

lehigh equitable valley entrepreneurship project



University

Lehigh University

Center Director

Brett Smith

Center Location

Lehigh University Small
Business Development Center
(SBDC)

Center since 2021

Center Activities

To promote business practices critical for equitable entrepreneurship and regional economic development:

- Local Sourcing*
- Supplier Diversity*
- Capital Access*

Clients

- Large businesses
- Financial institutions
- Small businesses
- Economic development agencies
- Students and faculty

Contact Info

Brett Smith, Director
lveep@lehigh.edu

Website

go.lehigh.edu/lveep



/EquitableEntrepreneurship



The **Lehigh Valley Equitable Entrepreneurship Project** strives to fuse connections between the Lehigh Valley's historically disadvantaged entrepreneurs, vast economic development network, large businesses, and financial institutions to improve equitable access to opportunities and capital through the Lehigh Valley. Market diversification and access to funding for growth and expansion are even more critical for small business success in a post-COVID economy but are even further out of reach for historically disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Through engagement, research, outreach, and more, the Lehigh Valley Equitable Entrepreneurship Project will promote the region's potential and capacity for local sourcing, supplier diversity, and equitable capital access.

Local Sourcing

As made evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical for businesses of all sizes to localize their supply chain.

The Project will work with Lehigh Valley businesses to increase their local sourcing capacity. In conjunction with our economic development partners, the Project will facilitate the technical training for small businesses to succeed.

Supplier Diversity

Having a diverse supplier base can make all of the difference in a company's innovation goals. Engaging with suppliers that have different background and experiences can lead to new solutions and long-term relationships.

Capital Access

One of the single biggest roadblocks to equitable entrepreneurship is access to capital. Potential entrepreneurs can be prevented from realizing their dreams, and existing business owners may have to scale back their visions.

The Project aims to work with local financial institutions and other community partners to promote capital access as integral to the sustainability of the Lehigh Valley economy, ensuring all entrepreneurs have access to the resources they need to be successful.



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