

The background features a solid red color with large, semi-transparent, stylized graphics. At the top, there is a silhouette of a chair. Below it, a person is shown in a dynamic, jumping or dancing pose. At the bottom, a large hand is depicted with fingers spread, as if reaching out or holding something. The text is overlaid on these graphics.

# **Come What May**

# **Pase lo que pase**

**150 years of Erie Neighborhood House**  
**2020 Annual Report**



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# Dear Friends,

## 2020 was a challenging year to celebrate our 150th anniversary of service.

But it was perhaps the most fitting. Throughout Erie House's history, the only constant has been change. Quick adaptation is at the heart of who we are. We have never stopped evolving to meet the needs of our community, and 2020 was no different.

In a year that saw the coronavirus pandemic, economic devastation and social unrest hit Erie House families and communities the hardest, we were yet again called upon to stretch our resources farther than ever before.

Our team quickly gained new skills and pushed their creativity to reach our participants however they could, piloting new programming and providing resources and support based on the changing needs of our community. Erie House stood with our people through virtual and hybrid education, workshops, counseling, and legal services; direct financial assistance for those who needed it most; and a safe return for children and youth.

We're so grateful for our staff! Their hard work and resilience, along with your generosity and support, allowed Erie House to truly live into our vision — a home with no borders. Even while physically apart, our Erie House community remained connected.

The work never stops. Come what may, Erie House will be here for our community. Whatever happens. *Pase lo que pase.*

Thank you for celebrating our first 150 years with us. Now, we look forward to the next 150 years. We hope you'll stand with us as we continue to grow and evolve into the future — our 151st year and beyond.



Kirstin Chernawsky  
Executive Director



Nicolas Guzman  
Board President





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# About Erie Neighborhood House

Since 1870, Erie Neighborhood House has provided comprehensive support immigrant and low-income families in Chicago need to thrive.

Today, Erie House serves individuals and families of all backgrounds, primarily the Latinx immigrant community. Through education, legal services, health programs, and more, we empower the people we work alongside to build powerful communities.

Upward mobility through hard work alone is more difficult to achieve for many immigrant and working-class families. The community we serve faces limited access to affordable legal and citizenship support, high-quality early childhood education, adult education programs, and mental health services, all of which are necessary for families to thrive. We provide these essential services to our community.

**Through our work, we empower the population we work alongside to build stronger communities, ultimately leading to a more just and inclusive society.**

The background features a dark blue gradient with several large, semi-transparent, stylized icons. At the top, there is a large, light blue graphic of a hand holding a globe. Below this, there is a large, light blue graphic of a person's silhouette. At the bottom, there is a large, light blue graphic of a hand holding a globe, similar to the one at the top. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**Our Commitment to  
Diversity, Equity,  
Access & Inclusion**

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Erie House believes in the importance of diversity, equity, access and inclusion. We stand in solidarity with those fighting against injustice, oppression, and systemic racism in all its forms. Our mission is to empower our community — Latinx immigrants and individuals and families of all backgrounds.

“All backgrounds” represents our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, religion, identity, ability and experience. We’re committed to working to unify our communities behind the shared goal of justice and equity.

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# Our Work

Erie House's comprehensive services are available to people of all ages, from early childhood to late adulthood. These services are offered through 14 different programs across 7 departments, all of which are designed to empower our participants to build strong communities.

**Our programs span a wide range of service areas, including:**

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## **Legal Services**

Our in-house team of attorneys and legal representatives help clients navigate the US citizenship and immigration system, keeping families together, and allowing them to achieve a greater sense of security.

## **Children & Youth**

We work with young people from infancy through high school graduation to equip them with tools and resources to build a bright future, including educational programs and activities, mentoring, and family support.

## **Adult Education & Training**

Through foundational academic and professional programs like English as a Second Language (ESL), civics education, workforce development, and more, we provide the tools adults need for long-term success.

