



NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA

Innovative Workforce Solutions

WIOA LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025 - 2028



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is pleased to present the 2025 Local Area Plan, which outlines a comprehensive, data-informed strategy for delivering Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded programs across the non-tribal areas of Gila, Navajo, and Apache counties. This plan articulates the region’s unified vision for aligning workforce development, education, and economic priorities to enhance labor market outcomes and strengthen economic mobility for all residents.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Northeastern Arizona continues to face complex workforce challenges, including population decline, rural infrastructure limitations, skill mismatches, and low labor force participation. Despite these headwinds, the region holds significant opportunity. With a Gross Regional Product of \$9.3 billion and major employment anchors in healthcare, government, construction, and education, the region is poised for targeted growth—provided that talent pipelines and service coordination systems are modernized and expanded.

This plan reflects the LWDB’s commitment to an integrated, responsive workforce ecosystem that meets the evolving needs of both employers and job seekers. The plan aligns closely with Arizona’s statewide WIOA goals and incorporates national policy guidance, including Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) and best practices from across the ARIZONA@WORK network.

KEY PILLARS OF THE LOCAL AREA PLAN

1. Workforce System Governance and Coordination

- The NEAZ LWDB exercises strategic oversight and governance, in partnership with Navajo County (Chief Elected Official), contracted service providers, and One-Stop partners.
- Eckard Solutions serves as both the WIOA Title I service provider.
- Head Forward Solutions serves as the One-Stop Operator, ensuring seamless program delivery and partner coordination.

2. Economic and Labor Market Intelligence

- The region faces a projected population decline of over 4,800 residents by 2029 and persistent underemployment, especially among degree holders.
- Aging demographics, outmigration of younger workers, and limited access to industry-recognized credentials signal a critical need for reskilling and workforce reintegration strategies.
- Key growth industries include construction, healthcare, and business/financial operations, with registered apprenticeships and on-the-job training prioritized as pathways to economic mobility.

3. Service Delivery Innovation and Equity

- Mobile workforce solutions and virtual services will address rural access barriers.
- A new referral system (Utilizing Google) is leveraged to promote co-enrollment, real-time data sharing, and service alignment across Titles I–IV and partner agencies.

- Focused outreach will expand participation among youth, veterans, older workers, and those facing significant employment barriers.

4. Business Engagement and Sector Strategies

- The LWDB has prioritized industry engagement through employer roundtables, sector partnerships, and customized training programs in healthcare, skilled trades, and business operations.
- Work-based learning, including Work Experience (WEX), Registered Apprenticeships, and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), is central to employer-aligned workforce development.

5. System Performance, Monitoring, and Accountability

- The NEAZ LWDB maintains rigorous fiscal and programmatic oversight in compliance with federal regulations.
- Continuous improvement is reinforced through regular partner training, evaluation of service delivery effectiveness, and alignment with state and federal performance indicators.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Local Area Plan positions ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona as a forward-thinking, collaborative, and data-driven workforce system committed to equitable economic opportunity. By enhancing employer partnerships, scaling training and credentialing access, and modernizing service delivery across rural communities, the NEAZ LWDB aims to build a resilient workforce that powers regional economic growth.

SECTION 1: INFRASTRUCTURE

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKFORCE PROGRAM IN THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) serves as the strategic convener and governing body responsible for fostering collaboration among key workforce system partners, including economic development agencies, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. As the steward of the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona system, the NEAZ LWDB is dedicated to strengthening the region's workforce ecosystem by ensuring the effective alignment and integration of programs and services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The NEAZ LWDB oversees the implementation of workforce development strategies that drive regional economic growth and enhance employment opportunities for job seekers. By continuously evaluating and refining service delivery models, the Board strives to enhance access to high-quality employment, education, training, and support services. Through data-driven decision-making and stakeholder engagement, the Board seeks to create a seamless and customer-centered workforce system that meets the needs of both businesses and job seekers.

With a strong emphasis on innovation and continuous improvement, the NEAZ LWDB facilitates the coordination of WIOA's six core programs—Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Adult Education and Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services—to ensure comprehensive, accessible, and efficient workforce solutions. By fostering sector partnerships, supporting career pathways, and leveraging regional assets, the Board is committed to building a workforce that is well-prepared to meet the demands of Northeastern Arizona's evolving economy.

The Northeastern LWDA covers the non-tribal areas of Gila, Navajo, and Apache counties.

Navajo County has been designated as the Chief Elected Official (CEO) under the Intergovernmental Agreement that established the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) on July 1, 2015. Since its designation, Navajo County has continued to serve as the CEO, providing oversight, governance, and strategic direction for workforce development initiatives within the LWDA.

The fiscal agent for the LWDA is Navajo County

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Staff Roles

Assistant Director

The Assistant Director is a key leadership role responsible for ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local workforce regulations while also leading employer engagement efforts to strengthen workforce development initiatives. This position ensures adherence to all applicable Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), and

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements while also spearheading Rapid Response services, business retention, and employer-driven workforce solutions.

The role combines compliance oversight, program integrity, and employer engagement strategies to support a high-quality, responsive workforce system that benefits both job seekers and businesses within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA).

Administrative Officer

Responsible for managing administrative functions essential to the effective operation of the LWDB. Duties include financial record-keeping, bookkeeping, scheduling and coordinating board meetings, preparing meeting materials, and ensuring compliance with administrative policies and procedures.

Business Services Representative – Gila County (Rapid Response)

Serves as the designated Business Services Representative for Gila County, providing direct support to employers in need of workforce solutions, including Rapid Response services for businesses undergoing workforce reductions. Works closely with local employers, industry stakeholders, and workforce partners to align services with regional labor market needs.

Business Services Representative – Apache County (Rapid Response)

Serves as the designated Business Services Representative for Apache County, providing direct support to employers in need of workforce solutions, including Rapid Response services for businesses undergoing workforce reductions. Works closely with local employers, industry stakeholders, and workforce partners to align services with regional labor market needs.

Business Services Representative – Navajo County (Rapid Response)

Serves as the designated Business Services Representative for Navajo County, providing direct support to employers in need of workforce solutions, including Rapid Response services for businesses undergoing workforce reductions. Works closely with local employers, industry stakeholders, and workforce partners to align services with regional labor market needs.

Contracted WIOA Service Providers In Northeastern Arizona

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) contracts with Eckard Solutions to deliver high-quality workforce development services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As a well-established community-based organization, Eckard Solutions has extensive experience in providing employment, training, and career development services that empower individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

WIOA Title I Programs & Contracted Provider: Chicanos Por La Causa (Cplc)

Adult Program

The WIOA Adult Program, operated by Eckard Solutions, provides comprehensive career and training services to eligible individuals aged 18 and older, with a focus on priority populations, including low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, and those with barriers to employment. Services include career counseling, job readiness training, skills development,

occupational training, and supportive services to facilitate employment and long-term career success.

Dislocated Worker Program

The Dislocated Worker Program, administered by Eckard Solutions, supports individuals who have lost employment due to layoffs, plant closures, or economic downturns. This program offers job search assistance, retraining opportunities, career transition support, and access to employment services that help participants re-enter the workforce quickly. Participants may also receive funding for credential-based training in high-demand industries and access to supportive services to ease the transition into new employment opportunities.

Youth Program

Eckard Solutions also manages the WIOA Youth Program, which serves eligible out-of-school and in-school youth ages 16–24 who face barriers to employment, such as homelessness, foster care involvement, justice system involvement, or lack of a high school diploma. The program offers career exploration, paid work experiences, mentorship, leadership development, occupational training, and support in obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent. Additionally, youth receive guidance on post-secondary education pathways and job placement assistance to support long-term career success.

One-Stop Operator

Head Forward Solutions serves as the One-Stop Operator (OSO) for the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona system. As the OSO, Head Forward Solutions is responsible for coordinating service delivery across multiple partner agencies within the ARIZONA@WORK One-Stop Centers to ensure seamless access to workforce development programs. The OSO ensures compliance with WIOA requirements, fosters collaboration among partners, and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce system by promoting a customer-centered service model.

