

Choose Erie: Competitive Advantage, Market Assessment, and Asset Inventory Research

Pilot Project Grant Program

Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership

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Application Form

Eligibility

Qualifiers*

All must apply in order to be eligible.

- Applicant is in good standing with ECGRA's reporting requirements to date
- Applicant is in good standing with the IRS and state and local taxing bodies
- Applicant's headquarters is located in Erie County
- Applicant is 501(c)(3), a municipal authority, or a school district

Disqualifiers

If any apply, your organization is not eligible.

Project Information

Project Name*

Choose Erie: Competitive Advantage, Market Assessment, and Asset Inventory Research

Brief Project Summary*

This project is a part of the Choose Erie initiative, taking the first step to establish Erie County in the site selector space through channel marketing. The project assesses Erie County's competitive advantage and appeal to companies locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It will also assess areas that need to be improved upon for Erie County to reach its full potential. It will provide a baseline of current market perception, a baseline asset inventory, and market profile.

Goals (broad) and Objectives (specific) of the project*

Erie County, Pennsylvania is at a pivotal time in its economic renaissance. As a part of the Choose Erie initiative developed by Erie County government and key business leaders and economic development stakeholders, the county needs to gather its resources, complete verifiable, repeatable research, and populate the content adding legs to the Choose Erie website – Erie County's front door for business attraction. This project is a first step in building the data and resources necessary.

This project will provide a baseline market perception, asset inventory, and market profile.

Project Narrative

Describe your project in detail including the problem you are addressing and what you will do to solve that problem.

Erie County is at a distinct disadvantage when competing for new corporations and firms against similar regions throughout the commonwealth and nationally. It is not on the radar of site selectors looking for communities with similar profiles. This research project is designed to give site selectors as well as state economic development agencies the information they need quickly and easily. If Erie County is to continue its resurgence, this is a necessary piece of modern economic development infrastructure required to compete.

SWOT Analysis of Erie County – What is Erie's Competitive Advantage/Disadvantage?

To identify Erie County's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in the national and regional market place.

- What are Erie County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as the County prepares for targeted industry segment identification and prioritization.
 - Develop a customized interview guide and survey to complete up to 40 interviews (10 per category) with the following four groups:
 1. Companies that have left Erie County
 2. Companies that chose Erie County for as a business location
 3. Site selection firms
 4. Business leaders of existing and emerging business throughout Erie County (small, mid-sized and large)
 - Identify and profile up to six peer markets throughout the U.S. with similar market size and amenities as Erie, County PA.
 - Baseline market profile (current top employers by industry output and market size) for use on website until prioritization occurs.

Erie County Asset Inventory & Analysis

Conduct a comprehensive inventory & analysis of economic development data needed for companies to make strategic business decisions as well as to provide the necessary data to complete the Choose Erie website.

- Conduct a data audit of existing resources and data available
- Review of data available on comparable economic development marketing websites.
- We will identify gaps and data needs to provide a comprehensive profile for those looking to Choose Erie for information.
 - Data included in this inventory and analysis will include, but not be limited to:
 - Location/Proximity to major markets
 - Affordability
 - Workforce Data
 - Colleges and Universities
 - Market Assets
 - Transportation
 - Incentives to Locate
 - Economic Development Efforts
 - Key Players in the Market
 - Other data needs as identified and discussed

Erie County Competitive Advantage/Disadvantage Research Report

- Final Deliverable: Data summary with SWOT analysis
- Final Deliverable: Peer markets analysis and recommendations
- Final Deliverable: Basic market profile

Erie County Asset Inventory & Analysis

- **Final Deliverable:** Provide data that builds upon existing resources and data availability in Erie County that will prepare Erie County's economic development leaders to identify key industry segments.

The outcomes of this project will provide the data necessary to effectively launch Choose Erie and put a structure in place to keep the data regularly updated beyond the timeline of this project.

Project Justification*

Describe why the pilot project is important and necessary (short and long term) to Erie County. Please provide evidence, research, and surveys documenting the problems. Standalone documents may be uploaded.

