

Lehigh Valley Community Foundation

Operating Definition of a Learning Organization



The Lehigh Valley Community Foundation prioritizes funding and partnerships with organizations that are learning organizations. LVCF's operating definition of a learning organization includes the following five attributes:

- **Systematic problem solving:** Relying on a scientific or standard method, rather than guesswork, for diagnosing problems; being data-informed in decision-making, rather than only relying on assumptions; Using tools to organize data and draw inferences.
- **Experimentation:** Organization has built a culture in which experimentation is encouraged. Experimentation is routinely searching and testing new knowledge. Experimentation differs from problem-solving because it expands new horizons, rather than focusing on current difficulties.
- **Learning from past experience:** Organization routinely reviews and reflects on successes and failures and records the lessons in a form that employees can reference at a later point in time.
- **Learning from others:** Organization routinely looks outside of one's immediate environment to gain a new perspective. Examples of learning from others could be: benchmarking industry standards, speaking with the people you serve and/or the organization's stakeholders.
- **Transferring knowledge:** Organization has integrated a culture in which learnings are shared broadly, rather than held in a few hands. Examples of ways that can be utilized in sharing information are through written, oral, and visual reports, site visits and tours, personnel rotation programs, education, and training programs, etc.