

Memorandum of Understanding among the Partners of the Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership.

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish an agreement among the partners of the Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership (ERMP) regarding their respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities.

Period of Relevance

This MOU is designed as an informational document to serve as a record of the relationship between the signatories and ERMP, effective upon execution. The document will be reviewed annually for any changes or modifications, and recommendations will be made to the ERMP Board of Directors.

Background

ERMP was formed in 2014 by a group of local manufacturers to develop and implement a plan that will result in the ability to identify, qualify, and recruit individuals for employment and training. Moreover, the partnership was forged to meet the skilled workforce needs of member companies and to create greater opportunities for individuals in the community to enter into and advance along manufacturing career pathways. This grassroots effort led by manufacturers seeks to partner with other organizations and institutions to collectively identify needs and champion solutions as it relates to developing a robust pipeline and producing a skilled workforce.

Goals

The overall goals of the Erie Regional Manufacturers Partnership are to:

- Change perceptions of the manufacturing industry image and provide knowledge of career options.
- Increase the use of assessments and credentials for placing talent.
- Increase occupational relevancy in education.
- Create more opportunities for work experience and hands-on learning.
- Create seamless career pathways, aligning education and training programs to employers' needs.
- Increase retention and job satisfaction through innovative practices.

Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding

- **Manufacturers** – Those who recognize the need to attract and develop the next generation to ensure the continuing competitiveness of manufacturing in the area as the single most critical issue and the importance of industry to take a leadership role in identifying industry's needs, to develop a sustainable plan for answering common needs, create a unified voice, and implement industry-driven solutions.
- **Education and Training Partners** – Includes Postsecondary Education/Training and Secondary Educational Institutions, Intermediary Units, Bridge Programs, English As a Second Language Instruction, Workplace Literacy and/or Remedial or Developmental Courses.
- **Workforce Partners** – Public workforce agencies and PA CareerLink.

- **Economic Development Partners** – Includes state, county, and city economic development organizations, chambers of commerce and others that provide services and resources to support business growth.
- **Social Service Partners** – Includes state, county, and non-profit agencies and others that provide wrap-around support and resources for individuals considering or entering into manufacturing career pathways.
- **Community Partners** – Organizations within the community interested in the economic vitality of the region. These could include banks, insurance companies, accounting firms, etc.
- **Individuals** – Those who are passionate about the topic and are willing to contribute to the mission of the collaborative.
- **Intermediary Organization** – Organizations like ERMP are considered Intermediaries.

Changes or Modifications

Partners may withdraw as a signatory from this MOU at any time, and those who discontinue the partnership will be withdrawn from this agreement as well.

Partner Benefits and Responsibilities

Each partner within the ERMP Collaborative can benefit from full participation, and each has a critical role to play to attract and develop the current and future skilled workforce in manufacturing in Erie County. The following outlines those benefits and roles.

Manufacturer Partners

The Benefits of Being a Partner

- Identify Common Needs by conducting timely research on economic and industry trends critical to manufacturing in the region.
- Create a single, powerful voice to communicate your needs to the education and workforce development communities. Working together as a cohesive group provides a greater and more effective means to address workforce challenges and open up opportunities that individually manufacturers cannot afford to pursue.
- Influence education and training by providing feedback to schools about the skills required to successfully enter into manufacturing occupations, so they can offer training programs that reflect real-time market needs to ensure a well-qualified pool of graduates who possess specific competencies desired by industry.
- Decrease recruitment and training costs by ensuring a pool of qualified workers is ready for industry recruitment and/or advancement with skills based on industry needs.
- Change perceptions about manufacturing to attract a more highly skilled workforce by using common messages and promoting manufacturing careers throughout the community.
- Provide an ongoing forum for information sharing and strategic discussion to share ideas and best practices through networking and create a “sounding board” for solutions on common issues.
- Implement strategies to improve employee recruitment and retention by learning about advanced workplace practices that will enable you to hire with confidence, increase employee commitment, make better promotion decisions and assist managers in carrying out business strategies.

- Link to funding for workforce development and training, receive priority consideration to participate in grant-funded activities and work collaboratively to get new funding to support regional priorities.

Roles of a Manufacturer Partner

- Attend general membership meetings, forums, and other events to provide strategic direction, insight, and feedback and share expertise and industry knowledge.
- Contribute to labor supply and demand analysis, participating in surveys about hiring and training trends, including current and future hiring projections and skill needs.
- Consult with training partners to provide feedback into programs and curricula including recruitments standards, training criteria, and course design.
- Serve as hosts for pathway program work-based learning, which may include internships, on-the-job training, customized training and/or apprenticeships.
- Provide resources (financial and in-kind) to aid in sustainability and success, which may include membership dues, match funding for training, materials for training programs, etc.
- Provide at least one Manufacturing Career Pathway Ambassador from your company to participate in speaking engagements, outreach and career awareness activities and/or facility tours to showcase career opportunities in manufacturing.
- Assist with recruiting other manufacturers to create a more powerful voice and ensure activities are representative of the industry as a whole by providing leads and contacts
- Utilize CareerLink (in Pennsylvania) for recruitment activities, including posting all available job openings.
- Participate in evaluation activities to measure progress and satisfaction, including surveys and testimonials regarding success
- Consider advanced hiring and retention practices, including adopting consistent and valid hiring practices, providing advancement opportunities for incumbent workers and making accommodations to help incumbent workers achieve success/complete training.

