



## Elevate Your Erie Gives Day – A Nonprofit’s 10–Point Strategy Checklist

New to Erie Gives, looking for a refresher, or just making sure you’ve checked all the necessary boxes? You’ve come to the right place.

Erie Gives is an inspiring event for our community. Thousands of donors from all over the country (and globe!) give to hundreds of local nonprofits on one monumental day in August.

Here at The Nonprofit Partnership, we want to make sure that our member organizations are armed with the tools to be successful during Erie Gives. The checklist below can be used for Erie Gives participants at any stage in the game, whether this is your first year or your fourteenth. And remember, you get out what you put in! We wish everyone the best of luck with their Erie Gives endeavors.

*Make sure you...*

### 1. Register your nonprofit with The Erie Community Foundation at [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org) by **Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>**.

- ☐ Before registering online, be sure to verify that your organization has a.) an agency endowment with The Erie Community Foundation OR b.) a membership with The Nonprofit Partnership. (Your organization’s membership with The Nonprofit Partnership must be in good standing to participate in Erie Gives.) **Learn more about membership benefits and download the guide [here!](#)**
- ☐ *Unsure if your organization meets either of these criteria?*
  - ☐ To see if your organization has an agency endowment with The Erie Community Foundation, contact **Kailey Pisani** via email at [KPisani@ErieCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:KPisani@ErieCommunityFoundation.org) or call 814.413.7356.
  - ☐ To see if your organization has a membership with The Nonprofit Partnership, email **Kensley Semple** at [KSemple@YourNPP.org](mailto:KSemple@YourNPP.org) or call 814.240.2490.
- ☐ Additionally, your organization must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving Erie County.
- ☐ To be included in the Erie Gives Guide (produced by Erie Times News), make sure your nonprofit is registered by July 31<sup>st</sup>. The issue will reach more than 14,000 households on August 4<sup>th</sup>!



- ☐ To complete your organization's registration at [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org), you'll need the following information:
  - ☐ Nonprofit name
  - ☐ Tax ID number, also sometimes called an Employer ID number or Federal ID number (this can be found on your organization's IRS determination letter)
  - ☐ Contact information – including full name, professional title, phone number, email and mailing address
  - ☐ Nonprofit's annual operating expense budget
  - ☐ The Nonprofit Partnership membership status and/or The Erie Community Foundation Agency Endowment status
  - ☐ Content to tell your nonprofit's story!

## 2. Maximize your organization's Erie Gives profile!

- ☐ You can take full advantage of the opportunity to tell your organization's story. **Include photos, videos, and clever copy.** The Erie Gives platform offers YOU the chance to get creative and grab attention (and \$\$)!
  - o Be sure to include your organization's website **URL**, **logo** (300x300), and your organization's **top 3 causes** (great for the search function – let donors find you based on their giving priorities).
  - o Include **a fundraising goal**, if interested – the site will include a fundraising thermometer to display your progress during Erie Gives Day.
    - Be strategic when setting your goal – don't set your sights too low or too high. What's your organization's sweet spot? Review past giving data to make an informed decision.
  - o Add **donation levels** (with images) – up to four. Remember – \$25 in the minimum.
  - o Take advantage of the **"Engagement Opportunities"** section – use the awareness power of Erie Gives to publicize upcoming volunteer opportunities and/or events.
  - o Highlight specific fundraising projects with the **"Support Areas"** functionality – fundraise for particular goals (example – pool renovation, mentorship program, etc.).
  - o Use your ambassadors – tap in to the **Peer-to-Peer Fundraising** functionality. Learn more [here](#).

## 3. Read the FAQ information at [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org).

- ☐ Be informed! [Read the available information](#) so that you are knowledgeable about gift amounts, the check acceptance process, and other details. Be ready to answer any questions from donors – they will appreciate that you are ahead of the game and prepared.



