



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
VIA ZOOM/In Person
Knowledge Park; 5240 Knowledge Parkway; Erie, PA 16510
April 17, 2025

ZOOM Meeting Information:

Meeting ID: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81276762840>

Password: not required

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 2025
6. DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS
7. COMMENTS BY CHAIRMAN
8. PUBLIC COMMENT
9. PRESENTATION
 - a. Erie County Earn & Learn – Douglas Massey, Director Economic Development
Ben Wilson – CEO, GECAC
10. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - a. Treasurer’s Report
 - b. Strategic Planning Committee
 - c. Update from County Council
 - d. Update from County Executive’s Office

11. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

12. SOLICITOR'S REPORT

13. OLD BUSINESS

14. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Resolution Number 11, 2025 – Resolution to approve the funding for the 2025 Erie County Earn & Learn Program, previously called the Summer Jobs and More Program

15. ADJOURNMENT

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Next Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting of ECGRA

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025
Time: 8:30 a.m. – BOARD Meeting
Location: 5240 Knowledge Parkway, Erie, PA 16510; Board Room
ZOOM meeting – details to follow



Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting

March 20, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Directors' Meeting of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority was held on March 20, 2025 in the Jordan Room; 5240 Knowledge Parkway; Erie, PA 16510. Legal Notice of the meeting was given through an advertisement appearing in the Erie Times-News. The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 8:32 am.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Cleaver, Ms. Hess, Mr. Louis, Mr. Oberlander, and Mr. Winschel are present in person. Ms. Amatangelo and Mr. Smith are present via zoom. Mr. Scutella and Mr. Copeland (arrives late) are present in person. Mr. Wachter and Dr. Wood are present in person.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ms. Hess makes a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Louis seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the agenda. Motion carries 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 2025

Mr. Oberlander makes a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Amatangelo seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the minutes. Motion carries 7-0.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Winschel: The only comments I would have I know we just got the agenda yesterday around 1:00pm or so and I know that when Carol was here the Board discussed about having it out by the end of Monday so we would have a couple days to review it. I just wondered if we could . . . I know it was posted on the website to meet the Sunshine thing but we need more time to review this stuff, especially for me the financials and that. I don't know if there is an issue on that, but I would like to try to adhere to that Monday anyway.

Mr. Louis: So, we can do that?

Dr. Wood: We can't always do it. I think we just . . .

Mr. Louis: The financials aren't . . . we can't get some . . .

Dr. Wood: Well, the financials . . .

Mr. Louis: I was traveling until 9:00 last night and couldn't look at anything.

Dr. Wood: Is there something on the financials that's giving people pause?

Mr. Louis: Well, no . . . it's just getting the information in advance of the meeting – in a timely fashion.

Mr. Winschel: I think the whole concept was that we get the information on Monday or Tuesday then we have Tuesday or Wednesday to reach out if we have any questions or to discuss this or clarify this because some of this stuff just kind of comes up at the Board kind of last minute.

Dr. Wood: Well 99% of what you're being asked to vote for was in the strategic planning meeting. So, I understand that if you couldn't make that, that is a difficult thing considering there are a significant amount of resolutions here. We can always table it; nothing on here is that pressing. As far as the financials go, we can absolutely get those out separate if the board packets aren't ready in time. But I don't think there's any surprises in the financials.

Mr. Winschel: So, I guess the question, Perry, is we discussed it at the strategic planning meeting, and if 99% of it was already discussed, what was the delay in the agenda then? Why wasn't that agenda kind of already finished before that?

Dr. Wood: Yeah, we just don't always have time to deal; we're a three person staff. I'd like to propose we add another project manager to the ECGRA staff. Why don't we look at that as a budget amendment. That way we'll have time to do these things.

Mr. Cleaver: It doesn't happen all the time, so I don't know about adding another employee. There is some way to resolve this, without a doubt.

Dr. Wood: I can get you numbers on another project manager, if you'd like.

Mr. Cleaver: I don't think you're looking for that, are you Gary?

Mr. Winschel: No, no, no, no, no.

Mr. Cleaver: Well, then let's just try to step it up a little bit. That's all I can say. We made a commitment and that was that we need all the information on Monday, let's get it.

Mr. Winschel: Perry, maybe if you say we need all the information that's going to be on the agenda, maybe your staff needs it seven to 10 days before the meeting, instead of just last minute all the time. I know you want to get things on once a month, again, it's kind of hard for the board to review this stuff and take a look at it.

Dr. Wood: And I know this was a tough month. We asked a lot of the board - meeting twice for strategic planning. That is a lot more than we normally ask of you. But things got backed up. That's why we have eight resolutions on the agenda.

Mr. Cleaver: Well, let's just keep an eye on it and if it presents a problem, we'll take another step.

Dr. Wood: Sounds good.

Let the record reflect that Mr. Copeland has joined the meeting.

COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Mr. Cleaver has no comment at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Wood: I am just going to tee things up before we bring our guests up here. On January 20th of 2025, the President issued an executive order stopping all refugee programs from proceeding to the United States. A month later, February 25th, a judge ruled that that executive order was unconstitutional and then two days later, the Department of State terminated all contracts with refugee resettlement agencies. We have three main agencies in our region that fall under that category. One is USCRI, also known as the International Institute. Second is Catholic Charities. The third is MCRC, or the Multicultural Resource Center. We had a special meeting of all the funders in the community to discuss what this crisis looks like and how we can be of assistance to it. I know these are last-minute agenda items here to talk about, but we wanted those three agencies to come here. And then under special presentations, Kim Thomas is going to give us an overview of what we in Erie might be able to do in conjunction with other funders. So, let's start by having our guest from USCRI come off of mute and talk to us this morning.

Ms. Lawson: My name is Ashley Lawson. I'm the field office director for the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. When we received this word of the termination of our funding, we immediately banded together as all three agencies with one ask of the community, and that is to figure out how to navigate uncharted waters. Since 2021 all three agencies have resettled over 3,500 refugees in the city of Erie, and that involves 467 children enrolled in the Erie School District in the last academic year alone. Erie's resettlement agencies employ over 110 people, and this funding affects about 5,100 refugees in Erie County that are still eligible for five years' worth of services after arrival. Yesterday, Kate Phillips from Kate & Co. came up with a really good example that I had not thought about. If you're originally from Erie, this is equivalent to Hammermill shutting down. This is the number of people who no longer have interpreters, have case managers who will help them find jobs, help them enroll their children in school, help them get to medical appointments.

We have enough funding to get through a short-term, but we are now hoping for a larger ask from the Erie community to first, enable us to get to a point where we can come up with a long term plan, but second, really think about what this means for our community. We have a bunch of data that Perry can share after about the economic impact of this, and I know Kim will probably share some in her presentation as well that we put together yesterday. But it was important for us to come here in person and talk about this as well, to make an ask that ECGRA help support this incredibly important endeavor we're coming to.

USCRI - International Institute, we have been resettling refugees for well over 100 years in Erie. Actually, Erie is the second oldest International Institute in the United States. So, we have a history of doing this, we've navigated tough times before and we're confident that we can do it again. But what we need right now, in the short term, is the time to figure out how to do this as three agencies, and how to continue to provide services truly to those in our community who are the most vulnerable. We are obligated to do this by having accepted refugees, and so if these services are no longer done through our three agencies, these services will fall to the city, the county, the school districts, and they will have to navigate this without the expertise of 200 years of collective experience of doing this.

I am happy to answer questions. I know Katie can talk about MCRC and Hiba is here somewhere to talk about Catholic Charities. We're happy to answer any questions, but it might be useful for me to let them both speak first before we go on.

Staff begins looking for the guest speaker that was online when the meeting began – Hiba from Catholic Charities. She is not on the Zoom anymore.

Ms. Kretz: Good morning, everyone. My name is Katie Kretz and I'm the executive director of the Multicultural Community Resource Center. Like Ashley said, all of this really caught us off guard. I think going into the election, we had made some like preliminary plans if things went a different direction than we were living in the last four years. And we did. I think we planned appropriately, but I think that what we are presented with now is something that we've never seen before. Completely the termination of the contracts, but I think more importantly, which is affecting us immediately is the fact that there's been federal freezing. So, what has happened is, for all of the supports that we've provided this fiscal year, which began in October up until now, those monies have not been reimbursed to our organizations. That's the biggest issue at hand.

Secondarily, prior to January 20th, all of our organizations were encouraged to resettle as many refugees as we could. We actually resettled two to three times the number of refugees that we normally would in any given fiscal year. So that's left our organizations with providing financial assistance to these families that we wouldn't necessarily have done in prior fiscal years, in the amount of time that we've served these folks. Ashley, would you say that that's correct?

Ms. Lawson: Yes.

Ms. Kretz: So, the issue at hand right now is there's a substantial amount of money that our three agencies have expensed that we haven't been reimbursed. That's close to a million dollars between the three of our organizations. We are anticipating updates from our respective resettlement agencies.

Just for a little bit of knowledge, USCRI is a national resettlement organization. They have been kind of since the inception of resettlement. My organization, MCRC, is an affiliate resettlement organization through the national resettlement organization of ECDC, and then Catholic Charities is also a national resettlement agency. All of the money that we haven't been reimbursed is actually funneled through those national organizations. We have to get the faucet turned back on, get those organizations reimbursed, and then we would be reimbursed. The problem is, is that we have not received any word as to why it was turned off and if and when it's going to be turned back on. So those are the immediate issues that we're facing.

On top of that, obviously, with us not being able to be reimbursed, our organizations have had to lay off staff. USCRI and Catholic Charities are in a little bit more of a critical situation than MCRC, just because we kind of have other programs to help support our organization as a whole. I don't know if you want to talk about that.

Ms. Lawson: USCRI has two revenue generating streams. We have an interpretation revenue generation stream. We also have a daycare on site that is at risk closing, which I know is something close to ECGRA's heart. USCRI has 30 staff - had 30 staff here in Erie, 80% of whom were resettled refugees themselves. Last Friday, I laid off 12, two Fridays before that, I had laid off one. So, my staff of the remaining 17 people are now serving the same number of refugees that 30 staff had been serving, and that is at risk of further cuts in the future.

I know Catholic Charities was on here, but I'll go ahead and speak for them. They are in a very, very bad situation. They have essentially laid off all of their staff, with the exception of their leadership team, and from what I understand, they only have funds to get them through the end of March. Then at the end of March, they're looking at closing their doors. If they close their doors, then our respective organizations will be absorbing all of their clients. Obviously, we're going to do the best that we can, but in the interim, with no funding coming our way, we're stuck with kind of trying to figure it out in the interim.

So, I guess we'll open it up for questions in relation to what we've already addressed. Because there's more.

Ms. Hess: I have a bunch of questions, but I'm almost wondering if Kim's going to answer some of them. I don't want to bring up something that will be addressed.

Dr. Wood: The way I tried to set this morning up, I know this is all the last minute, but these are the three agencies that are most affected. I think there's a couple ways of approaching this, right. There is an economic impact by having all this federal money dry up in our community. They've had to lay off several people in their agencies - it is a big impact. The greater impact, no offense, but the greater impact, especially the economic development one that we need to think about is what happens when you have less refugees in your economy. And so that is part of what Kim is going to talk about.

But just a couple of highlights. Five hundred manufacturing jobs are going to be eliminated, many millions of dollars in payroll are going to be eliminated; we think the minimum will be \$9 million. If you have just 300 fewer employees at an average of \$30,000 in salary, that's \$9 million in wages and \$1.3 million in local tax revenue. So, there's a ripple effect that's coming into play here and the board ought to know about this issue. I'm not sure how we take action on it yet, but Kim is going to prescribe, potentially, how we take action. Does that answer your question?

Ms. Hess: Yeah, because the bottom line is, what's the ask?

Mr. Louis: What's the ask?

Dr. Wood: These folks aren't here for an ask. They're here to provide you with a face to the crisis.

Mr. Louis: So with, like the International Institute, what's your annual budget? So, if you're standing alone and you're counting on the federal government to fund you . . .

Dr. Wood: And you haven't been reimbursed since what, October?

Ms. Lawson: October, correct. Our annual budget varies wildly.

Mr. Louis: Just roughly, just so we understand.

Ms. Lawson: The reception and placement and match grant and refugee support services budgets, which are kind of the core three refugee services for our agency, includes part of Catholic Charities;

they are a subcontractor for us for some services. That is about \$4.5 million. We know what we can make it work on and it's less than that and we'll do it. But that also involves a lot of dollars that every refugee who comes to the United States is allocated \$1,650; that is the money to support themselves while they set up their life in the United States. That is their rent, that is their utilities, that is their groceries, that is any kind of transportation, everything. And that is supposed to last them three months. And so, without reception occurring, we don't need that money moving forward, but that's really our core annual budget.

Mr. Louis: Is the governor? I mean, is there any state relief? We've got a little something we can help you with?

Ms. Lawson: Pennsylvania is one of the few states that does not allocate refugee funding in the state budget. They act as a federal pass-through only. So, the governor's office is aware and is trying, but this is also a problem in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, in Erie. We're strategizing with the Erie Community Foundation to come up with this longer-term support endowment, or however we want to look at it, but it critically right now, if we can't get through the next few months, it doesn't matter.

Dr. Wood: Let's put a few numbers in context here. According to what I have here, MCRC is due about \$196,000 in reimbursements. International Institute, USCRI, is due about \$440,000, Catholic Charities is due \$385,000; that's just an immediate need that you have of collectively, \$625,000.

Ms. Lawson: Correct, and that's just expensed money that we have not been reimbursed.

Dr. Wood: Already spent money, right? The federal government's not . . .

Ms. Lawson: That's essentially direct cash assistance to the refugees that we have resettled.

Mr. Wachter: Can I ask a question? So, the budget numbers you're talking about are the budget numbers that you have with the flow of refugees coming in.

Ms. Lawson: Correct.

Mr. Wachter: So, that flow is stopped, correct?

Ms. Lawson: Yes.

Mr. Wachter: So, you're looking for maintenance services, or monies to maintain the services to acclimate the individuals into the Erie community for housing, for job assistance, resources, things of that nature. What do those budget numbers look like?

Ms. Lawson: Our immediate ask in our larger Erie Community Foundation presentation is \$1.5 million for six months and \$10.5 million for five years.

Dr. Wood: Okay, five years is significant, I learned, because that's the system that's in place that shepherds refugees through assimilation, basically, for five years.

Ms. Kretz: Citizenship. I guess that's the piece that's really kind of the unknown variable at this point because we don't know what that's going to look like at the state level. The support for refugee services for the five years - from the point that they're done with a reception and placement period,

which is a 90-day period, then families and individuals are eligible for additional assistance for up to five years. That funding is federal funding, but it's passed through the state. We don't know what's going to happen with that because that could completely dry up. If that completely dries up, then we're not sure what we'll do.