1.a.iii.4. Copies of procured contracts for contractors can be found in Appendix B of this plan.

MONITORING EFFORTS

Fiscal Monitoring Efforts

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to ensuring the fiscal integrity and compliance of all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds through rigorous fiscal monitoring processes. Fiscal monitoring is conducted in accordance with federal regulations, state guidance, and local policies to safeguard the proper use of public funds and maintain program accountability.

NEAZ LWDB works in close coordination with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Navajo County (Chief Elected Official), and WIOA service providers to conduct ongoing fiscal oversight. This monitoring ensures that WIOA funds are allocated, expended, and reported in full compliance with **2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards** and **20 CFR Part 683 – Administrative Provisions Under Title I of WIOA**. Specifically, fiscal monitoring efforts align with the following regulatory requirements:

- **2 CFR § 200.303 – Internal Controls:** Ensuring that WIOA subrecipients establish and maintain effective internal controls to protect federal funds from fraud, waste, and abuse.
- **2 CFR § 200.328 – Financial Monitoring and Reporting:** Requiring regular financial reporting to assess whether funds are being spent in accordance with the grant agreement.
- **20 CFR § 683.410 – Fiscal and Program Oversight:** Mandating annual on-site fiscal and programmatic monitoring to evaluate compliance with WIOA regulations and financial management standards.
- **20 CFR § 683.420 – Sanctions and Corrective Actions:** Establishing procedures for corrective actions in cases of fiscal mismanagement or non-compliance.

Equal Opportunity (Eo) Monitoring Efforts

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to ensuring compliance with Equal Opportunity (EO) provisions under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and all applicable federal civil rights laws. In accordance with **29 CFR Part 38 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA**, the LWDB has designated Head Forward Solutions, the contracted One-Stop Operator, as the Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer responsible for overseeing EO compliance and monitoring activities within the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona system.

EO monitoring efforts are conducted to ensure that all individuals—including job seekers, participants, employees, and service providers—have equal access to workforce services, programs, and activities without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, gender identity, and transgender status), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or status as a beneficiary of WIOA-funded services. These efforts align with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions outlined in **Section 188 of WIOA (29 U.S.C. 3248)** and **29 CFR Part 38**.

Programmatic Monitoring Efforts

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) and administrative staff are responsible for ensuring that all WIOA Title I-B service providers and Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) operate in full compliance with federal, state, and local workforce development regulations. To uphold program integrity, NEAZ LWDB conducts ongoing programmatic monitoring in accordance with **20 CFR Part 683 – Administrative Provisions Under Title I of WIOA**, Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) oversight standards, and locally established policies.

Monitoring Of WIOA Title I-B Service Providers

In alignment with **20 CFR § 683.410**, the NEAZ LWDB and administrative staff conduct annual programmatic monitoring of all WIOA Title I-B providers, including services delivered under the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. This process ensures compliance with WIOA Title I requirements, evaluates service delivery effectiveness, and promotes continuous improvement in workforce programming.

Monitoring Of Eligible Training Providers

As required under **WIOA Section 122 (29 U.S.C. 3152) and 20 CFR § 680.490**, the NEAZ LWDB also conducts regular monitoring of Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) to ensure that training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) meet performance and compliance standards.

OVERALL OPERATIONS OF THE NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA LWDB

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is responsible for overseeing the strategic implementation and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). To ensure efficient governance, fiscal accountability, and programmatic effectiveness, the LWDB staff perform a range of operational duties that support the workforce system, including administrative management and board governance functions.

Administrative And Governance Functions

The LWDB staff manage the day-to-day administrative operations necessary for effective board function, including:

- Coordinating board meetings, agenda development, and meeting minutes to ensure compliance with Arizona Open Meeting Laws and WIOA regulations.
- Supporting the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the LWDB Chair in fulfilling statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Maintaining board membership records, including appointments, renewals, and compliance with WIOA membership composition requirements (**as outlined in WIOA Section 107(b) (29 U.S.C. 3122)**).
- Facilitating the development and execution of policies, procedures, and governance documents, including the Local Area Plan, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), and the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA).

Board Membership And Workforce System Leadership

The LWDB staff play a critical role in recruiting, onboarding, and supporting board members to maintain a diverse and well-represented local workforce board. Key functions include:

- Ensuring the LWDB's composition aligns with WIOA requirements by maintaining representation from business, workforce, education, government, and community organizations.
- Facilitating board member training on WIOA roles, responsibilities, and regional workforce priorities to enhance engagement and decision-making.
- Coordinating board committees and task forces focused on strategic workforce planning, performance evaluation, and system innovation.
- Engaging with WIOA partners, local businesses, and regional stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and advance workforce development initiatives.

PARTNER PROGRAMS

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title III -Services target individuals who need help with updating or developing a resume and labor exchange assistance that connects them to employment. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the service provider.**

The State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title IV - Services target individuals with disabilities and as per the WIOA will be treated mainstream when accessing the American Job Centers. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 - Services older adults through the Senior Community Service Employment Program with employment and training assistance. **The Arizona Agency on Aging is the provider in Gila County while NACOG is the provider in Navajo and Apache Counties.**

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) activities, authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 - Serves individuals who are eligible workers who lose their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced, because of increased imports or production transfers abroad. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs - Services individuals who are unemployed and eligible to receive unemployment compensation. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) programs, authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C. - Services individuals who are veterans with significant barriers to employment to receive tailored employment and training services. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, authorized under WIOA title II - Services target individuals in need of basic education classes with low basic skills and low educational attainment; English language acquisition for eligible learners to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension of the English language; and math skills needed to attain a high school credential and transition to post-secondary education and employment. **Gila County Educational Service Agency and Northland Pioneer College are the current service providers.**

Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) – **Northland Pioneer College is the current service provider for Navajo and Apache Counties.**

Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) – **Gila County Community Services is the current service provider in Gila County.**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, authorized underpart A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under **20 CFR 678.405(b), 34 CFR 361.405(b), and 34 CFR 463.405(b)**.

Funding streams not available in the local area include:

- Employment and Training Housing and Urban Development
- Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) programs (formerly known as Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO))
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- YouthBuild

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to fostering strong regional workforce development partnerships in alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and federal guidance on regional planning. NEAZ LWDB actively collaborates with neighboring Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to enhance service delivery, streamline referral systems, and ensure that job seekers and employers benefit from a coordinated and seamless workforce system.

In accordance with **WIOA Section 106(c) (29 U.S.C. 3121)** and **20 CFR § 679.510**, NEAZ LWDB engages in regional planning efforts designed to:

- Align workforce strategies across multiple LWDAs to address shared labor market challenges.
- Coordinate service delivery for participants residing near county and regional borders to ensure equitable access to workforce programs.
- Facilitate cross-region business engagement, ensuring that employer needs are met across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Develop and implement regional sector strategies, targeting high-growth industries critical to economic development in the Northern and Eastern regions of Arizona.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND STATEWIDE COORDINATION

NEAZ LWDB actively participates in regional planning sessions, engaging with state and local workforce leaders to develop integrated workforce strategies that enhance economic mobility and business competitiveness. These sessions focus on data-driven decision-making, labor market analysis, and resource sharing to maximize the impact of WIOA-funded programs. Additionally, the LWDB staff and One-Stop Operator engage in regularly scheduled All-State Director's Meetings, convened by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Arizona Workforce Council. These meetings provide a platform for:

- Exchanging best practices in workforce service delivery and employer engagement.
- Discussing employment and economic trends that impact regional workforce needs.
- Aligning strategies to ensure consistency in service provision across workforce areas.

INTER-AREA COLLABORATION AND ONE-STOP SYSTEM COORDINATION

The NEAZ LWDB One-Stop Operator Head Forward Solutions maintains ongoing communication and collaboration with One-Stop Operators in neighboring workforce areas. This coordination strengthens service accessibility, consistency, and effectiveness by:

- Enhancing referral systems to ensure job seekers and businesses receive the best possible workforce solutions, regardless of jurisdiction.
- Aligning policies and service models to create a seamless experience for customers across workforce areas.
- Identifying and implementing innovative service delivery models to improve customer outcomes.

