



***“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”***  
– Helen Keller

Erie Together’s countywide teams continue to advance the poverty prevention and reduction priorities that our community has identified as most important. Through cross-sector collaboration and with the input and involvement of hundreds of individuals, organizations, schools and businesses, Erie Together is taking the steps needed to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive. Below are select highlights from Erie Together’s comprehensive body of work.

## **Learn Highlights**

- Erie Together’s “Block by Block Campaign” is in full swing. This campaign is designed to increase awareness of the importance of early learning and early literacy, and connect families with local resources. Two events have taken place this summer, with two more to go. So far, 120 parents have registered their participation, with a reported 219 children under age five in the home. The events have garnered 22 Imagination Library signups. Please visit [erietogether.org/early-learning](http://erietogether.org/early-learning) for more detail. On a related note, Erie Together’s work to develop a community-wide *technology-based* campaign to reach even more families with early education- and early literacy-related information continues.
- Erie Together participants continue to provide expertise in support of the local push led by United Way to have Erie County become a “Campaign for Grade Level Reading” community.
- Erie Together facilitates the work of the “Erie County Career Pathways Alliance,” a group of business and education stakeholders partnering to create a countywide career pathways system to better prepare students for their future careers. This group is making great progress, informing course offerings and co-curricular activities within local school districts, creating “industry advisory groups” to advise the collective school districts, and strengthening connections with post-secondary education and training providers to continue students’ positive trajectory beyond high school.
- At the request of Emerge 2040, Erie Together is facilitating the “Erie County Education and Training Consortium.” This is a group of high ranking officials from pre-K through post-secondary education and training entities and other community leaders who are working together to identify our region’s top education and training-related priorities and rally efforts and resources to address them. The group has narrowed its priority list to four, and following its remaining due diligence, will soon choose its top priority. Please click here for more information: [erietogether.org/ETC](http://erietogether.org/ETC).

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

- Erie Together, in partnership with Gannon University and US Senator Pat Toomey's office, will host the second annual "Youth Civic Engagement Symposium" on Friday, September 15 in conjunction with "Constitution Day." Officials representing the executive, legislative and judicial branches of federal, state and local government will speak to an expected 165 students, more than tripling last year's number of student participants. New this year will be presentations by both City of Erie mayoral candidates, along with student exposure to voting booths. Volunteers are needed to ensure a successful event. Please contact [mary@erietogether.org](mailto:mary@erietogether.org) with interest.

## Work Highlights

Erie Together is exploring new ways to help individuals understand required job skills and connect them with training so they may find and maintain family-sustaining employment. The current focus is on expanding the Commonwealth of PA's "Job Gateway" database to serve as a one-stop-shop for individuals looking for a wide variety of training providers. This work is in the early stages, but shows good promise.

## Thrive Highlights

Erie Together's efforts in this regard are focused on (1) deploying additional "Getting Ahead" programs across Erie County; (2) connecting Getting Ahead graduates with employers to help fill local positions; and (3) researching successful "peer mentoring" programs locally and across the US to identify best practices for potential use in Erie County.

## What Others Are Saying

Erie Together held its annual "Cross Team Meeting" on June 27. Following the program, we asked attendees to comment on Erie Together's value. Here's what a few people had to say:

- *As a lifelong Erieite, being involved in Erie Together is providing me with the opportunities to see true collaboration – it gives me a sense of hope that Erie can be a great community for all!*
- *Oftentimes isolated to those in economic development circles, or those in the business community, Erie Together has broadened my professional and social circles to include those in the civic, political, philanthropic, education and faith-based networks.*
- *Erie Together is a convening force in Erie County, and with "silos" and multiple plans in place from businesses and organizations, Erie Together has kept the focus on collective impact and alignment.*
- *The community is certainly benefitting from the work of Erie Together in multiple ways. The initiative provides an open and effective means to make an impact. All perspectives are welcome and the teams get things done.*

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