Mr. Wachter: So, those numbers are the numbers that are needed to maintain the level of services at the level that was provided prior to it being dried up?

Ms. Kretz: Correct.

Mr. Wachter: And with respect to the jobs, the numbers that you were talking about Perry, were the numbers of new employees, new potential employees, not coming into the community, right?

Dr. Wood: I didn't get into the details on that since I just got briefed on this recently. I can't speak to that intelligently.

Ms. Kretz: Just for the frame of reference for the audience here, as soon as things started going in a direction that we weren't comfortable with, the three resettlement agencies came together. Now, this is something that has never happened before. I guess it's a blessing in disguise, but we are trying to figure out how to continue to provide services no longer in silos. We're looking to come together and really support one another. But being able to pull all of this together, and then we crafted a white paper that we provided to the Erie Community Foundation, plus supplemental documentation in relation to the finances and also data points, so that's been presented to the Erie Community Foundation, which is why Perry brought us here, because the funders group was part of that presentation as well. I believe Kim has a presentation to kind of explain all of this.

Dr. Wood: Let me say two things on record. Number one, now is not the time to fix the refugee resettlement system. It is in crisis right now. We can talk about how to fix it and it should operate, or whatever imagination comes to mind. This is a crisis; it needs to be addressed in the short term. To the second point, I wonder to what extent we should be a part of that financially, because that will take pressure off the state government to step in and truly fix the issue.

As this board moves forward and thinks about it, we ought to think about to what extent we get involved. The Community Foundation is going to propose an emergency fund to deal with the short term. That's probably where we might play in the mix, depending on what this board discusses. I just wanted to say those two things.

Ms. Kretz: We thank you for your time.

Dr. Wood: Absolutely. We appreciate you coming in. Let's turn it over to Kim now.

PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Thomas: Good morning, everyone.

Dr. Wood: We can't hear you very well, but your power point is in front of everyone.

Technical difficulties are troubleshooted, and then the meeting continues.

Ms. Thomas: All right. So good morning, everyone. Perry, thank you for the opportunity to share this with the board. Katie and Ashley, certainly, thank you to you both for your time yesterday and for all of the work that you're doing in this very stressful time, undoubtedly, for you and your organizations and certainly the individuals that you serve.

As they both mentioned, the Erie Community Foundation as a follow up to a recent funders forum, convened a group of leaders just yesterday morning to really hash out what this could look like moving forward, because this is truly a crisis. As you heard from Ashley and Katie, this is a right here, real time, right now, crisis that we're facing here in our community, and we need the leadership to step up and make sure that we're able to overcome this in the short term. So, what we're working on right now is really what that could look like in terms of rapid response. As you heard, this is caused by the federal funding that was cut off. There is going to need to be long term strategizing and planning to determine what the system looks like moving forward into the future, however that will happen, and that has to happen, and that can happen, but right here we're focused on the rapid response to this challenge.

I know Ashley and Katie provided a lot of this information, but these refugees, since 2021 more than 3,500 refugees have been resettled into this community. They were brought here to the United States by the United States for a very important reason, and as a result of that, we have a moral obligation to ensure that, regardless of what's happening at the federal level and the resources that are funneling through to our community, we need to make sure that they have the support and the resources that they need to settle comfortably and be able to transition into our community. You can see more than 4,000, I believe it's closer to 5,000 refugees in Erie currently that have been here within five years of arrival.

So why is this all important? So yes, there's a human element, a very strong human element to all of this that I think we all recognize, but there's also a very strong economic element that we are facing here in our community as a result of the funding freeze. One of the statistics that the organizations shared with us yesterday that really stands out, from an Infinite Erie standpoint, we're really focused on those North Star pillars, growing our economy, seeing an increase in GDP, seeing an increase in workforce and seeing an increase in home ownership opportunities. From an entrepreneurial standpoint, the refugees in our community own 5% of businesses throughout our county, and that's only based on them being 4.1% of our entire population. Forty-seven percent of resettled refugees are homeowners. Imagine if these individuals and families now and into the future do not have the resources or the support that they need to go about purchasing a home and paying their mortgages – they're contributing more than \$250 million to our economy, and that's significant.

From a workforce standpoint, it's been alluded to here this morning, but if you think about it from the Hammermill standpoint, if we were losing a workforce of 5,000 individuals who do not have resources to continue to live their lives and be in this economy and contribute to this economy, what will that ultimately do to our community?

I'll just run through this quickly because Ashley and Katie touched on this, but among the three organizations, I know Hiba from Catholic Charities was not able to participate this morning, but as you heard here and as she said yesterday, as of April 1st, they're planning on having to close their doors. Catholic Charities is having to close their doors. USCRI, the former International Institute, with its incredible history serving individuals and families here in Erie, facing the crisis that they're facing, and certainly MCRC as well. They need the resources. These individuals need the resources in order to be able to transition into these new communities, into our community. And as you also heard from Ashley and Katie, the services have to be provided one way or another. As these individuals are resettling into Erie County, we have to provide the services. The United States brought them here. The United States needs to take care of them here. And so regardless of whether or not the federal funding is coming, there needs to be resources. As we've heard, it will be very difficult. They will do

the best they can, but to be able to absorb the needs of all of these individuals and families moving forward as the resources start to dwindle will certainly put an additional burden on the system.

You've heard about the federal funding cut-off, and the last time they've all received their reimbursements I think, and I know you were discussing it, although it was a little hard to hear, I think upwards of about a million dollars in payments that they need to make and expenses that they need to make in order to keep moving forward.

So, what do we need to do? We have to act right here, right now. It's going to happen quickly in terms of seeing the ripple effect of this crisis. We've seen from the numbers before and we can get additional numbers, that these residents are critical to Erie County's workforce. As I mentioned, the local agencies will do the best they can but they cannot ultimately fill the gaps that would be left from this federal funding cutoff. And again, if these cuts remain permanent, we still need to serve the people who are here today.

So, what can we do? And I know that there's been a lot of questions this morning as to how ECGRA can play a role as well as others. As I mentioned, the Erie Community Foundation convened this group of leaders yesterday, which included Perry, it included Erie Insurance, it included all the agencies, certainly United Way, it included some of the banking institutions in our community and others to really come together and say, "What can we do right here, right now?" So, we really see this twofold in this moment of crisis.

The Erie Community Foundation, as I'm speaking right now, has already established a Rapid Response Fund. The site is live and available to take contributions, as we speak. So that fund, as I mentioned, a Rapid Response Fund has been created. As a result of that, that could be an opportunity for ECGRA to participate in this and provide some support during this time of crisis. I mentioned that it's a Rapid Response Fund; we are in this crisis right now, and it requires this attention right now. But I think as we know, and as we go back to the days of COVID, and certainly other emergency declarations and disasters in our past, that those will likely come up again in the future. So, this really has brought to the forefront the need for some sort of rapid response fund that can respond to this crisis at this time but potentially be available in the future as needed.

And then the second part of this is where Infinite Erie is really going to be providing backbone support through the public awareness campaign. We certainly know that there are different types of information that are circulating throughout our communities, throughout the nation, and what that means as it affects these resettlement agencies and these resettlement refugees. Infinite Erie will be working with all of the partners involved to really push out this public awareness campaign. As part of the Rapid Response Fund, that will be an opportunity for the Erie Community Foundation to do some really significant fundraising. I think Erie Gives will really be able to get the message to individuals and families throughout the community, noting that just a small contribution would go a long way.

As of yesterday, as a crisis would lead you to believe, this is all happening very quickly, but these are the paths that we're looking to take. The short-term investments and the Rapid Response Fund and really pushing out a public awareness campaign as to what this crisis means.

So that's all I have for this moment in time. I do know that we'll be working with Perry, with ECGRA, with the Community Foundation to really get this message out and to cast the net as far and wide as we possibly can to ensure that these organizations have the resources that they need to serve the individuals that they serve so that we can hopefully stave off as much of the crisis as possible. Are there any questions?

Dr. Wood: We are not asking the board to take any action today, let's start with that. This was purely informational. I think we need to digest it and have some dialogue about it. But it is a crisis. So, we're going to meet five times over the next five days. I'm just kidding. I know I've been asking a lot with these meetings, but we may need to have a meeting within the next few weeks to talk about the potential role we play on this issue.

There's a difference between refugees and immigrants. All refugees are immigrants, but not all immigrants are refugees. If you look at the data, it's mixed between the two. Five percent of refugees are entrepreneurs in our community, and they only represent 4.1% of the population. But they're 5% of the entrepreneurship. Forty-seven percent of refugees are homeowners. That's higher than the rate of blacks in our community, which is at 5%. Refugees and immigrants contribute \$253 million to our economy. So, there's where they mix the two numbers together to give you an idea of what that looks like. Immigrants living in the country helped create and preserve five hundred manufacturing jobs. This is clearly, not to minimize the human side of this, but this is clearly an economic development problem and that's why I brought it to you. I need to make sure that you contextualize it in those circumstances. There will be plenty of appeals and tugging at the heartstrings, but the pure economic case of this, I think, is significant.

To what extent you want to participate as a board, I think that's really a discussion for us to have. So, we have two agencies here with us and we have Kim online – what are the burning questions in your mind right now?

Ms. Amatangelo: Would it be possible to have Kim's presentation emailed to us? Is that allowed?

Ms. Thomas: Yes.

Ms. Amatangelo: Thank you.

Ms. Lawson: All the documentation that was made available to the Erie Community Foundation is available to you as well.

Dr. Wood: Thank you.

Ms. Kretz: I think to the point that was asked earlier about if you don't have any more refugees coming in and that being a concern, I think that the bigger concern is the focus on the people that we have here. If we can't support them, they're going to go elsewhere. You know, outmigration is something that does happen a lot with refugees, so we want to make sure that we can support them as best we can so that they do stay in Erie.

Mr. Louis: Pardon my ignorance, but is that part of what's happening is that we've shut off people coming in as refugees as well?

Ms. Lawson: Yes. That's multi-layered with the difficulties we're all facing.

Dr. Wood: The executive order froze it, the court overturned it, but the agencies that conduct it have been cut off from funding. So, in essence, it doesn't matter.

Ms. Kretz: We don't know what refugee resettlement is going to look like going forward, because there were contracts with 10 agencies nationally. All of those contracts have been terminated. So, if resettlement does occur, going forward, it won't be happening here, at least to our knowledge.

Ms. Hess: I'm sitting here with Bob and Gary and myself all in education and I just think of the impact that has potential to make on all of our school districts. I know we've called these agencies in at times when we've enrolled students who need additional supports that are refugees and the help staff, and to be able to put that burden back on the school districts, therefore those are going to be, once again, economically, become burdens of the taxpayers because the school districts aren't going to be able to

absorb that. Especially when you talk about someone like the Erie School District where they have some 467 children. I mean, that's overwhelming. I can't imagine the Erie School District being able to absorb those kinds of things.

Mr. Winschel: Even Millcreek, they're a budget 364 multi-language learners, so we're adding staff all the time to accommodate them.

Ms. Hess: My daughter's a teacher in Millcreek. She has four students that speak four different languages. So, the support that they provide, that support is going to have to come from somewhere and it's going to end up coming from the taxpayers.

Mr. Copeland: If I may, in my liaison positions, I've also considered that I'm here to listen, to be aware of the business and support. And I've always been really careful to not put undue influence on your funding priorities because I don't think that kind of political pressure is appropriate. But as a Council person, I do want to add to this. Kim's first slide here talks about rapid response to a short-term practice – think COVID. I think it's kind of interesting because I was speaking with Ms. Lawson this morning, and it's exactly what this is. When the funding freezes first came out in the first week, she and I had contact. I've been tracking this pretty carefully because we know that as the federal government decides to defund things, the state's going to have to step in somewhere, the county's going to have to step in somewhere. Maybe this is part of our responsibility too. But in terms of rapid response, I think you guys should reflect on your role in the COVID crisis and how you guys helped fund a lot of things to help the community respond to a crisis on a short-term basis. And I just wanted to add that I think this is something that your board has already shown that you have the capability to do and to do well. So, I just wanted to add that.

Mr. Cleaver: Any more discussion there?

Ms. Hess: What is the next step, having a meeting to discuss it further?

Dr. Wood: I think if there's no objections, I think the board should have a meeting. But I also think we should be responding to something. So perhaps a proposal from the Foundation on how we might participate in the emergency fund, so we have something to react to. We have the information now and like Mark said earlier, what's the ask. There really is no ask yet, and so we need some kind of a strongman proposal to react to. So, why don't we do that, and I'll try to schedule that. It will definitely be two weeks out, so we give you enough time, but something needs to either come from Infinite Erie or come from the Foundation. Sound good? Thank you so much for coming in.

Ms. Lawson and Ms. Kretz: Thank you.

Mr. Cleaver: So, we're settled on that. You're going to set something up for the next five to ten days?

Dr. Wood: I'll try to set something up and give you as much lead time as possible.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Amatangelo: Thank you. For the Treasurer's Report, it was basically business as usual. I will note, I know we all knew that the \$2.5 million for the Child Care Initiative was coming to us, and we had the press conference; the \$2.5 million is in our books, so it's nice to see that there. If you go down farther on the Profit and Loss, you'll notice some of the CDs. We don't have anything coming up until May and August, however the Flagship rate is now 4.45%, and FNB is now 4%. So, those are the updates from the P&L.

There is no Visa statement because there were actually no Visa charges, so that's why that's not there in case anybody did notice that. Other than that, I had no questions, so I wanted to leave it open to the board to ask any questions or any statements about the finances that you saw.

Mr. Winschel: Angie and Perry, I've got a couple questions. You mentioned on those CDs - are those the ones that came due on the 21st of February?

Dr. Wood: Yes.

Mr. Winschel: And what were the terms on those, the new terms?

Dr. Wood: Angie, do you want to answer that?

Ms. Amatangelo: Go ahead, Perry.

Dr. Wood: The Flagship renewal was for seven months at 4.45%. The FNB was the same at 4%.

Mr. Winschel: For how long? Same term?

Dr. Wood: That was for nine months.

Mr. Winschel: So, if you look at the Balance Sheet that says it's reflective through February the 28th, even though those two CDs kind of matured. And then the Erie Money Market . . .

Dr. Wood: So, just to your point, the March reports would reflect the new dates.

Mr. Winschel: Okay. And then the Money Market rate at Erie Bank, we have \$6 million there. Do you know what that rate is?

Dr. Wood: That rate has not come down. It was set to go down, and I called Bill and talked it through, and he said they would be consistent for another quarter.

Mr. Winschel: Do you know what that is? If you take a look at the income statement, you'll see that the interest earned on that Money Market was around \$17,000. So, if I just take the average balance, which was the \$3 million, and it comes up to like \$3.3 or something.