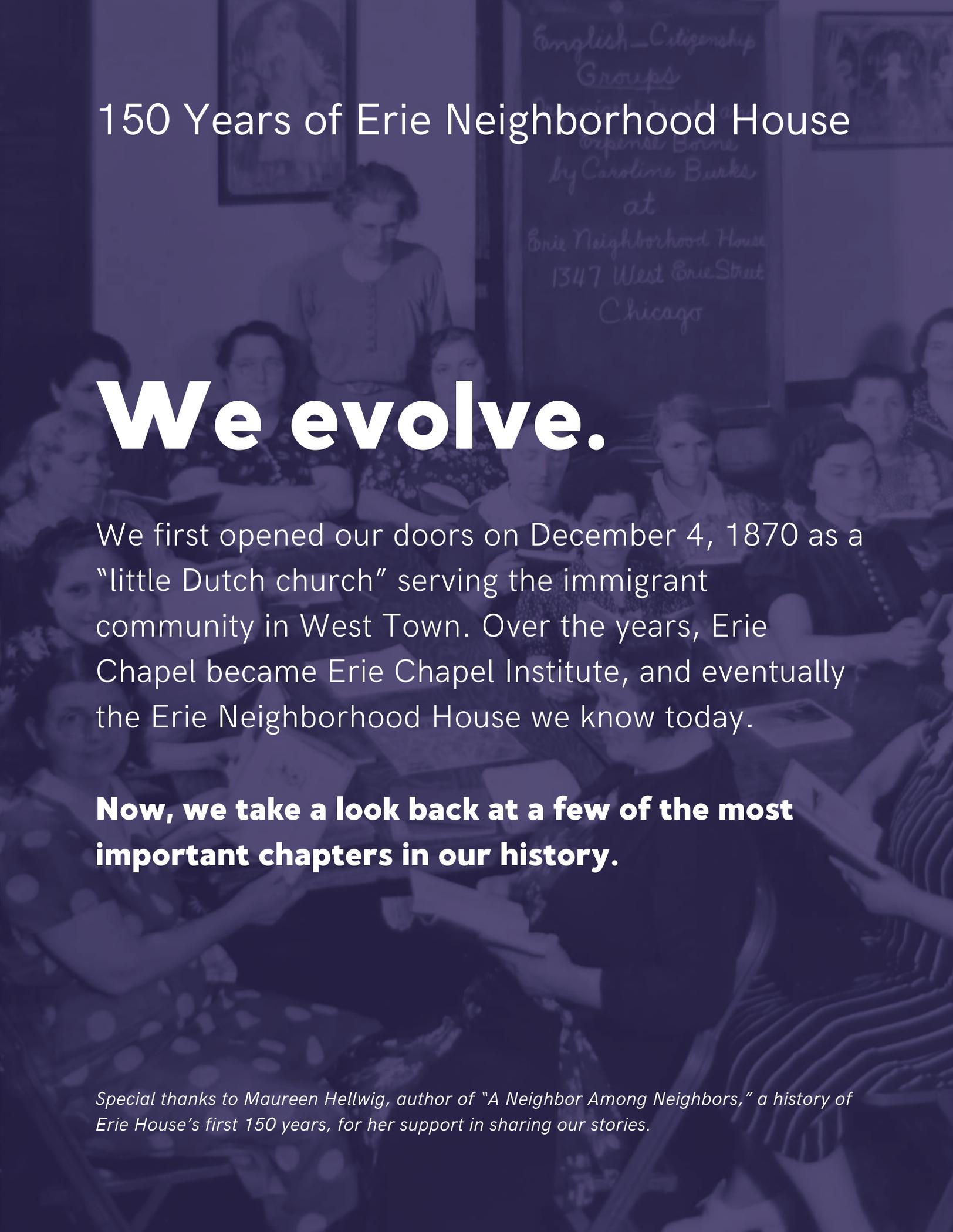
## **Mental Health & Community Wellness**

Healthy communities are empowered communities. We make a healthy lifestyle more accessible with workshops, support groups, and counseling, all through a trauma-informed and culturally-sensitive lens.

## **Community Resources & Empowerment**

We equip our community with the tools and information needed to thrive in the face of adversity, including "Know Your Rights" trainings and direct outreach.

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# 150 Years of Erie Neighborhood House

## We evolve.

We first opened our doors on December 4, 1870 as a “little Dutch church” serving the immigrant community in West Town. Over the years, Erie Chapel became Erie Chapel Institute, and eventually the Erie Neighborhood House we know today.