This research project is a vital component of the Choose Erie initiative started by Erie County to expand and attract new businesses to Erie County. Without this research, the initiative will not be able to go forward. The current website developed for the project www.ChooseErie.com is in place but not able to be fully launched because the research component is not finished.

ChooseErie.com is designed using best practices set by national sites and economic development initiatives such as Select Greater Philadelphia (<http://selectgreaterphl.com>), the Allegheny Conference (<https://www.alleghenyconference.org/our-work/>), and Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (<http://lehighvalley.org>).

Successful economic development initiatives need a front door, www.ChooseErie.com established that front door, now we need to furnish the house. This project embraces the Erie County we know and showcase our strengths and attractiveness.

In the short-term, this project builds out the Choose Erie website, and in the long-term it will be the data set that Erie County's collective business attraction efforts can use as a benchmark for documenting our success. This project will be housed at the Chamber so that it can be a regular part of economic development activities once the new President is hired.

Do you anticipate other funding sources?*

Please discuss your matching fund sources and financing partners.

Erie County has already invested \$36,000 into the brand promise, brand development, video assets and www.ChooseErie.com, and extended its investment by \$36,000 through December, totally \$72,000 available match. The ERCGP has also applied for a Shaping Tomorrow grant through the Erie Community Foundation, which is in a holding pattern until its new President is named.

Project Benefits*

Please describe who will benefit and how. Will specific groups be targeted or served?

This research will benefit the business and economic development community throughout Erie County. It allows Erie County to articulate its value proposition and strengths to businesses and site selectors throughout the United States and internationally. Erie County needs a front door to introduce or regions that don't know the value and strengths of Erie County's workforce and economic environment.

Unlike other cities and regions throughout the commonwealth and nation, Erie does not have a one-stop shop to attract business. Erie County needs to reassert its attractiveness to site selectors through the commonwealth and the nation. This research will be the backbone of the Choose Erie website to attract new

businesses to Erie County. Ultimately, the benefits of this project will be to the citizenry of Erie County through increased economic opportunity.

This is also a collaborative effort, bringing all of Erie County's assets together and aligning key stakeholders' efforts. This data and research will seek to gather input from existing business, key leaders and stakeholders across industry segments, government officials, and economic development leaders. Choose Erie presents a united front, which enhances our competitiveness on the state, national, and global stage.

Amount Requested from ECGRA*

\$39,500.00

Project Budget*

Please click here to download a budget form

Chamber Revised Budget for ECGRA including Match.xlsx
Project budget attached.

Long term plans*

Is there a plan to continue the project? How will you sustain the project financially and administratively?

After the research is completed and uploaded to the website, the Erie County Regional Chamber will take ownership of the research to ensure that it is updated regularly. The goal will be to have this research be repeatable and updatable internally.

Project Partners*

Describe project partners and how they will be involved.

Board members of the Chamber, staff, Erie County Redevelopment Authority, the County, and other economic development organizations will be an integral part of this project. We need to have buy-in and build a collective knowledge and support for this work to be successful. This project needs to be the first step in launching Erie County's new economic development ecosystem. They will provide feedback on surveys, research, provide recommendations for people interviewed, and react to results.

Project Support*

Provide evidence of project support within the community. (Letters of support, resolutions, memoranda of understanding, etc. can be uploaded at the end of the application.)

This research project was vetted through a core team of Chamber board members and other economic development leadership in Erie County to ensure its value and quality. The group believed that this specific scope will get Choose Erie and Erie County moving forward toward a more cohesive strategy of economic development.

Qualifications and Experience*

Description of the qualifications and experience of the project administrators and project leaders.

To do this research, the Chamber will retain Parker Philips, Inc., (www.parkerphilips.com) headquartered in Erie, PA. The lead researcher, Nichole Parker has 20 years of experience completing research and analysis for clients throughout the United States. Most recently, Nichole completed the Empower Erie feasibility study for the community college submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Her research skills, understanding of the Erie dynamic, and ability to document proper research protocols will be an asset to this project. Her experience in economic development goes back to work in Pittsburgh when it was still perceived as a gritty steel town with big dreams of biotech and healthcare. Parker Philips is a WBENC-certified, research, analysis, and communications firm. They do custom research and analysis and will provide analysis and reporting necessary for the Choose Erie website as well as provide necessary data for economic development efforts to move forward in Erie County.