These regional development efforts are informed by **Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 14-15: WIOA General Guidance for the Regional and Local Planning Process** and **TEGL 16-16: One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center (AJC) Network**. NEAZ LWDB remains committed to leveraging regional collaboration to enhance workforce services, strengthen economic development, and improve employment outcomes for businesses and job seekers alike.

SECTION II: STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS - ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTHEAST ARIZONA

The Northeast Arizona region, comprising Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties, is a significant contributor to Arizona's labor market and economic landscape. The region's total population in 2024 is 226,701, reflecting a decline of 10,333 residents over the past five years, with an additional projected decrease of 4,823 residents over the next five years. These demographic shifts impact labor force dynamics, economic development strategies, and workforce planning.

Key Economic Indicators

- Gross Regional Product (GRP): \$9.3 billion
- Cost of Living Index: 99.8 (slightly below the state index of 102.4)
- Exports: \$18.3 billion | Imports: \$16.5 billion

Despite its relatively small population, the region plays an important role in Arizona's broader economy, contributing to the state's total population of 7.47 million and workforce of 3.7 million.

Economic Significance

The economic landscape of Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties is shaped by public sector employment, healthcare, mining, and retail trade. While employment growth is steady, the lower average earnings per job compared to the national average indicate a need for continued investment in higher-wage industries, workforce training programs, and sector diversification.

The Northeast Arizona region remains an integral part of Arizona's economic framework, supporting state and regional workforce initiatives that align with WIOA priorities. Strategic workforce planning efforts will be critical in addressing demographic shifts, improving employment opportunities, and strengthening economic resilience across these three counties.

226,701

Population (2024)

Population decreased by 10,333 over the last 5 years and is projected to decrease by 4,823 over the next 5 years.

68,197

Total Regional Employment

Jobs grew by 898 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 1,992 over the next 5 years.

\$64.0K

Avg. Earnings Per Job (2024)

Regional average earnings per job are \$21.0K below the national average earnings of \$85.0K per job.

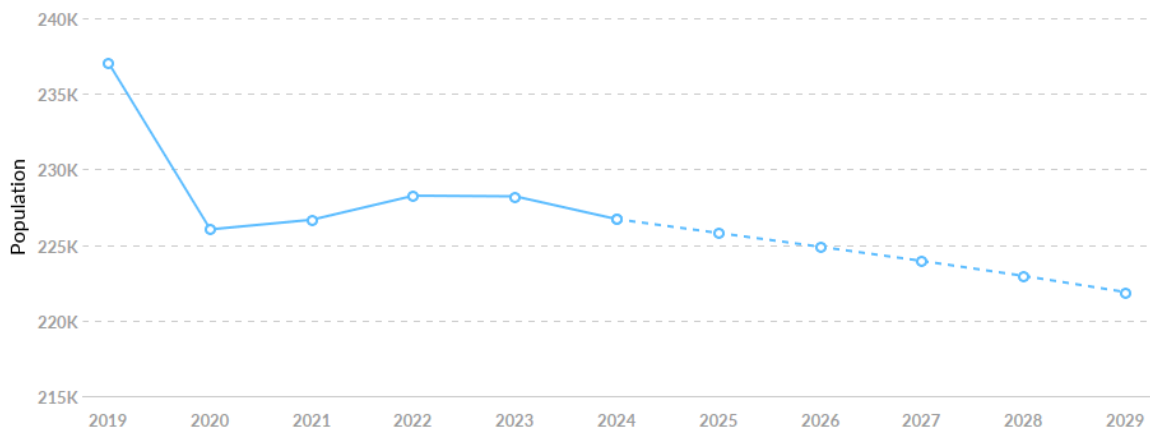
	Population (2024)	Labor Force (Dec 2024)	Jobs (2024)	Cost of Living	GRP	Imports	Exports
Region	226,701	77,471	68,197	99.8	\$9.3B	\$16.5B	\$18.3B
State	7,474,289	3,707,513	3,599,935	102.4	\$519.3B	\$354.0B	\$414.4B

Demographic Overview

The Northeast Arizona region, encompassing Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties, is undergoing significant demographic shifts that have direct implications for its labor force. As of 2024, the region’s total population stands at 226,701, reflecting a 4.4% decline since 2019. Over the past five years, the population has decreased by 10,333 residents and is projected to decline by an additional 2.1% (4,823 residents) between 2024 and 2029. This continued population reduction raises concerns about labor force availability, workforce sustainability, and regional economic resilience.

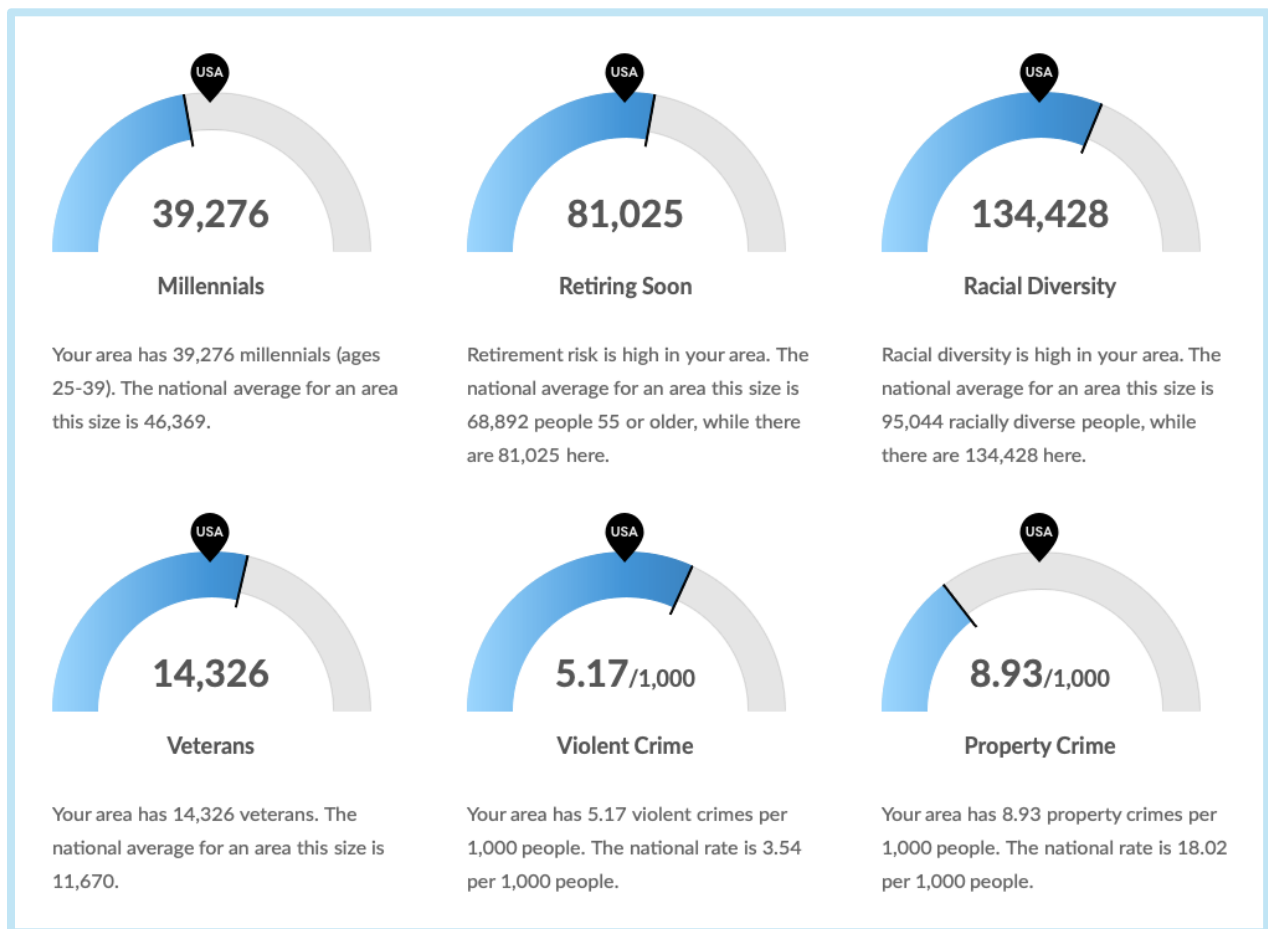
Population Trends

As of 2024 the region's population declined by 4.4% since 2019, falling by 10,333. Population is expected to decrease by 2.1% between 2024 and 2029, losing 4,823.