**Now, we take a look back at a few of the most important chapters in our history.**

*Special thanks to Maureen Hellwig, author of “A Neighbor Among Neighbors,” a history of Erie House’s first 150 years, for her support in sharing our stories.*

## **An incubator for growing organizations**

Since the boom of the settlement house movement of the late 19th to early 20th centuries, Erie House has continued to not only provide the kinds of programs sister organizations of the era pioneered, but we have also made unique, innovative contributions to our neighbors.

A few examples of this have been a clinic (today Erie Family Health Centers), an affordable housing development program (Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp.), and a bilingual charter school for the community (Erie Elementary Charter School).

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## **Critical access to technology in a fast-changing world**

In March 1996, Erie House opened its Technology Center — a comprehensive computer laboratory dedicated to the computer and information literacy of West Town residents. At this time, most nonprofit staff were still getting used to having a “word processor” at their desk, and probably did not yet have an email address. The significance of having a computer lab and the internet available to Erie House’s low-income and immigrant neighbors was immense.

Today, we continue this commitment to technology access — including for our school-age participants during a remote school semester.

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## **Expanding and adapting to better serve our community**

Throughout our history, Erie House has supported immigrant and low-income families in Chicago. Today, we serve individuals and families of all backgrounds, and primarily the Latinx immigrant community.

In recent years, this has meant expanding to Little Village, a community in Chicago with a rich Mexican American identity. Our services have also evolved to incorporate more culturally-sensitive and bilingual programming, including legal services for citizenship and immigration clients, and mental health and restorative justice for survivors of trauma.

And amidst fast-growing concerns about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in recent years, Erie House now delivers “Know Your Rights” training and education so the people of our community know what to do to stay safe and protect their families if they’re ever confronted by officials.

# 150 years of empowering Chicago's immigrant community.

The history of Chicago is the history of Erie House. As the city and its people have evolved over the last 150 years, so have we. Since we opened our doors more than a century and a half ago, we've been committed to offering comprehensive support for immigrant and low-income families, helping them to thrive.

**See how we've grown and changed to best serve our community over the years.**

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**1870**

**Holland Presbyterian Church – the precursor to Erie Chapel Institute and later Erie Neighborhood House – is established in West Town.**



# 1893

Erie Kindergarten is one of twenty flagship programs in Chicago's Free Kindergarten Association.



# 1914

Florence Towne begins her 37-year tenure at Erie House, serving as teacher, girls' group leader, and head resident. Reader's Digest calls her "Angel of the Alleys."

# 1936

Erie Chapel Institute is renamed Erie Neighborhood House. The same year, a new building is dedicated at 1347 W. Erie St., where we still operate today.



# 1942

Erie House begins providing daycare in response to growing demand during World War II as the American workforce evolves.

# 1945

Rev. Douglas Cedarleaf marches with Erie House participants in solidarity with an African American family who had been harassed upon moving to West Town. The march is featured in TIME Magazine.





## 1957

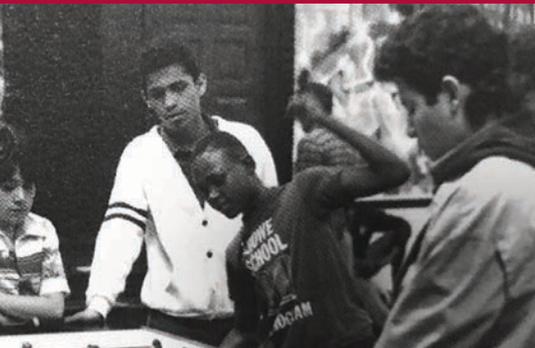
The Carmella Jacob Clinic (which will later be renamed as Erie Family Health), staffed by Northwestern University medical students, is established to serve low-income families.

## 1967

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation is founded by Erie House to create affordable housing opportunities for members of the community.

## 1970s – '80s

The demographics of West Town change as Mexican Americans become Chicago's largest immigrant community. Erie House evolves to meet the needs of a now predominantly Latinx participant population.



