

EMPOWER ERIE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE NOW!

Q: What is Empower Erie and why do they care about a community college?

A: There have been several attempts in the past to establish a community college that fell short for one reason or another. Many residents in our community who understand the importance of a community college to potential students and the local economy refused to give up hope.

Empower Erie is a nonprofit organization with the sole mission of getting Erie County the community college it deserves. In late 2016, Ron DiNicola and Erie County Councilman Andre Horton launched the nonprofit to develop the complex and detailed application necessary for state approval, and to raise awareness about the need for a community college in Erie County.

Empower Erie is an all-volunteer organization with a board of directors that has donated thousands of hours to the effort. Empower Erie works with local and regional professionals to tap their expertise to help propel the mission forward and compensates those professionals through funding provided by a grant secured through The Erie Community Foundation, details below. A list of board members is available at www.EmpowerErie.org.

Q: I heard we are already paying for the other community colleges in the state. Is that true?

A: Yes. If you pay state taxes, then you are among the Erie County residents who have been helping to fund the 14 public community colleges that share an estimated \$292 million in state funding annually. **We've been paying the bill to the tune of tens of millions of dollars for decades, while not reaping any of the benefits.** That's not fair, and we intend to change it so Erie County residents have access to the many advantages of a community college right here at home.

Q: How much have Erie County taxpayers paid for the community college so far

A: Erie County Council committed \$60,000 to study the feasibility of the community college, and later approved an additional \$15,000 to communicate the findings of this study to the public and others. **This total of \$75,000 amounts to 27 cents per resident in Erie County since 2016.**

In 2017, **Empower Erie received a \$3.7 million grant commitment for the college from The Erie Community Foundation**, which oversees charitable funds of local philanthropists committed to improving Erie County. The bulk of monies for the grant originated from the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy and a portion came from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. Empower Erie has used that money

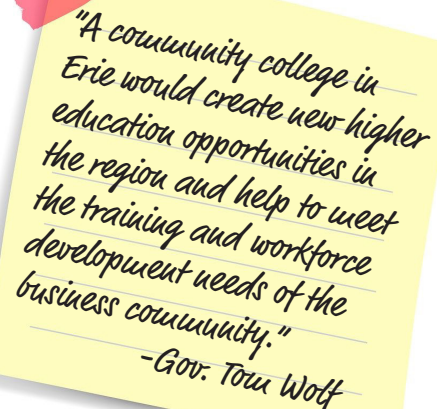
FAQS: ECC BY THE NUMBERS

to prepare the application, respond to state requests, and educate the public, and will also use it to pay for start-up costs for the college.

Q: Will the ECC raise my taxes in Erie County?

A: No real estate tax increases will be necessary to fund the community college.

The community college will be funded by Erie County receiving a share of an estimated \$292 million in state funding that is now distributed among 14 existing community colleges. In an October 2019 letter, Governor Tom Wolf proclaimed that the state can support a 15th community college in Erie without impacting the funding of the existing 14 community colleges.



*"A community college in Erie would create new higher education opportunities in the region and help to meet the training and workforce development needs of the business community."
-Gov. Tom Wolf*

Additionally, funding will be provided through a portion of the \$5.5 million in gaming funds that Erie County receives annually from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

THE TIME IS NOW!

JOIN THE FIGHT.
SIGN THE PETITION.
EMAIL OR CALL
YOUR LAWMAKERS.

EMPOWER ERIE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE NOW!

CONTACT
EmpowerErie

WEB: EmpowerErie.org
EMAIL: EmpowerErie1001@gmail.com
PHONE: 814-480-5717