



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



ERIE COUNTY  
**LAND BANK**

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info@eriecountylandbank.org (814) 580-8990

[eriecountylandbank.org](http://eriecountylandbank.org)

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## A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### This past year marked a period of change and new beginnings for the Erie County Land Bank.

I joined the organization at the beginning of 2025 and quickly began learning the many facets of land banking. Throughout the year, our team attended conferences and benefited from the insight of experienced professionals in the field.

We also made significant operational progress, including approving our first employee handbook, implementing new accounting functions, and streamlining payroll services. As we continue to improve internal efficiencies, we remain focused on strengthening service to municipalities across Erie County.

Our impact on the municipalities we serve also grew as we added seven blighted properties to our inventory and improved them through demolition and landscaping. We were able to sell ten properties and helped achieve our goal of returning these once blighted properties back to taxable status. We partnered with Realtor Pat Groner from Pennington Lines to aid in marketing our available properties and working with potential buyers. Our new property purchasers created landscaped lots, new garages and the first new home built in Corry, PA in years.

We continued our partnerships with first responders by hosting training exercises at properties slated for future demolition, including sessions for the Millcreek Township Police Department and the Union City Fire Department. These training courses provide realistic scenarios that help their personnel build skills and prepare safely for real-world situations.

We also piloted new outreach efforts, including our first annual Summer Open House, to highlight our work and connect with municipal leaders. These conversations strengthened existing relationships, opened the door to new municipal partnerships, and gave us valuable firsthand insight from the communities we serve as we continue working to combat blight countywide.

With all the exciting things happening in 2025, we look forward to an even more productive next year as we grow our impact and increase our efforts.



Handwritten signature of Jeremy Bloeser

**Jeremy Bloeser**  
Executive Director  
Erie County Land Bank

## ERIE COUNTY LAND BANK MISSION STATEMENT

The Erie County Land Bank was created to acquire, hold, and transfer interest in real property throughout Erie County in order to deter the spread of blight; promote redevelopment and reuse of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties; support targeted efforts to stabilize neighborhoods; and stimulate residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The Erie County Land Bank works in alignment with the goals and priorities of our local government partners and community stakeholders. Together, we strive to stabilize and enhance our unique communities within Erie County.

# 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Brian McGrath, Chair**  
**Christine Rush, Vice Chair**  
**James Cardman, Secretary**  
**Jack Lee, Treasurer**

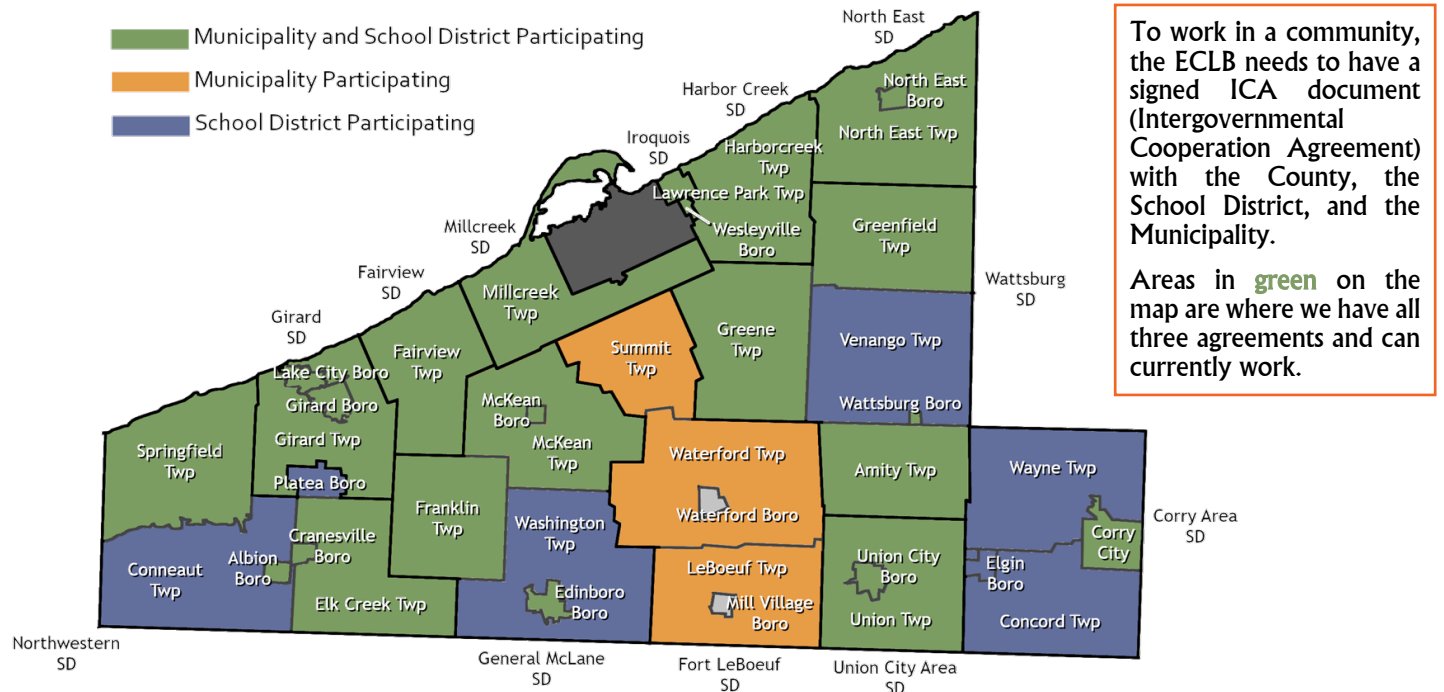
**David Mitchell**  
**Suzanne Weber**  
**Timofey Bogdanets**

