

## NEWSLETTERS

ECOHE newsletters are designed to inform, remind, and connect communities in Erie County to resources and knowledge of topics relating to the social determinants of health, including but not limited to food access, mental health, economic stability, chronic disease, and emergency preparedness. ECOHE newsletters are intended to offer upstream support that addresses health equity issues by putting the power of information in the hands of the residents of Erie County in a way that is positive, inviting, culturally connected, and representative of the diverse population we see across the county.

Each edition of the ECOHE newsletter is distributed in Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, English, Spanish, and Swahili. While primarily distributed in print to community-based organizations, each newsletter is available in both print and digital formats. Partners for distribution include libraries, health centers, community centers, and nonprofit service providers.

ECOHE newsletters are intended to be culturally responsive and are written in plain language to meet Erie County residents where they are at in terms of identity and literacy, respectively. This work aims to “eliminate racial, economic, sexual/gender, and geographic-based health inequities that shorten or negatively-impact lives by changing the social and economic conditions that cause illness and shorten lives.” [2]. Examples of these aims are apparent in *Let’s Talk About Mental Health* and *Let’s Talk About Grief*, where the ECOHE normalizes mental health challenges and connects the reader to support that is welcoming to all and easily understood by many. These aims are also apparent in editions such as *Let’s Talk About Food Access* and *Let’s Talk About Working in Government*, where systems that are often difficult for many to navigate are simplified in a way that makes them approachable and accessible to more people. Finally, the aim of reducing inequities is reflected in the work the ECOHE has put into emergency preparedness, both for heat and cold weather-related emergencies, offering Erie County residents solutions-driven support that prepares the population to withstand the obstacles that climate change is slated to pose our region over the years.

The ECOHE newsletters fulfill several key functions of the Office, including analyzing disparities in health, health care, and availability/accessibility to health care services among disadvantaged and marginalized Erie County populations; understanding and connecting factors that contribute to health outcomes; and promoting public awareness and community education with the goal of supporting healthy lifestyles among disadvantaged and marginalized people.



## **NEWSLETTERS**

Four new editions of the ECOHE Newsletter were produced in 2023: *Let's Talk About Pregnancy*, *Let's Talk About Summer Heat*, *Let's Talk About Lead*, and *Let's Talk About Grants*. The ECOHE Newsletter distribution reaches approximately 14,000 people in print and digital format per edition. In print, the newsletter reaches 28 ZIP codes at 129 unique locations, per edition. In email, the ECOHE sends the newsletter out to 881 addresses and counting, a list that continues to grow through the ECOHE's ongoing community engagement efforts. The ECOHE newsletter has an average open rate of 54% since June 2023 when ECOHE communications migrated to the Constant Contact platform. This open rate is much higher than the 20% industry average for similar communications.

It is difficult to measure the total number of people served as the ECOHE newsletter has a snowball effect, with more and more groups and organizations sharing this content digitally and photocopying and printing their own copies to distribute. For example, in 2023:

- UBMD Physicians' Group printed 500 copies of *Let's Get Ready for Winter* to include in winter preparedness outreach to patients in the WNY Children's Environmental Health Center via UBMD Pediatrics.
- Jewish Family Services regularly used an array of ECOHE newsletters in the information packets they give to new arrivals to Erie County for their Refugee Assistance Program.
- The Erie County Department of Personnel printed 5,000 copies of *Let's Talk About Working in Government* for outreach at job fairs across the county.
- Independent Health Foundation utilized *Let's Talk About Food Access and Do You Know Your Health Numbers* in their Healthy Options Buffalo program, delivering hard copies right to the door of program participants.
- The Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County utilized *Let's Talk About Food Access* in their summer and fall outreach events.
- The International Institute of Buffalo used an array of ECOHE newsletters in outreach to community partners as a best practice example of public communications that are well-suited for populations with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or who speak a language other than English at home.
- The Erie County Executive's Office utilized content from *Let's Get Ready for Winter* as talking points for their winter emergency preparedness kit distributions and for a YouTube video recorded by Lisa Chimera, Deputy County Executive. See her quotes about building a Circle of Care, one of her key tips for getting prepared for an emergency.

**TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE ECOHE NEWSLETTER**

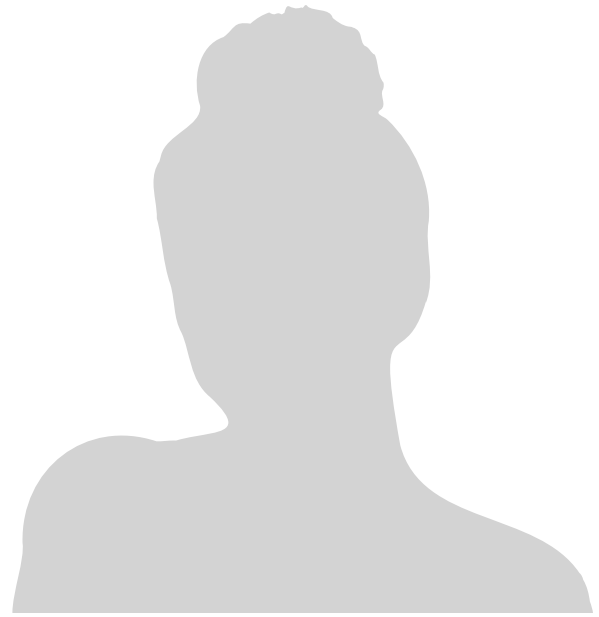
For ECOHE e-news updates: [bit.ly/ECOHEupdates](https://bit.ly/ECOHEupdates)

To distribute paper copies of the newsletter: [erie.gov/henews](https://erie.gov/henews)

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“It's great to see that we are finally having conversations about mental health. For many years we haven't talked about the impact of mental health and how it affects us on a daily basis.”

