




DIVERSE.
erie
DIVERSITY · EQUITY · INCLUSION

2022 Annual Report



STARTING A NECESSARY CONVERSATION



By investing in initiatives and ideas that advance equity in Erie County, Diverse Erie works to create an environment where all people of color are welcome and included. Join the #DiverseErie conversation!

Commissioners

Chair Tiffany L. LaVette
Treasurer Sarah Carter, MD
Gwendolyn White
Brandy Cortes
Jonathan Atkinson

Dr. Ricardo Escajadillo
Saeedullah Taraky
Marie A. Wells
Paul Kokhanevich

Diverse Erie Team

Gary N. Lee | Chief Administrative Officer
Devan Mitchell | Administrative Assistant

2022 Annual Report

TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,774,915
GRANT INCOME	\$3,500,000
ERIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT	\$125,000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,625,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$850,954
OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	\$2,774,046
NET POSITION (as of Dec. 31, 2022)	\$2,774,046



MEETING THE MOMENT

In September 2021, Erie County took the bold step toward ending the public health crisis that exists among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) when it unanimously created the Erie County Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission, now known as Diverse Erie.

The pandemic laid bare the impact persistent racism has on public health at all levels for BIPOC. In Erie County, food insecurity is 13% higher for Black families compared to white families. The infant mortality rate for Black mothers is 23 for every 1,000 births, compared to 4.9% for white mothers. Diabetes kills Black residents three times as often as white residents. Sharp disparity in job opportunities, business development, home ownership, and educational opportunities all compound the public health crisis caused by racism.

In just over a year since Diverse Erie's creation, the Commissioners have hired a Chief Administrative Officer and team, established and built a start-up organization, developed a unique brand that reflects the mission of Diverse Erie, adopted bylaws, created impactful grant program guidelines, and have begun investing in the BIPOC community.





CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

1.8%
BLACK

0.2%
AMERICAN INDIAN
& ALSCAN NATIVE

0.7%
ASIAN

1.9%
SELF-IDENTIFY AS TWO
OR MORE RACES

Diverse Erie leverages public resources to attract private resources to be invested toward generational impact, focusing on three strategic areas:

TRAINING & EDUCATION

HOMEOWNERSHIP

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Diverse Erie is committed to a positive conversation that helps each of us understand the real challenges BIPOC face and what diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) mean when we consider them as tangible goals as opposed to theoretical concepts. It's time to start a constructive conversation about the harm caused by racism. Diverse Erie is a vehicle to help bring our community along — embrace a philosophy that people of color can be their authentic selves — and still be included.



CREATING GENERATIONAL IMPACT

Diverse Erie announced the launch of the organization's first grant program — the Generational Impact Grant in July 2022. By investing in initiatives and projects that serve as a catalyst for generational change for BIPOC living in Erie County, Diverse Erie invests in the community, advances equity, and provides more opportunities for those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Funded with American Rescue Plan dollars, the Generational Impact Grant addresses the growing, exacerbated inequities BIPOC face as a result of the pandemic, and supports capital projects that will leave generational impact.

Through this funding initiative, the Generational Impact Grant works to support and advance these ideas and initiatives for generations to come.

Erie County Homeowners

95.3%
WHITE

2.8%
BLACK

1.9%
OTHER

SOURCE: EMSI

GENERATIONAL IMPACT GRANT INVESTMENTS

Eastside Renaissance, Inc.	\$250,000
GMA Development Group, LLC	\$250,000
Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation (GEEDC)	\$250,000
Mercy Center for Women	\$100,000
Minority Community Investment Coalition (MCIC)	\$250,000
Total	\$1,100,000



INVESTING IN BIPOC-OWNED BUSINESSES

Diverse Erie, in collaboration with key public and private partners, leveraged its resources to create a meaningful and sustainable fund — The Small Business Fund. By investing in local BIPOC businesses, this fund promotes business growth and advances equity among BIPOC-owned businesses in Erie County. It also works to attract new businesses to the region and advances economic development goals to support future generations.



The commission earmarked \$500,000 and leveraged those funds by bringing together key Erie County stakeholders to create the \$1.8 million fund. Fund contributors include:

- Erie County Redevelopment Authority (ECRDA): \$250,000
- Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA): \$250,000
- Erie Community Foundation (ECF): \$125,000
- Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation (GEEDC): \$250,000
- Enterprise Development Fund (EDF): \$500,000

This fund represents the power of leveraging to advance economic development goals to support future generations.



Developing and improving the financial infrastructure will be the catalyst for business growth and retention of BIPOC businesses in Erie County.



Lake Erie Woodworks

Loan Amount – 5 years at 2.75%	\$25,000.00
Interest Collected 1.375% Retained by FUND	\$46.79
Interest Collected 1.375% Payable to DEI	\$46.79
Principal Collected	\$389.15
Total Collected	\$482.73
Principal Balance	\$24,610.85

Pineapple Real Estate

Loan Amount – 5 years at 2.75%	\$177,750.00
Interest Collected 1.375% Retained by FUND	\$285.15
Interest Collected 1.375% Payable to DEI	\$285.15
Principal Collected	\$796.66
Total Collected	\$1,366.96
Principal Balance	\$176,953.34

TOTAL PRINCIPAL BALANCE

\$201,564.19

DIVERSE ERIE IS ADVANCING THE CONVERSATION

On June 21, 2022, Gary Lee, Diverse Erie's Chief Administrative Officer, attended a Juneteenth Luncheon at the Governor's Residence hosted by Gov. Wolf. This was a great opportunity to share with the Governor and other state leaders what Erie is doing in the space of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.



Chief Administrative Officer, Gary Lee, served as one of the featured speakers at the July 8, 2022 Investment Playbook roll-out hosted by Infinite Erie for community leaders and public at the Jefferson Educational Society. Infinite Erie is designed to ensure ongoing collaboration between the public, private, and civic leaders. This effort is driven and overseen by the Erie Action Team that includes the seven leading government and civic organizations driving Erie's economic development efforts.



On July 14, 2022, Gary Lee, Diverse Erie's Chief Administrative Officer, was a guest speaker on the panel "Diversity in Pennsylvania" summit hosted by City & State Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. The summit offered industry executives, public sector leaders and academics a full-day in-person conference dedicated to fostering business partnerships between the state and local government, prime contractors and minority and women owned businesses.



On August 23, 2022, Gary Lee spoke with members of the PA Legislative Black Caucus at a breakfast meeting hosted by the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership. The meeting was an outstanding opportunity to promote the great work being done by the commission.





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DiverseErie.org



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