I'm just wondering if we could do maybe a supplement to this that just breaks down like the cash asset. I just kind of drew up a spreadsheet here. It's just, you know, where the fund

is – the location, the amount, what's the rate, and what's the liquidity. In other words, is it daily liquidity or where they come due at a certain time. That way it kind of gives the board an idea of what's out there. Maybe I know with some of the financial reporting maybe you can get an intern from Penn State Behrend to help you out with something like that if you need more staff to do something on the accounting standpoint. But that's just a simple spreadsheet. It can be easily updated, but it really kind of keeps a handle on what the rates are and kind of ties back into the Profit and Loss to see what the earnings are. I hope that rate at Erie Bank is four or something, because I know like PLGIT, it's like 4.4% right now. So, if we're not getting that at Erie Bank, you can easily pick up a percent or something. That's \$100,000 over the course of the year, which we could fund a lot of grants with that. So anyhow, that's something to take a look at, maybe kind of get a little bit better vision and transparency around our cash assets, because we do have between the funds and the money market and the CD's, it's \$22 million. Every penny we can earn off that . . . And with the Fed probably not going to lower rates as much as they anticipated, these rates are going to stay high for a little bit. I think it's an opportunity for us to continue to make some interesting (inaudible). Enough said.

Mr. Winschel makes a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Oberlander seconds the motion. There is no further discussion on the Treasurer's Report. Motion carries 7-0.

b. Strategic Planning Committee

Dr. Wood: Let's talk about this committee and what this committee produced for resolutions three and on. We did see a presentation from Mercyhurst University on the Erie Market Study. If the board would like to see that proceed, we have it on the agenda as a pilot project. It's a low dollar figure. We saw a presentation from Penn State Behrend on the Center for Manufacturing Competitiveness. I know we had some interesting dialogue about that. It's a huge ask; it's a monumental ask. We're obviously not ready to deal with it here today. So, maybe when we meet to discuss the refugee issue, we'll also have next steps in the Center for Manufacturing Competitiveness. I would like them to do that. And so, we might want to think about what our next steps are there in vetting that project. It's up to you. It's a big project.

Infinite Erie proposal is on the agenda - that's a two-year proposal for \$300,000. The snow emergency receipts. Tim, did we hear back from the solicitor on the snow emergency receipts?

Mr. Wachter: No.

Dr. Wood: So, that's on hold. But we went over those receipts in the committee meeting. The Youth Leadership Institute, we talked about how the loan to YLI is, well, we haven't received January or February's payment and we're not going to receive March's payment. We have not determined what to do on that yet. Tim and I are going to talk with Tupitza on his advice on how to move forward with it. I just saw him a few days ago. That's what we decided Tim, just so you know.

Mr. Wachter: I've already had a significant number of conversations on that particular issue. I just haven't had a chance to update you.

Dr. Wood: Sounds like that's an offline update.

Mr. Wachter: I think that's appropriate.

Dr. Wood: Very good. The draft budget, of course, has been reviewed twice now. If everyone is comfortable with it, we can vote on it today and put it in place as of April 1st. Special Event grant reviews - we talked about overages, we talked about the difference between 2024 and 2025, we talked about the issues around the maximum payment of \$15,000 which only affects a couple of entities. That is about a \$200,000 grant program that will be on your agenda today. That was the meeting on March 10th.

Then on March 17th, we reviewed what the county wants us to call the Erie County Investing in Families discussion, but we've typically referred to it in shorthand as daycares. We had a great presentation from Elena Cuomo and her assistant Steve, and I think if you were there, that was a great opportunity for you to see the expertise that was brought on board by having the JAM Foundation, the Early Learning Resource Center, and the Northwest Institute of Research. All three of those entities are represented by those two individuals and are on board with this program. I'll pause there and see - does anyone have any questions or want to make any comments about those two meetings?

Mr. Cleaver: Is the budget on the agenda?

Dr. Wood: The budget is a resolution. It's the first one, it's number three.

Ms. Hess: The only feedback I have about the daycare initiative is, once again, I don't know what our role, or is it we have any role at all, but just the sustainability of it. I feel like if we make this investment, like is it, what's the sustainability? I think it would be interesting and important that we keep on talking about it.

Dr. Wood: The sustainability of the early childhood educator retention awards is not clear.

Ms. Hess: I know. And that's, you know, like you just throw the money at it. But, what's the long term? How are we going to be able to do this long term? And, who's championing that? I don't think that question was answered.

Dr. Wood: Infinite Erie is going to champion it, with our state delegation. So, it will be from a policy standpoint that we're attempting to get the state to reimburse at a higher level. We're going to help shore up some of that gap. But if you look at York, which we're benchmarking off of, their United Way is the one that does it.

c. Update from County Council

Mr. Copeland: I spoke too much already.

Chairman Scutella: He spoke.

d. Update from County Executive's Office

Mr. Sinnott is not present for an update.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Wood: I never shy away from talking too much. Of course, the first thing we have in my report is the letter we get from the state about the gaming revenues that come in quarterly. We used to get this from the county, but it stopped coming, so we went directly to the state to get a copy of this letter. This is the fourth quarter revenue. Moving down to the next page, this is a report of what we did with Kate & Company this month; these were our activities. The March 10th strategic planning meeting, the March 17th strategic planning meeting. We have a really nice thank you letter from ACES, Americans for the Competitive Enterprise System. I like to include these thank you letters whenever we get them in the office because I want you to know these organizations are appreciative of the money we provide. Then the one last thing was the announcement of the investing in Erie County Families Funds, a.k.a. the daycare funds. Any questions for me?

Mr. Louis: The audit is still going along well?

Dr. Wood: Sure. We've had a couple more interactions with the auditors. They are very close to writing their final report. That was the last discussion we had.

Mr. Wachter: They're just confirming the accuracy of some of the data, making sure that some of the data that is reflected on the website reflects the data that we provided, making sure that that information is updated so that there aren't any inconsistencies when they issue the report. I have not heard anything negative.

Mr. Louis: That's good news.

Dr. Wood: And I think the last thing they confirmed on was the revenue numbers because we are coordinating with them on that issue as well.

Mr. Wachter: I think we've received no pushback or any question on our position on the 55-45 split and the applicability and appropriateness of that. No questions.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Wachter: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I have nothing to report.

Mr. Cleaver: I think there was a question. I think maybe after this meeting we should have an executive session. There was some discussion on the campaign and so on, and there was some information that was going to be presented, I believe.

Mr. Wachter: I am not prepared to do that. I got sidetracked with all the early childcare.

Mr. Cleaver: All right, we should have something so we can stand up to what we agreed upon.

Mr. Wachter: I have those notes. I do not have a final document yet.

OLD BUSINESS

There is no Old Business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Resolution Number 3, 2025 – Resolution to adopt the 2025-26 Budget

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Ms. Hess makes a motion to accept the resolution. Ms. Amatangelo seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- b. Resolution Number 4, 2025 – Resolution to appropriate \$2.5 million for Erie County Investing in Families

Dr. Wood: Tim, do you just want to comment and how we worded this and why we worded it the way we did?

Mr. Wachter: The subrecipient agreement with the county requires that there be at least a one-to-one match to the \$2.5 million appropriated of federal ARPA dollars. I've suggested that while this board has agreed to appropriate \$2.5 million of local share gaming revenue to this particular initiative, that you give yourselves the flexibility to not just have it made available as match, but to have that money available to support the program, whether there's additional expenses that are incurred as a result of the NWIR partnership, or whether you run into situations where entities are ineligible for federal funding due to having previously received over \$100,000 in federal funding, which we know is a restriction that's placed in the contract and you may want to fund them out of a separate bucket. The way that this resolution is worded is it gives you that flexibility. Now, that does not in any way stop or prevent us from still having to make sure that we have a one-to-one match of federal funding. In my conversations with Dr. Wood, he has assured me that he is confident that the Phase II of the early childhood funding initiative, there will be sufficient match made by the grant applicants to make up for any dollars that we would potentially spend out of this \$2.5 on something other than the match. So, the way I worded the resolution was just to give you that flexibility should those situations arrive.

Dr. Wood: Does that make sense?

Ms. Hess: And it's not in violation of what we . . . ?

Mr. Wachter: We did not agree in the subrecipient agreement that the Gaming Authority would provide the one-to-one match. We agreed that there will be one-to-one match without regard to what the source would be. I just didn't want to limit your investment specifically and solely to match when it was clear that after the conversation last week that additional expenses may be incurred and then we'll have the availability to match elsewhere.

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Oberlander makes a motion to accept the resolution. Ms. Amatangelo seconds the motion. There is no further discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

Mr. Wachter: Mr. Cleaver, now that that's passed, I do note that when awards are made, when recommendations will be made for funding, there should be a column added to the resolution exhibit that we typically do where it says provider amount awarded, which will indicate how much of that is the ARPA funding and then how much of that is match or other funding coming from the Gaming Revenue Authority just so that we can keep track of that.

Mr. Cleaver: Let me ask you, are we committed to that total \$2.5 million? In other words, now we run into a refugee problem - that can't be dipped into to try to resolve that? Are we committed to the \$2.5?

Mr. Wachter: You've just committed to the \$2.5, yes.

Dr. Wood: So, in essence, we're going to reserve that \$2.5 on our financials in the Grant Reserve so it won't be spent on anything else but this issue.

- c. Resolution Number 5, 2025 – Resolution to adopt the Erie County Investing in Families Phase I grant guidelines

Dr. Wood: These are the guidelines that we just reviewed on the 17th that Elena and Steve answered questions on. We're estimating it's going to cost \$1.5 million on the higher end - that's a conservative estimate. On the lower end, \$1 million. To Ms. Hess's point, this is the concept that doesn't really have a sustainability model in place yet but is benchmarked off of what York County does and has a 70-some percent retention rate.

Mr. Wachter: If I may, may I share my screen? I just wanted to point out some additional changes that I've made. I just received this document late last night and I was unable to review it until this morning, so the changes are not in your packet. But these changes that I have made in this document were reflective of the conversation that we had last week. So, they wanted the email those changes to grants@jamteam.org. We had conversations about Keystone Stars or equivalencies, so I wanted to put that in there.

I wanted to confirm that liens or liabilities filed against the companies would not include UCC-1 filings, which are secure transactions; they are not debts that are owed, but they're the security for debt for transactions that have been engaged in. We wanted to ensure that if you are in noncompliance with the grant guidelines that you're not eligible for ECGRA funding; we had that conversation.

We wanted to remove the availability of volunteers to receive these monies. I did miss one up at the top here - I removed the provision in there stating that if you drop a star, you're not going to be eligible for funding because this is not an open, rolling grant application; it's you have to meet the star requirements as of the date of the application as per our conversation. I removed all of the language relative to all the different tax forms that they have to provide to us because that was a requirement of the state government and it's information that quite frankly we don't need. All we need is proof that the money was spent in the way in which was provided, and they can do so through providing payroll stubs. So, I had removed that. The eligibility requirements we had talked about is not just being a teaching staff, but that you would be a teaching staff who holds a CDA or nine equivalent credits, nine credits in early childhood education.

And I added the language that I wanted in there relative to unsworn falsification to authorities, which is essentially if you lie on this application that you're committing criminal perjury, which is standard language that we use on government documents. So, I ask that the guidelines that be considered for approval be this revised version.

Dr. Wood: Nice work.

Mr. Smith: I have a question for Tim. When you mentioned that if they drop a star, are you referring to if they drop below a certain star level or if they are at a particular star, say four, and they drop to three, does that kick in there?

Mr. Wachter: The language that was in there was if you drop below a star two, but I removed that language because that was written for the program that is used in York, which I believe is a rolling application program. We have a set date that you have to have your stars in place as of the date of application, which is April 25th. And so, whether you drop after April 25th or not, it's not going to require you to submit a new application. We still have the requirement in there that if you drop below a star 2 before the grant is paid out, it is not eligible. But the requirement to come in with a new application is not appropriate because all applications are due by one day.

Mr. Smith: Thank you very much for that clarification.

Mr. Louis: Are the nine credits of early childhood an equivalent to a CDA?

Mr. Wachter: The conversation that was had was it's a CDA or nine credits of early childhood education. I did not inquire as to whether that's an equivalency, but that seems to be the industry standard that was discussed last week.

Mr. Louis: My daughter worked at Rena Irwin's organization in the beginning. She doesn't work there anymore, but they require you have a CDA. So that's a nice standard to have.

Mr. Cleaver: Is there any more discussion on item C, which is the family grant guidelines?

Dr. Wood: When someone makes a motion, it will be to accept the guidelines per Tim's recommended suggestions.

Ms. Hess makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Oberlander seconds the motion. There is no further discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- d. Resolution Number 6, 2025 – Resolution to support Infinite Erie for a period of two years not to exceed \$300,000

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Oberlander makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Winschel seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- e. Resolution Number 7, 2025 – Resolution to enter into a pilot agreement with Mercyhurst University for the Erie Market Study

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Louis makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Oberlander seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- f. Resolution Number 8, 2025 – Resolution to enter into agreements with forty-four (44) Erie County Special Events grant applicants

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Oberlander makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Louis seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- g. Resolution Number 9, 2025 – Resolution to renew the existing lease for the period of one (1) year

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Ms. Hess makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Oberlander seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

- h. Resolution Number 10, 2025 – Resolution to authorize the Executive Director to be the sole signatory for ECGRA investments

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Ms. Amatangelo makes a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Louis seconds the motion.

Mr. Winschel: If we could just get some additional transparency on that cash asset spreadsheet for the monthly reports.

Dr. Wood: Is this the formatting you want us to use?

Mr. Winschel: It's just a template.

Dr. Wood: And also, I just want to comment. This gives me the sole ability to sign. I'm still not making any decisions without talking to Gary and Angie, just so I have some cover from the board standpoint.

Mr. Winschel: I think something like that, Perry, you can say, "We've got this coming up. Take a look at this. We will need cash to fund this project and that project." It's all transparency.

Dr. Wood: I think this report is great. We can definitely plug this in.

Mr. Winschel: I have no problem. It can be together. You're making the decisions on the end.

Dr. Wood: A nice supplemental piece.

There is no further discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Oberlander moves to adjourn. Mr. Louis seconds the motion. Meeting is adjourned at 9:48am.

