



The Erie
Community
Foundation

Position Guide

President

<https://www.eriecommunityfoundation.org/>





POSITION: President

REPORTS TO: Board of Directors

LOCATION: Erie, PA

MISSION

The mission of The Erie Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life for all in our region by evaluating and addressing community issues, by building permanent charitable endowments and by promoting philanthropic and community leadership.

ABOUT THE ERIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The next leader of The Erie Community Foundation will join a rapidly growing, and widely respected, institution recognized as a key community leadership organization working collaboratively with others to transform our region.

In the past five years, the Foundation has averaged \$21.3 million annually in new gifts and \$19.9 million in annual grantmaking. Recently, it worked closely with corporate and civic leadership to raise \$27 million in start-up funding to transform our downtown, while also strengthening adjacent neighborhoods. It has led the effort to establish a community college, a center city Innovation District and the Magee-Women’s Research Institute in Erie, a \$26 million medical research facility that represents a unique partnership of UPMC Hamot, a 423-bed hospital, and Penn State University, the Behrend Campus.

These, and other grantmaking and community leadership initiatives, place the Foundation at the center of solving critical poverty, neighborhood stabilization and access to education challenges. The Foundation is committed to increasing access to economic opportunity for all in the region and is helping to lead efforts to transform the region so all can grow, evolve and thrive.

The City of Erie has been widely recognized by Forbes, the Brookings Institution, American Writer and Journalist James Fallows, and others, as a community on the rise. Grantmaking and community leadership efforts of The Erie Community Foundation are keys to this recent recognition.

The Foundation traces its history back to 1935 when Elisha H. Mack, co-founder of the Boston Store, created a charitable endowment fund. Mr. Mack's fund was transformed into a public charity, The Erie Community Foundation, in 1971. In a town of 100,000, and a County of 280,000, the Foundation is now a growing collection of over 900 endowments and named funds with a collective market value of \$312 million. Foundation assets have doubled since 2006 and tripled since 2002, making The Erie Community Foundation one of the largest community foundations in the country for a community of its size.

Key Erie Community Foundation programs include:

- The [Erie Women's Fund](#) educates and inspires members to positively impact the lives of Erie County women through philanthropy and community engagement. In 2007, twelve altruistic women sought to combine their philanthropic efforts to make a difference in our community. Today, EWF has nearly 200 like-minded members who have given over \$700,000 to local nonprofits that Empower Women and Families.
- [LGBT Fund](#) – As one demonstration of the Foundation's commitment to diversity and inclusion, this growing endowment was established to address the unique challenges of this community while creating a positive and thriving environment for all.



- [Erie Vital Signs](#) – A community indicator project for regional action that encourages our community to create a shared vision for the future by tracking indicators that measure our county's well-being. The data and analysis serves as a common source of information on critical topics that affect the health and progress of Erie County. Erie Vital Signs informs community stakeholders while spurring discussion and collaboration. Erie Vital Signs also informs community foundation grantmaking.
- [Erie Gives](#), a wildly successful giving day, has been replicated by many other community foundations. In 2020, 11,482 donors from 50 states and several countries gave \$6.3 million to support 422 different nonprofit organizations in 12 hours. During a pandemic and economic downturn, this was a 13% increase in dollars and a 27% increase in donors.

- [The Nonprofit Partnership](#), a supporting organization of the Foundation, provides a wide array of quality capacity building services for over 400 nonprofit member organizations. In addition to webinars, workshops and training programs, the Partnership also hosts an annual conference that attracts attendees from throughout the state and region. The Partnership is physically located next to The Erie Community Foundation and is connected via a sky bridge. There is frequent interaction between Foundation and Nonprofit Partnership staff members.



- Regional Affiliates – To serve the entire County, The Erie Community Foundation established and operates regional affiliate community foundations serving the communities of Corry, Union City, North East and Findley Lake, NY.
- Youth and Young Professional Philanthropy – The Foundation has growing programs to service these important constituencies.
- The [Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy](#) was announced in December 2015 as a new grantmaking program targeting large, systemic problems in the Erie community. A donor advised fund, it was established with a \$10 million gift from Thomas B. Hagen, on behalf of the Hagen Family in memory of his deceased wife, Susan Hirt Hagen. The fund, and other community foundation resources, works with strong nonprofit partners, civic, government and business leaders to identify a few multi-million-dollar ideas that can address issues such as persistent poverty, low educational attainment and workforce readiness at scale.