Growth And Decline Patterns

- A critical factor influencing workforce trends is the region's age distribution:
- 81,025 residents (35.7%) are aged 55 or older, which is significantly higher than the national average of 68,892 for an area of similar size.
- The millennial workforce (ages 25-39) includes 39,276 individuals, which is lower than the national average of 46,369, indicating potential challenges in replacing an aging workforce.
- Veterans represent a notable portion of the labor force, with 14,326 veterans residing in the region, exceeding the national average of 11,670.
- These patterns suggest an increasing retirement risk, a shrinking pipeline of younger workers, and a growing need for targeted workforce development initiatives to attract, retain, and upskill younger talent to offset labor shortages.



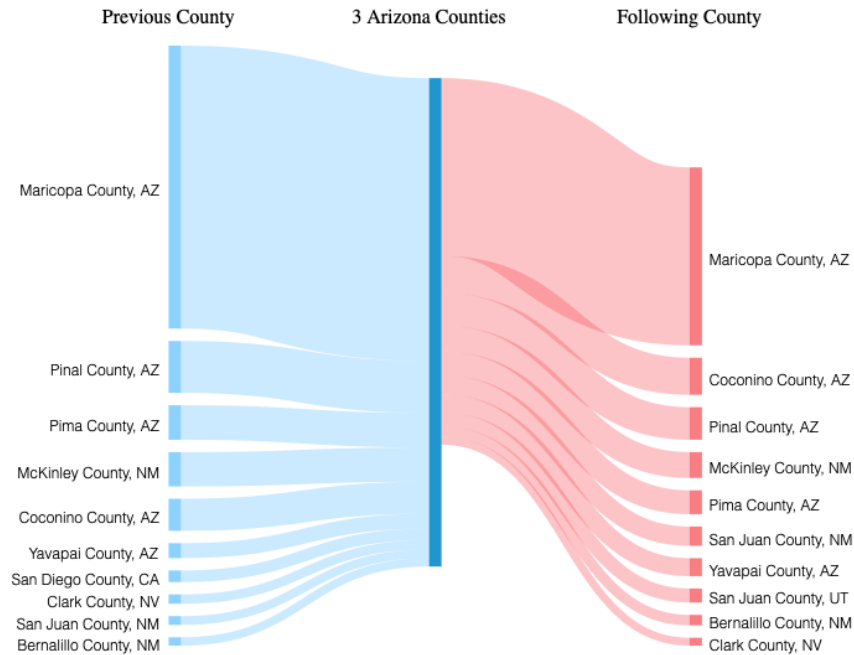
Migration Trends and Labor Force Mobility

Migration trends further shape the labor market in Northeast Arizona.

- Net migration in 2022 was positive (+1,732 residents), indicating more people moved

The table below analyzes past and current residents of 3 Arizona Counties. The left column shows residents of other counties migrating to 3 Arizona Counties. The right column shows residents migrating from 3 Arizona Counties to other counties.

As of 2022, **4,061** people have migrated from Maricopa County, AZ to 3 Arizona Counties. In the same year, **2,553** people left 3 Arizona Counties migrating to Maricopa County, AZ. The total Net Migration for 3 Arizona Counties in 2022 was **1,732**.



Top Previous Counties	Migrations	Top Following Counties	Migrations
Maricopa County, AZ	4,061	Maricopa County, AZ	2,553
Pinal County, AZ	744	Coconino County, AZ	532
Pima County, AZ	495	Pinal County, AZ	467
McKinley County, NM	491	McKinley County, NM	371
Coconino County, AZ	459	Pima County, AZ	342
Yavapai County, AZ	214	San Juan County, NM	276
San Diego County, CA	166	Yavapai County, AZ	257
Clark County, NV	134	San Juan County, UT	200
San Juan County, NM	125	Bernalillo County, NM	150
Bernalillo County, NM	120	Clark County, NV	113

into the region than left.

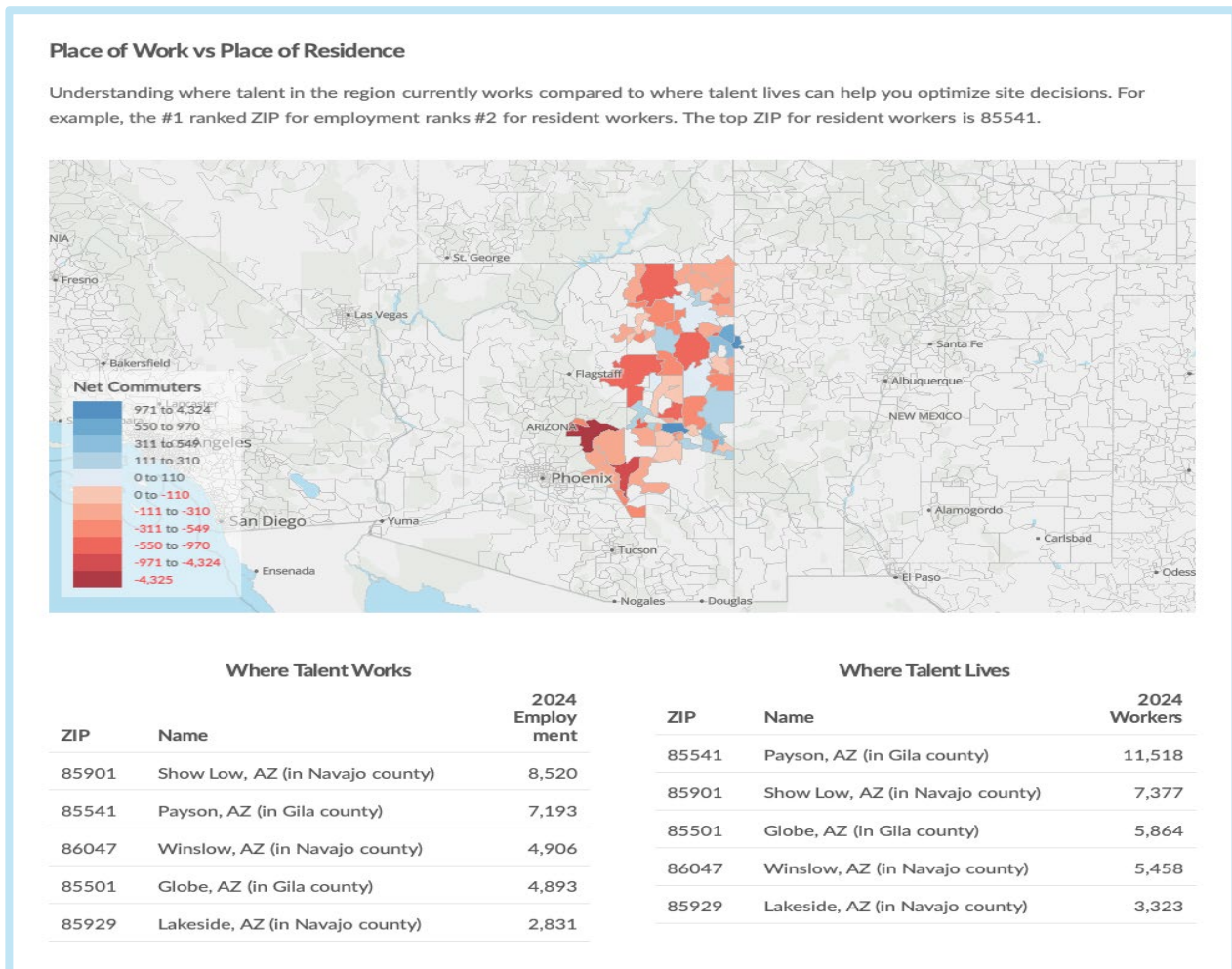
- The largest source of in-migration is Maricopa County, AZ, with 4,061 residents relocating to Northeast Arizona.
- Conversely, 2,553 individuals left the region for Maricopa County, suggesting a continued labor exchange between rural and metropolitan areas.
- Other significant sources of in-migration include Pinal County (744), Pima County (495), and McKinley County, NM (491).