**Sandra Morrow**  
**Susannah Faulkner**  
**Scott Harris**

Solicitor: Jennifer Hirneisen

## OUR PARTNERS

as of Dec. 31, 2025



### Participating Municipalities

(with year partnered)

- Albion Borough, 2019
- Amity Township, 2024
- City of Corry, 2019
- Cranesville Borough, 2022
- Edinboro Borough, 2025
- Elk Creek Township, 2019
- Fairview Township, 2019
- Franklin Township, 2019
- Girard Borough, 2019
- Girard Township, 2021
- Greene Township, 2019
- Greenfield Township, 2024
- Harborcreek Township, 2023
- Lake City Borough, 2020

- Lawrence Park Township, 2019
- LeBoeuf Township, 2024
- McKean Borough, 2025
- McKean Township, 2019
- Millcreek Township, 2019
- North East Borough, 2019
- North East Township, 2019
- Springfield Township, 2019
- Summit Township, 2019
- Union City Borough, 2019
- Union Township, 2023
- Waterford Township, 2023
- Wattsburg Borough, 2023
- Wesleyville Borough, 2019

### Participating School Districts

(with year partnered)

- Corry Area School District, 2019
- Fairview School District, 2019
- General McLane School District, 2019
- Girard School District, 2019
- Harbor Creek School District, 2023
- Iroquois School District, 2019
- Millcreek Township School District, 2019
- North East School District, 2019
- Northwestern School District, 2019
- Union City Area School District, 2019
- Wattsburg Area School District, 2019

**Thank you to our partners!**

If your Erie County municipality or school district is not yet partnered with the ECLB and you'd like more information, please contact us at (814) 580-8990 or [jeremy@eriecountylandbank.org](mailto:jeremy@eriecountylandbank.org).

## ECLB FAQ

**What's the difference between the Erie County Land Bank and the Erie Land Bank?**

Location! The Erie Land Bank works in the City of Erie. The Erie County Land Bank works throughout the rest of Erie County. Despite being separate entities, the ECLB and the ELB work closely together.

**How does the Erie County Land Bank acquire properties?**

The ECLB typically acquires properties through tax sales, donations, or the Repository List. We can also work with municipalities and county government toward acquisitions. Pennsylvania land banks do not have eminent domain powers.

**Does the ECLB compete with the private market?**

No, the ECLB typically obtains properties that have sizeable property tax debt, are in need of extensive repairs, and that often carry title issues or other liens. This all adds up to much more expense and time than a private buyer or developer is able to take on.

**What does the ECLB do with properties it acquires?**

We discuss the best use for a property with the municipality and work toward that end goal. This could mean renovation, demolition, or partnering with other organizations on a project.