The Foundation has a 13-member Board of Trustees, a staff of 15, and an annual budget of \$2.4 million. The Foundation president serves as an ex-officio trustee, with vote.

THE OPPORTUNITY

In 2018, the Erie Community Foundation announced its ambitious plan of investing \$30 million over five years through transformation of the economy, neighborhoods and the downtown area. There are three parts to this plan. The new leader will have the opportunity to work with Foundation trustees to expand and adjust this plan as needed. Components include:



\$5 million: Double our Helping Today Budget – To support of Erie’s strong and valuable nonprofit sector, the Foundation doubled our traditional Helping Today grants budget from \$500,000 per year to \$1,000,000. Helping Today grants are typically smaller and designed to meet nonprofit basic needs. The Foundation built a designated endowment to sustain this increased support, in perpetuity.



\$15 million: Transformational Projects – The Foundation seeks to work with strong nonprofit champions that can address critical systemic issues, at scale. Ideas are generated through a white paper process that includes extensive dialogue between the Foundation and key community leadership. The goal is to advance the Foundation’s vision through partnership with strong champions and “at scale” solutions.

\$10 million: Mission Related Investments – Access a portion of The Erie Community Foundation’s endowment principal to invest in local projects with strong champions. These are investments, not grants. Examples include mortgages, other loans and equity positions that are not easily financed in the conventional marketplace. The Foundation also

recently worked with Erie Insurance, a local fortune 500 company, to attract \$40 million in Opportunity Zone investments from Arctaris, a socially responsible hedge fund with a growing portfolio across the nation.

POSITION SUMMARY

The President serves as an ex-officio member of the board of trustees. He or she will also be expected to provide critical leadership in planning, organizing, and directing the operations of the organization. While a talented board and staff team is in place, the President of The Erie Community Foundation is recognized as the external “face” and “voice” of the organization.

Our next leader will continue a successful and time-tested wealth attraction model. A key focus will be to develop and sustain relations with high net worth individuals, wealth gatekeepers, top elected and corporate leadership and other key institutional partners. The President also works with trustees to develop and sustain a strategic vision for the organization. Development and implementation of policies and procedures needed to ensure the effective management of the organization, exceptional grantmaking and good fiscal stewardship are also key priorities. The President represents the Foundation within the industry and community; collaborates with community members and other organizations (both for and nonprofit); and develops and sustains relationships with constituents including but not limited to appropriate high net worth individuals and appropriate advisors.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek a proven and visionary executive-level leader who demonstrates a strong ability to work collaboratively at all levels in the community, but especially including government, nonprofit and private sector leadership. The ability to inspire confidence and trust, along with exceptional communications skills, are a must.

The successful candidate will likely be a self-starter who pursues, cultivates and enjoys building and maintaining strong and authentic donor and stakeholder relationships. This person must be able to engender trust and empathy and relate to donors in a highly professional, honest and caring manner. His/her career has been noted by their ability to chart a path forward with exceptional interpersonal skills and a servant leadership style.

The ability to communicate exceptionally well in oral and written form is necessary for success in this position. As the key spokesperson for the Foundation, this person must be able to speak extemporaneously and appropriately on any number of subjects in a clear and transparent fashion in order to build trust and support.

The qualified candidate must demonstrate success in reaching out to the community, participating with people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and building rapport with those who have varying viewpoints and perceptions. High integrity and sound judgment are essential to success in this role.

While a familiarity of the region and of Erie is a plus, it is not a requirement. However, the ability to quickly understand the resources of the region and assimilate into the culture is a necessity.

Career experience in a top leadership position in a community foundation is highly desirable. However, an understanding of the community foundation’s organizational and financial model is expected. Leading, growing and empowering the staff and a dedicated, committed Board are needed skills, as

well. Energy, natural optimism and the ability to be a good listener and a quick learner are important personal attributes. A sense of humor and humility are also valued.

The ideal candidate will show a high level of participation in the life of the community in which he or she works by virtue of civic involvement, public service, volunteerism and club or social activities. A Bachelor's degree is required. Advanced and continuing education/certification is preferred.

To apply, please submit a current resume and letter of introduction to the following link: <https://bit.ly/3tLFBWA> (click on the Apply button at the bottom of the page).

For more information about the Erie Community Foundation, visit <https://www.eriecommunityfoundation.org/>

ABOUT ERIE, PA

Located on the south shore of Lake Erie, Erie is Pennsylvania's primary access point to the Great Lakes. Presque Isle bay is well known throughout the Great Lakes for sailing and is served by many yacht clubs. Presque Isle State Park, a 3,200-acre accessible peninsula, that draws more than four million visitors a year to its seven miles of sandy beaches and 13 miles of bike paths, surrounds this bay and provides year-round recreational opportunities.