- Some highlighted information includes:
  - Erie Gives will take place online on **Tuesday, August 13, 2024 from 12:00 AM to 11:59 PM**. Phone support will be available from 8:00 AM through 8:00 PM. Donations are made directly online at [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org).
  - Thanks to generous sponsors, Bonus Bucks (formerly known as the prorated match) will enhance each donor's gift. The name has changed, but the math remains the same – **bonus bucks are not a 100% match!** The Bonus Bucks addition will be determined after totals are calculated.
    - PLUS, if you are a nonprofit in North East, Corry or Union City, you may be eligible for extra Bonus Bucks committed by the Boards of the North East, Corry and Union City Community Foundations at \$30K, \$25K and \$10K respectively!
  - **New this year!** Now through 8/13/24, Country Fair is donating .02 cents from every gallon that loyalty members pump at any one of 36 eligible locations. In addition, donations will be made with the purchase of select candy bars at Country Fair locations. The final amount raised from these purchases will be evenly distributed to all Erie Gives nonprofits.
  - Visa, Master Card, American Express, and Discover cards are accepted. Donors will have the option to cover credit card and platform fees which means you receive your donor's full gift.
  - The minimum gift amount is \$25, for both checks and online gifts. There is no limit to the amount of money, nor the number of organizations donors can give to.
  - Encourage donors to ask their employers if they participate in gift-matching.
  - Donors can make their contribution with a check:
    - Check donations do not incur any processing or platform fees!
    - Checks must be made out to The Erie Community Foundation.
    - **ALL CHECK DONATIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN [ERIE GIVES CHECK CONTRIBUTION FORM](#).**
    - Checks must be delivered to The Erie Community Foundation (459 West 6th St., Erie, PA 16507) by **Tuesday, August 13th** to be eligible for Bonus Bucks.
    - Check donations also require a minimum donation of \$25 per organization.
  - Charitable IRA Rollovers, via check or electronic transfer of cash or securities, are encouraged. If you or your donors have questions about this, please contact **Steve Weiser** at [SWeiser@ErieCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:SWeiser@ErieCommunityFoundation.org) or 814.413.7345.



- ☐ Donors may indicate whether they would like to remain “anonymous,” meaning their name will not be printed in annual reports, newsletters, or elsewhere. However, complete anonymity is **not possible**: some information, such as full name and mailing address, needs to be retained by The Erie Community Foundation (and is fully protected).

#### **4. Continue gathering information and start customizing marketing and messaging pieces – visit The Nonprofit Partnership’s Erie Gives Toolkit online via [www.YourNPP.org](http://www.YourNPP.org).**

- ☐ The Nonprofit Partnership’s [Erie Gives Toolkit](#) can be found in our Resource Library, under the Resources tab at the top of the page.
  - ☐ Get started by:
    - ☐ Downloading the Erie Gives logo.
    - ☐ Downloading and customizing NPP’s templates or creating your own!

#### **5. Spread the word! Inform stakeholders of your Erie Gives participation via word of mouth (of course!), postal mail, email, social media channels, etc.**

- ☐ Draft, edit, and send your organization’s donor appeal letter
- ☐ Additionally, it is a good idea to send a postcard of sorts as a reminder prior to Erie Gives. Don’t wait too long! You wouldn’t want your postcard arriving at 9:00 AM on 8/14/2024!
- ☐ A few essential places to advertise your organization’s Erie Gives involvement include your organization’s:
  - ☐ Website
  - ☐ Active social media channels
    - ☐ Be creative! Consider contextualizing donations by tying various dollar amounts to how that money could be used. For example, a \$25 donation could buy 25 meals for 25 hungry children.
    - ☐ Stories, posts, events, videos, covers, etc.
  - ☐ Newsletter and/or e-Newsletter
  - ☐ Signage
- ☐ THINK EXPOSURE & ENGAGEMENT! This is different for various organizations – find your special mix & niche.
  - ☐ Do you see stakeholders in person? Have flyers available and posters posted!
  - ☐ Do you email a lot? Throw in a signature line reminding everyone of Erie Gives!