Education and Training Partners

Benefits of Being a Partner

- Provide comprehensive and accurate career advisement to students through real-time feedback from industry about occupational trends and understanding where promising career opportunities lie.
- Participate in professional development opportunities providing real-world examples and context for curriculum development.
- Increase enrollment into your programs through ERMP outreach and recruitment strategies while networking with other partners for possible opportunities.
- Improve student preparedness by aligning programs to specific skills and competencies required.
- Understand hiring projections in order to inform future program development and student recruitment.
- Partner with other institutions to create seamless career pathways for students, encouraging advancement, and improving program performance.
- Learn about best practices from others within the region and across the country for program design/content.

- Bolster your voice with policymakers through partnering with industry to create a common agenda addressing barriers and winning support your efforts.
- Strengthen education and training programs by incorporating work-based learning and hands-on opportunities for students.
- Identify and attract more resources to support innovative program design and address identified gaps.

Roles of an Education Partner

- Work collaboratively with other partners, including manufacturers and other institutions, to identify plausible education and training solutions to workforce needs.
- Attend collaborative meetings, forums, and other events to provide strategic direction, insight, and feedback.
- Develop/modify curricula in partnership with ERMP to ensure students receive the skills and credentials needed to enter and advance along manufacturing career pathways.
- Incorporate identified assessments and credentials that are nationally portable and industry-recognized into manufacturing career pathway programs.
- Disseminate ERMP materials and labor market information to advisors and instructors to ensure they are providing accurate guidance and career pathway navigation.
- Work with other partners (Pa CareerLink, other education and training providers, social service organizations, etc.) to develop effective and non-duplicative recruitment and assessment strategies to enroll and place students into the most appropriate entry point on the career pathway; keeping the best interests of the student in mind.
- Contribute to outreach activities to identifying opportunities and increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and related programs. Activities include industrial career fairs, company tours, speaking engagements, etc.
- Aid in the development of customized curriculum, when applicable, for a tailored approach to industry training needs.
- Proactively identify, share, and incorporate best practices about program design and content.
- Participate in evaluation activities by sharing data related to manufacturing career pathways programs and student performance.

Roles of Secondary Educational Institutions

Includes high schools, career centers, boards of education, educational service centers and intermediary units.

- Contribute to outreach activities by identifying opportunities to increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and related programs. Such activities would include Industrial Career Fairs, company tours, speaking engagements, etc.
- Provide early academic and career counseling to motivate students to be aware of all postsecondary options and the value of their academic and career accomplishments.
- Attend Collaborative meetings, forums, and other events to provide strategic direction, insight, and feedback.
- Disseminate ERMP materials and labor market information to advisors and teachers to ensure they are able to provide accurate guidance and career pathway navigation.
- Bolster career guidance by providing professional development opportunities for teachers and counselors.
- Focus on strategies that will eliminate or reduce the need for remedial work in postsecondary education.

- Increase occupational relevance in education by contextualizing lessons with real-world, industry themed examples.
- Identify and negotiate articulation agreements with postsecondary officials to develop and offer credit-bearing transitional coursework to facilitate student advancement from high school to postsecondary programs.
- Proactively identify, share, and incorporate best practices for program design and content.
- Participate in evaluation activities, including sharing feedback and data related information for manufacturing career pathways programs.

Roles of Bridge Programs

Bridge Programs include those that provide GED preparation, English as a Second Language instruction, workplace literacy and/or remedial or developmental courses.

- Provide adults with basic skills they need to enter and advance in postsecondary education/training.
- Increase occupational relevance in education by contextualizing lessons with real-world, industry examples.
- Incorporate workplace skills and personal effectiveness competencies in coursework.
- Proactively identify, share, and incorporate best practices about program design and content.
- Contribute to outreach activities by identifying opportunities to increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and related programs.

Workforce Partner

Workforce Partners include the public workforce development agencies, Workforce Investment Boards and PA CareerLinks.

Benefits of Partnership

- Network and connect manufacturing employers you serve to ERMP as an organization focused on current and future work shortages.
- Provide comprehensive and accurate career counseling to individuals you serve by capturing real-time feedback from industry regarding occupational trends and promising career opportunities.
- Invest public resources strategically into education and training programs enhanced by ERMP.
- Increase performance through first-hand experience regarding which programs are most effective, result in placements, and pay competitive wages for in-demand manufacturing jobs.
- Place job seeking customers into positions of employment through stackable career pathways programs created or improved through ERMP and designed to maximize labor market value through the most efficient means.
- Increase individual customer retention through improved career pathways, assessments, and wrap around services.
- Receive feedback from industry and partners about which programs are effective and how others can be improved.
- Attract more resources to support innovative program design and address identified gaps.