Despite a net positive migration rate, the continued movement of residents toward urban centers like Maricopa County and Pima County signals that rural workforce retention remains a challenge. Strategic efforts to enhance employment opportunities, improve wages, and develop sustainable career pathways will be critical in stabilizing and growing the labor force.

Place Of Work Vs. Place Of Residence Analysis

An analysis of where talent works versus where they live highlights regional commuting trends and potential workforce mismatches.

- Show Low, AZ (Navajo County) is the top employment center, with 8,520 jobs in 2024.

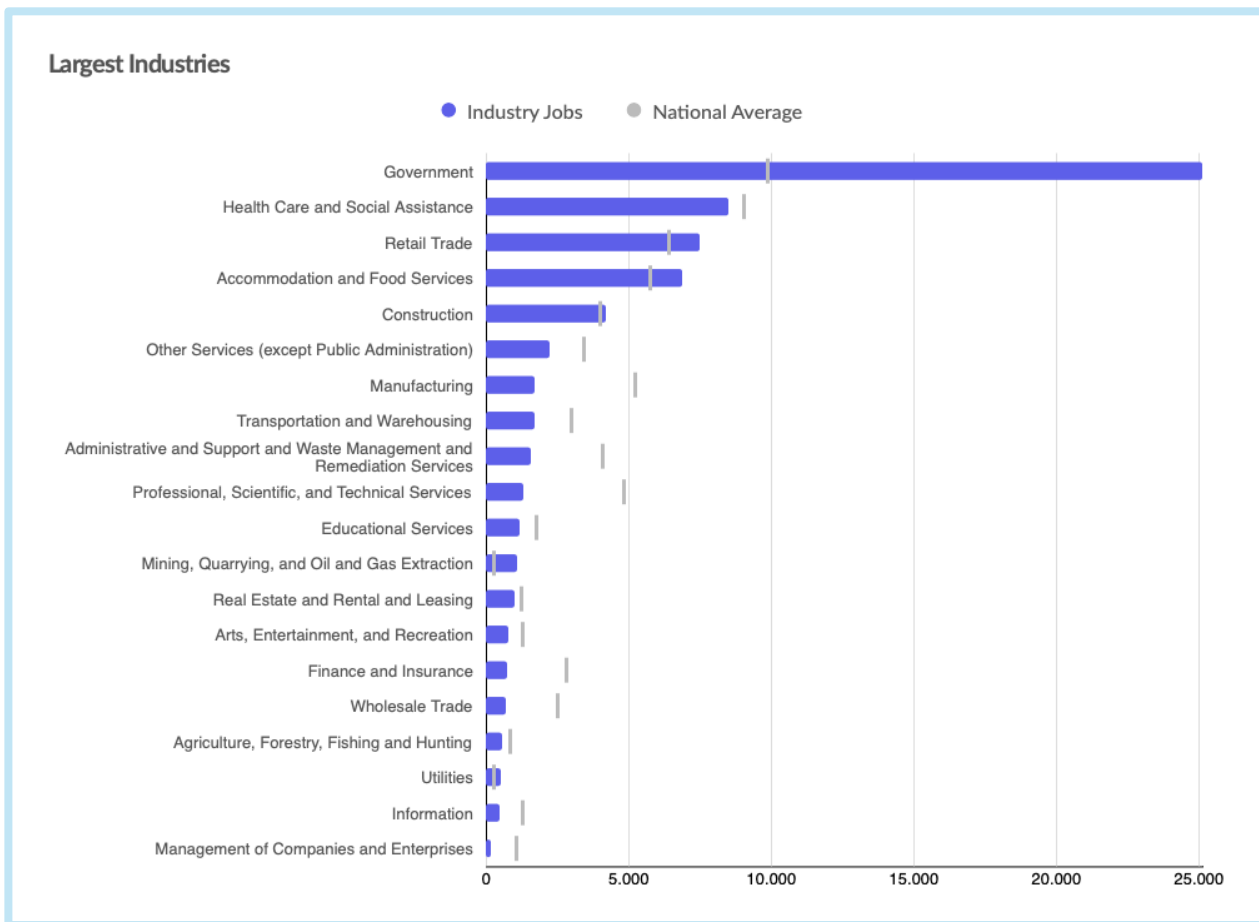


- Payson, AZ (Gila County) ranks highest for resident workers (11,518), followed by Show Low (7,377) and Globe, AZ (5,864).
- The regional net commuter balance indicates workforce mobility, with some areas experiencing net outflows of talent to larger employment hubs.

This suggests that while employment centers exist within the region, commuting patterns and labor mobility constraints may impact workforce participation. Investments in transportation infrastructure, remote work opportunities, and local job creation strategies will be essential for optimizing labor force engagement.

Major Industry Sectors

The **Northeast Arizona region**, which includes **Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties**, is driven by a mix of public sector employment, healthcare services, retail trade, and tourism-related industries. The largest industry sectors in terms of employment include:



- **Government** – The largest employment sector in the region, with a workforce significantly exceeding the national average. Public administration roles, tribal government positions, and local municipal jobs form a substantial portion of the economy.
- **Health Care and Social Assistance** – The second-largest industry, reflecting the region’s growing healthcare needs, aging population, and the presence of major healthcare providers.
- **Retail Trade** – A key sector, supporting consumer demand and local commerce, particularly in hubs like Show Low and Payson.
- **Accommodation and Food Services** – A major employer, driven by tourism and seasonal visitors drawn to the region’s natural attractions.

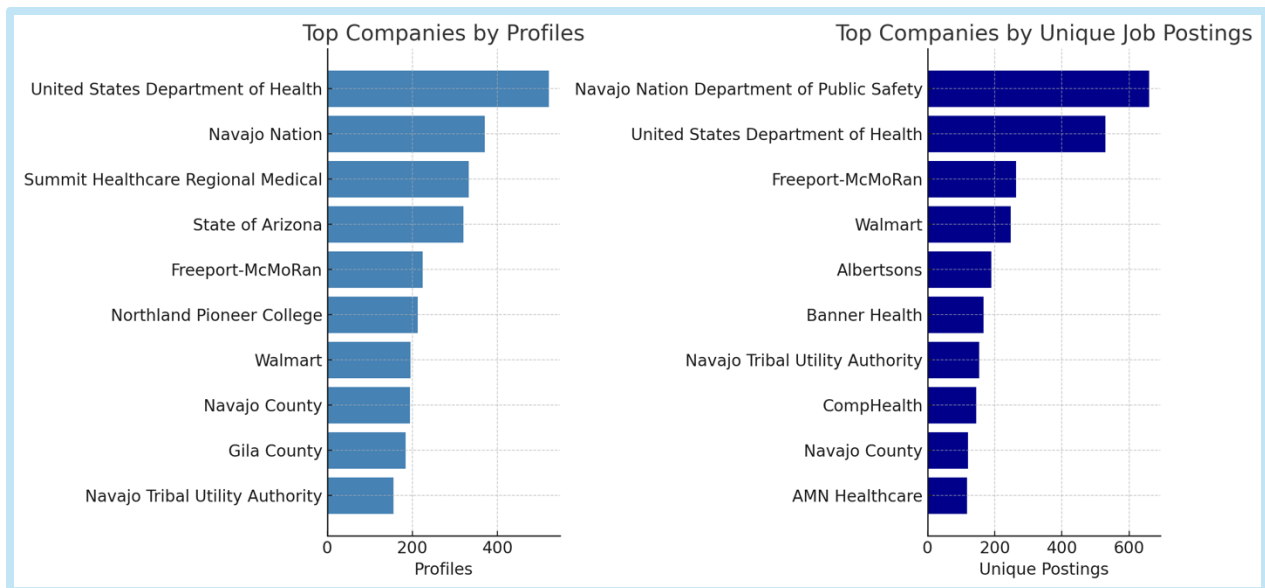
- **Construction** – A steadily growing industry, likely influenced by infrastructure projects, housing development, and public investment in regional improvements.

