

GRANTS

ECOHE grant programs and services primarily fall into two categories: internal ECOHE grant programs and pilots to improve health disparities and external grant technical assistance to community organizations engaging in health equity work. The ECOHE provides free grant-related technical assistance to local community-based organizations and groups serving minority, marginalized, and underserved communities in Erie County. The ECOHE's grant technical assistance services include a group workshop, Let's Talk About Grants, which was developed in 2023.

The Let's Talk About Grants workshop provides an introduction to grants and covers the basics of grant writing, including finding grants, eligibility and funders, parts of an application, budget basics, timelines, and resources. In addition to these resources, the ECOHE provides free one-on-one technical assistance with finding grants, applying for grants, data and evaluation

support (via the ECOHE epidemiology team), and grant reporting. This technical assistance can include identifying potential funding opportunities, providing feedback on grant application drafts, providing templates and examples of grant components like budget narratives and workplans, and answering grant-related questions, and is tailored to the organization's needs.

ECOHE grant programs and services primarily relate to the following functions of the ECOHE per the Erie County Health Equity Act of 2021: Make recommendations for improving delivery and access to health services for disadvantaged and marginalized populations and pilot models and programs to improve health disparities. Grant technical assistance services and resources further the mission of the ECOHE by providing support to and building the capacity of organizations that are rooted in the community and are experts in the work that is needed to help achieve health equity here in Erie County, but who may not have the funding, staff, or other resources required to meet the community need.

Four Let's Talk About Grants workshops were conducted in 2023, reaching a total of 88 community members. Requests to register for these workshops greatly exceeded availability. An additional 61 community members attempted to register for one of the Let's Talk About Grants workshops after registration was full and were placed on an interest list and were contacted about additional workshops scheduled for early 2024. Also in 2023, the ECOHE produced a newsletter edition entitled *Let's Talk About Grants* that aligns with the grant writing workshop and provides a similar introduction



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to grants and grant writing. The *Let's Talk About Grants* newsletter was developed with the rigorous plain language and readability standards of all ECOHE newsletters and was translated into 5 of the most commonly spoken languages in Erie County. Over 13,000 copies of this newsletter edition were distributed in December 2023. In 2023, the ECOHE provided 222 hours of one-on-one technical assistance, helping 72 community-based organizations and groups serving minority, marginalized, and underserved communities in Erie County apply for a total of \$11,575,000 in grant funding from federal, state, municipal, and foundation funders, much of which is pending at the time of this report but \$3,550,000 of which has already been successfully received by 18 of those community organizations.

222
hours of 1-on-1 grant assistance helping

72
Erie County community organizations apply for grant funding totaling over

\$11.6 million

Organizations who received technical assistance in 2023 serve a variety of communities, including racial minority communities, refugees and immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, older adults, children and youth, rural communities, and people with disabilities. Feedback regarding grant technical assistance has been overwhelmingly positive. Technical assistance clients have noted that grant technical assistance provided by the ECOHE is “honest, helpful, and insightful.” Clients commented that the ECOHE’s responsiveness when providing one-on-one assistance is “refreshing and appreciated” and one likened the support provided to mentorship. Other feedback included: “*You were thorough and easy to follow. The way you presented the information made it easy to understand and made me feel like I can move forward with this.*” “*I can’t thank you enough for all your assistance!*” “*I truly appreciate your support and knowledge.*” “*Thank you for your insight, explanation and expertise.*” “*Thank you so much for all your assistance and guidance.*”

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-Let’s Talk About Grants Participant



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In 2023, ECOHE applied for and secured funding for four internal ECOHE grant programs and pilots totaling \$193,000. The ECOHE received a \$40,000 Equitable Procurement Consultant grant from the New York State Department of Health in partnership with Health Research, Inc., to support grant technical assistance, and which resulted in a confirmed award of \$799,984 to 16 community organizations, with several awards still pending at the time of this report. The Equitable Procurement Consultant award also facilitated the development and implementation/distribution of the Let's Talk About Grants workshop and newsletter. The ECOHE received a \$50,000 grant from the New York State Department of Health's Office of Minority Health to implement the Holistic Healing Pilot Program, providing free holistic mental health interventions including Sawubona Healing Circles,

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yoga workshops, and art workshops led by local community organizations to Erie County community members impacted by the massacre at Tops supermarket on May 14, 2022. The ECOHE received a \$3,000 Climate & Health Adaptation mini grant from the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) to implement "Stay Cool Erie County" in collaboration with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. As a part of Stay Cool Erie County, the ECOHE produced and distributed extreme heat emergency preparedness information in the form of the Let's Get Ready for Summer Heat edition of the ECOHE newsletter as well as 500 cooling neck wraps and 500 seed kits to address equity in access to cooling systems and green spaces among lower income residents and historically marginalized communities in Erie County. In partnership with the Buffalo Center for Health Equity (BCHE) and the University at Buffalo's Community Health Equity Research Institute (UB CHERI), the ECOHE was awarded a \$100,000 community capacity building grant as part of the PHEARLESS Initiative from the University of South Florida's College of Public Health with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the de Beaumont Foundation. The ECOHE, BCHE, and UB CHERI comprise the Buffalo Community Collaborative, one of 15 selected nationwide for participation in PHEARLESS, a one-year, experiential learning public health regenerative leadership program.

Recommendations for grant programs moving forward include increasing the ECOHE's capacity to provide technical assistance to meet the increasingly evident community demand for these services. During a presentation on Mental Health in Rural New York [8], data were presented that supported a need for grant technical assistance among rural community organizations, prompting the ECOHE to

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schedule a workshop at the Rural Outreach Center in February 2024 in addition to schedule additional workshops on the East Side and West Side of Buffalo. As previously mentioned, attempted registrants for 2023 Let's Talk About Grants workshops greatly exceeded capacity, and interested community members were placed on an interest list to be notified when 2024 trainings became available. Additionally, attendees of multiple workshops requested the expansion of grants programming to include further workshops on finding grants, including an experiential workshop where participants can learn how to navigate grant databases such as candid.org and grants.gov, as well as workshops providing an overview of grants management once a grant has been successfully received. At current capacity, the ECOHE would likely not be able to fulfill these requests for trainings and resources in addition to 1-on-1 technical assistance requests from community organizations.

1-on-1 technical assistance requests and hours of 1-on-1 technical assistance provided to community organizations increased significantly over the course of 2023, and are anticipated to increase further as community awareness of these free services increases. The increasing frequency of requests for technical assistance indicates that there is a significant community need for grant-related technical assistance among community-based organizations and groups serving minority, marginalized, and underserved communities in Erie County.

NEED GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

Email healthequity@erie.gov

Call (716) 858-1681

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Let's Talk About Grants Workshop, November 29, 2023