The team from Parker Philips will work collaboratively with the Chamber to ensure that this project is successful and responsive to the needs of the economic development community.

Ability to Complete the Project*

Describe your ability to complete the project within the allotted time.

The timeline of this project is 90 days from start to finish. It will take focus and a clear roadmap to accomplish these efforts. The team at Parker Philips will lead the day-to-day, with the project advisory team assisting at key points to gather and recommend key stakeholders.

Timeline*

Please provide a project timeline with key milestones (12-month schedule).

The project team is ready to begin immediately and completed in three months (90 days).

Month 1: Project Kick-off, Survey Review, Identification of Potential Interviewees. Deliverable: Meeting minutes, final surveys, and project related documents

Month 1-3: Erie County Competitive Advantage Research Report. Deliverables: Data summary with key findings highlighting Erie's competitive advantage. Data will be used to populate the website and build consensus and momentum.

Month 1-3: Erie County Asset Inventory & Analysis. Deliverables: Creation of databases for use on the website including data points such as: location/proximity to major markets, affordability, workforce data, colleges and universities, market assets, transportation, incentives to locate, economic development effort, and who are the players in the market.

Late Month 3: Executive Summary and Recommendations. Final Presentation. Discussion of research findings. Final report summary of project, consultant recommendations, and sources used in gathering data.

Outcome Measurement*

Please describe how you will analyze the outcomes and gauge success of the project.

This project will launch the Choose Erie website, the data and finding will be the starting block for launching Erie's front door to channel marketing. Success will be that this project completes the Choose Erie website in 90 days and gives a market profile, competitive advantage/disadvantages data, and a complete asset inventory package. This project will be a success if high quality data is collected and uploaded into the Choose Erie website framework.

Organizational Information

Name of Organization*

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership

Organization Mission Statement*

The three divisions of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership — Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, and Growth Partnership — support the organization's core mission: to collaborate and mobilize leadership, expertise, and resources to sustain business, create jobs, grow investment, enrich lives, and improve the prosperity of the region. As a whole, the organization continues to make significant progress in the areas of membership; customer service; business attraction, retention, and expansion; and the identification of key regional initiatives that promote the economic health of the Erie region.

Year Organization Was Established*

2002

Municipality in which headquarters is located*

City of Erie

County Council District in which headquarters is located*

[Click here to see a County Council District map](#)

County Council District #2

Website Address

www.eriepa.com

Staff/Volunteer Leadership*

List or upload a list of the names, email addresses, titles, and job descriptions of the organization's leadership.

Linda C. Robbins
CFO/Director of Operations
Email: lrobbins@eriepa.com
Job description: Finance and Operations

Jacob Rouch
VP of Economic Development
Email: jrouch@eriepa.com
Job description: Economic Development

Nadeen Schmitz
Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
Email: nschmitz@eriepa.com
Job description: Directs Marketing and Communications

Nancy Irwin
Development Director
Email: nirwin@eriepa.com
Job description: Grant writing and Fundraising

Steve Walters
Sales Manager
Email: swalters@eriepa.com
Job description: Sales

Susan Ronto
Membership Coordinator
Email: sronto@eriepa.com
Job description: Member Services

Board of Directors*

List or upload a list of the names, email addresses, and occupations of the organization's board members.

Tom Tupitza, Esq.
Board Chairman
President, Knox McLaughlin Gornall Sennett, PC
Email: ttupitza@kmgslaw.com

Charles 'Boo' Hagerty
Board Vice Chairman
Chief Development Officer, Hamot Health Foundation

Email: hagertycf@upmc.edu;

Christina Marsh

Board Secretary

Chief Community & Economic Development Officer, Erie Insurance

Email: Christina.Marsh@ErieInsurance.com

Bruce Kern

Board Treasurer

President, Curtze Food Service

Email: cbk2@curtze.com.

