



GROW ERIE

Urban Agriculture at Savocchio Opportunity Park

The GROW ERIE TEAM

- **Leadership**

Management oversight, community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, marketing, neighborhood reinvestment, equitable development

- **Support**

Real estate development, fiscal management, grant writing, project management and evaluation, public relations and investor relations

- **Expertise**

Proforma business development, facility design/ Integration, hydroponic systems, greenhouse equipment, construction and project management, bidding & subcontractor selection, nutrient production and integration



The Grow Erie Team Members



- **MCIC:** Shantel Hilliard (BTW Center), Gary Horton (UECDC), James Sherrod (MLK Center)
- **ECRDA:** Tina Mengine (CEO), Dr. Amy Cuzzola-Kern (Special Project Manager for SOP)
- **INTAG:** Allen Tait (President), Paul Nickerson (VP Applied Sciences), Dr. David Foster (Horticulture)

TABLE 1: GROW ERIE TARGET AREA, DEMOGRAPHICS BY CENSUS TRACT (CENSUS REPORTER 2022*)

Census Tract	Population	BIPOC Population	Foreign-born population	Poverty Rate	Children in Poverty	Per Capita Income	Median HH Income	Home Ownership	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
<i>City of Erie</i>	94, 013 ¹	35% ²	8.7% ²	23% ²	36% ²	\$24,129 ²	\$43,186 ²	45% ²	\$95,900 ²	23% ²
3	3,282	31%	6%	32%	49%	\$18,766	\$36,452	27%	\$77,700	20%
4	2,085	54%	7%	21%	33%	\$21,360	\$39,514	36%	\$44,100	24%
5	3,253	54%	3%	33%	58%	\$14,509	\$31,296	37%	\$48,800	12%
6	3,210	46%	7%	22%	36%	\$27,304	\$42,824	43%	\$92,300	24%
7	2,056	46%	11%	26%	36%	\$18,879	\$30,521	44%	\$41,700	13%
8	1,930	53%	6%	52%	88%	\$14,155	\$21,157	33%	\$21,157	12%
9 ³	4,359	22%	8%	35%	55%	\$22,127	\$21,430	25%	\$98,450	22%
12	3,026	46%	8%	43%	59%	\$13,939	\$22,295	32%	\$70,400	13%
13	1,741	59%	9%	51%	69%	\$11,576	\$22,964	22%	\$22,964	9%
14	2,749	47%	9%	66%	91%	\$13,153	\$17,679	23%	\$56,300	5%
15	2,909	78%	14%	37%	43%	\$11,037	\$25,313	31%	\$47,200	16%
16	4,329	42%	11%	31%	58%	\$21,433	\$36,089	24%	\$72,400	14%
17	2,713	51%	7%	17%	16%	\$19,722	\$47,826	48%	\$49,600	6%
18	1,991	66%	4%	35%	40%	\$12,851	\$25,330	35%	\$37,200	12%
<i>Target Area</i>	39,633 ⁴	50% ⁵	8% ⁵	36% ⁵	52% ⁵	\$17,201 ⁵	\$30,049 ⁵	33% ⁵	\$55,734 ⁵	14% ⁵

*Census Reporter. (2022). 2021 Census Data. Retrieved from <https://censusreporter.org>

