more at sciencebuff.org and tift.org.

About the Buffalo Eclipse Consortium

The Buffalo Eclipse Consortium (BEC) is an organized effort to make safe viewing of the upcoming solar eclipses available to Western New Yorkers. This following organizations have been collaborating to help WNY safely enjoy these spectacular events: Buffalo Astronomical Association, Buffalo Audubon Society, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Buffalo Museum of Science, Penn Dixie Fossil Park & Nature Preserve, The Planetarium Association of WNY (PAWNY), Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium, and Williamsville Space Lab Planetarium. Learn more and see an interactive map of the 2024 Eclipse Path of Totality at the BEC website, buffaloecclipse.org.

About Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System

Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries have more than 3.2 million materials - books, eBooks, DVDs, and more. There are 37 libraries and two mobile book vehicles serving the community. Over 400,000 people have library cards which are free to Erie County, New York residents and to those who work and/or attend school in the county. Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries offer materials, streaming, public computers, WiFi, hundreds of onsite and virtual programs annually for all ages and links to community groups and resources in an effort to support a society of lifelong learners. Follow the library on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/buffalolib), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/buffalolib) (X), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/buffalolib), [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/buffalolib), [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/buffalolib) and on our podcast [All Booked Up!](https://www.allbookedup.org) Information: 716-858-8900 or <http://www.buffalolib.org>.