**What if the ECLB uses a property in a way our community doesn't want it to?**

The Land Bank is a tool for communities to address blighted properties. We have conversations with our municipal partners about which properties to obtain and what end use they have in mind. We're here to help, not to take over.

**Can anyone purchase a property from the ECLB?**

The ECLB has an application process for purchasing properties. Anyone may apply, but there are stipulations for potential buyers. Unlike standard real estate transactions, ECLB property sales are not necessarily awarded to the highest bidder; they are based on the highest and best end use of the property in line with the community's desired outcome.

**What's the 5/50 tax recapture?**

Our agreements include a clause that 50% of taxes assessed on a property will be allotted to the ECLB for five years after the property is returned to tax rolls. This helps offset the cost of blight mitigation and allows us to make additional investments into our local communities.

As these properties are typically tax delinquent before the ECLB acquires them, taxing bodies are often still collecting funds that they had not previously been receiving.

Have another question? Please reach out to (814) 580-8990 or [info@eriecountylandbank.org](mailto:info@eriecountylandbank.org).

# 2025 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

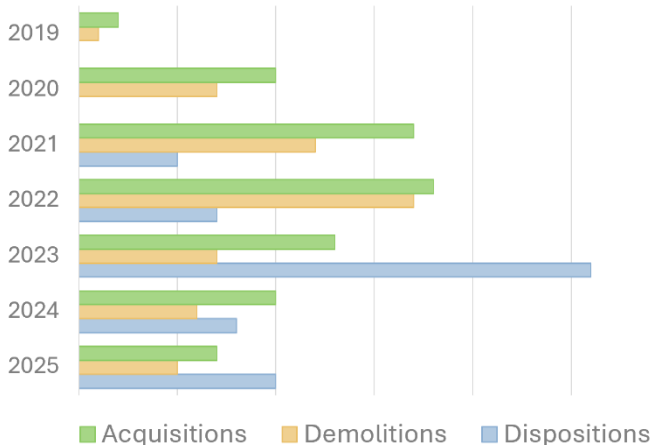
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,258,411</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$379,229</b>
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>\$1,130,000</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,392,579</b>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$3,879,212</b>

Detailed audit reports are available at [eriecountylandbank.org](http://eriecountylandbank.org).

## ECLB BY THE NUMBERS

	2025	In Total
<b>Properties Acquired</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Blighted Structures Demolished</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Structures Sold for Rehabilitation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Properties Returned to Productive Use</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Total Value of Properties Returned to Productive Use</b>	<b>\$156,600</b>	<b>\$1.07 million</b>

## ECLB PROPERTIES BY YEAR



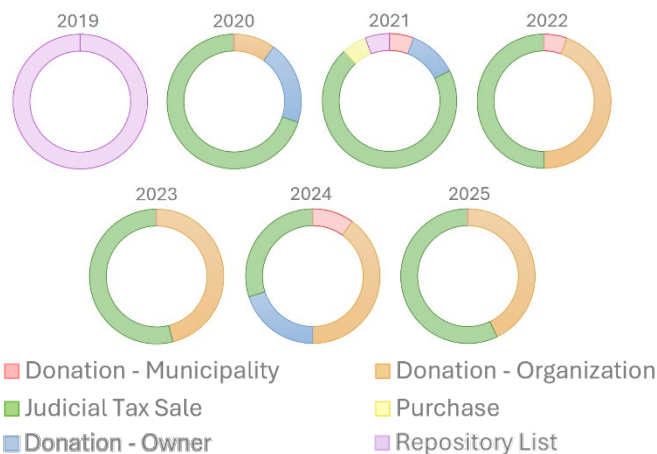
Historically, most ECLB properties were acquired through the annual Judicial Tax Sale. The sale lists have been shrinking over the past few years, which is good in that paid property taxes benefit our communities.

What doesn't benefit our communities is when owners of vacant, deteriorating properties pay their taxes on time, but do nothing else to remedy the serious issues with those properties. This makes it more difficult for us to acquire these parcels, so we intend to explore new acquisition avenues going forward.

We have been very active in the City of Corry due in part to the work of the Corry Neighborhood Initiative and the Corry Industrial Benefit Association. These community organizations obtain problem properties and donate them to the ECLB, allowing us to address the blight and revitalize affected neighborhoods. We are always open to conversations with municipalities about properties of concern and ways we may help.