Smaller but still significant industries include manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, mining, and professional and technical services, each contributing to the region’s economic diversity.

Top Employers

The largest employers in the region span government, healthcare, education, and retail, emphasizing the dominance of public sector jobs and service-based industries. The top employers by workforce size include:

- **United States Department of Health** – The largest employer, reinforcing the region’s reliance on healthcare and social services.
- **Navajo Nation** – A major employer providing government and public services across



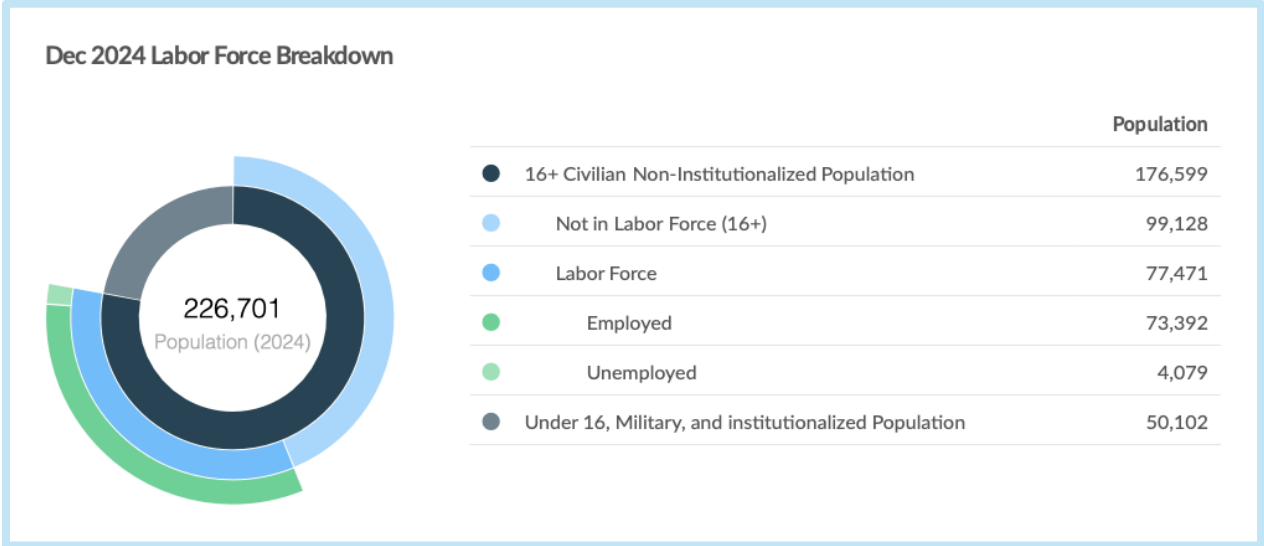
tribal lands.

- **Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center** – A leading healthcare provider, reflecting the sector’s high demand.
- **State of Arizona** – Includes education, transportation, and other public sector employment.
- **Freeport-McMoRan** – A key mining industry employer, contributing to economic stability.
- **Northland Pioneer College** – A significant education sector employer, supporting workforce development.
- **Walmart** – A major retail employer, sustaining local commerce and consumer spending.
- **Navajo County & Gila County** – Regional government bodies providing essential public sector jobs.

LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

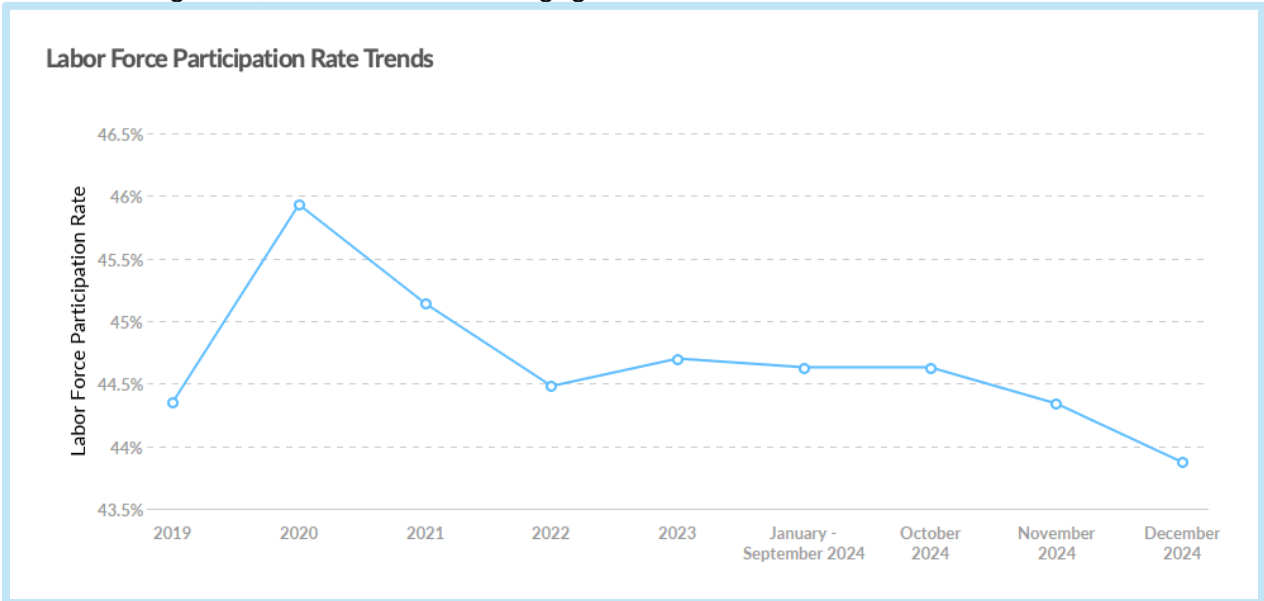
Labor Force Size & Participation Rates

As of December 2024, the total population of the region stands at 226,701 residents. The working-age population (16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized) is 176,599, with a labor force of 77,471 individuals, reflecting a labor force participation rate of approximately 43.9%.



Labor Force Participation Trends

- The labor force participation rate (LFPR) has declined in recent years. While it peaked at 46% in 2020, it has since dropped to 43.9% in December 2024.
- This decline reflects broader workforce challenges, including an aging population, outmigration, and workforce disengagement.

