



Maricopa County Workforce Development Board 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan

Developed by the Workforce Development Board
in collaboration with the Maricopa County Innovation Studio
5.29.2025

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Workforce Development Board Background

Mission

The Maricopa County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) is established by the Board of Supervisors (BOS), serving as the Chief Local Elected Officials, to support strategic planning, oversight, and evaluation of the local workforce development area. The MCWDB is committed to driving effective workforce outcomes aligned with statewide goals, objectives, and locally negotiated performance measures.

Representing a diverse range of individuals, businesses, and organizations across the region, the MCWDB acts as a strategic convener—fostering collaboration among county leadership, economic development entities, educational institutions, and workforce partners. The Board is dedicated to cultivating strong relationships with business associations, chambers of commerce, labor and trade groups, education providers, and other key stakeholders to advance workforce innovation and opportunity.

Vision

To be a premier workforce development system that empowers jobseekers with meaningful career opportunities and connects employers with skilled talent—driving economic growth and improving the quality of life across our communities.



2025 Workforce Development Board Members

Board Member	Affiliation
Ruben Eddie Baldenegro	Tango Health
Grenee Celuch	Concord General Contracting
Kathryn Che' Collins	Habitat for Humanity
Dr. Tina Drews	Salt River Project
Gregg Ghelfi	Arizona Finance Authority
Danielle Goodman	Intel
Loren Granger	Wells Fargo
Scott Holman	Amkor Technology
Brittany Holmes	Arizona State University
Shawn Hutchinson	Phoenix Electrical JATC
JakinDee Kosaka	Maricopa County Adult Probation
Anne Landers	Junior Achievement of Arizona
Justin Oviatt	Comparion Insurance
Konrad Robichaud	Banner Health
Bonnie Schirato	Tivity Health
John Soto	Arizona Department of Economic Security
Noelle Trinder	Banner Health
Elizabeth Valdez	Arizona Department of Economic Security
Tim Willenborg	Brenntag North America-Scottsdale
Linchen Anna Yap	TSMC

Strategic Methodology Review

Process Overview

The Maricopa County Innovation Studio collaborated with the Workforce Development Board from January – May 2025, taking a co-creative and iterative approach with Staff and Board members to construct their Strategic Plan. The objectives of the collaborative sessions were to:

- Identify new strategic focus areas that built upon the work of the 2022 MCWDB Strategic Plan and associated plans
- Facilitate rounds of collaborative feedback across stakeholders to define, evaluate, and refine goals and strategies that aligned to focus areas and expertise
- Develop specific actions to connect strategies to measurable outcomes for implementing, reporting, and improving during the three-year strategic planning cycle

Key Strategic Planning Milestones



Detailed View of Plan’s Co-Creation

Session Purpose:

When Board feedback was collected:



Detailed Strategic Plan

Defining Strategic Focus Areas

During initial Strategic Planning sessions, Staff and Board were prompted through a Value Ecology Mapping activity to frame current relationships with collaborating partners and customers—i.e., job seekers, employers, apprentice program partners, etc.—and define how value is created through services they provide. The objective was to identify the core promises of the MCWDB services that should be prioritized for further development in the 2025-28 strategic planning cycle. The core promises were developed into the below Strategic Values that serve as guiding pillars for the outlined goals, strategies, and measures.

Guiding Strategic Plan Values

1. We will continuously assess and address critical workforce needs

Through 2028, we will prioritize in-demand industries and their workforce needs, aligning actions to trends in the short- and long-term.

The Board and Staff will formalize the approach for prioritizing in-demand industries during each three-year strategic planning cycle. During collaborative discussions, the need for creating an assessment process that could be reused as current in-demand industry needs continue to develop was emphasized to ensure the Board's focus areas remain relevant. Additionally, the Board wanted to be able to address critical workforce needs through diversified funding.

2. We will mobilize collective expertise.

Through 2028, we will convene and leverage best-in-class workforce development expertise, connecting organizations and leaders in a trusted information network.

Partnerships were an area of continuous emphasis during planning discussions, particularly in the desire for establishing the MCWDB as a leader in convening organizations to move workforce expertise forward, beyond making connections. Board members wanted to see more action taken towards strengthening and leveraging ecosystem-level partnerships to make actionable decisions to support job seekers and funnel efforts to areas impacted by economic development and in-demand industry growth.

3. We will visualize emerging career pathways.

Through 2028, we will improve the accessibility, exposure, and quality of training resources to better identify and showcase career pathways for qualified and unqualified job seekers.