## 1984

Erie House collaborates with the Northern Trust Company to launch Tutoring to Educate for Aims and Motivation (TEAM), a groundbreaking mentoring program that supports the growth and development of neighborhood youth.

## 1994

Erie House moves into its second West Town location at 1701 W. Superior St., sharing a renovated factory building with Erie Family Health Center. This new space allows Erie House to expand early childhood education programming and serve more of the West Town community.

## 1996

Erie House opens its community technology center, opening new opportunities for education and professional development for participants in a changing world.





# 2004

Erie House expands to begin serving families in Little Village, a community with a rich Mexican American identity.

# 2005

Erie Elementary Charter School, founded by Erie House, opens in Humboldt Park, providing a bilingual school option for community families.

# 2016

Kirstin Chernawsky becomes Executive Director of Erie House.

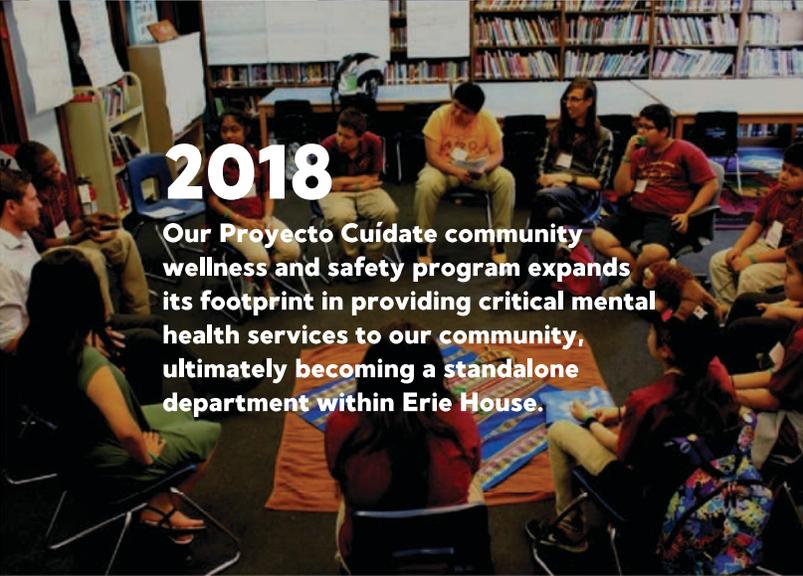
# 2017

Amidst growing concerns about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Erie House begins delivering "Know Your Rights" training to the community.



# 2018

Our Proyecto Cuidate community wellness and safety program expands its footprint in providing critical mental health services to our community, ultimately becoming a standalone department within Erie House.