¹ Total (sum), City of Erie population

² Average (mean), City of Erie

³ Total (sum) and Average (mean) for CT 9.01 and 9.02

⁴ Total (sum), Grow Erie Target Area

⁵ Average (mean), Grow Erie Target Area

TABLE 2: GROW ERIE TARGET AREA, FOOD DESERT ANALYSIS¹

Census Tract	Population	BIPOC Population	Poverty Rate	Median HH Income	>1 mile to nearest supermarket	Low income	HH without vehicles > 1/2 mile to supermarket
3	3,282	31%	32%	\$36,452	yes	yes	25.3%
4	2,085	54%	21%	\$39,514	yes	yes	31.6%
5	3,253	54%	33%	\$31,296	yes	yes	22.1%
6	3,210	46%	22%	\$42,824	yes	yes	17.2%
7	2,056	46%	26%	\$30,521	yes	yes	40.0%
8	1,930	53%	52%	\$21,157	yes	yes	47.6%
9	4,359	22%	35%	\$21,430	yes	yes	22.4%
12	3,026	46%	43%	\$22,295	yes	yes	37.3%
13	1,741	59%	51%	\$22,964	yes	yes	33.7%
14	2,749	47%	66%	\$17,679	yes	yes	42.5%
15*	2,909	78%	37%	\$25,313	no	yes	10.3%
16	4,329	42%	31%	\$36,089	yes	yes	6.3%
17*	2,713	51%	17%	\$47,826	no	yes	24.9%
18	1,991	66%	3%	\$25,330	yes	yes	28.4%
Target Area	39,633	50%	36%	\$30,049	yes	yes	27.8%

¹ Economic Research Services (ERS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). [Food Access Research Atlas](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/), <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/> (Last updated 4/27/21)

Grow Erie Evolution

Grow Erie evolved within the context of MCIC's mission to promote EQUITY, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, and COLLABORATION

- ❖ EQUITY in economic development

 - focus on low-income, BIPOC communities, gain access to land for development activities, neighborhood improvement, reinvest in vulnerable areas

- ❖ EQUITY in health

 - Reduce health disparities, reduce hunger, promote COVID activities (education, testing, vaccination), youth mental/physical development through arts and athletics

- ❖ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

 - create safe spaces, reduce blight, provide access to land for neighborhood residents (urban farming, murals), improve social capital (neighborhoods, families, individuals), promoting resident self-determination

- ❖ COLLABORATION

 - Neighborhood resident groups, businesses, and service providers, project partners, elected officials

MCIC Community Partners, Stakeholders and Investors*

PA Department of Community & Economic Development*

PA Department of Agriculture*

Erie Community Foundation*

Infinite Erie*

Diverse Erie*

Curtze Food Service*

UPMC Health Plan*

Highmark/First Priority*

ERIE Bank*

First National Bank*

Marquette Savings Bank*

Northwest Bank*

Erie County*

Mayor Joe Schember & City of Erie*

City of Erie Department of Economic & Community
Development*

Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM)

Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation

School District of the City of Erie

Congressman Mike Kelly

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Knox Law Firm

Environmental Remediation & Recovery

Attorney Matthew Wolford, Esq.

Mayor Joyce Savocchio

Housing Authority of the City of Erie

Sr. Michele Schroeck & House of Mercy

Eastside Grassroots Coalition

Parker Philips

Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership

Attorney John Melaragno, Esq.

Debra Smith

Scott Turner

Solar Revolutions

Veronica Rexford, UECD

Abigail Lechner, Human Capital Associates

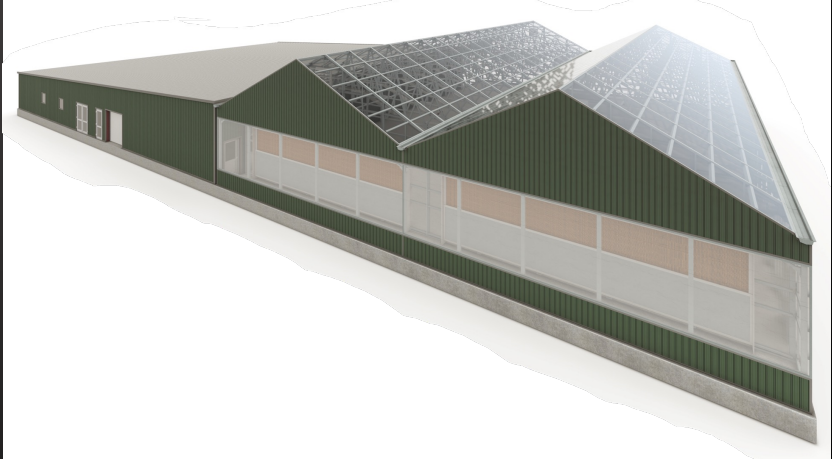
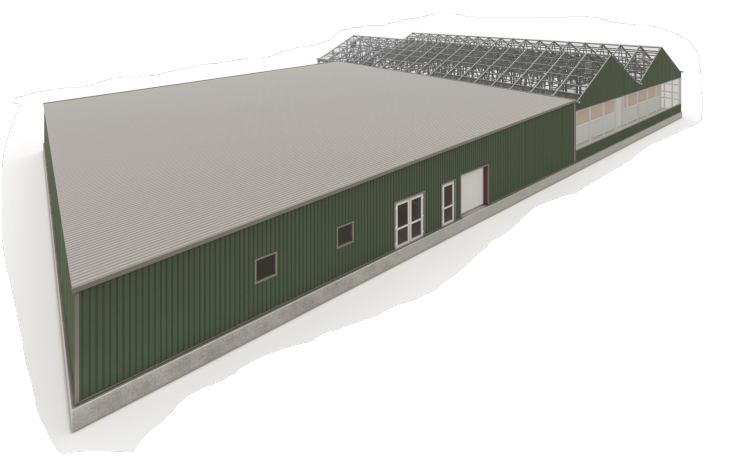
Grow Erie Project Scaling