In 2025, the ECLB partnered with Realtor Pat Groner of Pennington Lines to list our Vacant Lots on the MLS. This has played a crucial role in 2025 being our second-best year ever for property sales, returning ten properties to productive use.

## ACQUISITION TYPE BY YEAR

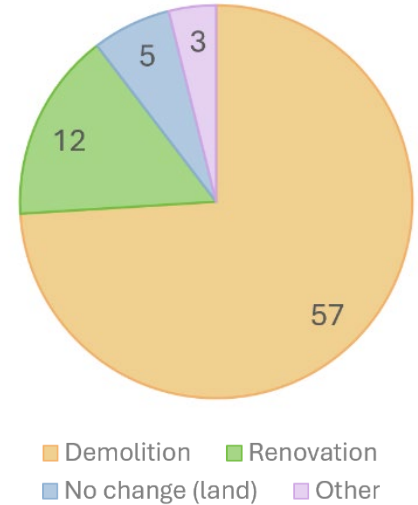


\* All except 2 organization donations were made by the Corry Neighborhood Initiative/ Corry Industrial Benefit Association.

## INITIAL PROPERTY OUTCOMES

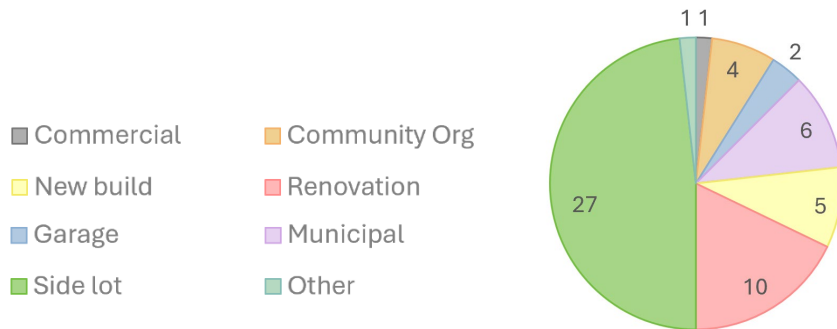
Much of the activity carried out by the ECLB is demolition. The removal of a blighted property instantly uplifts a community, and neighbors are often happy when the deteriorated, vacant house next door is gone.

Other neighbors miss the house that's always been next door, even if they acknowledge it had problems. Unfortunately, most properties obtained by the ECLB to date have been too deteriorated to be saved by the time we acquire them. Some buildings may appear salvageable from the street, but the interior is collapsing or the foundation is unstable. In some cases, if we'd been able to obtain a property even a few years earlier, it could have been saved.



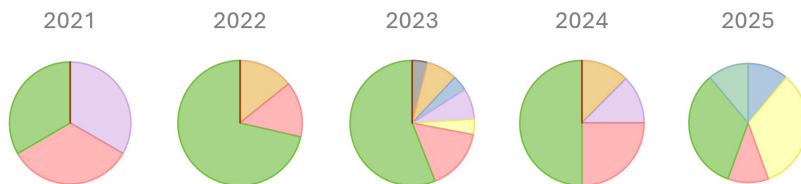
The Land Bank is just one tool in a community's toolbox to address blighted properties. Land Banks complement other tools such as strategic code enforcement, planning, and community development. These municipal actions lay the groundwork for the ECLB to be able to help with blighted properties.

## END USES OF DISPOSED PROPERTIES



Not every parcel on which the ECLB demolishes a house is considered large enough for a new home to be built under modern zoning. These parcels, sold through the Side Lot Program, open up excellent opportunities for neighbors to expand or gain a yard.

## END USES BY YEAR OF DISPOSITION



We're very excited by the number of parcels sold in 2025 for new home builds, which stabilize and breathe new life into Erie County communities.

## NEW LEADERSHIP



**We kicked off 2025 by welcoming Jeremy Bloeser as the new ECLB Executive Director on January 1<sup>st</sup>.** Jeremy has brought a wealth of experience to the Land Bank, joining our team after twelve years as the Executive Director of the Bayfront East Side Task Force (BEST). His work at BEST addressing blight and improving neighborhood conditions provided valuable knowledge and insight which is now benefitting our partnered communities throughout Erie County.