- ☐ Have an event coming up? Make sure to include a few sentences about Erie Gives in opening remarks and/or have flyers available.
- ☐ Challenge your organization's Board of Directors to participate and to ask their friends to participate, too.
- ☐ Feel free to share, repost, and like posts made by The Erie Community Foundation throughout the day during Erie Gives. The media covers the event and ECF shares the coverage.

#### **6. Help The Erie Community Foundation share your story!**

- ☐ The Erie Community Foundation wants to help to share your nonprofit's story. Do you have a past Erie Gives story or a current project your fundraising (during Erie Gives 2024) for that you'd like to spread the word about? Please send context and media (graphics, photos, videos) to **Erin Fessler** via [EFessler@ErieCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:EFessler@ErieCommunityFoundation.org). Your story may be featured on ECF social media channels!

#### **7. Take advantage of your membership with The Nonprofit Partnership – visit us for Erie Gives–related educational opportunities and MORE!**

- ☐ At NPP, we are adamant about giving members what they want and need. We offer a handful of Erie Gives–related sessions each year. *\*Offerings posted at [YourNPP.org](http://YourNPP.org)!*
- ☐ We also offer dozens of other learning opportunities that contribute to Erie Gives success, such as sessions on marketing and fundraising, all year long.

#### **8. Do things by the book! Don't get your organization in trouble trying to top the charts.**

- ☐ Remember: Erie Gives is based on an honor system.
- ☐ Don't re-gift money to your nonprofit from your organization's operating budget.
- ☐ Don't ask people to make payments for things like programs, services, tuition, etc., through Erie Gives.
- ☐ If an organization designates Erie Gives money for a specific project, then they need to honor donors' intent and use it for that project.



- ☐ People cannot be entered into a drawing by making a donation as that turns the transaction into a game of chance, which nullifies the charitable giving aspect.
- ☐ Have questions about something your organization has planned or has done in the past? Run it by **Adam Bratton**, Executive Director with The Nonprofit Partnership. He can be reached at [ABratton@YourNPP.org](mailto:ABratton@YourNPP.org) or 814.240.2490.

## 9. DON'T SLACK ON THE BIG DAY!

- ☐ If you have an email list, remind your more digital savvy stakeholders in the morning to think of you on August 13, 2024 and direct them to [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org).
- ☐ Stay active on social media, especially during the online day of giving – 8/13/2024.
  - ☐ Consider taking fun bets throughout the day. For example: *If we surpass our goal of \$### by 3:00PM, Jerry will get a pie in the face!* (We don't need any Erie Gives tragedies... make sure Jerry isn't allergic to the pie!)
  - ☐ Post video updates. Video is the future king of content! Keep a tally board going throughout the day and invite donors to join you on camera.

## 10. Be thankful. During Erie Gives *and* always.

- ☐ Send personalized thank you notes to the sponsors of Erie Gives. Without them, Erie Gives wouldn't be possible. The graciousness of our community grows each year. With this growth, our gratitude must keep pace.
- ☐ After downloading your Erie Gives donor list, make sure to thank your donors. While it's true that the donor will receive an email from the Erie Gives team on the day of giving for tax purposes, it is more meaningful if a thank you comes from the organization itself.
- ☐ Checks will be mailed, post-Erie Gives.
- ☐ An electronic donor list will be available for download through your GiveGab/Bonterra dashboard at [ErieGives.org](http://ErieGives.org).
- ☐ The Erie Gives team will send your organization a survey post-Erie Gives –**respond!** Your answers help to improve Erie Gives.



If you have any questions about this checklist, Erie Gives as a whole, or anything else related to the nonprofit sector, please don't hesitate to reach out to the staff of The Nonprofit Partnership.

And don't forget, the Marketing & Communications Team with The Erie Community Foundation is your go-to Erie Gives contact – drop them a line with any questions or concerns!

- Erin Fessler: [EFessler@ErieCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:EFessler@ErieCommunityFoundation.org) / 814.413.7352
- Kailey Pisani: [KPisani@ErieCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:KPisani@ErieCommunityFoundation.org) / 814.413.7356