- ❖ MCIC worked with Cornell University Engineers Without Borders (2018-2019)
 - ❖ Surveyed local residents
 - ❖ Helped to identify potential facility size scenarios,
 - ❖ Provided various pricing options to install hydro/aquaponics
 - ❖ Facilitated introduction between MCIC & INTAG
- ❖ MCIC working with INTAG to balance (2020-present)
 - ❖ Resources (funding, capacity, expertise) with
 - ❖ Facility feasibility (size, offtake, economies of scale, buyers)
 - ❖ Funding * Size * Profitability
 - ❖ Able to identify the working capital needed to create income (estimated at 8-9 months)
 - ❖ Acceptable income as a social enterprise providing community benefit

Grow Erie Project Team

Name	Credentials	Experience	Role
Tina Mengine	BS (Business): La Roche University; Leadership Certificates from U.S. Army War College and Cornell University	Over 25 years of management experience in economic development (ECRDA, Regional Director of Governor's Action Team, PA DCED), politics (Chief of Staff, Erie Mayor and U.S. House of Representatives), Higher Education (PennWest) and marketing (Bluestocking Consulting, Impact Advertising)	ECRDA-CEO; MANAGEMENT; real estate development, investor relations, advocacy, stakeholder engagement; staff management
Dr. Amy Cuzzola-Kern	BA (political science): University of Michigan MPIA; University of Pittsburgh (public policy), MSW (social work): Columbia University, PhD (social welfare policy): Case Western Reserve University	Over 25 years of experience in nonprofit management (HANDS, Inc., YWCA of Erie), philanthropy (VP Programs, Erie Community Foundation), politics (District Director, U.S. House of Representatives), consulting (SafeNet, Erie Art Museum, Eastside Grassroots Coalition, MCIC), and higher education (adjunct teaching at Gannon University, Mercyhurst University, and Case Western Reserve University)	ECRDA-Project Consultant; SUPPORT; project management, grant writing, evaluation, internal team communications; stakeholder engagement
Meghan Sleezer	BA (Psychology, Exercise Science): Skidmore College; MSA (Sport Administration): Canisius College; Licensed PA Real Estate Professional	Over a decade of experience in administration, management, and compliance. Licensed Pennsylvania Real Estate Professional with a focus on Commercial Real Estate and real estate development.	ECRDA – Compliance Officer; SUPPORT; grant management, evaluation, and reporting
Shantel Hilliard	BA (Business Management): Mercyhurst University; M.Ed. (Educational Leadership): Gannon University; MBA: University of Phoenix	Over 20 years of management experience in nonprofit neighborhood centers (Booker T. Washington) where he is currently Executive Director. He has been a part-time faculty instructor at Mercyhurst University and Erie Business Center. He is involved in volunteer leadership at Erie Rise and the Erie Water Authority.	MCIC-Founder, President; LEADERSHIP, management oversight, community engagement, collaboration, equitable development, neighborhood reinvestment
Gary Horton	BA (Political Science): Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	Mr. Horton has worked in Erie for almost 50 years advocating for improved housing, education, equity in employment and environmental justice. He has held multiple management positions including his current ED role at Urban Erie CDC, formerly as assistant to the Erie Mayor Joyce Savocchio and at the Greater Erie Community Action Committee. He is the current president of NAACP (Erie Chapter) and former school board director for the Erie City School District).	MCIC-Founder, Secretary; LEADERSHIP, management oversight, community engagement, collaboration, equitable development, neighborhood reinvestment