**Also in 2025, we bid farewell to founding Board member Christine Rush, and welcomed new Board member Scott Harris.** We fondly wish Chris the best of luck in her next chapter and are thrilled to have Scott on board!

## 2025 DEMOLITIONS



Throughout the summer and fall, we demolished six seriously deteriorated houses in Erie County communities.

Most of these properties were acquired from tax sales due to delinquencies, and all are now reset and ready to be put back into productive use.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET, CORRY



Corry, Pennsylvania has a vibrant city center, and several active community organizations working hard to energize and revitalize local neighborhoods. Despite their many successes, new houses were not being built in the area.

That all changed in 2025. Wanting to enroll their children in the Corry School District, a family from Pittsfield had decided to relocate. While reviewing potential locations for their new home, they found a lot on 5<sup>th</sup> Street which seemed perfect.

The property they were interested in had been acquired by the Corry Neighborhood Initiative in 2023, who donated it directly to the Erie County Land Bank. In derelict condition and with the foundation crumbling away, the house could not be saved. The ECLB carried out the demolition and land reset with the help of the Act 152 Demo Fund.

The family from Pittsfield filled out an ECLB Vacant Lot Application in February of 2025. Their application was approved by Corry and the ECLB Board of Directors, and the sale was completed in April.

**By September, the family was settled into their new home—the first new house built in Corry in ten years, on land made available by the Erie County Land Bank.**

# PROPERTY PROGRAMS

**ECLB properties are not necessarily sold to the highest bidder; rather, they are sold for the highest and best end use.** Interested parties must fill out an application for the property they would like to purchase. Applicants are vetted for tax delinquencies, violations, and liens on their current properties.



## VACANT LOT PROGRAM

The Vacant Lot Program is how buildable lots are listed for sale. These properties are designated for new structures, rather than yard expansion or green space.

## SIDE OR NEIGHBORHOOD LOT PROGRAM

The Side Lot Program allows qualifying homeowners to purchase designated parcels adjacent to their property at a low price to expand their yard, increasing the overall value of their property.

The Neighborhood Lot Program allows qualifying homeowners living within 500 feet of a designated Side Lot to purchase the lot at a low price.

# FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING SITES

**ECLB buildings offer a unique opportunity to local first responders, allowing area Fire and Police Departments the ability to hold important trainings not possible in traditional locations.**

Properties slated for demolition are allowed to be further damaged, including:

- Door breaches
- Pepper spray/pepper ball
- Fill with smoke for search and rescue
- Cutting holes in the roof
- Controlled burns

Properties reserved for renovation or resale can be utilized for non-damaging exercises, including:

- Movement
- Hostage negotiation
- Clearing rooms
- EMT extrications

If you are a first responder and you are interested in scheduling a training at a land bank property, please contact us at (814) 580-8990 or [info@eriecountylandbank.org](mailto:info@eriecountylandbank.org). Please note that there may not always be suitable properties available, but we'll be happy to work with you when there are.



# RAPID RESET PROGRAM

Overgrowth, aging trees, aggressively invasive weeds, or debris may have gotten out of hand for a homeowner who is otherwise upkeeping their property. This could be due to a permanent situation such as aging or a chronic medical condition, or due to a temporary situation such as an acute medical condition or family emergency. The homeowner can't personally address these issues and isn't able to afford professional assistance, but is able to care for or arrange maintenance of their yard if these major issues are remedied.

This homeowner is an ideal candidate for the ECLB Rapid Reset Program!

**In an effort to stop blight before it starts, the ECLB has dedicated funding to arrange for one-time exterior cleanups of home properties in need, through our Rapid Reset Program.**