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Profit & Loss
March 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget YTD</u>	<u>2024-25 Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
44000 • ARPA Fund	-1,844,273.22	655,726.78		
44800 • Gaming Revenue		4,102,442.66		
44801 • Interactive Gaming Revenue		1,998,846.01		
46400 • Other Types of Income				
46410 • Interest Income - Savings	12,210.99	235,612.17		
46422 • Interest Income - BWC - Erie Grow	7,500.00	30,416.67		
46424 • Interest Income - Progress Fund		15,000.00		
46424.5 • Interest Income - 1855 Capital				
46425 • Interest Income - EDF Restruct	3,250.00	13,000.00		
46426 • Interest Income - BWC - Inclusive	6,250.00	25,347.22		
46427 • Interest Income - Blue Highway	20,059.00	37,171.58		
46428 • Interest Income - eCAT	2,556.00	12,780.00		
46450 • Dividend Erie Bank MMKT	22,411.90	183,536.67		
46451 • Dividend Erie FCU CD_12	22,651.34	151,521.34		
46452 • Dividend Flagship CD_7	9,120.21	63,220.71		
46453 • Dividend FNB CD_3		13,222.54		
46454 • Dividend FNB CD_6		26,128.62		
46455 • Dividend FNB CD_9		25,636.92		
Total Income	<u>-1,738,263.78</u>	<u>7,589,609.89</u>		
Expense				
62100 • Contracted Services	5,451.43	78,846.07	71,650.00	71,650.00
62800 • Facilities & Equipment	1,677.50	20,241.98	23,200.00	23,200.00
65000 • Office Administration	2,331.05	14,572.92	19,750.00	19,750.00
65100 • Other Types of Expenses	2,728.17	52,769.83	55,000.00	55,000.00
66000 • Payroll Expenses	25,203.88	324,975.49	291,950.00	291,950.00
67000 • Building a Better Future (ARPA)	6,030.00	647,016.78	869,408.00	869,408.00
7000 • Provision for Uncollect Notes		(2,172.24)		
Total Expense	<u>43,422.03</u>	<u>1,136,250.83</u>	<u>1,330,958.00</u>	<u>1,330,958.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	(1,781,685.81)	6,453,359.06		

(con't)

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Profit & Loss

March 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget YTD</u>	<u>2024-25 Budget</u>
Other Income/Expense				
70000 · Grants / Settlements / MRIs				
70030 · Community Assets	2,970.00	453,084.50		
70050 · Municipal Settlements	331,916.19	1,525,322.18		
70070 · Special Events		199,090.70		
70090 · Multi-Municipal Collaboration		253,625.00		
70100 · Mission Main Street		1,167,281.18		
70120 · Summer Jobs Program		167,586.23		
70125 · Neighborhoods & Communities MRI				
70130 · Small Business Financing				
70136 · Ignite Erie_Beehive				
70140 · Pilot Projects		75,000.00		
70150 · Shaping Tomorrow				
70170 · Renaissance Block		213,334.00		
70180 · Anchor Building		505,000.00		
70190 · COVID-19 Immediate Human Relief				
70300 · Transformational Grants		728,077.00		
Total 70000 · Grants / Settlements	<u>334,886.19</u>	<u>5,287,400.79</u>		
Net Other Income	<u>(334,886.19)</u>	<u>(5,287,400.79)</u>		
Net Income	<u>(2,116,572.00)</u>	<u>1,165,958.27</u>		

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Balance Sheet
As of March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings/Money Market	
10000 · ErieBank - Checking	52,435.19
10100 · ErieBank - Savings	
10101 · Committed Funds	820,733.00
10102 · Restricted Funds	4,575,966.49
10104 · ARPA Fund	207,156.12
10105 · ARPA Childcare	2,500,000.00
10100 · ErieBank - Savings - Other	(1,849,771.74)
Total 10100 · ErieBank - Savings	<u>6,254,083.87</u>
10110 · Erie Bank Money Market 4/12/25	<u>6,232,522.67</u>
Other Current Assets	
10300 · Erie FCU CD 8/28/25	5,151,521.34
10400 · Flagship CD 9/26/25	2,063,220.71
10510 · FNB CD_7 8/21/25	1,026,128.62
10520 · FNB CD_9 5/21/25	<u>1,025,636.92</u>
Total Checking/Savings/Money Market/CDs	21,805,549.32
Other Current Assets	
12000 · Notes Receivable	
12004 · NR - BWC - Erie Growth	1,000,000.00
12005 · NR - Progress Fund	1,000,000.00
12010 · NR - 1855 Capital	500,000.00
12050 · NR - EDF Restructured	1,300,000.00
12060 · NR - BWC - Inclusive Erie	2,500,000.00
12070 · NR - Blue Highway	250,000.00
12080 · NR - BWC - Resp Fund Sm Bus	482,922.27
12085 · NR - BWC - Resp Fund Nnpfit	100,000.00
12090 · NR - eCAT	500,000.00
12500 · NR - Youth Leadership Institute	98,506.00
12900 · Reserve for Uncollectable Notes	(1,553,881.00)
12000 · Notes Receivable - Other	<u>37,077.73</u>
Total 12000 · Notes Receivable	6,214,625.00
14500 · Prepaid Insurance	17,591.03
Total Other Current Assets	<u>6,232,216.03</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>28,037,765.35</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>28,037,765.35</u></u>

(con't.)

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Balance Sheet
As of March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
20100* - Deferred Revenue	2,500,000.00
20300 - Unearned Revenue	<u>213,681.10</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>2,713,681.10</u>
Total Liabilities	2,713,681.10
Equity	
30000 - Opening Balance Equity	2,927,064.18
32000 - Unrestricted Net Assets	21,231,061.80
Net Income	<u>1,165,958.27</u>
Total Equity	<u>25,324,084.25</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>28,037,765.35</u></u>

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Cash Asset Analysis
as of March 31, 2025

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

FUND	LOCATION	AMOUNT	RATE	MATURITY DATE	LIQUIDITY
Committed Funds	Erie Bank	820,733		N/A	daily
Restricted Funds		4,575,966		N/A	yearly
ARPA Fund		226,921	2.32%	N/A	daily
ARPA Childcare		2,500,000		N/A	daily
Savings		6,211,324		N/A	daily

MONEY MARKET / CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT

FUND	LOCATION	AMOUNT	RATE	MATURITY DATE	LIQUIDITY
Money Market	Erie Bank	6,232,523	4.25%	4/12/2025	daily
Certificate of Deposit	FNB	1,025,636	5.15%	5/21/2025	9 month
Certificate of Deposit	FNB	1,026,128	4.00%	8/21/2025	7 month
Certificate of Deposit	Erie FCU	5,128,870	5.33%	8/28/2025	12 month
Certificate of Deposit	Flagship	2,054,100	4.46%	9/26/2025	7 month

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Budget vs. Actual
March 2025

	March	YTD	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget	% of Budget
Expense					
62100 · Contracted Services					
62110 · Accounting Fees	0.00	8,150.00	8,150.00	0.00	100.00%
62130 · Professional Services	3,000.00	37,500.00	40,000.00	(2,500.00)	93.75%
62140 · Legal Services	2,353.50	30,054.50	20,000.00	10,054.50	150.27%
62145 · Website Design	0.00	1,888.68	2,000.00	(111.32)	94.43%
62150 · Payroll Services	97.93	1,252.89	1,500.00	(247.11)	83.53%
Total 62100 · Contracted Services	5,451.43	78,846.07	71,650.00	7,196.07	110.04%
62800 · Facilities & Equipment					
62840 · Office Equipment	0.00	111.98	3,000.00	(2,888.02)	3.73%
62890 · Rent	1,677.50	20,130.00	20,200.00	(70.00)	99.65%
Total 62800 · Facilities & Equipment	1,677.50	20,241.98	23,200.00	(2,958.02)	87.25%
65000 · Office Administration					
65010 · Books, Subscriptions, Dues	0.00	1,018.91	3,000.00	(1,981.09)	33.96%
65020 · Postage	0.00	38.96	100.00	(61.04)	38.96%
65040 · Office Supplies	0.00	1,362.04	2,000.00	(637.96)	68.10%
65050 · Cell Phone	354.83	2,380.79	3,000.00	(619.21)	79.36%
65060 · Copier Lease	691.90	4,151.40	4,200.00	(48.60)	98.84%
65070 · Copier Printing Costs	0.00	32.07	200.00	(167.93)	16.04%
65080 · Bank Fees	17.00	186.00	500.00	(314.00)	37.20%
65085 · Professional Development	1,267.32	3,557.32	3,000.00	557.32	118.58%
65090 · Meeting Expenses	0.00	1,819.58	3,500.00	(1,680.42)	51.99%
65095 · Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	25.85	250.00	(224.15)	10.34%
Total 65000 · Office Administration	2,331.05	14,572.92	19,750.00	(5,177.08)	73.79%
65100 · Other Types of Expenses					
65105 · Outreach	0.00	4,986.50	5,000.00	(13.50)	99.73%
65110 · Advertising	0.00	4,368.31	4,000.00	368.31	109.21%
65115 · Phone/IT/Fax	1,157.48	20,700.57	18,000.00	2,700.57	115.00%
65120 · Insurance	1,559.97	15,880.67	18,000.00	(2,119.33)	88.23%
65130 · Grant Management Software	0.00	5,562.00	6,000.00	(438.00)	92.70%
65150 · Travel	10.72	1,271.78	4,000.00	(2,728.22)	31.79%
Total 65100 · Other Types of Expenses	2,728.17	52,769.83	55,000.00	(2,230.17)	95.95%
66000 · Payroll Expenses					
66005 · Salaries & Wages	22,204.69	287,025.28	250,000.00	37,025.28	114.81%
66010 · FITW Tax	1,452.74	18,882.27	20,000.00	(1,117.73)	94.41%
66015 · FUTA Tax	0.00	126.00	150.00	(24.00)	84.00%
66020 · PASUI Tax	27.25	655.03	2,000.00	(1,344.97)	32.75%
66700 · PMRS	1,519.20	18,286.91	19,800.00	(1,513.09)	92.36%
Total 66000 · Payroll Expenses	25,203.88	324,975.49	291,950.00	33,025.49	111.31%
67000 · Building a Better Future (ARPA)					
67005 · Contracted Services - ARPA	0.00	10,499.00	11,000.00	(501.00)	95.45%
67010 · Subawards - ARPA	6,030.00	636,517.78	858,408.00	(221,890.22)	74.15%
67025 · Indirect Costs - ARPA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
67030 · Salaries & Wages - ARPA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Total 67000 · Building a Better Future (ARPA)	6,030.00	647,016.78	869,408.00	(222,391.22)	169.60%
7000 · Provision for Uncollect Notes	0.00	(2,172.24)			
Total Expense	43,422.03	1,136,250.83	1,330,958.00	(194,707.17)	85.37%

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Schedule of Grant Reserve

as of

March 31, 2025

	March	YTD	Totals/Subtotals
Restricted Uncommitted Funds	4,575,966.49		
Committed Funds	820,733.00		
ARPA Funds	220,891.12		

2024 Restricted Funds: (75% - after settlement payments)

First Quarter Gaming Revenue	208,206.38	
1,234,402.27 / 2 = 617,201.13 (land bank/county)		
617,201.13 * .55 = 339,460.62 (county)		
617,201.13 * .45 = 277,740.51 (ECGRA)		
277,740.51 * .75 = 208,206.38		
Second Quarter Gaming Revenue	869,863.85	
2,960,173.23 - 382,798.86 (land bank) = 2,577,374.37		
2,577,374.37 * .55 = 1,417,555.90 (county)		
2,577,374.37 * .45 = 1,159,818.47 (ECGRA)		
1,159,818.47 * .75 = 869,863.85		
Third Quarter Gaming Revenue	1,002,914.20	
2,971,597.64 * .55 = 1,634,378.70 (county)		
2,971,597.64 * .45 = 1,337,218.94 (ECGRA)		
1,337,218.94 * .75 = 1,002,914.20		
Fourth Quarter Gaming Revenue	995,748.55	
2,950,366.08 * .55 = 1,622,701.34 (county)		
2,950,366.08 * .45 = 1,327,664.74 (ECGRA)		
1,327,664.74 * .75 = 995,748.55		
		3,076,732.98

2024 Interactive Gaming Revenue

FY 2023-2024		
4,441,880.02 * .55 = 2,443,034.01 (county)		
4,441,880.02 * .45 = 1,998,846.01 (ECGRA)		
1,998,846.01 * .75 = 1,499,134.51	1,499,134.51	1,499,134.51

Total Gaming Revenue	4,575,867.49
-----------------------------	---------------------

FY Disbursements:

First Quarter Disbursements	2,377,281.44	
Second Quarter Disbursements	1,465,714.91	
Third Quarter Disbursements	1,140,429.74	
Fourth Quarter Disbursements	340,916.19	5,923,918.57

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Schedule of Grant Reserve
as of
March 31, 2025

Disbursements Detail

Grants/Settlements/MRIs

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
MUNICIPALITIES			
Settlements			
Summit Township	149,362.29	686,395.03	
Greene Township	36,510.78	167,785.43	
McKean Township	36,510.78	167,785.43	
Millcreek Township	36,510.78	167,785.43	
Waterford Township	36,510.78	167,785.43	
Erie County	36,510.78	167,785.43	
			1,525,322.18
Multi-Municipal Collaboration			
Jefferson Educational Society		100,000.00	
Girard Township		10,000.00	
Washington Township		43,625.00	
West County Paramedic Association		100,000.00	
			253,625.00
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT			
Community Facilities			
Harvest 912		10,050.00	
Union Township		33,500.00	
			43,550.00
Erie County Investment Playbook			
Nonprofit Partnership		28,096.29	
			28,096.29
NEIGHBORHOODS & COMMUNITIES			
Anchor Building			
2019 Impact Corry		60,000.00	
2022 East Side Renaissance		50,000.00	
2024 Borough of Union City		75,000.00	
Explore the Possibilities		100,000.00	
Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society		70,000.00	
Greater Erie Community Action Committee		50,000.00	
Impact Corry		100,000.00	
North East Community Foundation		50,000.00	
			555,000.00

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Schedule of Grant Reserve
as of
March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
NEIGHBORHOODS & COMMUNITIES			
Mission Main Street			
2019 Borough of Union City		125,000.00	
Borough of North East		125,000.00	
City of Erie		205,000.00	
Downtown Girard		125,000.00	
Erie Downtown Partnership		125,000.00	
Fairview Township		175,000.00	
Impact Corry		125,000.00	
SSJ Neighborhood Network		100,000.00	
2022 Downtown North East		87,500.00	
		<u>87,500.00</u>	<u>1,192,500.00</u>
Renaissance Block			
Bayfront Eastside Taskforce		100,000.00	
Borough of Edinboro		80,000.00	
Borough of North East		80,000.00	
Borough of Union City		100,000.00	
Downtown Girard		80,000.00	
Impact Corry		100,000.00	
Our West Bayfront		50,000.00	
		<u>50,000.00</u>	<u>590,000.00</u>
PILOT PROJECT			
Erie City Moms		75,000.00	
		<u>75,000.00</u>	<u>75,000.00</u>
QUALITY OF PLACE			
Community Assets			
Arts, Culture, & Heritage			
Albion Area Fair, Inc.		7,000.00	
AmeriMasala		10,000.00	
Community Resources for Independence		3,138.93	
Dafmark Dance Theater		10,000.00	
Downtown North East, Inc.		12,000.00	
Edinboro University Foundation		5,500.00	
Edinboro Arts & Music Fest		13,000.00	
Erie Art Company		5,000.00	
Erie Arts & Music Festival		12,000.00	
Erie Yesterday		14,000.00	
Erie's Black Wall Street		12,000.00	
Film Society of Northwestern PA		10,000.00	
Heberle's Heartstrings		1,500.00	
Hornby School Restoration Society		6,300.00	