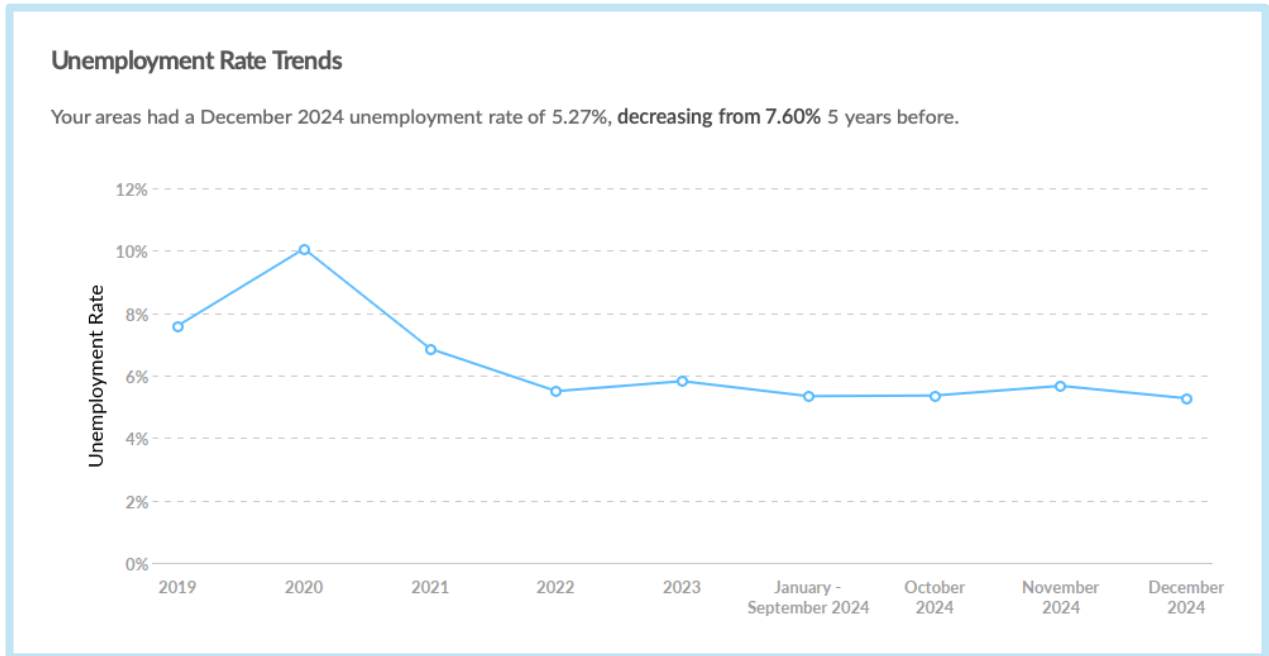


Unemployment Trends

The region's unemployment rate has shown gradual improvement, decreasing from 7.60% in 2019 to 5.27% in December 2024. However, fluctuations exist across age groups and industries.

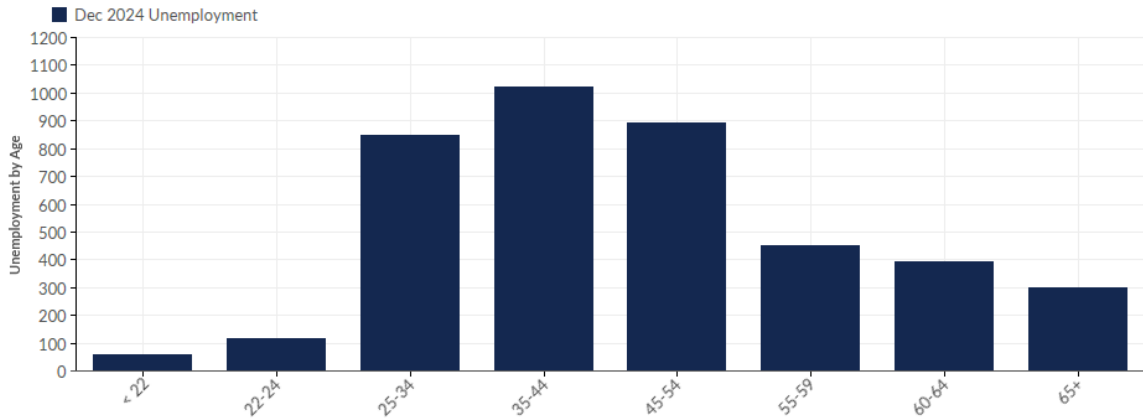
Unemployment by Age Group (December 2024)

- Ages 35-44 (25.01%) and 25-34 (20.76%) have the highest share of unemployed individuals.



- Older adults (55-64) and youth (under 24) show lower unemployment rates, but may face barriers to workforce participation, such as lack of training or early retirement trends.

Unemployment by Age



Age	Unemployment (Dec 2024)	% of Unemployed
< 22	60	1.47%
22-24	117	2.87%
25-34	847	20.76%
35-44	1,020	25.01%
45-54	892	21.87%
55-59	451	11.06%
60-64	392	9.61%
65+	300	7.35%
Total	4,079	100.00%

Job Growth & Decline: Expanding and Contracting Sectors

Top Growing Occupations in Northeast Arizona

- Several sectors are experiencing positive job growth, with management, construction, and business/financial operations leading expansion.

Declining & At-Risk Sectors

- Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services are facing slowdowns, potentially impacted by automation, e-commerce shifts, and economic conditions.
- Government employment remains stable but may face reductions due to funding constraints.

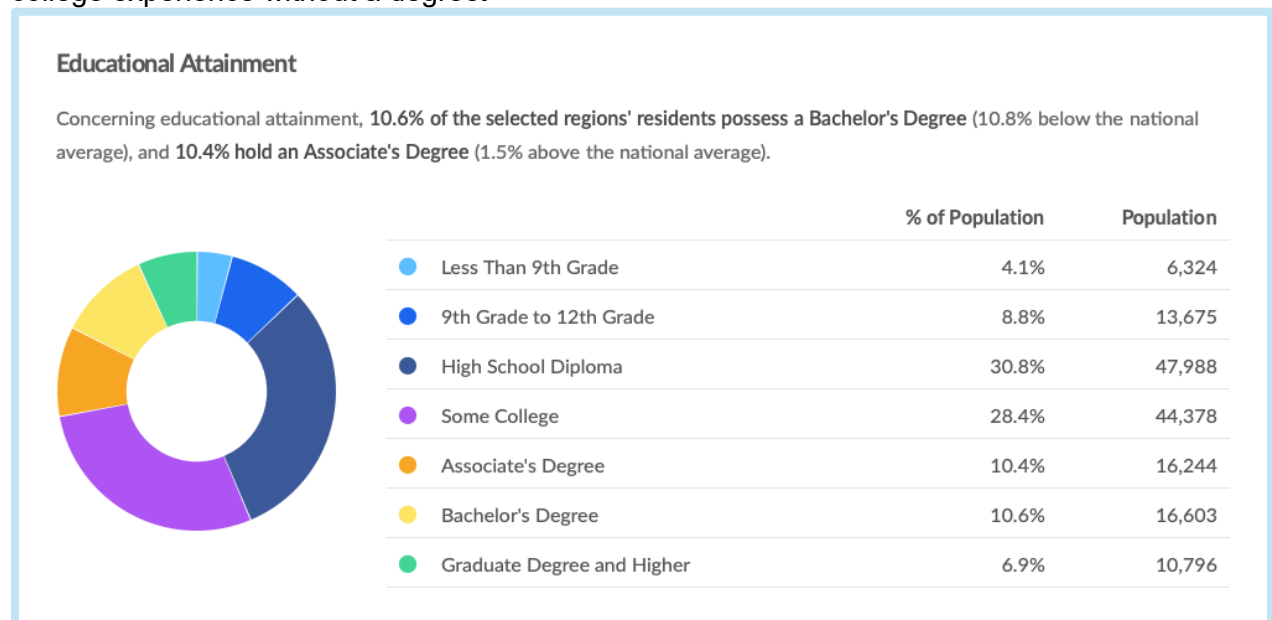
SOC	Description	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2019 - 2024 Change	2019 - 2024 % Change
11-0000	Management Occupations	3,782	4,754	972	26%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	4,369	5,028	659	15%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	2,238	2,687	449	20%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	4,349	4,460	110	3%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	2,836	2,933	97	3%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	675	757	82	12%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	449	530	81	18%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,691	2,762	71	3%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	759	822	63	8%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	5,312	5,342	31	1%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	930	957	27	3%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,532	3,557	24	1%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	1,571	1,571	0	0%
99-0000	Unclassified Occupation	0	0	0	0%

17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	644	643	(1)	(0%)
55-0000	Military-only occupations	254	239	(15)	(6%)
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	5,107	5,083	(24)	(0%)
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	490	432	(57)	(12%)
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	1,566	1,451	(114)	(7%)
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	4,244	4,123	(121)	(3%)
51-0000	Production Occupations	2,007	1,727	(280)	(14%)
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	6,553	6,256	(297)	(5%)
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	4,588	4,244	(344)	(8%)
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	8,353	7,838	(515)	(6%)

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS & BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Educational Attainment & Workforce Credentials

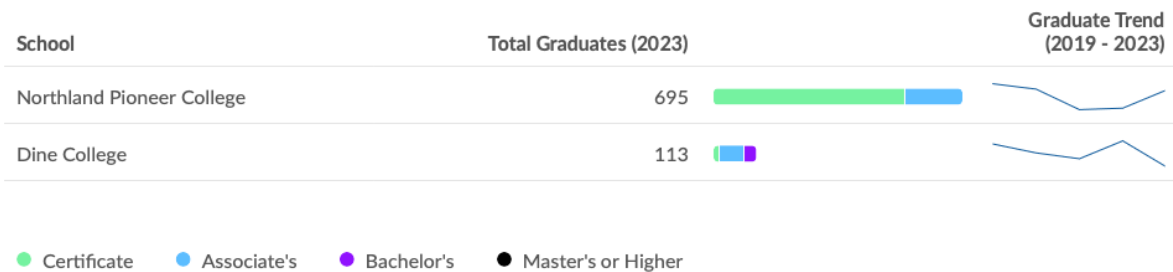
The educational profile of the Northeast Arizona workforce reflects low levels of postsecondary attainment, with a large percentage of the population holding a high school diploma or some college experience without a degree.