## To Qualify:

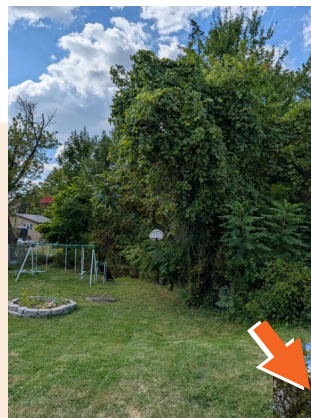
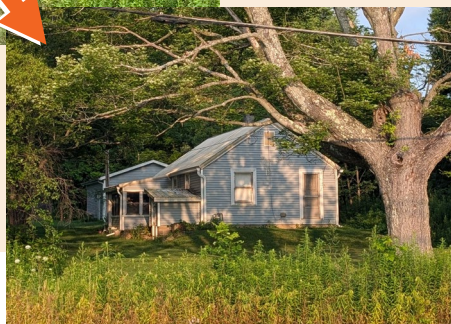
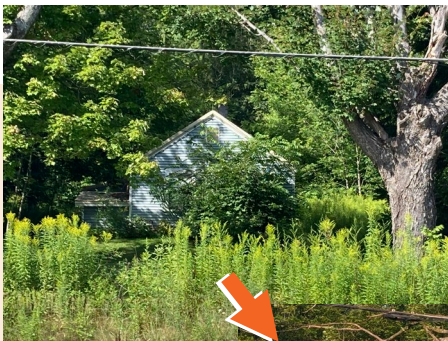
- Home must be owner-occupied (no commercial buildings or rentals).
- Home must be located in a land bank-participating municipality and school district.
- Homeowner is unable to perform or afford the initial work.
- A plan for maintaining the property after the Reset must be in place.

## How it works:

- 1) A municipal official identifies a property/homeowner in need, checks with the homeowner to make sure they're interested, and fills out the application on the ECLB website, found at [eriecountylanbank.com/programs/cleanup](http://eriecountylanbank.com/programs/cleanup).
- 2) If the application is selected, the ECLB reaches out to the homeowner to view the property and discuss the property issues. The ECLB makes sure the homeowner has a plan in place for the upkeep of their property following a potential Reset.
- 3) If the project is determined to be viable, the ECLB makes arrangements with landscapers to address the identified issues.
- 4) Once the property has been reset, the homeowner follows their upkeep plan.

Applications should demonstrate homeowner need and include a practicable post-Reset plan. At this time, the program is strictly for cleanup and does not include repairs.

As this is a blight prevention program, homes that are already seriously deteriorated are unlikely to qualify. An application does not guarantee a Reset.



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

### Address problem properties in new ways

Our near-record sales in 2025 means that neighborhoods are being revitalized and parcels are back on the tax rolls. It also means that the ECLB inventory has decreased, with fewer properties available to potential buyers who are looking to return them to productive use.

We're happy to accept that if it's due to all blight in Erie County being eliminated... but, this is not yet the case. The reason for this decrease is remaining vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties becoming more difficult to acquire. Since most of these properties aren't winding up on the Judicial Tax Sale, we intend to work with our partnered communities to explore new avenues of addressing problem properties.

### Increase outreach and partnerships

Due to the concentration of blighted properties as well as community organization involvement, a large portion of our work has occurred to date in Corry and Union City. We look forward to furthering our activities here, while also becoming more active in our other partnered municipalities. Our 2025 Judicial Tax Sale acquisitions include parcels in Cranesville Borough and McKean Township, our first properties in both communities.

We will also continue to reach out to the one school district and ten municipalities with whom we are not yet partnered, to discuss possible ways we may be of assistance in their jurisdictions.

Officials from municipalities and school districts within the ECLB footprint up through state government can expect an invitation to our second annual Summer Open House in 2026. We were excited to share lunch and information with about forty officials at our first Open House in July, and are looking forward to welcoming even more guests to our 2026 event!

### Expand blight prevention programs

While not all communities need extensive blight remediation, most have at least one or two households who could benefit from the Rapid Reset Program to prevent blight before it starts. With the success of our pilot Reset, we're looking forward to bringing this benefit of ECLB partnership to more Erie County homes.

We're also in discussions to reignite our Master Homeowner Program, a hands-on class series introducing homeowners to many aspects of home maintenance, empowering them to protect their home and preventing blight before it starts.



## IN CONCLUSION

### **2025 was a year of new beginnings for the Erie County Land Bank, with a new Executive Director, new board members, and a renewed outlook.**

Building on our existing experience and knowledge, in 2025 we educated ourselves about the ECLB to date; gathered new ideas and perspectives through outreach and conference attendance; and interwove those concepts with existing ECLB processes to move the organization— and thus the communities we serve— forward toward a brighter future. It was exciting to see the positive impact of our property sales and demolitions in 2025, and we can't wait to continue our upward momentum in 2026 with an even wider scope of blight remediation and prevention.