The need for supporting the job seeker in new ways emerged as a key factor for the creation of this Strategic Plan. The Board will focus efforts on improving the accessibility and understanding of what emerging pathways exist for job seekers, considering how job seekers, specifically youth, are thinking about careers and their own career progressions, and attempting to better align those expectations with the paths—traditional and nontraditional—toward in-demand industries and occupations.

We will continuously assess and address critical workforce needs.

Goal 1: Determine long- vs. short-term in-demand industry and occupation workforce planning needs

Accompanying Strategies

IA: At least once per strategic planning cycle, identify in-demand industries and occupations assessment data sources to make justifiable decisions, leveraging diverse, validated, and up-to-date information.

IB: Evaluate identified in-demand industries and occupations to compile critical workforce need areas within each industry

IC: Prioritize workforce needs within in-demand industries and occupations to direct support

'26

By end of June 2026, conduct a workforce data evaluation study by assessing the current state of AZ industry and occupation data sources (such as OEO, Jobs EQ, LNI, and others) to create a justifiable methodology to share across relevant identified organizations for feedback and utilization.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Workforce Data Collection Plan based on findings from evaluation
- One-pager to formalize process for continuous updates

By end of June 2026, create a flexible rubric by outlining scoring criteria that evaluates under-resourced fields, technology and AI implications, available training programs, etc., to compile tiered prioritization of in-demand industries and occupations.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Workforce Needs Scoring Rubric

'27

By end of June 2027, identify 2-3 in-demand industries and occupations to pilot the evaluation and prioritization of workforce needs, using the rubric and data collection plan methodology. These 2-3 industries will be the focus of specialized support efforts in '25-'28.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Depending on identified industries and occupation outcomes, the WDB team will develop success measures based on how support is directed.

'28

By end of June 2028, host a facilitated workgroup with pilot participants, data analysts, and key stakeholders. The workgroup sessions will include a review of pilot results, structured feedback discussions, and collaborative refinement of the data collection plan and scoring criteria. The outcome will be to finalize a methodology that can be scaled.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Validated Rubric and Data Collection Plan
- Pilot Retrospective Workshop
- Summary report of pilot findings and refinement decision

We will continuously assess and address critical workforce needs.

Goal 2: Establish sustainable funding opportunities based on workforce needs and shared funding partnerships

Accompanying Strategies

2A: Evaluate past funding strategies and grant successes to determine gaps in source types.

2B: Use research to support funding strategy development that identifies grants and other diverse funding options to support gaps in workforce needs identified through Goal One

'26

By end of June 2026, document and evaluate the funding strategy utilized in the past 5 years to identify most commonly applied for, received, and successfully utilized funds.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Tracking document that logs, categorizes, and assesses funding sources, types, success rates, and utilization outcomes over the last 5 years
- Retrospective workshop with Board and staff to review past strategy and document learning for future funding and development outlook.

'27

By end of June 2027, conduct research, gather data, and assess existing funding sources to identify gaps related to workforce needs. The final output will be a prioritized list of funding opportunities that align with workforce development goals.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Presentation to key stakeholders (e.g., funding experts, workforce development professionals, regional partners) on findings, highlighting opportunities for funding and alignment with workforce needs.
- Work group discussion to identify additional funding sources or opportunities not previously considered.
- Collaboratively prioritized list of funding areas based on workforce needs, regional priorities, and feasibility.

'28

By end of June 2028, formalize funding assessment approach to maintain an updated database of past strategies and successes, and evaluate opportunities to realign with goals at least once per strategic planning cycle.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Finalized Funding Assessment Workbook (updated from tracking document) that maintains updated view of the WDB funding strategy year-over-year.
- Standardized funding strategy presentation and work group agenda based on learnings from Action Two to be facilitated at least once every 3 years.

We will mobilize collective expertise.

Goal 3: Scan the environment (regional and state) to identify, leverage, and improve alignment of existing Arizona workforce expertise, economic development opportunities, and title partners.

Accompanying Strategies

3A: Analyze gaps in community (regional and statewide) expertise—the employer, educator, and workforce organization ecosystem—to document areas for further development.

3B: Leverage Committee focus areas to make employer, educator, organization connections to improve support at different levels of the workforce process (awareness, training, etc.)

3C: Identify benchmarks to measure desired impact of convened expertise

'26

By end of June 2026, research, identify, and adopt a gap analysis framework that has the capacity to guide the future evaluation of expertise in each workforce ecosystem area and define opportunities for new partnerships to address unmet needs.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Adopted Gap Analysis framework with documented justification for its selection that includes its relevance, simplicity to use, data requirements (inputs), and how it was adapted for this context, if at all.