Other bicycling and hiking opportunities abound, with the Seaway Trail running through downtown Erie along the lakefront. Erie is also home to the *U.S. Brig Niagara*, Pennsylvania's signature Tall Ship.



Once primarily known as a manufacturing town, Erie now enjoys a diverse and modernized industrial base with fully developed educational, cultural, healthcare and recreational resources that far surpass most communities of its size.

Gannon University, Mercyhurst University, Penn State Behrend, Edinboro University and the nation's largest medical college, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, attract talented students from around the country and across the globe. Waterfront hotels, restaurants, museums and a convention center also highlight our downtown.

Erie is a fast-growing regional healthcare hub anchored by UPMC and Allegheny Health Network's Saint Vincent Hospital; each recently investing over \$100 million in their physical plants. Additional investments include the Magee-Women's Research Institute in Erie.

Alongside the area's healthcare and higher education communities, Erie Insurance, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in the center of the city and a business stronghold in the community since 1925, has been a leader in the private sector efforts by driving a huge transformation in downtown Erie and the area's workforce. Over the last few years, the company has invested \$135 million in capital projects and added 250 jobs per year. Currently employing 3,600 people in Erie alone, the company anticipates that this number will climb to 4,000 and beyond with the opening of their new office building. Scott Enterprises, a regional hospitality company, is also planning an investment of over \$100 million on the City's waterfront. A 42-acre Bayfront site, within an Opportunity Zone, also stands ready for residential and commercial development.

With a well-established, thriving and talented performing arts presence, the city is home to many internationally and nationally recognized artists. The Erie Philharmonic, in continuous existence since 1913, is comprised of a group of professional musicians, a full chorus and a Junior Philharmonic division that tours the area. Similarly, iconic is the Erie Playhouse, the city's more than 100-year-old community theater. The Lake Erie Ballet is a professional company that performs well-known programs throughout the year. The Erie Civic Music Association attracts, sponsors, and books performances by professional musicians, singers, entertainers, and ensembles from around the world. The \$16.5 million renovation to the historic Warner Theater will create a world-class performing arts center to rival big city venues.

Equally vital to the fabric of Erie's art culture is the Erie Art Museum, also more than 100 years old, which holds a collection of more than 8,000 objects, with strengths in American ceramics, Tibetan paintings, Indian bronzes, photography, and comic book art. The Museum underwent a significant expansion in 2010 to integrate five historic buildings into one with a Gold Level; LEED certified rating making it the first of its kind in Erie. In 2011, the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the Museum the nation's highest honor for museums, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Other community assets include the Erie History Center; the ExpERIEence Children's Museum which is currently undergoing an expansion; the [Bayfront Convention Center](#); the Bicentennial Tower that overlooks Lake Erie; Dobbins Landing, a pier in downtown Erie; the Erie Land Light, and the Erie Maritime Museum, the home port of the *U.S. Brig Niagara*. Erie residents and tourists alike cheer on the city's home teams including the Erie SeaWolves, the minor league baseball team; the Erie Otters, a team in the Ontario Hockey League; and the BayHawks, the NBA D league basketball team.

Erie's location along the shores of Lake Erie provides a plethora of outdoor activities throughout the year. Peek and Peak ski resort and the Allegheny National Forest are a short drive away. The region also grows grapes and produces the third largest amount of wine in the United States.

The Erie metropolitan area is equidistant from Buffalo, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Erie International Airport/Tom Ridge Field is located 5 miles (8.0 km) west of the city and enjoys daily flights to and from Chicago, Detroit and Charlotte.

Sources include:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erie,_Pennsylvania

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_in_Erie,_Pennsylvania

<https://chq.org/about-us>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/allegheny/home>

<https://www.goerie.com/news/20190118/sneak-peek-grand-upgrades-at-eries-warner-theatre>

<https://www.visiterie.com/>

<https://www.eriepa.com/>

www.eriecdc.org

<https://www.goerie.com/business/20200216/upmc-doctor-researcher-leads-new-research-institute>

<https://www.flagshipopportunityzone.com/why-invest-in-erie-pennsylvania-duplicate>

Find additional Erie resources at the following links:

<https://www.eriepa.com/erie-pa-relocation-guide>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHacXS8dMhE>