

MEDIA RELEASE



COUNTY OF ERIE
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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Erie County government becomes a Blue Zones Project Approved worksite

ERIE, Pa. – Blue Zones Project® Corry announced today Erie County government achieved designation as a Blue Zones Project Approved™ worksite. With approximately 1,200 employees serving more than 269,728 residents throughout the cities of Erie and Corry, the townships of Millcreek, Harborcreek and Fairview, and the boroughs of Edinboro, North East, Girard, Waterford and Union City, Erie County government is the largest employer in Pennsylvania to become Blue Zones Project Approved™, demonstrating how employers can play a significant role in promoting longer, better lives.

“This designation is a massive contribution to the vitality of Erie County because the healthy changes made by employees in county government will ultimately affect the community’s well-being,” said County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. “I have witnessed and supported Blue Zones Project as it transformed the Corry community, and am thrilled with the progress made to expand these efforts into Erie County government.”

While the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, and communities cannot stop public health threats, they can instill the community habits that will shield residents from the next crisis. Blue Zones Project promotes community resilience by nurturing a culture of well-being that prioritizes not just physical health outcomes, but also individuals’ purpose, sense of belonging, and access to community resources that propel their healthcare journey.

The Blue Zones Project worksite pledge promotes evidence-based actions and lifestyle principles that help make the healthy choice the easiest choice for employees. This translates into increased productivity and a potential healthcare cost savings for employers. Across the country, more than 500 employers have taken the Blue Zones Project worksite pledge.

Erie County government became Blue Zones Project Approved™ on Feb. 5, 2021, by implementing a number of best practices to improve and support employee well-being.

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- Standing desks are provided to employees who request them
- Under-desk elliptical machines provided to departments
- Microbreaks/meditations promoted to employees
- Blue Zones-inspired food items at restaurants within the County system
- Tobacco cessation support offered onsite
- Weight loss classes offered onsite
- Walking route booklet created for each main building
- Check. Change. Control. A blood pressure self-monitoring program was implemented
- Wellness Fair/Blue Zones Project kick-off

Funding for these initiatives was provided through a grant that was submitted and approved in 2020.

“It has been proven that when we feel well we perform well,” said Melissa Lyon, director of the Erie County Department of Health. “Workplace wellness is necessary to enable employees to reach their greatest success each day. Blue Zones Project has helped Erie County government accomplish this by establishing the best workplace practices. This accomplishment demonstrates that Erie County is committed to establishing a wellness culture in the workplace.”

Erie County government, with its visionary leadership, stands as a model for employers across Pennsylvania.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, a recognition ceremony and ribbon-cutting event will be scheduled in the near future.

Brought to Corry, Pa., by Highmark/AHN Saint Vincent, Corry Memorial Hospital an affiliate of LECOM Health and UPMC, Blue Zones Project by Sharecare is a well-being improvement initiative designed to enable community members to live longer, healthier lives with lower rates of chronic diseases and a higher quality of life.

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About Blue Zones Project

Blue Zones Project® by Sharecare is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a city's environment, policy, and social networks. Established in 2010, Blue Zones Project is based on research by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five cultures of the world—or blue zones—with the highest concentration of people living to 100 years or older. Blue Zones Project incorporates Buettner's findings and works with cities to implement policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Currently, 56 communities across North America have joined Blue Zones Project, impacting more than 3.8 million citizens. The population health solution includes two Health Districts in California; 15 cities in Iowa; Albert Lea, Minnesota; the city of Fort Worth, Texas; Corry, Pennsylvania; Brevard, North Carolina; the Walla Walla Valley in Washington; and communities in Southwest Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wisconsin. Blue Zones Project is a partnership between Blue Zones, LLC, and Sharecare, Inc. For more information, visit bluezonesproject.com.

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