James Sherrrod	BA (Education): Mercyhurst University	Over 25 years of nonprofit management experience at Martin Luther King Center, where he is currently director, and BTW Center (previous ED) and direct clinical practice at Family Services of NW PA, and Perseus House. He is a strong advocate for health equity and youth development.	MCIC-Founder, Vice President; LEADERSHIP, management oversight, community engagement, collaboration, equitable development, neighborhood reinvestment
Chris Nguyen	BA (Biology): Johns Hopkins University	Over 25 years of experience funning early-stage technology companies. Mission-oriented investor focused on climate medical, education, and agriculture sectors.	Chairman/CEO INTAG; Strategy, Controlled Environment Agriculture industry trends
Allen Tait	BA (Economics): Bethany College; MS (Corporate Finance) Wisconsin School of Business	Senior business leader with extensive experience in operational and financial transformations, as well as corporate strategy development and execution. Has shown successful leadership in start-up situations, jumpstarting underperforming companies, and integrating merging organizations. Strong financial engineering skills coupled with the ability to create and implement operational strategies.	President, INTAG; proforma business development, project accounts and evaluation, bidding and subcontractor selection
Paul Nickerson	BS (Plant science): Messiah University	Agriculture, controlled environment growing expert with over 100 projects in implementation from small, school-based farms to entry-level commercial farms	VP, Applied Sciences; INTAG; facility design, operations management; Staff oversight
Krilen Ramandaidu	MSc (Agrobiology): University of British Columbia; MBA: St. Mary's College	Over 10 years of experience within the controlled environment/hydroponics space. Expert in the development in the deployment of state-of-the-art hydroponic, vertical farming systems and has authored multiple research and popular publications. Led the operational teams establishing and operating multiple CEA facilities including two that were established by McCain Foods.	Applied Scientist; INTAG; operations management, equipment maintenance, agriculture science and growing management
Paul Eyking	BA (business): St. Francis Xavier University	Mr. Eyking is a leader in urban/vertical farming techniques. Mr. Eyking developed the growing systems used by TrueLeaf Farms. TrueLeaf is the vertical farming arm of McCain Foods, one of the largest food companies in North America.	Consultant, INTAG; Operations management for commercial and community facilities

GROW ERIE – COMMERCIAL FACILITY RENDERING



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Erie Hi-Tech Farm



GROW ERIE

Urban Agriculture at Savocchio Opportunity Park

HIGH TECH FARM FOR ORGANIC PRODUCE



- 10,000 SF gutter-connected greenhouse
- Engineered heavy structure
- Two 5,000 SF floatbeds
- 225 tray array for micro greens
- Products for wholesale to CA Curtze include: leafy greens, micro-greens, live herbs (e.g. basil) and potted herbs - now sourced primarily in CA & MX

GROW ERIE – COMMERCIAL STARTUP

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

# OF POSITIONS	JOB TITLE	SALARY
1	FACILITIES GENERAL MANAGER	\$80,000
1	ASSISTANT MANAGER	\$70,000
5	HYDROPONIC STAFF	\$45,000

- ❖ 7 INITIAL FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES
- ❖ MANAGER AVERAGE SALARY: \$75,000
- ❖ SUPPORT STAFF AVERAGE SALARY: \$45,000
- ❖ TRAINING & SUPPORT PROVIDED BY INTAG