-Community Member  
(Translated from Spanish)



Feedback on the ECOHE newsletters from community members has been collected and reported by ECOHE staff during community engagement activities. This feedback includes:

- They loved the newsletter, especially the Know Your Health Numbers edition.
- Out of the 7 newsletters I took to the event, [Let's Talk About] Food Access was the most popular.
- I had a good conversation with a veteran about grief after reviewing the [Let's Talk About] Grief newsletter.
- From an elderly woman in Spanish, "Que bueno que estamos teniendo conversaciones sobre la salud mental. Por muchos años nosotros no hablamos sobre la salud mental y como nos impacta todos los días." / "It's great to see that we are finally having conversations about mental health. For many years we haven't talked about the impact of mental health and how it affects us on a daily basis."
- [The] majority of the population [at this event] was Hispanic/Latino. Saw one Burmese family that was very happy to receive literature in Burmese and one family that was Middle Eastern, and they were very happy to receive literature in Arabic.
- Some people following Islam do not typically display pictures of living creatures in places where they pray. This includes people and animals. More mosques and other places of worship would be inclined to subscribe if we offered this.

Informed by the Health Equity Act of 2021 and ECOHE data and reports, the ECOHE will continue to produce a set of materials that is reflective of the needs of Erie County residents. The upcoming topic list includes but is not limited to health equity, diabetes, heart health, and immunizations.

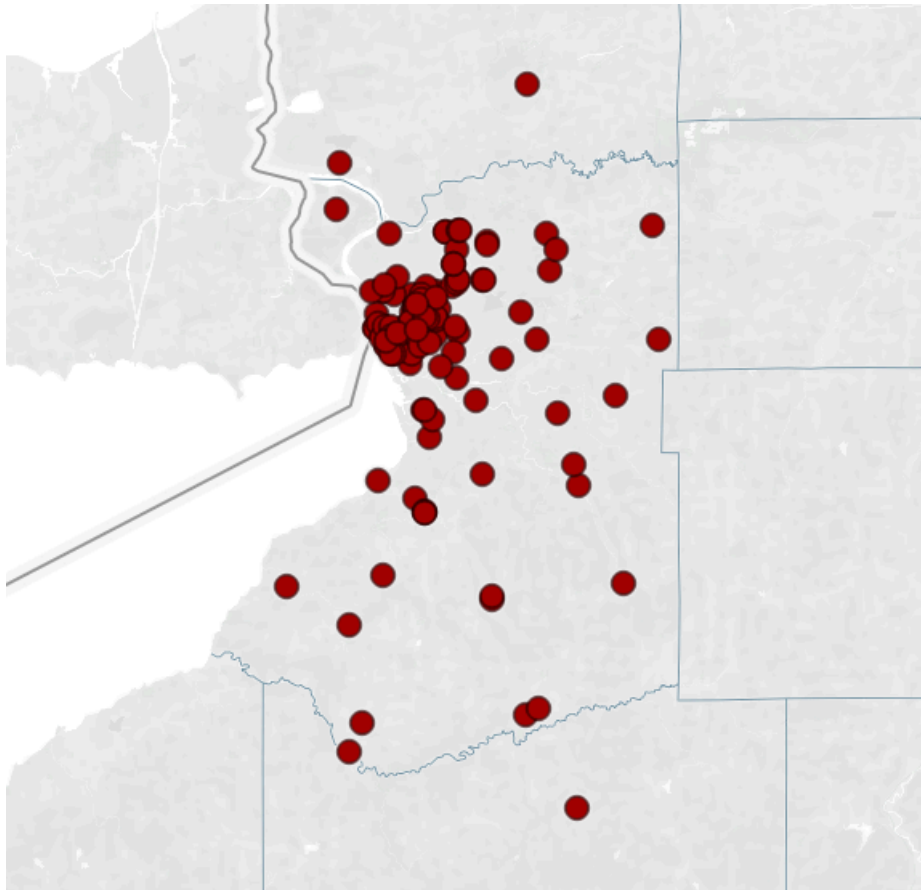
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Other components of the ECOHE newsletter slated to be launched in 2024 include:

- Full social media campaign including at least 5 posts with graphics for each release, including re-releases of back editions
- Production of a text-only version of the Arabic and Bengali newsletters
- One Instagram reel developed and shared on social media per edition
- Signage for community engagement that corresponds with each edition

In addition to expanding content offerings, the ECOHE newsletter team will work to expand ECOHE's digital reach and scale the print reach. This includes tasks such as connecting with existing print subscribers to understand the value of the ECOHE newsletter has in their respective communities and updated subscriptions to better suit their needs and connecting with new organizations that serve communities that are indicated by the Health Equity Act of 2021, including organizations that serve individuals speaking the five languages into which the newsletter is translated.

### Newsletter Distribution Locations



The above map shows the geographic distribution of all copies of Erie County Office of Health Equity newsletters by delivery address of organizations receiving paper copies. This map is not comprehensive, as it does not include any deliveries made within the Erie County offices at the Rath Building or Lincoln Building and does not include any digital distribution.