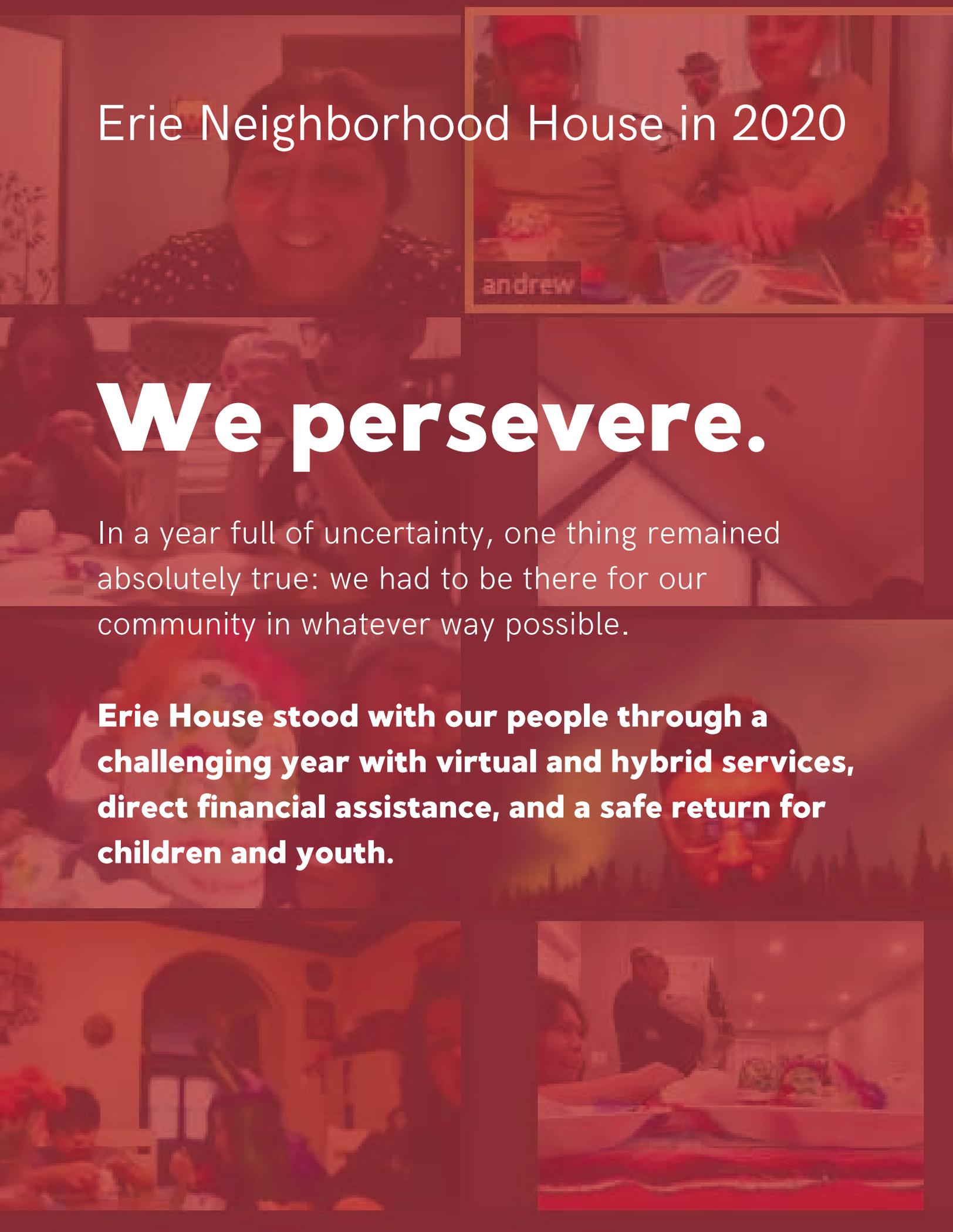


# 2019

Erie House's Legal Services program grows into its own department, expanding its mission of keeping families together and allowing them to achieve a greater sense of security in the U.S.







# Erie Neighborhood House in 2020

## We persevere.

In a year full of uncertainty, one thing remained absolutely true: we had to be there for our community in whatever way possible.

**Erie House stood with our people through a challenging year with virtual and hybrid services, direct financial assistance, and a safe return for children and youth.**

## Adapting to reach our community virtually

On March 17, 2020, Erie House closed its doors for in-person services — but our work continued. Instead of waiting for a return to normalcy, our team immediately got to work adapting to a new normal. Programs and supporting staff quickly learned new skills and tools and found creative ways to continue to serve our participants, even if from a distance.

**In FY2020, our Legal Services team had a**

**96%**

**approval rating of applications filed.**

### Remote consultations for immigration clients

Erie House's in-house attorneys and DOJ-accredited representatives provide access to low-cost, critical resources to foster security and reunification of immigrant families. Following the onset of the pandemic, the team continued to offer consultations over the phone to citizenship and immigration clients. We also hosted Citizenship workshops with the help of attorney and community volunteers to serve over 80 citizenship applicants.

**One of our legal team's clients is Camila, an award-winning artist who moved to the United States from Ecuador when she was 9 years old. Our team helped her apply for DACA in 2014 and have supported her with renewals ever since. And when Camila married her high school sweetheart in early 2020, our team helped her apply for her Green Card.**

**Camila says "it takes the support of an entire community to have a success story like mine."**



### Virtual classes for adult learners

In our English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Community Literacy classes, students gain the skills they need to thrive in the classroom, in the workplace and in the community. These classes also help prepare our participants for naturalization exams and interviews on their paths to U.S. citizenship. In our online classes, we replicated the in-person class experience with video lessons and active conversations, and our students continued to be supportive and helpful to one another.