Roles of a Workforce Partner

- Work with manufacturer partners to facilitate job orders and adapt screening, recruitment, and assessment strategies, as needed, at the request of ERMP.

- Increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and related programs through online and in-person manufacturing workshops and PA CareerLink locations.
- Notify and invite ERMP members to participate in events which would include jobs fairs and other events sponsored by the public workforce system.
- Invest resources in manufacturing career pathways programs and services created or endorsed by ERMP.
- Work with other partners (education and training providers, social service organizations, etc.) to develop effective and non-duplicative recruitment and assessment strategies to ensure students are placed into the appropriate entry point on the career pathway.
- Provide job search assistance to individuals interested in manufacturing careers.
- Provide support and wrap-around services to individuals in career pathways programs and/or entry level employment.
- Assist in recruiting new manufacturing members by connecting ERMP partners to manufacturers who could support ERMP or benefit from its activities.
- Disseminate ERMP materials and labor market information to counselors, other staff, and partners to ensure they are providing accurate guidance and career navigation.
- Participate in evaluation activities, including sharing feedback and data related to manufacturing career pathways programs and student performance.

Economic Development Partner

Economic Development Partners can include state, county, and city economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and other organizations providing services and resources to support business growth.

Economic Partner Benefits

- Strengthen targeted sectors by providing a mechanism to address their talent needs, spurring productivity, and economic growth of businesses, the industry, and the region.
- Identify solutions that will help manufacturers to remain competitive.

Roles of and Economic Development Partner

- Promote industry objectives to the community and facilitate the participation of other stakeholders.
- Share information in regard to programs, services, resources, and incentives available to interested ERMP members.
- Work with manufacturers to provide business growth, expansion activities, and entrepreneurial assistance within your respective geographical jurisdiction.
- Ensure that partners are aware of new manufacturers entering the region that could benefit from ERMP.
- Assist in recruiting new manufacturing members by connecting ERMP partners to manufacturers who could support the partnership or benefit from its activities.
- Promote and market the ERMP pathways framework to attract new businesses to the region.
- Contribute to outreach activities by identifying opportunities to increase awareness of ERMP, manufacturing career pathways, and related programs.
- Participate in evaluation activities, including sharing feedback and data related to manufacturing career pathways programs.

Social Service Partner

Social Service Partners can include state, county, non-profit agencies, and others that provide wrap-around support and other resources for individuals considering or entering into manufacturing career pathways.

Social Service Partner Benefits

- Provide more accurate advisement to clients with current information on occupations in demand, related wages, training, and career pathways.
- Understand specific hiring requirements to align programs and other resources for individuals.
- Identify and attract more resources to support innovative program design and address identified gaps.

Roles of a Social Service Partner

- Contribute to outreach activities and increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and other related programs.
- Provide support and wrap-around services to individuals in career pathways programs and/or entry level employment.
- Participate in evaluation activities through sharing feedback and data related to manufacturing career pathways programs.

Community Partners

Community Partners are organizations within the community interested in the economic vitality of the region. These could include banks, insurance companies, accounting firms, etc.

Community Partner Benefits – Through strengthening manufacturing as an economic driver, the overall tax base and providing opportunities for residents to enter into and move along the career pathway is enhanced.

Roles of Community Partners

- Contribute to outreach activities to increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways and related programs.
- Identify resources that could support ERMP career pathways efforts.
- Identify opportunities to align services, resources, entities, and individuals throughout the region toward a common agenda.

Intermediary Organization Responsibilities

ERMP is considered an Intermediary Organization and is supported, in large part, with membership dues contributed by the Board of Directors. The following are the roles ERMP will fill within the partnership:

- Convene local stakeholders to build and pursue a strategic plan for creating a competitive workforce and developing career pathways initiatives.
- Develop the project framework, including partnership agreements, operations, implementation plans, and coordination of partners.
- Work with the industry and other partners to identify funding solutions for long-term ERMP sustainability.
- Work with project partners, local, and state governmental agencies and private foundations to develop a resource and funding package to support and enhance pilot programs to ensure they are sustainable.

- Ensure that goals are set, progress is tracked, milestones are met, and the system is functioning on a day to day basis.
- Convene ERMP member and action team meetings.
- Identify and request third-party technical assistance on behalf of ERMP as needed.
- Assist in the development, dissemination, and collection of ERMP surveys.
- Monitor activities, individual funding received, and reporting progress to ERMP partners as needed.
- Provide support for new employer and stakeholder recruitment. Activities will include identifying, contacting, and meeting with prospects and tracking contacts made.
- Provide the partnership with access to labor market information, existing industry research, and any other available publication pertinent to ERMP and its mission and goals.
- Facilitate evaluation of ERMP and its strategies and activities.

Signature

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, all partners are attesting they have reviewed the MOU and find it accurately reflects their understanding of their involvement in Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Title

Company/Organization