Annual Summary Statistics*

Please click here to download the Annual Summary Statistics form

[305885_annual-summary-statistics-form-community-assets.xlsx](#)

Additional Documents

501 (c)(3) Designation Letter

Most Recent Annual Report or Year End Review*

[ERCGP 2017 Final Audited Financial Statements.pdf](#)

Current General Liability Insurance Certificate

[ECGRA Certificate.pdf](#)

Organization Logo

[Chamber Logo.docx](#)

Letters of Support

[RDA Support Letter](#)

Other Supporting Material

[ERCGP 501C3 STATUS LETTER.pdf](#)

Other Supporting Material

ECGRA Support choose erie.jpeg

Links

Upload a link

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Chamber Revised Budget for ECGRA including Match.xlsx
- 305885_annual-summary-statistics-form-community-assets.xlsx
- ERCGP 2017 Final Audited Financial Statements.pdf
- ECGRA Certificate.pdf
- Chamber Logo.docx
- RDA Support Letter- File could not be converted
- ERCGP 501C3 STATUS LETTER.pdf
- ECGRA Support choose erie.jpeg

File Troubleshooting

Files not included will be available online when viewing the submission or request unless the file type is not compatible with software available on your computer. To view the file online, open the appropriate application or request and click on the file name link. The file will also be able to be printed separately from your computer.

Files unable to be included in the packets can affect the ease the packet may be read by the staff and evaluators at the grant maker. Please take a moment to read the common causes for files not converting and, if possible, resolve this issue.

Please note: If you have already submitted the form, you will need to contact the grant maker to request they return it to draft form for you to be able to make changes.

Common issues:


- The file type uploaded is not supported in print packets.
 - Supported file types are:
 - PDF files (Adobe Acrobat)
 - Common image formats (JPEG, GIF, PNG)
 - Microsoft Office formats (Word, Excel)
 - Text files (.txt)
 - Comma Separated Value files (.csv)

If you are using an unusual file type, please see if a more standard file format may be used. Often unusual file formats will not be able to be opened or read by the staff or evaluators of the organization you are applying to for funds.

- The file caused an error while being converted to PDF.
 - The file path is too long or contains special characters such as (%&^*)@#&\$!)
 Example: c:/documents/foundant/marketing/spring2012/programs/events/walkathon2012.doc
 c:/documents/foundant/walkathon@mall.doc
 - The most common cause for errors is due to the document being password protected

Please check your file to make sure password protection is turned off in the document. If your file name is too long or contains special characters, try saving the file to your desktop, removing any special characters and uploading the file again from your desktop to the application.

- A virus was detected in the file so it was not uploaded to the system

 Budget (Do not include in-kind)						
Category	Amount Requested from ECGRA	Amount Contributed by Agency	Amount(s) Contributed from Other Sources	Breakdown of Other-Source Contributions	Narrative (include a breakdown of what is entailed in each expense category)	Total
Personnel (15% maximum of the requested amount from ECGRA)						\$0.00
Marketing						\$0.00
Facility Expense						\$0.00
Project/Programming Insurance						\$0.00
Equipment & Supplies						\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$39,500.00		\$124,500.00			\$164,000
Construction						\$0.00
Outcomes Measurement & Impact Tracking						\$0.00
Other						\$0.00
Totals	\$39,500.00	\$0.00	\$124,500.00			\$164,000.00

MATCH DETAIL		
Dollar Amount	Project/Deliverable	Funders
\$72,000	Choose Erie - Marketing, Branding, Logo, beta website, social media	Under contract by Erie County

Contracted Services	
Reserach services for competitive advantage/disadvantage SWOT reseearch, Peer Market identification, asset inventory, as described in the grant application are the contracted services.	\$39,500

\$52,500	One-stop Economic Development Data Center	Emerge 2040 (\$47,500), the Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership (\$10,000), and the Erie County Redevelopment Authority (\$5,000)
\$124,500	Total Under Contract / Funded	
\$15,000	Further Choose Erie Website Development	Budgeted with Epic Web to be Paid by County of Erie
\$15,000	Further Choose Erie Workforce Video Development	Budgeted with MenajErie to be Paid by County Erie
\$30,000	Total Budgeted	
\$154,500	Total Contracted and Budgeted	

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