## **Tele-health counseling and support groups for survivors of trauma**

In our Proyecto Cúdate community wellness and safety programs, we help individuals and families heal following trauma. Through counseling, case management, support services, and restorative practices, we build stronger, healthier families and communities.

In the midst of a pandemic with devastating effects on already at-risk communities, these services were critically important. So, the Proyecto Cúdate team provided one-on-one counseling through teletherapy and virtual support groups for youth to help our participants and clients navigate a stressful and traumatic time.

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**In FY2020, our  
Proyecto Cúdate  
clinicians provided**

**446**

**mental health  
sessions to survivors  
of domestic violence.**

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**“It’s beautiful to see the way people connect with one another, even as they are struggling.”**

Solomon Martinez

Youth Program Manager, Proyecto Cúdate

## **Tutoring, mentoring, and activities for children and youth**

In Erie House's Expanded Learning Programs (ELP), students aged 5 through 18 have access to after-school and out-of-school activities and clubs designed to support academic, socio-emotional, and physical growth.

We’ve shared digital books as well as off-screen educational activities for students in first through third grades in our READS program, and now, tutors connect virtually with these students to help them improve their reading comprehension and build a lifelong love of reading.

In our TEAM program, mentors continued to check in with their youth mentees, even after in-person meetings ended in March. At the start of the new school year in September, the program began to hold meetings virtually over Zoom.





## **Providing direct assistance for our participants**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, many of Erie House's participants lost hours and wages. Some lost work entirely and were unsure of how they could provide for their families and pay their bills. Others continued to work, but were stressed about care for their children with schools closed. The government aid that was made available was helpful for those who could access it, but those benefits were not available to everyone, including many undocumented families like those we serve.

With these challenges in mind, immediately after suspending our in-person services, Erie House launched our Community Relief Fund. 100% of donations to this fund went directly to Erie House participants hit hardest by the pandemic, and every dollar supported our clients and community in meeting immediate needs like groceries, child care, safe transportation, rent, utilities, and more.

We also hosted food and supply drives to ensure our people were able to access basic needs like meals for their families and diapers for their little ones.

**Erie House has provided assistance to 300 families through our Community Relief Fund – and that number continues to grow.**

## Ensuring a full count in the 2020 Census

Census data is used to allocate budget and resources to communities, which is why it's so important for everyone to participate in the census. Leading up to the closure, the Erie House Health & Leadership Programs (HLP) outreach team was hard at work knocking on doors and educating hard-to-reach communities about the necessity — and safety — of participating in the census.

Our team reached  
more than

**340,000  
people**

to encourage them to  
participate in the  
2020 Census.

**"If we don't count them now, we will be losing a lot of funding for our kids for ten years."**

Elva Serna

Program Manager, Health & Leadership Programs

Then, beginning in March, much of this community outreach work shifted to online platforms and phone-banking, and later socially-distanced tabling events and car caravans in hard-to-count areas like Berwyn and Cicero.





## Supporting our families through programs for children and youth

When Chicago schools closed for students, it was necessary to prevent further spread of COVID-19. But it was also a major challenge for the families in our programs due to gaps in access to daytime child care and reliable technology for remote learning.

After carefully planning, preparing our spaces for social distancing, and re-certifying our programs, we were able to safely welcome a limited number of early childhood and school-age students back for in-person programming in August 2020.

And when the remote CPS semester began in September, we were ready to provide a space for our school-age kiddos to spend their days learning in safe pods. It was important for us to ensure our students had a place with reliable Wi-Fi and all the tools and technology they needed to be successful throughout the school year.



**Erie House being here and open for our students has been so important for families like Maria's. She needed support for herself and her daughters to ensure family safety.**

**Maria knows her girls – Elizabeth, Stephanie, and Camilla – are safe at Erie House during the day while she works and studies for the GED.**

**Maria says her daughters "don't get sad about what's going on because they have friends to play with and their teachers are very caring."**

# Thank you to our supporters.

We're so grateful for every individual and organization that helps make our work possible. Hear from a few of them about why they choose to support Erie House:

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"I grew up half a block away from Erie Neighborhood House! Erie House was the only place my parents would let me go to after school. I recall a family near our house losing their home to a fire in the winter and the only presents they opened for Christmas were from Erie House. They were also given groceries for their holiday dinner. How does one forget something like that?"

