



SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Executive Summary of 2023 Business Plan

According to the **PA Department of Education**, community colleges are at the forefront of:

- ✓ remedial and developmental education
- ✓ dual enrollment opportunities for secondary school students
- ✓ workforce development and public safety training
- ✓ 2-year associate degrees and certificate programs in occupational and technical areas
- ✓ access for students in the arts, sciences and professions seeking to transfer at the end of 2 years to 4 -year institutions
- ✓ expanded educational opportunities for individuals from all walks of life
- ✓ significant contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of their regions.

(Source: PA Dept. of Education, [www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/CollegeCareer/Pages/Community-Colleges.aspx](http://www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/CollegeCareer/Pages/Community-Colleges.aspx))

## PA Community College Act of 1963, 1982

*"The policy of the Board is to encourage and facilitate the development of community colleges within reasonable commuting distances of every citizen of this Commonwealth."*

In spite of this directive, **Pennsylvania has the lowest community college to resident ratio of any state in the country.**

- only 15 community colleges exist in PA
- nearly all located in **densely populated, metropolitan areas**
- vast area of **rural populations with no reasonable access to a community college**

## Central Susquehanna Valley Region of Northumberland, Union, Montour, and Snyder Counties

- Rural populations disadvantaged with no reasonable access to a community college.
- In this same area, approximately 8000 high-priority job openings annually that employers struggle to fill with a historically economically challenged population. (Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis 2022)
- Problem is worsened by the 'brain drain' of local students leaving the area for accessible, affordable education options.

Fueled by the overwhelming need for real, achievable pathways to a better life through education and training for area residents, Dr. Lenaire Alhum created the Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project, a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to establishing **The Susquehanna Valley Community College (SVCC)** \*as an **independent public anchor community college** serving the Pennsylvania Central Susquehanna Valley **with a mission to enrich the service region through delivery of affordable and accessible quality education that is learner centered and aligned with business needs.**

(\*Name yet to be finalized.)

## Products & Services

By offering a **custom designed curriculum** consisting of associate degrees, certificate programs (including custom workforce training), and lifelong learning classes, all of which **will continue to evolve** based on input from stakeholders, updated gap analyses, and high priority occupation vacancies; **SVCC will provide a skilled workforce for area companies** struggling to fill high demand jobs. Providing these pathways **in partnership with the community as a whole** will work to create **sustainable, life changing, economic development** throughout the region, **lifting neighborhoods** and working to effectively **break generational social challenges.**

## Target Market and Key Segments

Offering accessibility, affordability and a pathway to anyone in the central Susquehanna Valley region of **Northumberland, Union, Montour, and Snyder Counties** looking for accessible, quality, affordable education and training options to better themselves and build a brighter future, the SVCC will focus on a number of key segments, **traditional and non-traditional**, with strong **potential for enrollment and successful completion** of an associate degree, certificate, or training program. A large percentage of these key target segments involve **low-moderate income students, individuals, and families**.

## Demographics & Affordability

In comparison with key national and PA statistics, along with the mission and targeted segments of the SVCC, the demographic make-up of the four-county service region **validates the potential for sustained success** of a community college in this underserved region. The combined ALICE + FPL (Federal Poverty Level) county demographics **show a substantial segment service base in need of local, accessible, affordable, quality education and training options, ranging from 38% to 48% of each county's total population**.

**More than 56% of nationwide community college students qualify for financial aid**, meaning they come from **low-moderate income** situations. (Source: American Association of Community Colleges, 'Fast Facts 2022') This significant number also highlights the **importance of this segment to the success of a community college**, especially with curriculum and programs created to **meet specific local community needs**.

**Similar rural PA community colleges realize more than 60% of students graduating debt free** through qualification and use of available financial aid resources. (Source: [www.bc3.edu/paying](http://www.bc3.edu/paying))

It is projected that a similar percentage of SVCC students will also have the opportunity to graduate debt free.

## Promotion

The Susquehanna Valley Community College will utilize an **effective mix of promotional media** along with a **well-developed, strong referral partner network** to reach potential students in targeted segments.

## Area Alternatives

The **area's other** available post-secondary **education and training options** offer **quality programs and degrees**, however, they are **not designed to primarily serve the lower income, ALICE populations, or non-traditional students**, and are therefore, **financially and feasibly out of reach for those segments** that the Susquehanna Valley Community College is created to serve.

It is the intention of the **SVCC** to find ways to **partner with** as many of these **area institutions** as possible, both from a transfer and referral aspect to best serve the community.

## Economic Impact

A **2021 EMSI Economic Impact Study** shows that a new community college is a **smart economic investment**, providing the region with a path forward in the 21st century, resulting in over **\$78 million in economic growth** over the **first 10 years** in operation. This exceptional return can be realized by a local **sponsorship equivalent to \$1.15 per household per month**, thereby enabling the benefits of state and federal investment. **The local sponsors exert their local control through the appointment of a board of trustees to the community college and final approval of the annual community college budget.**

## Financial Projections

Using **conservative estimates for enrollment** and comparable **industry averages for expenses** as compared to the national averages for community colleges, the financial projections show **strong financial viability by Year 7**, meaning tuition revenues alone surpass total operating expenses and fixed costs.