



# COUNTY OF ERIE

## OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

---

**Kathy Dahlkemper**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

June 30, 2017

Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director  
State Board of Education  
333 Market Street, 1st Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Ms. Molchanow,

The County of Erie is proud to submit a proposal to the Pennsylvania Board of Education for the establishment of a public community college in Erie County.

For decades, Erie County has faced significant economic challenges. The transition from a largely manufacturing community to a diverse, service-based economy has not yet been fully realized. Socio-economic and educational data reveal that Erie County residents are lagging both the Commonwealth and the nation's citizens with respect to educational attainment and wealth creation.

The existing post-secondary and higher education offerings in Erie County, while a critical part of the region's educational framework and economy, have been unable to fill the persistent gap of providing affordable, accessible curriculum offerings that would meet the economic and educational/training needs required for the jobs and careers of today and those projected for the future.

A community college in Erie County will be uniquely positioned to fill that gap, offering the right balance of affordability and accessibility with curriculum offerings designed to have a direct positive impact on the local economy and its associated challenges and opportunities.

This plan is the culmination of an extensive grassroots, volunteer-led effort by a cross-section of the Erie County community, including elected officials, nonprofit leaders, business owners and engaged citizens. The team identified that a community college is a necessary catalyst for

reinvigorating our local economy by erasing a widening workforce training gap, as well as by creating accessible pathways to education for all of our residents.

Enclosed with this submission are the following items:

- 1) One binder containing a printed copy of the Application, the Feasibility Study and the Feasibility Study Appendix;
- 2) One flash drive containing the Application, the Feasibility Study and the Feasibility Study Appendix;
- 3) 35 copies of the printed Executive Summary; and
- 4) Certified copy of the Resolution to Sponsor the Community College of Erie County and to Submit the Community College of Erie County Plan to the State Board of Education for Approval, as passed by Erie County Council on June 27, 2017 and signed by me on June 29, 2017.

I am proud to submit this plan for your consideration and I look forward to working with the Pennsylvania Board of Education and the Commonwealth in moving this plan forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Dahlkemper". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kathy Dahlkemper

KAD/ar