

LWDB 21 Palm Beach County EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM of the Palm Beaches QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: Q 2

Date of meeting: 06/18/2025

Report prepared by: Michael Corbit, VP Business Development

Local Workforce Development Board contact: Julia Dattolo, CEO

B. ATTENDANCE

See attached attendance of Consortium members and industry specific guests below.

C. SUMMARY REPORT

Summary:

The Education and Industry Consortium focused on enhancing collaboration between educators and industry representatives to improve job readiness for students, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Michael Corbit highlighted the success of previous consortiums in healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, emphasizing the importance of curriculum alignment with industry needs. He also noted a legislative update regarding a proposed chief manufacturing officer position for Florida and shared that Palm Beach County's unemployment rate is 3.4%, with a growing economy that attracts new businesses.

Michael Corbit presented data indicating that Florida's manufacturing sector employs over 422,000 individuals, contributing \$5.5 billion to Palm Beach County's economy. He pointed out the significant indirect job creation associated with manufacturing and the need for talent pipelines to meet job demand, especially as the workforce ages. With only 4.9% of the manufacturing workforce aged 19 to 24, he stressed the importance of developing internship and apprenticeship programs to attract younger individuals and address skill shortages in areas like CNC operations and machine maintenance.

The discussion also covered strategies to engage students in manufacturing careers, including innovative outreach efforts by CareerSource Palm Beach County and the use of mobile training units for hands-on experiences. Corbit emphasized the need for early engagement with students to help them understand career options and proposed conducting alum surveys for insights into improving educational programs. The conversation highlighted the hiring challenges faced by manufacturers, particularly in finding qualified support staff and specialized roles, underscoring

the necessity for collaboration between educational institutions and industry to address workforce needs effectively.

Topics:

Updates on Education and Industry Consortium Initiatives

Michael Corbit provided an overview of the Education and Industry Consortium's initiatives, which aim to connect educators with industry leaders to ensure relevant curriculum development. He mentioned the successful consortiums held in healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, and shared insights from a recent legislative update regarding the potential hiring of a chief manufacturing officer for Florida. Melville also highlighted the county's low unemployment rate and the growth of various sectors, including education and health services.

Workforce Dynamics and Manufacturing Growth in Palm Beach County

Michael Corbit discussed the robust growth of the manufacturing sector in Florida, which now ranks as the 10th largest in the country. He shared statistics indicating that manufacturing jobs lead to a substantial number of indirect jobs, with 420,000 manufacturing positions impacting 2.8 million indirect jobs. Corbit also pointed out the need for talent development in Palm Beach County to address the demand for jobs, where the average earnings in manufacturing are approximately \$111,000.

Demographic Analysis and Workforce Development in Manufacturing

Charles Duval presented demographic data indicating that the majority of manufacturing workers are between the ages of 35 and 44, with a notable portion aged 55 to 64. He pointed out the imbalance in the workforce, as only 4.9% are aged 19 to 24, stressing the importance of creating internship and apprenticeship opportunities to engage younger talent. The demand for jobs in Palm Beach County remains strong, but there is a lag in the supply of qualified workers.

Addressing Enrollment Challenges in Manufacturing Education

Kimberly Lea highlighted the struggle to enroll students in the CMC machining program and proposed recalibrating the curriculum to meet industry needs. She mentioned the importance of outreach to families and high school students to raise awareness about manufacturing careers. Lea also suggested utilizing dual enrollment and collaborative promotional efforts to attract more students.

Bridging the Gap Between Education and Industry

Bob O'Dea addressed the challenges of engaging young people in manufacturing careers, noting that many students quickly lose interest after brief exposure. He advocated for demonstrating the practical applications of mathematics in machining to inspire students. O'Dea emphasized the necessity of industry involvement to create effective educational experiences.

Innovative Strategies for Engaging Students in Manufacturing Careers

Marney Erichsen highlighted two initiatives aimed at increasing student interest in manufacturing careers, including mobile demonstration vans and a two-day event with Elite Trades focused on job fairs and hands-on activities. Erichsen elaborated on the acquisition of mobile training units equipped with virtual reality tools to simulate hands-on experiences, emphasizing the need for collaboration between schools and industry to improve career education and awareness.

Understanding Student Engagement and Faculty Challenges

Dr. Jeraline Johnson highlighted the necessity of enhancing student advising practices to better understand their needs and experiences. She proposed conducting an alum survey to gather insights on how students found their programs and what improvements could be made. Johnson

also pointed out the challenges educators face in quickly assessing student traits and suggested that faculty play a crucial role in this process.

Discussion on Manufacturing Workforce Challenges

Matthew Rocco opened the floor for manufacturers to discuss their hiring challenges, emphasizing the need for educational partners to understand these issues. Jonathan Greenwald noted that while hiring technicians is not overly challenging, the real difficulty lies in recruiting support staff and specialized roles, particularly in medical device manufacturing, which can take four to six months to fill. He also mentioned the scarcity of talented CNC programmers, which is a significant concern for his company.

Action Items:

- * Michael Corbit will follow up on the legislative update regarding the hiring of a chief manufacturing officer in Florida.
- * Charles Duval will work with educational partners to develop internship and apprenticeship programs to attract young people into manufacturing careers.
- * Marney Erichsen will coordinate a large event in October with Elites Trades that includes a job fair and apprenticeship-related activities for students.
- * Matthew Rocco will collaborate with local manufacturers to gather input on curriculum adjustments needed to better align with industry requirements.
- * Barbara Cipriano will plan a larger scale event at Palm Beach State College to showcase manufacturing capabilities and attract students.

Key Questions:

- * How can the curriculum be adjusted to better meet the needs of the manufacturing industry?
- * How can educational institutions engage with students to raise awareness about manufacturing careers?

Proposed answer: Educational institutions can engage students through hands-on demonstrations and interactive events.

- * What are the specific skills that are currently in high demand in the manufacturing sector?

Proposed answer: The specific skills in high demand include programming, project management, and marketing skills

EDUCATION & INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM OF THE PALM BEACHES
(FOCUS) MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY MEETING

06/18/25

ATTENDEES CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	INDUSTRY	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
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