I am a firm believer that education from the earliest possible age enables progress. Erie House's programs deliver enrichment of the mind and spirit. Erie House programs are also about empowering the individual at every age: from pre-school, to school age to adult programs. I give to Erie House because every dollar that I contribute goes towards programs and communities I value and care about."

**Librada Killian**

Board Member

"We've always felt that the mission of Erie is reflected in the staff and the people served by Erie House's various programs. Early childhood education is of particular importance to us and my wife Barb has served as a volunteer for many years in Erie House's ECP classrooms. The infectious dedication of Erie House's staff and the love and joy reflected by the people Erie House serves inspire generosity and support for the organization. It's always been very important to us to share our blessings in support of the work Erie House does. We actively introduce others to Erie House and feel the organization sells itself and inspires giving."

**Dan Hartnett**

Board Member

"Growing up in Chicago, being an immigrant, coming from a family of immigrants, I have always paid attention when topics of immigration are in the news. From an early age I always heard about Erie House or La Casa Erie as an advocate organization for immigrant rights. Knowing that Erie House has existed for 150 years gives me great hope for our city of Chicago as they have welcomed immigrants with open arms. Erie House has changed with the times but in ways that have always helped immigrants succeed and thrive, regardless of where they come from. It is organizations like Erie House that have helped many immigrant families like mine when help was needed."

**Diana Marquez**

Erie Associate Board Member

"I sit on the board of the Henry Nias Foundation, a New York-based entity. In early spring 2020, with Covid wreaking havoc on people's livelihoods, our board president decided all directors could give out an emergency donation. I found Erie House searching online, and realized its values align greatly with my own. Erie House has exactly the type of mission I want to support."

**Catherine Edelman**

West Town Community Member  
and Community Relief Fund donor

**It is organizations like  
Erie House that have  
helped many immigrant  
families like mine when  
help was needed.**

**The infectious dedication of  
Erie House's staff and the love  
and joy reflected by the  
people Erie House serves  
inspire generosity and support  
for the organization.**

"Both Erie House and the AMA are long-standing organizations rooted in Chicago and committed to improving the community we call home. At AMA, we look to eliminate health inequities and improve health outcomes. Erie House's work or its community is an ideal place for the AMA to make that investment. We love that the Erie House team cares so much and does so much for our community."

Sheri Seery, Director of Social  
Responsibility and Business Operations  
**American Medical Association**

"JBCC has been working in Chicago since 1906, and we've been able to watch the city grow as we've grown. As we work in the city's communities, we see the families and struggles of everyday life and believe we should be putting as much effort into these communities as we would our own. Erie House represents every single goal we have. We volunteer at the Holidays with Heart event every year and we are always excited to get out there and help."

Tara Szwabowski, Assistant Secretary and Philanthropy Chair  
**John Burns Construction Company**

"As a supporter of Erie Neighborhood House, we have seen firsthand the impact they bring to the communities they serve. This year, in particular, they provided urgent and community-focused resources to those hit hardest by COVID while still operating their foundational programs and services. The Chicago Blackhawks Foundation is proud to partner with Erie Neighborhood House as we both work to empower communities and increase support and opportunity for the children and families in need across Chicago."

Sara Guderyahn, Executive Director  
**Chicago Blackhawks Foundation**

"Despite a challenging year, Erie Neighborhood House demonstrated their deep commitment to supporting residents with culturally affirming mental health services through Proyecto Cuidate and raising funds to provide direct relief to communities that have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic. We value Erie Neighborhood House's important work and look forward to co-creating our shared vision of improving health outcomes in our region."