GROW ERIE – COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE



- 2,500+ square foot polycarbonate greenhouse containing variety of raised beds for local residents and community groups
- Cultivation will include herbs, greens, vegetables
- Climate-controlled for year-round crop production
- Resident-led and managed
- Provide for family consumption, distribution at MCIC programs and food pantries as well as neighborhood farmers' markets

GROW ERIE – COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE



- ***Fully funded (100%): \$590,000 (CDBG/HUD)***
- With additional support from the City of Erie, \$225,000 in donated Hydroponic Growing Equipment including:
 - Vertical growing towers,
 - Lighting and electrical equipment and fixtures,
 - Growing supplies
- Project Construction: Summer 2024

Grow Erie Costs

- Total Commercial: \$4,698,311
 - \$1,894,039: Commercial Greenhouse, , Commercial Headhouse, Bioreactor, Aquaculture Equipment, INTAG Horticulture nutrient production system, Design, Project Management, Cultivation Systems, Microgreen Equipment, Delivery, Installation
 - \$1,979,292: Multi-Prime Construction Package, Utility Service, Agency Review Fees, Storage Container Rental, PCE Engineering Service Fees
 - \$825,000: Site Preparation, Permits, Erie Water Works, Stormwater Cleanout, Foundation

Grow Erie: Funding Secured

Grow Erie, Funding Stack (Updated April, 2024)		
Funding Secured - Commercial Facility	Amount	Status
City of Erie, ARPA	\$ 1,000,000	Secured, In hand
Erie County, ARPA	\$ 500,000	Secured, In hand
Erie Community Foundation/Infinite Erie	\$ 500,000	Secured, In hand
Diverse Erie	\$ 250,000	Secured, In hand
City of Erie Brownsfields Program via ECRDA	\$ 250,000	Approved
PA Department of Agriculture	\$ 50,000	Secured, In hand
PA DCED/NAP-SPP	\$ 273,750	Approved: Commitments from: UPMC Health Plan, Curtze, Highmark, First National Bank, ERIE Bank, Marquette Savings, Northwest Bank
Commodore Fund Grant, City of Erie	\$ 10,000	Approved, for pending permits
Subtotal, Funding Approved - Commercial	\$ 2,833,750	
Funding Secured - Community Greenhouse		
City of Erie DECD, CDBG - HUD	\$ 260,000	Approved
Federal Appropriations	\$ 330,000	Approved: submitted by Senator Casey to HUD Economic Development Initiatives
Subtotal, Community Greenhouse	\$ 590,000	
<i>Other Funding</i>		
City of Erie Patient Loan*	\$ 250,000	No payments for 24 months; 1% Interest Rate after 2 years; will make loan
TOTAL FUNDING	\$ 3,673,750	
Total Project Cost	\$ 5,073,116	Commercial Facility + Community Greenhouse
Current Funding Need	\$ 1,399,366	

Grow Erie (Commercial): 2nd Round Funding

- **Goal: \$1.8- \$2 million Prospects**
 - USDA – Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP),
submitted April 2024, status=pending
 - PA Department of Agriculture - *prospecting*
 - PA DCED Neighborhood Assistance Project (SPP) - *seeking commitments, submission by June 28, 2024*
 - Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation - *application due August 1, 2024 (maximum \$50,000)*
 - Emerging Erie Fund - *application due May 31, 2024 (maximum \$75,000)*
 - Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority – *currently pending, due to schedule a presentation to ECGRA Board of Directors*

Grow Erie: Financial Summary

Key Considerations:

- Initial greenhouse revenue in month 2
- Break-even by month 9
- Full capacity (100%) efficiency by month 15
- Assumes full production offtake at wholesale prices (opportunity for direct retail sales)
- Self -Sustaining Social Enterprise after year 1

Annual Profit Estimates:

- Baseline (80%): \$225,000
- Upside (100%): \$575,000
- with \$100,000 additional Microgreen Equipment and necessary Capital Expenditures: \$400,000 (baseline) - \$750,000 (upside)

Profits will be used to service Grow Erie debt, MCIC programs, and future projects in health equity, affordable housing and homeownership, economic development, and neighborhood reinvestment



Thank You!!!