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Schedule of Grant Reserve

as of

March 31, 2025

	March	YTD	Subtotal
Arts, Culture, & Heritage (con't)			
Impact Corry		11,000.00	
Lake Erie Fanfare, Inc.		12,000.00	
Messiah Lutheran Church		5,000.00	
Springfield Township		1,445.00	
Triangle DAR		10,000.00	
Veterans Miracle Center Erie		15,000.00	
Waterford Community Fair Association		13,500.00	
Wattsburg Agricultural Society		11,000.00	
WQLN Public Media		13,000.00	
YMCA of Corry		7,000.00	
Young Artists Debut Orchestra		15,000.00	
			235,383.93
Community Assets			
Community Centers			
Borough of North East		10,000.00	
Boys & Girls Club of Erie		8,164.00	
Christian Ministries	9,000.00	9,000.00	
Community Resources for Independence		7,500.00	
Corry Community Center		15,000.00	
Corry Higher Education Council		2,612.50	
Edinboro Market		14,969.00	
Erie's Black Wall Street		15,000.00	
Harvest 912		4,950.00	
Inner-City Neighborhood Art House		7,500.00	
JFK Center		15,000.00	
Mercy Center for Women		15,000.00	
Mercy Hilltop Center		15,000.00	
Multi-Cultural Health Eval Delivery Sys		13,000.00	
SSJ Neighborhood Network		15,000.00	
Union Township		16,500.00	
			184,195.50
Parks, Fields, Trails			
Asbury Woods Partnership Inc		21,350.00	
Borough of Edinboro		25,000.00	
Borough of Union City		25,000.00	
Edinboro Legion Pool Inc		5,394.56	
Elk Creek Recreation & Leisure Board		16,500.00	
Erie Area Council of Governments		10,000.00	
Headwaters Natural Resource Center Trust		9,500.00	
McKean Recreation Authority		25,000.00	
Presque Isle Partnership		7,500.00	
			145,244.56

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Schedule of Grant Reserve
as of
March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
Special Events			
Albion Area Fair, Inc.		13,700.25	
Americans for Competitive Enterprise Sys		2,700.00	
AmeriMasala		1,683.00	
Asbury Woods Partnership, Inc.		3,363.73	
Barber National Institute		12,516.08	
Borough of Edinboro		1,507.50	
Borough of Girard		572.93	
Borough of Wesleyville		869.40	
Borough of Union City		207.00	
CAFE		15,000.00	
Crime Victim Center of Erie County, Inc,		3,313.85	
Downtown North East, Inc.		3,044.70	
Edinboro University Foundation		2,553.75	
Edinboro Arts & Music Fest		3,420.00	
Erie Art & Music Festival		5,130.00	
Erie County Bar Association		2,250.00	
Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Inc		3,288.60	
Erie Latino Leadership Association		1,391.18	
Erie Lions Club Save an Eye Game		1,125.00	
Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partner.		4,500.00	
Erie Roller Derby		364.14	
Erie United Methodist Alliance		3,150.00	
Erie-Western PA Port Authority		5,652.90	
Film Society of Northwestern PA		5,458.50	
Goodell Gardens & Homestead		2,947.50	
Harborcreek Community Engagement Team		936.00	
Harborcreek Township		1,350.00	
Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church		7,065.00	
Humane Society of NWPA		7,074.00	
Impact Corry		3,472.79	
Jefferson Educational Society of Erie		15,000.00	
Lake Erie Fanfare, Inc.		2,245.50	
Lake Erie Greek Cultural Society		7,375.50	
Mercy Center for Women		4,059.00	
Nonprofit Partnership, The		3,947.18	
Orthodox Church of the Nativity		2,700.00	
Presque Isle Light Station		1,011.15	
Presque Isle Partnership		4,990.50	
Saint Patrick Church		7,389.66	
SSJ Neighborhood Network		5,031.16	

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Schedule of Grant Reserve
as of
March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
Special Events (con't)			
Union City Pride		946.13	
Waterford Community Fair Association		8,685.00	
Wattsburg Agricultural Society		12,651.75	
YMCA of Greater Erie		330.75	
Young Artists Debut Orchestra		4,366.80	
			<u>200,337.88</u>
 SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING			
 TRANSFORMATIONAL GRANTS			
Enterprise Development Fund		250,000.00	
Erie Center for Arts & Technology		103,077.00	
Fly Erie Fund LLC		125,000.00	
Minority Community Investment Coalition		250,000.00	
			<u>728,077.00</u>
 YOUTH & EDUCATION			
Summer Jobs & More		167,586.23	
			<u>167,586.23</u>
 Total Funds Disbursements	340,916.19	5,923,918.57	5,923,918.57

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Schedule of Grant Reserve
as of
March 31, 2025

	<u>March</u>	<u>Amount Remaining</u>	<u>Original Commitment</u>
Committed Funds:			
N&C			
Renaissance Block 2018			
1 Academy Neighborhood Association		11,250.00	22,500.00
SSJ Neighborhood Network		7,000.00	70,000.00
2 Bayfront Eastside Taskforce		25,000.00	50,000.00
ServErie		29,000.00	58,000.00
Renaissance Block 2022			
Borough of Edinboro		50,000.00	100,000.00
Renaissance Block 2023			
Borough of Edinboro		50,000.00	100,000.00
Borough of Union City		50,000.00	100,000.00
Anchor Building 2020			
Borough of Union City		15,000.00	64,375.00
Mission Main Street 2022			
Edinboro Community & Economic Development		62,500.00	125,000.00
MUN			
Multi-Municipal Collaboration 2021			
Borough of North East		50,000.00	100,000.00
SB			
Beehive Network			
Community Enterprise Financing Loan			
QP			
Transformational Grants			
Erie Center for Arts & Technology		125,983.00	229,060.00
Fly Erie Fund LLC		125,000.00	250,000.00
PP			
Pilot Program			
Y&E			
Shaping Tomorrow			
Summer Jobs 2024		0.00	200,000.00
Empower Erie - Community College		220,000.00	400,000.00
Total Committed Funds	0.00	820,733.00	1,868,935.00
 ARPA Transformative Funds			
Subawards	6,030.00	215,391.12	3,622,025.00
Contracted Services	0.00	5,500.00	273,274.00
Salaries & Wages	0.00	0.00	93,406.00
Indirect Costs	0.00	0.00	11,295.00
Total ARPA Funds	6,030.00	220,891.12	4,000,000.00

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
Transaction List Detail
March 2025

Date	Num	Name	Memo	Amount
03/05/2025	EFT	Altair Real Estate	2025 March Rent	-1,677.50
03/05/2025	EFT	Urban Erie Community Development Corp	2024 Campaign for Jobs	-500.00
03/05/2025	EFT	Summit Township	2024 Q4 Settlement	-149,362.29
03/05/2025	EFT	Greene Township	2024 Q4 Settlement	-36,510.78
03/05/2025	EFT	McKean Township	2024 Q4 Settlement	-36,510.78
03/05/2025	EFT	Millcreek Township	2024 Q4 Settlement	-36,510.78
03/05/2025	EFT	Waterford Township	2024 Q4 Settlement	-36,510.78
03/05/2025	EFT	Erie County	2024 Q4 Settlement	-36,510.78
03/12/2025	EFT	ECCA, Inc.	02/22/2025 to 03/07/2025 Payroll	-9,800.05
03/12/2025	EFT	Fidelity Investments	02/22/2025 to 03/07/2025 Simple IRA	-500.00
03/12/2025	EFT	PMRS	Pay Ending 3/7/25	-759.60
03/12/2025	EFT	Velocity Network, Inc.	2024 March Phone/IT	-1,157.48
03/12/2025	EFT	The Hartford	2025 March Disability Insurance	-109.39
03/12/2025	EFT	Kate & Co., Inc	2024 March Professional Services	-3,000.00
03/12/2025	EFT	Christian Ministries	2024 Community Centers	-9,000.00
03/20/2025	EFT	Highmark Health Insurance	2025 March Health Insurance	-3,214.53
03/20/2025	EFT	Wells Fargo Financial Leasing	2025 March Copier Lease	-691.90
03/20/2025	EFT	Great Lakes Insurance Services Group	Public Officilas Liability	-14,550.00
03/20/2025	EFT	Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett	2025 March Legal	-2,353.50
03/20/2025	EFT	Tom M. Maggio	Q4 2024 Phone/Travel, Professional Development	-1,132.87
03/21/2025	EFT	Erie Bank	Wire Fee - Blue Highway	-17.00
03/28/2025	EFT	ECCA, Inc.	03/08/2025 to 03/21/2025 Payroll	-9,768.03
03/28/2025	EFT	Fidelity Investments	03/08/2025 to 03/21/2025 Simple IRA	-500.00
03/28/2025	EFT	PMRS	Pay Ending 3/21/2025	-759.60



E.C.G.R.A.
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT
FOR
APRIL
2025**



ECGRA Communications Services Report

March 2025 Comms.

BiWeekly Meeting with ECGRA Executive Director

Ongoing Social Media Management

Ongoing Consulting

IMPLEMENTED

March social media posts
2 new graphics posted in Feb.
Article reposting
BiWeekly planning meeting with the Executive Director
Photos – Ihack Press Conference
Photos – Edinboro Market
Talking Points – Ihack Press Conference

IN PROGRESS

Brand guide updates (edits made) - #ECGRAworks content from grant recipients
Little Explorers Childcare Op-Ed (in review)
Content Capture from Recipients
Scheduling – Lead Assets Event w/ Zoo

IN PLANNING

Event planning /scheduling (Lead Assets Press Conference, Special Events Press Conference, Upcoming Grants)
Graphics – Future grant opportunities
Annual Report 2024



Early Childhood Learning Erie County Investing in Families

Educator Retention Awards (ERA)
Work Session
April 1, 2025



JAM Team Foundation

1



The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) is a subrecipient of Erie County's grant award and was awarded \$2.5 million in funding by Erie County Council in 2024 to stabilize and improve the early childhood learning and daycare industry throughout Erie County.



2



ECGRA

ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

ECGRA has developed a three-pronged approach to address stabilizing and developing the childcare industry in Erie County.

- 1.) Stabilizing the Workforce
- 2.) Incentivizing Facility Expansions
- 3.) New Facility Construction

3



ECGRA

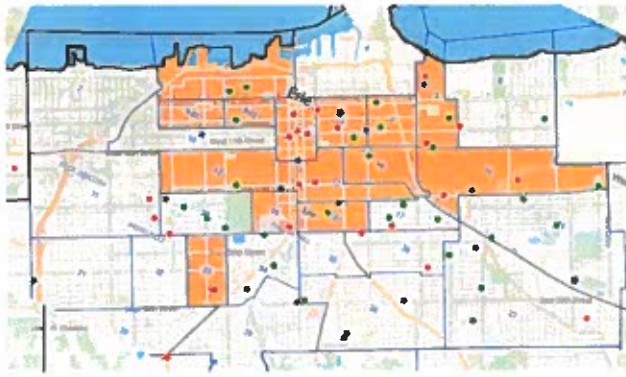
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

Priority Areas

This program requires that grant-funded activities take place within Erie County with priority given to geographic areas and populations that have faced long-term economic challenges, disinvestment, and poverty.

