

## Lehigh Valley Manufacturing & Supply Chain Industry Partnership - Meeting Minutes

Meeting 1 | Monday September 29, 2025 | 2:00pm-3:30pm

### Participants:

B. Braun Medical Inc.	Morten	Rasmussen
Da Vinci Science Center	Kendal	Askins
Da Vinci Science Center	Trey	Yogeshwar
EMD Electronics	Kelly	Hansbury
Evonik	Todd	McEvoy
Freshpet Kitchens	Mindy	Deeds
Gemini (KB Systems)	Portia	Watkins
German American Chamber of Commerce	Matthew	Allen
HindlePower	Brian	Fritz
Holcim	Lorraine	Faccenda
Ledvance	Nancy	Williams
Lehigh Career and Technical Institute	Randy	Zimmerman
Lehigh University	Lisa	Moughan
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation	Karianne	Gelinas
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation	Trisha	Nardone
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission / Workforce Board LV	Minsoo	Park
Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority	Christopher	Heckman
Lutron Electronics Company	Ken	Borger
Manufacturers Resource Center	Diane	Lewis
NFI Industries	Sarah	Hessinger
Northampton Community College	Shelly	Mule
Northampton Community College	Ken	Nasatka
Northampton Community College	Michele	Salkin
Northampton Community College	Dr. Shawn	Thomas
PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley	Ryan	Knepp
Penn College of Technology	Angelo	Fattore
Penn State Lehigh Valley	Andrea	Tessier
Precision Roll Grinders, Inc.	Victor	Schmidt
Sharp Packaging Services	Kristine	Chimics
Sharp Packaging Services	Brad	Kreibel
Ward TLC	Ron	Spina
Workforce Board Lehigh Valley	Sarah	Lutz

**Location:**

PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley  
555 Union Blvd  
Allentown, PA 18109

**Summary:**

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

**Nancy Dischinat**, Executive Director, and **Sarah Lutz**, Assistant Executive Director of the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, welcomed attendees to the inaugural Industry Partnership meeting, introducing the meeting organizers from iTEC Lehigh Valley and the guest speakers.

**2. Industry Partnership Purpose and Goals**

**Sarah Lutz** reviewed the purpose of the Industry Partnership including:

1. Addressing key challenges in hiring, training, and retention
2. Leveraging collective strengths to solve problems beyond one company's capacity
3. Developing strategies to attract talent, improve workplaces, and stay competitive
4. Building a resilient industry that adapts to changing market demands
5. Revising the WBLV's Industry Partnership grant narrative and budget to reflect the needs of the Partnership – grant to expire on June 30, 2026.

The Partnership will convene for 7 additional meetings between October 2025 and May of 2026.

**3. Guest Presentations**

- **Minsoo Park**, Economist; WBLV and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, presented data relating to the manufacturing and supply chain industries, noting key indicators, including the higher percentage of the workforce represented by the sectors in the Lehigh Valley compared to Pennsylvania as a whole and a decline in overall employment in the region due to a reduction of 5,000 jobs in the supply chain industry since 2023.

- **Morten Rasmussen**, Chair iTEC Lehigh Valley ; Corporate Vice President, Human Resources for Operations, Logistics and Quality, B.Braun Medical, Inc., presented the iTEC Lehigh Valley training consortium model, highlighting the employer-led initiative's support of workforce needs through Apprenticeships.

#### **4. Community Discussion and Needs Assessment**

- Hiring / Talent Acquisition
  - Company representatives discussed ongoing challenges in finding and retaining qualified new hires, particularly for entry-level positions.
  - Several employers noted instances where candidates accepted new positions without formally resigning from their previous jobs, only to return to their former employers shortly after starting. Others mentioned cases of new hires failing to report for work on their first day.
  - Concerns were also raised about inaccuracies or misrepresentations on résumés, particularly regarding work experience and safety credentials—such as forklift operation.
  - Participants observed that minimum experience requirements and company-specific criteria (including age and prior work experience) can significantly limit the available talent pool. Additionally, differing skill requirements and job profiles among companies make coordinated talent acquisition efforts challenging.
  - In terms of soft skills, employers cited communication—especially written communication—and reliability as key areas of concern. Some noted that soft skill proficiency among incumbent workers declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the ongoing need for employee training and development.
- Collaboration and Investment Priorities
  - Participants had mixed experience with Artificial Intelligence (AI), with some utilizing it internally for efficiency improvements as well as process and internal document development. Others have not implemented AI tools or are not permitted to due to regulatory oversight.
  - Artificial Intelligence is being identified in resume development and interview preparation by candidates, which is leading to some misrepresentation of skills.
  - It was also noted that AI is expected to take the place of some jobs and that employers are considering this for future planning.

- The Da Vinci Science Center noted that an installation at their center (Career Kiosk) offers visitors the opportunity to explore career paths based on submissions regarding their skills and interests.
- Suggested uses for additional resources included training (especially for forklift operation and automated training), support for issues regarding attendance (including childcare, transportation, and housing costs), and exposing the younger generation to manufacturing and supply chain work sites in person, including multiple different environments.
- Multiple participants noted issues with a declining talent pool, including smaller graduating high school classes, less interest in hard skills, inability to pass drug screenings, and reduced workforce participation.

## 5. Closing

Sarah Lutz reviewed the 2025-2026 Industry Partnership meeting schedule, upcoming events, and displayed the link to the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation's Talent Supply Study survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

### **Next Meeting:**

**DATE:** Monday, October 27, 2025

**TIME:** 2:00pm – 3:30pm

**LOCATION:**

B. Braun Medical Inc  
901 Marcon Blvd.  
Allentown, PA 18109