

# EMPOWER ERIE

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE NOW!

### Q: Why do we need a community college?

**A:** Competitive advantage. *The reality is that community colleges are increasingly viewed as the cornerstone of workforce development*—likely one of the reasons every city in the country the size of Erie or larger has a community college focused on producing work-ready employees.

In the increasingly global economy, Erie competes with communities around the country to attract new businesses. Lacking a community college puts us at a clear disadvantage. For instance, *when Amazon held its well-publicized search for a second headquarters, a non-negotiable issue was that the location had a community college that could produce a steady stream of work-ready employees.* You only need to do a quick Google search to see that Amazon’s stance is the rule, not the exception.

*Without a community college, Erie is falling behind.*

### Q: How will a community college help local employers?

**A:** Recently, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry’s 28th Economic Survey found *that the shortage of qualified and skilled workers was cited by most job creators as the number one issue affecting their ability to stay competitive in the global economy.* We are already seeing the impact of this in Erie County where a lack of qualified applicants, compounded by an aging and retiring workforce, is challenging our ability to meet customer demand and remain competitive. To continue to grow and thrive, Erie County businesses and organizations are in dire need of a well-trained workforce.

Community colleges partner closely with local businesses and organizations to make sure the classes and training being offered prepares students with the skills needed to get hired, succeed, and build a prosperous career with an Erie County employer. With a community college everyone in Erie County wins—from North East to North Springfield, and everywhere in between.

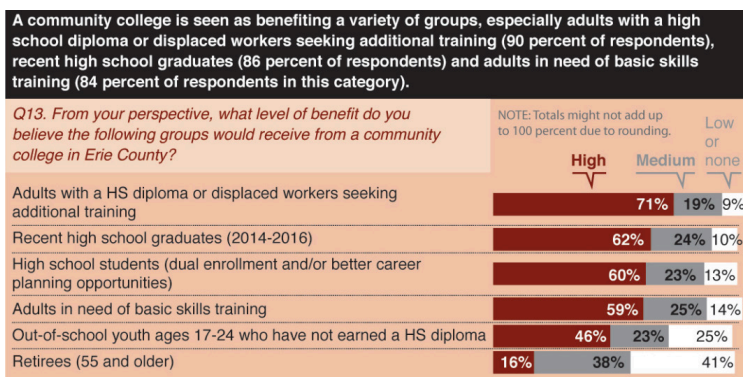


## FAQS: ECC BENEFITS OUR ECONOMY



### Q: Why do you think a community college offers the best opportunity for workforce development?

**A:** In 2018, the State Board of Education adopted a degree attainment goal for Pennsylvania. This goal stated that in the state, 60 percent of the population ages 25-64 should hold a postsecondary degree or industry recognized credential by 2025, with a focus on closing attainment gaps for historically underrepresented populations. *While nearly 30% of the nation has a bachelor’s degree or higher, only 26.1% of the Erie County population does, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It’s also telling that 21.1% of the U.S. population has taken some college classes, while just 16.2% of Erie County residents fall into that category.* An educated workforce improves community and quality of life for all, not just the person holding the degree.



SOURCE: Empower Erie Community College Feasibility Study

### Q: Will the community college be an economic boost to Erie County?

**A:** Absolutely. Respected labor market analysis firm Emsi conducted an economic impact study that identified a range of ways that a community college will drive growth and greater prosperity in Erie County. A few of those include:

1. Leasing and eventual renovating or construction of the community college will stimulate more than \$44 million of economic growth in Erie supporting jobs, taxes, and the local economy now and in the future.
2. By year five of operation, the college will create as many as 200 part-

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and full-time jobs, adding more than \$6.5 million in taxable income to the local economy.

3. A community college combats “brain drain,” helping teach and keep local talent at home. Plus \$6.3 million in income will be added to our economy when students rent, shop, and play in Erie.
4. One community college student can expect to make \$6,100 more per year after earning a degree or professional certification – that’s \$245,000 more in earnings over a 40-year career. By 2030 alone, the projected 5,749 alumni of ECCC will collectively add \$11 million in total income annually to the county economy.

Data comes from “A Ripple Effect for Erie County: The Economic Impact of a Stand-Alone Community College in Erie County”

### **Q: What Erie County businesses and organizations are behind the plan and why?**

**A:** Many local employers are facing a crisis: Their longtime employees are nearing retirement age and there is a shortage of skilled workers to fill the void. ***A community college is in a unique position to partner with local businesses and manufacturers to make sure that they are preparing students to succeed in jobs that are open today, as well as the jobs of the future.*** Both business and labor leaders have voiced strong support for the community college as they see the potential for it to benefit all sectors of our community and drive job creation and economic growth.



UPMC Hamot



Leaders from the Erie Chamber of Commerce, as well as several local manufacturing executives testified in favor of the community college before the State Board of Education. Two of Erie County’s largest employers, Erie Insurance Group and UPMC Hamot, have publicly voiced their support of Erie County Community College. Many other major local employers as well as small business owners have shown support for the plan as well.

**THE TIME  
IS NOW!**  
JOIN THE FIGHT.  
SIGN THE PETITION.  
EMAIL OR CALL  
YOUR LAWMAKERS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
OR TO GET INVOLVED:

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