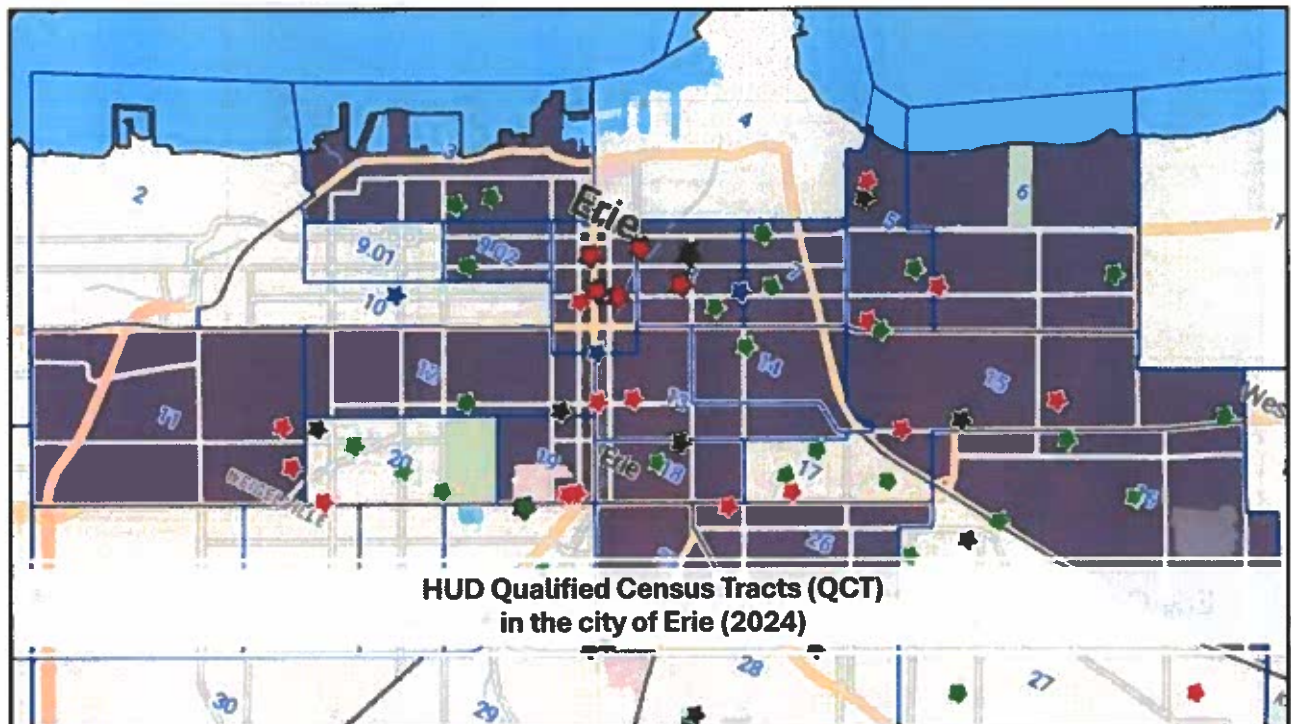
4

Erie County Census Tracts with Median Family Income less than 60%

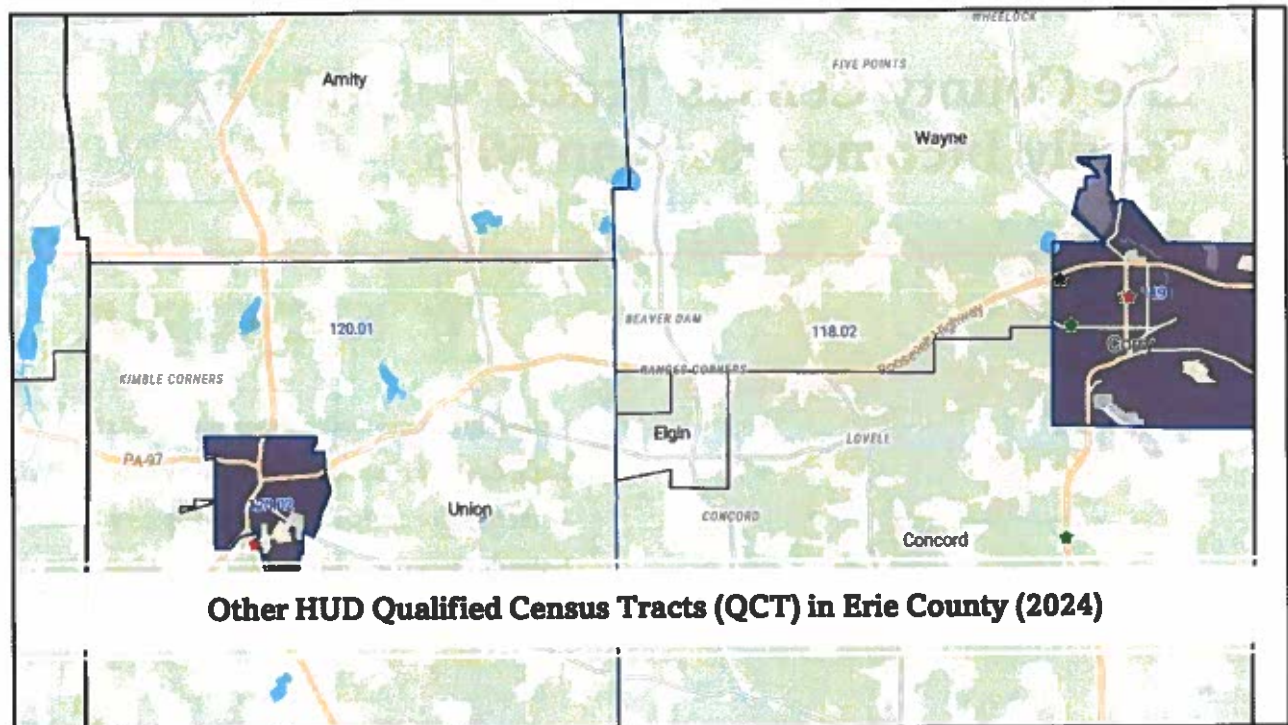


- 4-star daycare centers represented by red stars.
- 3-star daycare centers represented by blue stars.
- 2-star daycare centers represented by green stars.
- 1-star daycare centers represented by black stars.

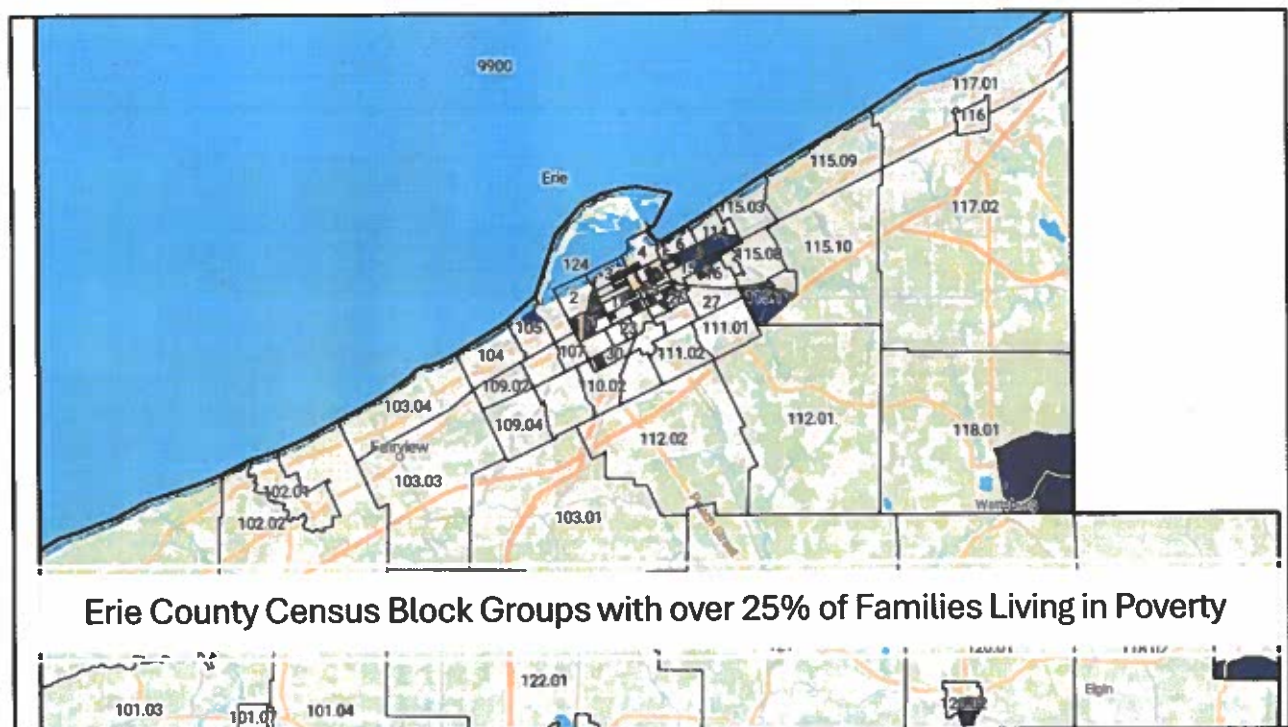
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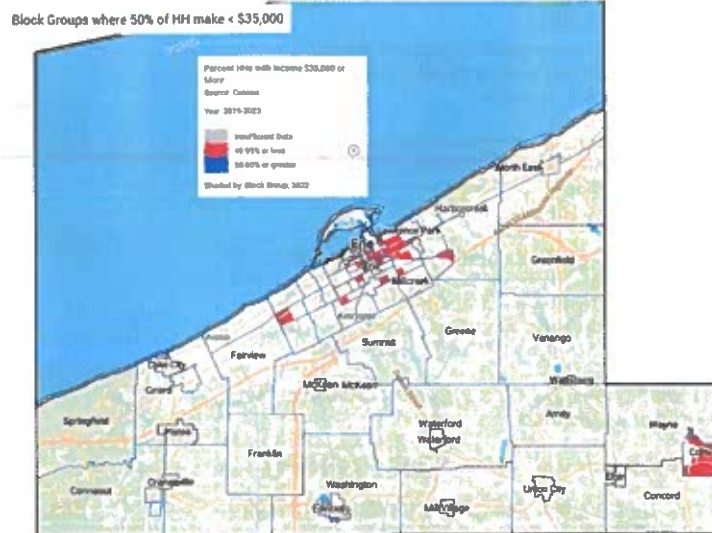


7



8

Erie County Census Block Groups where 50% of Households make less than \$35,000.



9

ECGRA Early Care and Education (ECE) Educator Retention Award (ERA)



10

Purpose

This award is designed to support Early Care and Education (ECE) programs who are serving families in Erie County.

Priority for these awards will be targeted to Department of Human Services (DHS) Early Care and Education (ECE) programs serving vulnerable or at-risk populations.

If there are available funds, they may be awarded to programs who have Pre-K Counts (PKC), Head Start and Head Start State Supplemental (HS & HSSP), Early Head Start (EHS), and/or Private Academic Pre-School (PDE) certification.

Provider must be STAR 2, 3, or 4, or equivalent at time of application.

Pre-K counts is considered STAR 4 equivalent.

Private Academic Pre-School (PDE) certification. (STAR 2 unless Accredited)



11

Important Notes:

All award funds are contingent upon the availability of ECGRA funds.

**This application may be denied if it is not complete,
or
the instructions have not been followed.**

For any questions regarding the completion and submission of the ERA request, please contact the JAM Team Foundation at grants@jamteam.org



12

Eligibility Criteria

- † Applicant must align proposed projects and programs with priorities and recommendations identified by Positioning Erie To Prosper and Compete (2024), Child Care Crisis in Erie testimony (2024), as well as any other relevant existing community plans.
- † Other American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding may not serve as match.
- † Applicant must adhere to contemporary practices/policies with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion and reflect the spirit and intent of Erie County's Diversity Commitment Statement (Appendix B.)
- † All applicants must be in good standing with the IRS and state and local taxing bodies.
- † All applicants must be in good standing with ECGRA's reporting requirements to date.

Ineligible Grant Recipients

- † Suspended or inactive daycares
- † 501 c 3 not in good standing with IRS




13

General Provider Eligibility:

- ❖ The provider must be designated at and meet all Keystone STARS Performance Standards associated with a STAR 2 (or higher) designation or equivalent.
- ❖ The provider must hold a regular Department of Human Services (DHS) Certificate of Compliance. If a provider has a Provisional Certificate of Compliance, award funds may be available upon return to a full DHS Certificate of Compliance. PKC, HS, HSSP, EHS, or PDE certification may apply and will be awarded based on available funding.
- ❖ The provider must have an agreement with Child Care Works (CCW) through the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC). Furthermore, the provider must be willing to enroll a child who qualifies for subsidy, if space is available.
- ❖ Providers who have liens/liabilities to the commonwealth and/or federal government, including tax liabilities, filed against them (not UCC-1 filings) will be suspended from Keystone STARS and will not be able to receive grants and awards until those liens/liabilities are fully satisfied and the program provides the ELRC a clearance certificate issued by the Department of Revenue. Clearance certificates can be obtained at the provider's local tax office.



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Specific Provider Eligibility

The provider must meet the following site-specific requirements:

- Be able to provide the following upon request:
 - Copies of employee salary scale, bonus policy and personnel handbook
 - Proof of payment of payroll taxes
 - Verification of staff eligibility through Career Pathway Placement in the PD Registry.

ERA funds must be processed through payroll and are subject to applicable taxes (processing through IRS 1099 is prohibited). Adhere to IRS guidelines for employers and be responsible for any employer's portion of taxes as awards are distributed.

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Award Timeline:

Providers shall complete and submit their application by 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 25, 2025.

All completed grant documents shall be emailed to: grants@jamteam.org

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Electronic submission:

- 1) Page A Request Form and Page B Attestation Form
- 2) Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook

emailed to:

grants@jamteam.org




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Eligible Staff Persons



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Position Titles:

- OO = Owner/Operator as Primary Caregiver;
- PSP = Primary Staff Person as the Operator
- D/AD = Director and one Assistant Director
- GS = Group Supervisor
- AGS = Assistant Group Supervisor
- A = Aide

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Eligible Staff Persons

To be eligible, staff must be listed and verified on the providers staff report in the PD Registry.

Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications.

Administrative, custodial, transportation, and food service staff, are not eligible for the ERA unless they have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) and work at least 15 hours per week directly with children. If this is the case, they should be classified as an Aide or AGS.

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ECE Educator Eligibility Requirements

- Staff must be employed at the same legal entity for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the date of ERA request.
- Teaching staff awards may be used only for staff who work directly with children during operating hours (at least 15 hours) a week, who hold a CDA or 9 credits in Early childhood Education.
- Award amounts are based on the number of hours worked. Staff members working less than 15 hours per week are not eligible for awards. This may be an average of 15 hours over a 12-month period.



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Academic Eligibility Requirements

Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications regarding degree types, related degrees, credit hours, etc.

- Owner/Operator Awards
 - At least a Level B on the Career Pathway
 - Can receive the director ERA at Career Pathway A+ with an approved educational plan to achieve Career Pathway Level B
- Teaching Staff Awards
 - At least a Level A on the Career Pathway
- Teaching staff who are below Level A are not eligible.
- Administrative, custodial, transportation, food service staff, and volunteers are *not* eligible for the ERA.

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ECE Educator Retention Award (ERA) Award Amounts

STAR Level Attained	# Hours Worked Per Week	Director/AD Owner/Operator Level B or above	All Qualified Staff (Career Pathway Levels)		
			Level C or above	Level B or B+	Level A or A+
STAR 2	15 - 20	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,000	\$ 500
	21 - 40	\$ 4,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000
STAR 3	15 - 20	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 750
	21 - 40	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,500
STAR 4	15 - 20	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000
	21 - 40	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,000

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Guidelines and Compliance for the ERA Award

Non-compliance with any requirement of the Grant Agreement could result in the provider being required to return grant funds to ECGRA and not be eligible for future ECGRA funding.

- All award funds are a one-time payment for those working directly with children and are not to be used to supplement the incomes of teachers.
- Funds attributed to this grant must be expended within six months of the Board approval date as specified in the signed Grant Agreement. Grants not expended must be returned.
- The provider must retain original documentation for all award expenditures for seven years and ensure the documented amounts match total expenditures as reported on the respective Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook. Non-compliance will result in grantee being ineligible for future grants.
- **Important:** Any unexpended funds must be returned to ECGRA.



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Reporting Requirements

A closeout report will be required at the completion of the program. Details will be furnished at a grantee award meeting.

ECGRA must submit quarterly reports to Erie County. Grantees will need to furnish the following information:

1. Number of households served
2. Number of children served
3. Race, ethnicity, gender, and income level of families supported.



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Award Reconciliation/Closure

Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook with all tabs completed.

(The budget revision tab is to be completed only if budget revision becomes necessary).

For grant closing and budget approval/expense reconciliation, the following **must** be completed and submitted to grants@jamteam.org no later than **November 30, 2025**.



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Right to Know Law

- Federal funding and local share gaming revenue (State funding) is being used as a source for the program funding. As such, Erie County, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, or their authorized representatives shall have right of access to records of the grantee to conduct audits or other investigations. Grantee records including the grant application, may be subject to disclosure under Pennsylvania's Right to Know Law.
- Providers must keep documentation of ERA pay-outs to staff for their records, for review by the Jam Team Foundation or ECGRA and for state/federal agents who may need to review documents for auditing/monitoring purposes. **All grant related documents must be maintained for 7 years.**
 - Allowable documentation: Payroll/employee compensation documents indicate payee, date, amount paid and description of payment and/or is supported by a check or other proof of employee payment.
 - Payroll documents should remain onsite and should not be submitted with Attachment #1.