'27

By end of June 2027, apply the selected gap analysis framework to evaluate expertise gaps among at least 5 employers, educators, and community organizations. Document areas where each entity is making a meaningful impact, gaps in work being done, and partnership opportunities to strengthen the workforce ecosystem.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Completed Gap Analysis framework that synthesizes ecosystem research
- Gap and Opportunity Impact Matrix to collaboratively prioritize where to focus efforts of staff and committees in building partnerships and support actions.

'28

By end of June 2028, develop an improved partnership tracking system to replace the current method that includes new metrics to measure both the quantity and quality of partnerships with employers, educators, and organizations. It will be used to report on the impact of convening expertise through partnerships.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Improved spreadsheet-based tracking system that includes items such as dates of engagement, activity type, outcomes, and quality rating.
- Updated partnership quality metrics that consider criteria such as, engagement depth (one-time vs. ongoing), improved awareness, increased investment, etc.
- Identified quality benchmark to measure success of increasing partnerships in next strategic planning cycle

We will mobilize collective expertise.

Goal 4: Leverage network to establish consistent industry terminology requirements used by employers, educators, and organizations to align with job seekers' qualifications, certifications, lifestyle expectations, etc.

Accompanying Strategies

4A: Analyze current language used to communicate accepted qualifications, certifications, forms of training, and job requirements in prioritized in-demand industries and occupations.

4B: Align employer requirements and prerequisites to job seeker expectations and realistic experience levels.

4C: Utilize community partnerships and marketing channels to socialize common language and provide job seekers direction.

'26

By end of June 2026, integrate an Industry Terminology section in the adopted Gap Analysis framework that documents patterns and misalignments in industry terminology, with a focus on in-demand industries.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Adopted Gap Analysis framework (see Goal 3)

'27

By end of June 2027, use framework to document a list of in-demand industry terminology misalignments between employers, educators, and workforce partners, and provide recommendations for clarifying or standardizing key terminology to improve communication. Consider input from employers, educators, organizations, and job seekers.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Terminology Collection Template to capture terminology, use cases, it's meaning, alternative or conflicting terms, and notes on misalignment impacts
- Listening sessions with key stakeholders to gather input on recommendations for clarifying or standardizing key terminology.

'28

By end of June 2028, collaborate with employers to pilot the use of the updated industry terminology in job postings or outreach materials. Identify specific opportunities where revised language could attract job seekers and track any resulting changes or increases in interest during the pilot period.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Pilot plan that identifies participating employers, sets pilot objectives and benchmarks to measure successes
- Stakeholder discussion to update and finalize terminology collection template in the next strategic planning cycle

We will visualize emerging career pathways.

Goal 5: Recognize each in-demand industry's potential career pathway entry points for current and future job seekers of all levels.

Accompanying Strategies

5A: By prioritized in-demand industry, document job seeker types by demographic and their potential entry points

5B: Make more visible each pathway per job seeker type and industry, identifying current milestones such as, outreach to organizations, certifications, education, apprenticeship, etc.

5C: Evaluate pathways to identify which are most underutilized

'26

By end of June 2026, research and identify workforce organizations currently developing or publishing career pathway information.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Career Pathway Organization Inventory through Excel to document a view of work being done that includes items such as fidelity, information/resources available, potential/estimated reach, format, and notable gaps.

'27

By end of June 2027, conduct a comparative review of what is being done and where there are opportunities to intervene, consolidate, and support improvements for broader reach and accessibility.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Comparative Review Matrix that allows staff to evaluate opportunities by in-demand industry alignment, career advancement clarity, connection/linking to training, current partnership connections etc.

'28

By end of June 2028, utilize and develop organizational partnerships to plan consolidation effort to align work around job seeker types, build upon current career pathway information, and distribute it more widely.

Reporting tools & methods:

- Career Pathway Alignment Roadmap planning session with identified partners to design pathway consolidation and improvement effort
- Tracking partnership quality improvements form this effort in the improved partnership tracking system (Goal 3)

Workforce Alignment Guide

The following reference guide highlights where the MCWDB Strategic Plan aligns to the WIOA State Strategic Plan and how this plan’s 2025-28 goals will build upon the work done in the 2022 MCWDB Strategic Planning cycle.