Jackie Rodriguez, Communications Officer  
**Healthy Communities Foundation**

**As a supporter of Erie Neighborhood House, we have seen  
firsthand the impact they bring to the communities they serve.**

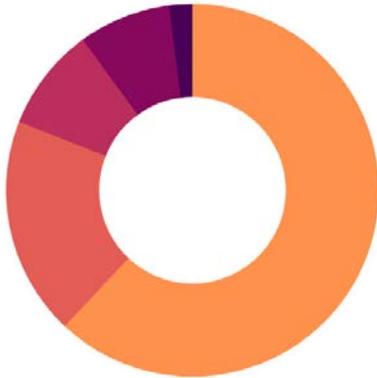
"My parents came to Chicago from Puerto Rico when they were kids and I was born and raised in Chicago. I was the first member of my family to go to and graduate from college. I attribute the education and foundation that I got to my experience being in the Early Childhood program at Erie House at Erie House. Settlement houses like Erie House and Grand St. Settlement help generations of families like mine unlock and achieve opportunity and success."

**Robert Cordero**  
Executive Director, Grand St. Settlement (New York City)  
and former Erie House participant

# Financial Highlights

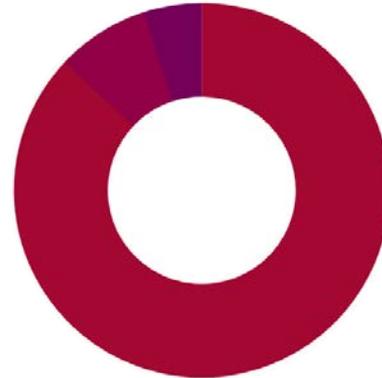
Complete Fiscal Year 2020 audited financial statements are available at [eriehouse.org/impact](http://eriehouse.org/impact)

## Where Funds Come From



62% - Government Fees/Grants  
 19% - Private Contributions  
 9% - Program Fees & Other  
 8% - Special Events  
 2% - Miscellaneous

## How Funds Are Used



87% - Programs  
 8% - Fundraising  
 5% - Management & General

## Statement of activities as of June 30, 2020 & June 30, 2019

Revenue	2020	2019
Private Contributions		
Foundation, Corporations and Trusts	1,226,829	812,748
Individuals & Board	297,175	79,775
Congregations	1,133	5,447
Donated Goods & Services	359,717	3,821,570
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago	127,900	70,000
Government Fees/Grants	6,536,089	5,867,416
Special Events	879,924	557,595
Other Income and Program Fees	926,725	695,775
Investment Return, net	107,250	138,543
Miscellaneous Income	17,421	1,200
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>10,480,163</b>	<b>12,050,069</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Programs	8,766,940	8,094,452
Management & General	476,434	394,996
Removal of Construction in Progress		1,612,475
Fundraising	811,314	701,384
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>10,054,688</b>	<b>10,803,307</b>

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Caber Hill Advisors

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### Treasurer

Allstate

## Carlos Ramirez

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Illinois Department of  
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## Elizabeth Binkley

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## Lory Carbajal Van Ness

The Coca-Cola Company

## Adriana Cuellar

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## Frances Delgado

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Committee Chair  
Teamsters Local 705

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## Ashley Galston

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BMO Financial Group

## Stephanie Kanter

### Programs Committee Chair

Candidate for Master of Arts in  
Liberal Studies, 2021

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## Lou Leonardi

Wintrust

## Monique Mervin

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## Nadine O'Malley

HOME

## Oswaldo Ortega

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## Chris Terzich

### Government & Oversight

### Committee Chair

CIBC Bank USA

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Rose Ann Savino

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John Van Pelt

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Nancy Vincent

Carol Wiley

Kathy Wiley

Richard Wiley

Robert Wiley\*

\*deceased member



**erie**  
neighborhood  
**house**

**Erie Community Center &  
Administrative Offices**

1701 W. Superior St., Chicago IL 60622  
(312) 653-5800

**Erie Neighborhood House**

1347 W. Erie St., Chicago IL 60642  
(312) 666-3430

**Erie House Little Village**

4225 W. 25th St., Chicago IL 60623  
(312) 542-7617

**Erie House Satellite Locations**

**Jose De Diego Community  
Academy - After School**

1313 N. Claremont Ave., Chicago IL 60622  
(312) 975-2637

**Logan Square Neighborhood  
Association - Legal Services**

2840 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60618  
(312) 384-4370