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2025 Grant Schedule



- 📅 **April 1, 2025:**
 - 📍 ECGRA releases the **Early Childhood Learning - Erie County Investing in Families Grant Application for Stabilizing the Workforce**
- 📅 Application and Guidelines posted to ecgra.org
- 📅 **April 1, 2025 –**
 - 📍 Grant workshop held at NWIR / ELRC / JAM Team Foundation
 - 📍 3823 West 12th Street, Erie, PA 16505
- 📅 **April 25, 2025 –** Applications must be submitted by midnight
- 📅 **May 15, 2025 –** ECGRA's board of directors will make the final review and approve funding recommendations
- 📅 **May 30, 2025 –** last day to submit signed agreement letter
- 📅 **October 31, 2025 –** last day to submit a closeout report online
- 📅 **November 30, 2025 –**
 - 📍 grant closing and budget approval/expense reconciliation, must be completed and submitted to grants@jamteam.org

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Thank You!

'The chance to seed a biomedical industry'

Gannon University's new biomedical lab plans to create 100 jobs



Walter Iwanenko, now the president of Gannon University, is shown in this 2021 file photo 21 on the first floor of Gannon's Institute for Health and Cyber Knowledge, or I-HACK building. ERIE TIMES-NEWS FILE

Jim Martin

Erie Times-News USA TODAY NETWORK

First Ascent Biomedical, a 2022 graduate of the Erie Accelerator program sponsored by the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, is betting that artificial intelligence might hold the key to more effective and personalized cancer treatment.

The Miami-based company isn't alone in making that bet.

Gannon University and Saint Vincent Hospital announced plans Wednesday to develop two new laboratories inside Gannon's Institute for Health and Cyber Knowledge or I-HACK building. The plan has the financial support of the Lutheran Foundation for Long-Term Living, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and the state of Pennsylvania.

First Ascent's plans call for the immediate creation of 38 jobs paying between \$60,000 and \$150,000, with plans for the number of jobs to top 100 within five years.

That's not to mention the construction jobs that will flow from the \$6.5 million project that will include space for a 3,000-square-foot First Ascent lab, 2,000 square feet for offices and a second 3,000-square-foot lab that Saint Vincent Hospital would use to expand its medical laboratory science program.

About 100 people were at Gannon for the announcement.

More important than the jobs

Ultimately, the importance of all those jobs might take a backseat to the human impact of the work that will be done inside the building.

It's there that First Ascent expects to work with 20,000 cancer patients a year, using artificial intelligence to process DNA/RNA sequencing, mutation analysis and data on drug sensitivity to produce personalized treatment information.

In an interview earlier this year with the Erie Times-News, First Ascent CEO Jim Foote explained the approach.



Foote

It's not about finding a new cure, but crunching massive amounts of data to find the best drug for a patient and his or her tumor.

"Everybody is looking for the silver bullet," Foote said. "I think we have enough bullets. We are just not using them in the right way. We are taking all the bullets available and finding out which one works for you."

Advertisement

Foote said Wednesday that data already is being processed at its lab in Florida, but that the one in Erie will have five times the capacity.

Ultimately, he said, First Ascent hopes to locate facilities around the country.

Where's the money coming from?

The Lutheran Foundation is contributing \$2 million toward the project, while the ECGRA is chipping in \$500,000 toward the project's projected price tag of \$6.5 million.

The state Department of Community and Economic Development has pledged \$1.7 million toward the project.

"Generally, we support smaller nonprofit organizations with more limited means, but the LFLTL board saw this as an opportunity to make a wide-spread community impact," said Mark J. Gusek, CEO of the Lutheran Foundation.



This fourth-floor space inside the Gannon University I-Hack building will be transformed into a medical-technology lab. GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

"The community involvement — the job creation, the new student programs, extending care to our community — really impressed the LFLTL board," he continued.

Perry Wood, executive director of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, said that the \$500,000 is the largest investment in ECGRA history.

The remainder of the money is expected to come through financing and ongoing fundraising efforts.

'This has the potential to put Erie on the map'

Work is expected to start late this fall and to be complete in the fall of 2026.

"We are deeply appreciative to the Lutheran Foundation and to ECGRA for their support," said Gannon President Walter Iwanenko. "Their significant gifts allow us to begin the design phase of this important initiative that will not only contribute to the economic development in downtown Erie but could potentially be a life-saving project."

Advertisement

Iwanenko said that he believes the impact could be far-reaching.

"This has the potential to put Erie on the map in terms of biomedical technology and translational research," he said. "We have the chance to seed a biomedical industry here in Erie with this project."

Dr. Chris Clark, president of Saint Vincent Hospital, said he's excited about the potential for cancer research taking place in Erie.

Clark also called the expanded education program an investment in the community's future.

"By training the next generation of highly skilled medical technologists, we're ensuring a robust healthcare workforce, including for underserved areas," he said.

Clark also joked about the source of the ECGRA money that's derived from Erie County's share of revenues from Presque Isle Downs and Casino.

"I have to put a plug in for my sister and my mother who spent a lot of time at the casino," he said.

Clark also took careful note of what's at stake in bringing to Erie technology that has improved outcomes by 83%.

"We are in a position to start enrolling cancer patients to qualify," he said. "We are ready to go."

Jordan Fuller, who led the Fire Accelerator that brought First Ascent to Erie, was among many who have asked the company's leaders why they chose Erie.

The answer, according to Foote, had a lot to do with the embrace of the community, starting with Erie Insurance, and the partnerships First Ascent has been able to form.

Advertisement

Foote was not shy about touting what he thinks this could mean to northwestern Pennsylvania.

"I think it will become an epicenter, a beacon of hope," he said.

Contact Jim Martin at jmartin@timesnews.com.

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New \$1.3 million Edinboro Market offers cafe, classroom, kitchen, shop

Jennie Geisler
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Edinboro Market, a space for locally produced and unique food items, just ballooned from a 900-square-foot space to a palatial 3,450 square feet, by making a short move.

"We were just retail before," said executive director Marti Martz, barely able to contain her joy. "Now we have 1,500 square feet of retail space, as well as a cafe, a classroom and a commercial kitchen, and we've hired a chef."

They also have a delivery ramp, storage space and an office and staff break area at 211 Mill St.

"We had none of this before," Martz said. "It really is awesome."

She said the \$1.3 million expansion project was paid for by federal money

from the Appalachian Regional Commission, matched by local grants from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, the Erie Community Foundation and private philanthropists. The money allows what was just a small retail outfit to act as a community center in the midst of a food desert, as defined by the USDA.

Martz said the original market opened in December of 2017. The new one, at the former location of Edinboro Outdoors, made its first sale just two weeks ago.

The market, which is a certified non-profit, is in the process of developing classes for both local food producers, as well as consumers, such as making sourdough bread, seasonal fermentation, kids in the kitchen and more.

A baker, Curtis Hals, runs the new in-house bakery, Boro Sweet Spot.

"It is our goal to use this as a shared

commercial kitchen," Martz said, adding that they would rent the space by the hour. She said the kitchen still needs a hood, a dishwasher, vacuum sealer, oven and stove.

The market carries more than 80 products produced within 150 miles of the store, Martz said, and their limit is a radius of 250 miles. By contrast, the USDA defines "locally produced" as within a 400-mile radius.

"We're trying to attract people who are connected to growing food," Martz said.

'Local community center feel'

The market is more than a store, said Livia Homerski, 26, who has worked for the organization for five years.

"I just love that local community center feel to it," she said. "You'll never find

toilet paper or bananas here. But there are always friends and family who meet here, or just run into each other and come here and see their neighbors."

Also, it keeps nearby farmers and food producers in business, Martz said, adding that the store is "walkable" for most who live in the area, and they'll be offering scholarships for classes to those who can't pay the entry fee.

Homerski said the Edinboro Market is poised to become much more than a grocery store.

"In the next few years, I'd love to see this become a central community space centered on wellness, where people feel comfortable and welcome to come get whatever they need," she said.

Contact Jennie Geisler at jgeisler@ettimesnews.com. Find her weekly newsletter at <https://profile.goerie.com/newsletters/erielicious/>.



◀ Livia Homerski, 26, has worked for the Edinboro Market since 2021. She is thrilled about the new space at 211 Mill St., Edinboro. "I just love that local community center feel to it," she said. "You'll never find toilet paper or bananas here. But there are always friends and family who meet here, or just run into each other and come here and see their neighbors." PHOTOS BY JENNIE GEISLER/ERIE TIMES-NEWS



▲ Marti Martz, executive director of Edinboro Market, shows off their new soon-to-be commercial kitchen.



► Tim Faulkner of Edinboro has been visiting the Edinboro Market for two years.



Strategic marketing and communications firm Kate & Co. founder and CEO Kate Phillips, tallest woman at left, celebrates with staff announcing the downtown expansion and renovation of the company's offices in Erie on Friday. The wrecking ball used for demolition has four coats of pink paint, a brand color for Kate & Co., according to Brian Dwyer, owner of Dwyer Plumbing & Excavating. GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

A NEW HOME

Area firm relocates to historic building

Nicholas Sorensen
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

A historic building in downtown Erie is being revitalized to house a modern marketing and communications firm.

Kate & Co., the woman-owned strategic marketing and communications firm, located at 1250 Tower Lane, is relocating to 111 W. 11th St.. The 155-year-old building once was the site of A.K.D. Printing Company but has sat vacant for years.

The building was purchased by Velocity Net Holdings, whose president, Joel Dueterman, saw more potential for his wife's company in the space. Kate Phillips, wife of Dueterman, is CEO of Kate & Co.



Phillips

are going to restore and that will be the

"Eventually it will house our marketing agency," Phillips said. "The building has a really cool printing press inside. It's an antique printing press that we

"This new space will not only serve as the heart of our operations but also strengthen our commitment to fostering creativity, collaboration, and community engagement right here in Erie."

Kate Phillips
CEO of Kate & Co marketing and communications firm

entrance when you come in."

The \$4.5 million renovation began Friday with a wrecking ball ceremony. The company anticipates being moved into the freshly renovated building by 2026. Kate & Co. partnered with Avon Design Group, LLC. and Spaulding Banks Project Management to bring the vision to fruition.

"(Friday) marks an exciting milestone and new chapter at Kate & Co.," Phillips said in a news release. "This new space will not only serve as the heart of our operations but also strengthen our commitment to fostering creativity, collaboration, and community engagement right here in Erie."

A reflection of history and modernization

Since the company began in 2016, Kate & Co. was first located in the Renaissance Center before moving to Tower Lane in 2019.

With the new space on West 11th Street, Phillips said it will reflect the company she has built with the mix of experience and modernization.

"We're leaning into the original structure as much as we can but then modernizing it in a way that I think Erie is being modernized," Phillips said.

See LOCATION, Page 6A

Location

Continued from Page 1A

It has deep roots, but with entrepreneurship and ingenuity everything's coming into this next generation. I think that this space will reflect the naissance that's taking place across Erie."

Along with the age of the building, Phillips says the building has a strong foundation which also represents her company.

"It survived the flood of 1915, which wiped out pretty much 80 percent of downtown Erie," Phillips said. "We see it as a symbol of strength and resilience which we see our company is a lot like that too. We're excited to bring it back to life."

The building, which was constructed in 1870, will have several features reserved, including the iron fire escape, vintage printing press and exposed brick interior walls, according to

A NEWS RELEASE.

Demolition ceremony to commence construction

To commence the construction of their new headquarters, Kate & Co. held a demolition ceremony Friday while a wrecking ball demolished the front of the building.

Guest speakers included Erie Mayor Joe Schember and Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority Executive Director Perry Wood.

"We're proud that one of Erie's own is taking on the transformation of this historic property," Schember said in a news release. "This project will preserve a piece of Erie's history and contribute to the revitalization of downtown Erie — projects like this require more than a capital stack, they require a love of Erie, and an eye on the future."

Perry Wood, the executive director of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, said that ECGRA was the first



Construction on the future headquarters for Kate & Co., at 111 W. 11th St., is set to be complete in 2026. PROVIDED BY SAMUEL PETERSON

client for Kate upon her return to Erie.

"I can't say enough good things about the work that goes on behind the scenes, Kate, I'm super proud of you and

congratulations," he said from the podium.

Contact Nicholas Sorensen at nsc@nsc.com.

We don't have to choose between veterans or refugees



Your Turn
Katie Kretz
Guest columnist

After years of working on behalf of refugees in Erie, I recently felt a renewed sense of energy and hope. Our collective resettlement team had just completed a comprehensive white paper highlighting the critical needs and opportunities around refugee resettlement in our region. When we presented it to the Erie Community Foundation, their response — along with the support from other community partners such as Infinite Erie, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership and more — was swift, meaningful and affirming. It reminded me of why we do this work: because it matters, and because it's building something beautiful and lasting for Erie.

But that energy was quickly tested. Following recent articles and interviews highlighting the need for expanded refugee support in Erie, I found myself reading through the public comments on social media. Many were filled with anger, misinformation and division. What hurt the most were the claims that helping refugees somehow means we are turning our backs on our veterans. That couldn't be further from the truth — and as someone who deeply loves this country and those who've served it, I want to address that head-on.

Refugees are deeply vetted

Let's begin with the facts. Refugees are not undocumented immigrants. They do not cross the border illegally. Every refugee who is resettled in the U.S. has gone through a rigorous, multi-agency vetting process that can take years to complete. Background checks, biometric screening, medical evaluations, interviews and security clearances are conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the State Department, and international partners like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Only after this extensive process are they legally admitted to the U.S. under refugee status — a lawful immigration classification recognized under federal law.

Refugees are granted full legal work authorization upon arrival and are required to apply for permanent residency (a green card) within one year. Like any other lawful residents, they work, pay taxes and contribute economically and civically to the communities they live in. Refugee resettlement is not just legal — it is structured, intentional and deeply American.

Once here, agencies like mine, Multicultural Community Resource Center



Abdul Bashir Massod, an Afghan interpreter of Pashto, Dari, Arabic and English works with attorney Michael Barron translating segments of documents on March 25, 2022, in a reception room at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Erie Field Office, formerly the International Institute of Erie. BENJAMIN CHAMBERS/ERIE TIMES-NEWS; FILE PHOTO

(MCRC), step in to support them with housing, employment assistance, language access, school enrollment for children and community orientation. We are one of three federally authorized refugee resettlement agencies in Erie, and our work is guided by strict federal and state regulations. Our respective agencies — MCRC, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Erie Field Office, and Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services — are not transporting undocumented immigrants. We are not operating independently. We are responding to a call made by our own government to assist families fleeing war, persecution and violence.