WIOA State Plan (2024-27) Goals	MCWDB Strategic Plan Alignment Areas
<p>Goal 1: Promote a customer-driven workforce system approach</p>	<p>Goal 1, 4, and 5 align with WIOA State Plan's focuses to build industry-driven career pathways and meet the needs of current and future job seekers, by creating a cascading strategy for 1. justifiable prioritization of workforce needs, 2. clarifying in-demand industry terminology for top-down reach, and 3. refining job seeker career pathway resources.</p>
<p>Goal 2: Foster Business Engagement</p>	<p>Goal 1, 2, and 5 will focus on the enhancement of workforce services to support employers increased access to a skilled workforce by making data-driven decisions on where to focus Board support, continuously updating which in-demand industries and career pathways are underutilized and directing expertise to improve opportunities for development of training, communication, and outreach.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Invest in Opportunity and Growth</p>	<p>Goal 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be measured by the impact and increased quality of partnerships, locally and statewide. These goals will center around opportunities to streamline and improve work already being done, instead of replicating expertise and services.</p>
<p>Goal 4: Prepare Arizona’s Youth Workforce</p>	<p>Goal 1, 4, and 5 were developed with a youth-focused lens. Each goal strives to support future job seekers by evaluating their needs in the current workforce climate, clarifying terminology to support their connection to different career pathways through employer and educator outreach, and improving their access and understanding of career milestones that align to their expectations.</p>

2022-25 Plan Values	2022-25 Strategic Plan Goals
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Innovation</p>	<p>Goal 1: Optimize culture of collaboration among core partners and providers</p> <p>Goal 2: Expand role of MCWDB in regional economic development efforts</p> <p>Goal 3: Expand role of MCWDB in local education system</p> <p>Goal 4: Strengthen regional collaboration among MCWDB and other local workforce areas</p> <p>Goal 5: Increase participation of individual job seekers and businesses served across all MCWDB title partner programs</p> <p>Goal 6: Maximize scope of services to individuals served by title partner programs</p> <p>Goal 7: Position the MCWDB as a forward-thinking strategic leader</p> <p>Goal 8: Create system-wide standards derived from implemented best practices that improve the scope and quality of services from partners and providers</p>
2025-28 Plan Values	How each value area continues to move the work of the MCWDB forward from the previous strategic planning cycle
Assess and address workforce needs	<p>Analyze data quality and formalize prioritization methodology</p> <p>By supporting the creation of a justifiable method for reviewing data used to prioritize in-demand industries for the short- and long-term, while using outcomes to make data-driven decisions on partnerships and funding opportunities.</p>
Mobilize collective expertise	<p>Increase partnership impact and improve how its measured</p> <p>By analyzing gaps in current work and expertise from a workforce ecosystem level, make recommendations for improved employer/education outreach, and create a metric to more accurately report on partnership quantity and quality.</p>
Visualize emerging career pathways	<p>Make pathway resources more accessible and collaborative</p> <p>By building upon how current job seeker pathways are presented, consolidating resource and training information to make it more easily accessible, and developing partnerships to engage current and future job seekers with in-demand opportunities.</p>

Data-Driven Reporting and Feedback

Based on the defined Strategic Plan goals, strategies, and actions, this table provides an overview of the estimated reporting tools & methods that can support the Board to measure the Plan's success year-over-year. MCWDB Staff will provide a biannual update (presented mid- and end-of-fiscal-year) by reporting on the percentage of completion of items outlined in the following list and any adjustments made to outcomes.

	'26 Goal Outcomes	'27 Goal Outcomes	'28 Goal Outcomes
1	Data Collection Plan	<i>Metric will be defined</i>	Validated Tools
	Process One-pager		Pilot Retrospective
	Workforce Needs Rubric		Pilot Report
2	Funding Tracker	Stakeholder Presentation	Finalized Workbook
	Retrospective Workshop	Workgroup Discussion	Strategy Presentation
		Prioritized Funding List	
3	Gap Analysis Framework	Completed Gap Analysis	Partnership Tracker
		Impact Matrix	Quality Metric
			Quality Benchmark
4		Terminology Template	Pilot Plan
		Listening Session(s)	Stakeholder Discussion
5	Pathway Inventory	Comparative Matrix	Alignment Roadmap
	Progress Report Dec. and June of '26	Progress Report in Dec. and June of '27	Progress Report in Dec. and June of '28



[Click for access to
Progress Reports](#)

Appendix

Links to relevant Strategic Planning documents and activities

[Project Charter](#)

[3/6 Youth Committee Meeting Packet](#)

[3/18 Regional Committee Meeting Packet](#)

[3/19 Workforce Development Division Strategic Planning Session Presentation](#)

[4/3 Employer Connection Committee Meeting Packet](#)

[4/17 Full Board Meeting Packet](#)

[2/5 Core Project Team Kick-off Mural](#)

[2/20 Strategic Planning Session Mural](#)

[3/6 Youth Committee Strategic Planning Session Mural](#)

[3/18 Regional Committee Strategic Planning Session Mural](#)

[3/20 Executive Committee Strategic Planning Session Mural](#)

[4/17 Full Board Meeting Strategic Planning Session Mural](#)

[Group Interview/Sessions Synthesis Mural](#)

[Project Team Session: Finalizing Metrics and Reporting Mural](#)