



**ERIE TOGETHER** is a movement of scores of local individuals and organizations working together in very strategic ways to elevate prosperity and make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive.

The initiative was launched in 2009 through a partnership of the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), Mercyhurst University, and United Way of Erie County. These three organizations came together in response to in-depth local research regarding the prevalence and impact of poverty in our community. Erie Together's role is to help better align local resources to prevent and reduce poverty, which will ultimately help strengthen our local economy.

Erie Together is not a social service agency or program, but rather a mechanism that convenes organizations and individuals from many different personal and professional backgrounds to work together differently than ever before on these significant, complex issues.

Erie Together's efforts address three different vantage points, by (1) working directly with families; (2) working within specific neighborhoods; and (3) working through four county-wide action teams. The four action teams are developing and implementing strategies related to: (a) early childhood readiness and success; (b) preparing students for life after high school whether that means a job, or successful completion of post-secondary education or training; (c) bolstering individual and family stability to reduce dependence on outside assistance to meet their needs; and (d) aligning workforce and economic development so job seekers have the skills they need to secure and retain family-sustaining employment.

Regarding the "learn" portion of the community aspiration, Erie Together's efforts are focused on helping children be prepared as they enter Kindergarten so they can stay on target through their elementary years. Regarding older students, Erie Together's focus has been ensuring they have age appropriate career exploration opportunities so they understand their options for life after high school and can make informed class choices, stay focused on their studies, and have hope for their future.

Erie Together's "work" efforts have centered on helping job seekers understand the soft skills that employers expect from employees, and ways they can overcome certain barriers to employment, so they may obtain and retain family sustaining jobs.

Finally, in the "thrive" category, Erie Together is helping families understand what it means to be self-sufficient, and how to set and achieve goals to get there. Additionally, the movement is working within local neighborhoods to help residents, businesses and organizations identify location-specific challenges and find new ways to work together to address them.

For more information regarding Erie Together, the community vision or desired outcomes, please visit [www.erietogether.org](http://www.erietogether.org). To discuss ways you can join the county-wide movement or align your efforts toward the desired outcomes, please contact Mary Bula at [mary@erietogether.org](mailto:mary@erietogether.org) or 814-456-2937 ext. 231. To learn about Erie Together's family self-sufficiency efforts, please contact Kathy Stearns at [kstearns@gecac.org](mailto:kstearns@gecac.org) or 459-4581 ext. 652.

*"Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity  
where everyone can learn, work and thrive."*

**[www.ErieTogether.org](http://www.ErieTogether.org)**