One comment I came across on social media said, "Practically no one even knows your organization exists." My response to that is simple: That's exactly why I'm here — why I'm on social media, and why I'm writing this op-ed. Because people deserve to know the truth, and because I believe we don't have to choose between who we serve. We need to serve everyone — our veterans, our refugees and our neighbors in need.

How services for refugees and veterans align

I want to take a moment to speak from personal experience. My grandfather was a U.S. Air Force pilot. My grandmother was an Army nurse. My brother-in-law is a veteran who has served this country with pride. The people I love most have worn the uniform, and I carry their service and sacrifice with me every day. I have the deepest respect for our veterans, and I believe they deserve every resource and support available to them.

Here in Erie, we are seeing meaningful work being done on that front. Local organizations have been working tirelessly to combat veteran homelessness,

expand mental health services and create more accessible pathways to housing and care. From the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center to grassroots support groups, this city is not turning its back on those who have served. We are stepping up.

And here's something else many people don't realize: Some of the refugees we resettle served alongside American troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and other war zones. They worked as interpreters, guides and logistical support — placing their lives at risk because they believed in the same mission our veterans did. In many cases, they were promised protection for their service, and now we must fulfill that promise.

Federal funding freeze hits hard

But we are doing this work in increasingly difficult conditions. While the federal refugee resettlement program has been effectively terminated, the responsibility to support those already here remains. In Erie alone, we have over 5,000 legally resettled refugees who are still eligible for services — families who were brought here by our government and those who are newly resettled still need support as they continue working toward self-sufficiency.

Unfortunately, the funding that supports these services is now in jeopardy. Programs that provide case management, job readiness, youth education and mental health support are at risk, just when they are needed most. These aren't handouts — they are tools that help people succeed, contribute and become fully integrated members of our community.

Come and see the work we do

That's why I want to personally invite the Erie community to come see the work we're doing. Spend time with our

staff. Meet the families. See the joy of children thriving in local schools. Witness the resilience of youth who are learning English, adjusting to a new culture and dreaming big for their futures. See the dignity of parents starting over — working jobs, opening businesses, buying homes. This is not a story of burden — it's a story of hope.

Refugees are not outsiders in Erie — they are part of the very fabric of this community. They shop at our grocery stores, worship in our communities, clean our streets, teach in our classrooms and serve in our hospitals. Their children sit beside ours in classrooms. They celebrate holidays with us. They grieve losses and celebrate milestones. They are not guests — they are our neighbors.

A nation of immigrants

And while we're on the topic of community and identity, I want to remind us of something we too often forget: We are a nation of immigrants. Look back three or four generations in your own family — where did they come from? My husband's family migrated from Poland. Mine came from Germany. What about yours? The very foundation of this country was built by people seeking safety, opportunity and a better life. That same dream lives on in the refugees we welcome today.

This is not about politics. It's not about choosing one group over another. This is about humanity — and honoring the commitments we've made as a nation.

Supporting refugees doesn't dishonor our veterans. It reflects the values they fought to protect.

So let me be clear: This is not about division. This is about community. We don't have to choose between veterans and refugees. We don't have to decide who is more deserving of safety, support or opportunity.

We can care for both. We must care for both.

As a community, we should consider approaching this moment with grace and humility — recognizing that none of us arrived here without help, and that everyone deserves a chance to find safety, purpose and belonging.

Erie is strongest when we come together — not when we let fear or misinformation pull us apart. We can support our veterans, welcome refugees, and build a thriving community where everyone has a place and a purpose.

That's the Erie I believe in. This is the America I believe in. And that's the work I'll keep showing up to do.

Katie Kretz is the executive director of the Multicultural Community Resource Center in Erie. The Erie Community Foundation's newly established Rapid Response Fund will initially accept contributions to help nonprofits address urgent challenges for Erie's refugee community: <https://bit.ly/ecrfapid>.

The Erie County Executive Brenton Davis campaign has taken its first major swipe against Democratic challenger Perry Wood.

In a news release Monday, the Davis campaign called for Wood to resign as executive director of the county's Gaming Revenue Authority after discovering that a nonprofit funded by ECGRA called on its clients to participate in a photo shoot with Wood.

The [Innovation Entente Lab](#), housed at Mercyhurst University, sent a group email on March 20 to organizations served by the lab, asking them to join the photo shoot to "show your support for the continued success of the Beehive Network."

The email doesn't encourage clients to support Wood's campaign. However, the email, which was sent via a Mercyhurst email server, directs recipients to the Wood campaign website for more information.

The lab is part of the [Northwest Pennsylvania Innovation Beehive Network](#), which was founded in 2014 to enhance business expansion and development in the Erie area. ECGRA has been one of its funders.

Davis campaign manager Melanie Brewer said the photo shoot email represents a "clear example of using taxpayer-funded programs to build a partisan political base," according to the news release.

Wood rejects accusation, calls it a distraction by Davis

Wood has dismissed the accusation, insisting "there was no conflict of interest."

"This is clearly an attempt by Davis to prevent me from using my record to run for office, while distracting from his own record of chaos and abuse of power," Wood told the Erie Times-News. "I want to be crystal clear – I am running on my record and how it's benefitted Erie County."

Wood said his campaign had reached out to people who work at Mercyhurst, not the university itself, about organizing a photo shoot to showcase the success of the Beehive Network, which he referred to as "one of the most important economic development initiatives that ECGRA helped pioneer from Day One."

He said his campaign was unaware that an email would be sent out.

Mercyhurst University has referred to the email from the Innovation Entente Lab as an "error."

"Mercyhurst University is committed to non-partisanship. The announcement in question was an error. It did not have administrative review," read a statement provided to the Erie Times-News from Mercyhurst spokesperson Debbie Morton.

Davis has been attacking ECGRA — and Wood — for a while

Wood, who [announced his candidacy](#) for county executive Jan. 28, has been a frequent target for Davis.

In early 2024, Davis criticized [ECGRA](#) for its operating costs and Wood's salary; rebuked it in the [news media](#) as a "slush fund of walking-around money;" and floated the idea of dissolving the board altogether, placing all gaming revenue funding decisions squarely in the hands of county government.

Wood, along with members of the ECGRA board, pushed back against Davis, insisting the county executive was seeking to impugn the credibility and frustrate the business of an independent authority with baseless accusations.

ECGRA Solicitor Tim Wachter has said ECGRA's funding approvals have "met both the spirit and letter" of state gaming laws. Moreover, during ECGRA's latest board meeting in March, Wachter indicated that a state audit of ECGRA has not yet found any signs of financial malpractice. The audit is expected to wrap up in the May-June timeframe, according to Wood. ▶

"Brenton Davis hasn't done his job serving this county, so he is picking a fight with me," Wood said. "I got in this race to bring my decades of experience creating jobs and improving outcomes for Erie County residents to a broken county government. I will continue to connect with voters about my record and why I will be a better county executive. This scares him since he has done nothing but create chaos."

Wood is competing with [Democrat Christina Vogel](#) for the Democratic Party nomination for county executive.

A.J. Rao can be reached at arao@gannett.com. Follow him on X [@ETNRao](#).

Donors Making a Difference



Donor Recognition

As we reflect on an amazing 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the support that allows us to make a difference in our community. We had the joy of delivering appreciation gifts to some of our amazing business advocates

and want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our marvelous business champions who continue to support us year after year allowing us to bring creativity, joy, and opportunities to youth in our community, thank you! Your generosity makes our mission possible. We couldn't do it without you.



We **heART** you for all you do!

*Special thanks to Ben Davis for creating these fantastic metal pieces and Gene Davis Sales & Services for donating our custom project.

2024 Grants Received

2024 Catholic Social Ministry Grant
Benedictine Ministry Fund
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
Charles I Blake Family Foundation
Find Your Light Foundation
Gannon University Schuster Arts Re-Grant Initiative
Huplits Grant (Sierra Club)
John Nesbit Rees & Sarah Henne Rees Charitable Foundation
RBC-USA Regional Grant
The Erie Community Foundation-William & Ethel Hovis Fund



EITC Thank You

Dahlkemper Landscape Architects & Contractors
Erie Insurance Group
Knox Law
MacDonald Illig Attorneys
Marquette Savings Bank
MaxPro Technologies, Inc.
Plastikos, Inc
PNC Bank, N.A.
Scott's Splash Lagoon, Inc.
UPMC Health Plan



We need people like you.



February 17, 2025

YOU can empower a safe, fun, and welcoming downtown for all.

Perry Wood
5340 Fryling Road
#201
Erie, PA 16510

Dear Perry,

The best part of downtown Erie is the people—like YOU!

Your support matters now more than ever as community development organizations like ours **continue to build the downtown community, with the community we serve.** People are at the heart of everything we do because when the heart of our culture and commerce thrives, our entire region prospers.

For those who have never given to the Erie Downtown Partnership, we're making it easy to start: just **\$25 in 2025** can help fuel transformative projects, beloved events like the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Downtown d'Lights, and essential services like clearing snow and removing litter from sidewalks.

Every contribution, no matter the size, plays a vital role in shaping a vibrant, welcoming downtown. Join us in making 2025 a year of momentum and progress—**your \$25 gift is the first step toward something extraordinary.**

Make 2025 the year to support downtown's quality of life and economic vibrancy!
Give today at eriedowntown.com or mail your check to:

Erie Downtown Partnership
140 East 5th Street
Erie, PA 16507

Thank you for considering a gift and for being part of our mission!

Warm regards,


Emily Fetcko, CEO

*We value what ECGKA does for us—
and the wider community!*



From the office of.

The Most Reverend Dwane Brock, Archbishop

1129 Pennsylvania Avenue • Erie, Pennsylvania, 16503 • (814) 874-3091 • (814) 874-3063 fax

February 28, 2025

Please, let me take this time to thank you for your presence, support, prayers, good wishes, and kind words at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new ERIEBANK branch on 10th and Parade streets. It means a lot to me and the entire team.

We cherish your partnership and look forward to building the ideals of what we call "community".

Sincerely & Respectfully,

P.S. If you haven't already, please consider opening an account at the new branch to satisfy any and all of your individual and/or business needs.

"Ad maiorem Dei gloriam inque hominum salutem"

RESOLUTION NUMBER 11, 2025

Resolution to adopt the Funding for the Erie County Earn & Learn Program, formerly called Summer Jobs & More Program

Whereas, ECGRA's mission of economic and community development recognizes the importance of local government, businesses, and citizen groups working together in a public-private partnership to address the needs of youth development;

Whereas, the Economic Development Financing Law recognizes that economic insecurity due to unemployment is at any time a serious menace to the people of the Commonwealth in areas of urban and rural blight;

Whereas, the Economic Development Financing Law states expressly that entities like ECGRA may have as one of its purposes the alleviation or elimination of unemployment;

Whereas, ECGRA's Strategic Plan recognizes that regional asset funding is to provide basic services that address the needs of our most vulnerable, including youth that are challenged by circumstances of economic disadvantage;

Whereas, programs that develop the next generation through employment opportunities and career pathways are necessary components of a healthy community;

Whereas, Erie County Council and multiple private and nonprofit funders have approved matching funds for the Erie County Earn & Learn Program (the "Program") to the extent outlined in attached Exhibit "A" meeting ECGRA's minimum 1-1 match (the "Match Funding")

Whereas, the funders have requested \$200,000 from ECGRA ("ECGRA Funding");

Whereas, the Match Funding and ECGRA Funding represent the total funding for the Program (the "Program Funding");

Whereas, additional funding has been applied for through the organization acting on behalf of the Workforce Investment Board and other financial partners that could possibly enhance or replace Program Funding this fiscal year ("Supplemental Funding");

Whereas, ECGRA believes, as a good steward of the Gaming Funds, that, in the event that Supplemental Funding is received this fiscal year, the amount of the ECGRA Funding shall be proportionately reduced by a fraction representing the ECGRA Funding divided by the total Program Funding;

Whereas, ECGRA declares the milestones are to be measured throughout the summer of 2023 and analyzed in accordance with the Program contract;

Whereas, ECGRA believes the stipulations resulting from the careful deliberation of Erie County Council on reporting and the use of Erie County funding creates a wise and appropriate framework to be applied to ECGRA funding as well;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, pursuant to the Economic Development Financing Law and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority Bylaws, resolves to adopt the summer jobs pilot project to the extent outlined in this Resolution and attachments.

On the motion of _____, seconded by _____.

This resolution was passed on the 17th day of April 2025 by a vote of _____ - _____.

ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

Chairman, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
April 17, 2025

ATTEST:

Secretary, ECGRA



COUNTY OF ERIE

ERIE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Erie County & ECGRA Partnership Funding

Earn and Learn—Jobs for Students and Adults

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and Erie County Government have worked as partners in the community effort to create employment opportunities for young adults--- ages 16 to 21 since 2014. Entering its eleventh year Erie County is seeking a higher level of outcomes, more sustained employment for young people and filling the needs of manufacturing and industry through the region. The community has invested approximately \$2.5 million into this initiative so far, assisting over 1,200 youth throughout Erie County.

Erie County and GECAC seek the partnership of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority to continue to build upon the **Erie County EARN & LEARN**. This proposal carries a solid record of success that has proved its value to its employers.

Earn & Learn will have two tiers, one for entry-level student workers and the other for creating career pathways for long-term employment. Again, this year, we are asking businesses to commit a portion of the wages once the worker accrues 90 hours on the job. Employer commitment through wages will increase the likelihood of training and retention. Between June 10, 2024 and August 31, 2024 ECGRA Funding helped local young adults work 19,071 hours across Erie County. This year EARN+LEARN could potentially deliver \$270,000 in wages to 150 young adults along with experiences they will carry for a lifetime.

In 2025, GECAC is joining with Gannon University and Erie Insurance, as employers and as in person trainers for orientation. Participants are then be exposed to a greater variety of industries and operations. It is these on-the-job experiences, which can lead young people to pursue paths to education or pique their interest in future careers – scenarios that reflect not just the goal of **EARN & LEARN** but an essential outcome for our community overall.

The participants must attend training, and prove to employers that they are positive and dedicated working members of the local workforce. Community partnerships with Erie Together, the Corry Community Center, the Erie Downtown Partnership and Widget Financial Credit Union allow **EARN +LEARN** to deliver on its promises to participants, the community and potential funders like ECGRA.

Erie County and other leaders are committed to securing this future with continued funding that provides for the training and employment of **Erie County EARN & LEARN** participants during summer months and beyond. We ask the Erie County gaming revenue Authority to continue its devotion to this winning formula for our community's future.

According to the Bid submitted by GECAC to the County of Erie, the Projected 2025 Cost of **EARN + LEARN** for 100 Tier 1 kids and 50 Tier 2 kids to go through the program is \$458,403.

Erie County has budgeted \$263,000 in 2025; we are respectfully requesting \$200,000 for this vital program.