

2023 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



Since the launch of the Shift 2.0 program in January 2023, there has been a measurable impact on Western New York's small to medium sized manufacturers (SMM). Shift 2.0 helps SMMs learn about, prepare for, identify, and implement technological advancements to help them better operate, compete and grow.

50 Western New York SMMs joined the Shift 2.0 Ecosystem

21 Technology Implementation Assessments completed

20 Western New York SMMs joined a Shift 2.0 Peer Groups

4 Technology Implementation Projects started

82 Individuals trained in one of our Automation Courses

10 Students engaged in the High School Automation program

SUPPORTERS



PARTNERS



In January 2023, EWI launched Shift 2.0 in Buffalo with grant support from the Economic Development Administration's "Build Back Better Regional Challenge" and additional funding from New York State's Empire State Development Corporation. The program, an expansion of a successful pilot from 2017 to 2021, was designed to help small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in Western New York benefit from the implementation of advanced manufacturing technologies. Several avenues for technology exploration and adoption were identified early on, including training, company peer groups, networking opportunities, and process/system adaptation for smaller factories and shops.

Shift 2.0 has met or exceeded all of its goals to date. Below is an overview of program achievements so far:

- Through engagement with 57 SMMs, the program has already provided advanced training in robotics and automation to 82 individuals. Nine 1-day introductory classes and three 5-day robotic integration classes, taught at EWI's Buffalo Manufacturing Works facility, have provided tools for SMMs to understand and adopt automation solutions in specialized situations.
- A new 2-day class in Robotic Vision Systems & End-of-Arm Tooling was developed for Shift 2.0 to meet additional needs identified among the program participants. The course will roll out at the end of February 2024 and be available to all EWI clients and members.
- In 2024, our slate of advanced automation courses for professionals will be offered 15 times. In addition, the after-school automation training for high school students will continue at WNY P-TECH STEM College & Career Academy and a new, two-week camp for high school students will be offered at Buffalo Manufacturing Works this coming summer.
- SMM peer groups are now active in two WNY locations, with a third group starting up this spring. Facilitated by our partner, Insyte Consulting, these groups offer opportunities for similar-sized companies to benchmark, troubleshoot, network, and cooperate with support from the program.
- On the technical side, we've been able to expand the automation demonstration and development labs at Buffalo Manufacturing Works to accommodate the demands of the program. The enhancements offer new capabilities to all EWI clients.
- Shift is currently working with four SMMs in their facilities to implement specific automation solutions. The first of these was recently completed. We expect that these compact, efficient solutions will save the companies time and money. At least eight similar projects are planned for 2024.
- To help companies get started with automation implementation, we have developed three cobot loaner cells that can be used for a limited duration by SMMs in the program. The cells will be deployed at the SMM premises to establish a first-time automation process, with assistance from our engineering team provided if needed.

The Shift 2.0 program is a win-win for all involved. SMMs in Western New York have received valuable training, consultation, and resources through the program that might have otherwise been unaffordable, and EWI has gained the opportunity to devise new solutions on a scale that makes sense for smaller enterprises. We look forward to accelerating Shift's impact in the next two years.