Pipeline Of Skilled Workers: Postsecondary Education & Training

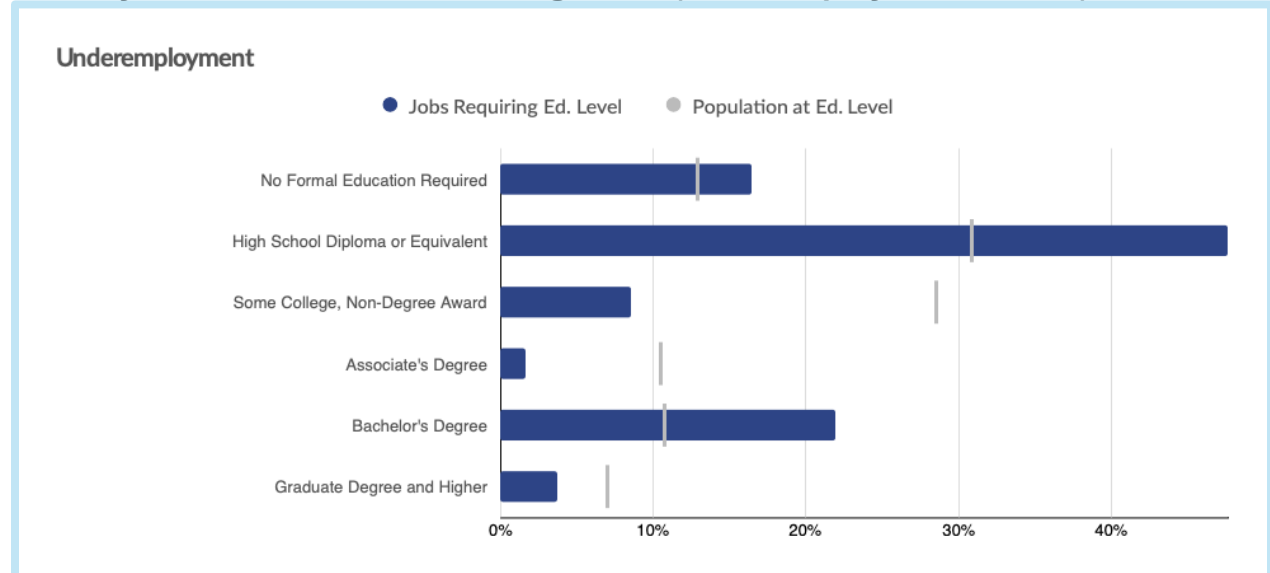
- In 2023, 808 students graduated from regional institutions, but this number has declined by 13% over the past five years.
- Northland Pioneer College accounted for the majority of graduates, with most earning certificates in technical fields like Welding Technology and Vehicle Maintenance.
- Diné College had 113 graduates, primarily in associate and bachelor's degrees.

In 2023, there were 808 graduates in 3 Arizona Counties. This pipeline has shrunk by 13% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "Welding Technology/Welder" (Certificate), "General Studies" (Associate's), and "Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Technology/Technician, General" (Certificate).



Workforce Skill Gaps & Readiness Challenges

Industry vs. Workforce Skills Misalignment (Underemployment Trends)

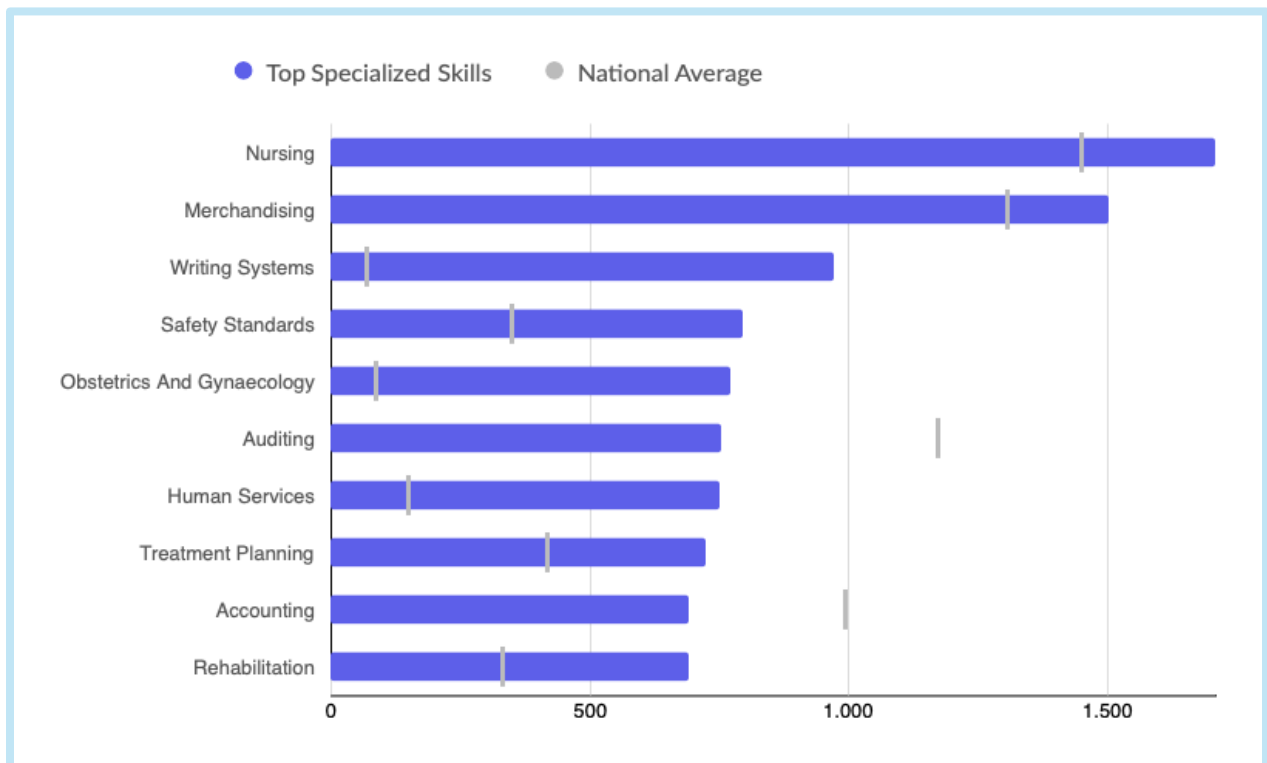


- A significant mismatch exists between education levels and job requirements, leading to underemployment in the region.
- Most jobs (40%+) require only a high school diploma or equivalent, while a substantial portion of the population holds higher education credentials with limited job opportunities requiring those skills.
- Bachelor's degree holders face underemployment, as the demand for jobs requiring higher education is lower than the available workforce at that level.

Top Specialized Skills in Demand

The most sought-after skills in the region align with key employment sectors, particularly in healthcare, business, and technical fields.

Top In-Demand Skills	Industry Alignment
Nursing	Healthcare & Social Assistance
Merchandising	Retail Trade
Writing Systems	Administrative & Business Services
Safety Standards	Construction, Manufacturing, Healthcare
Obstetrics & Gynecology	Healthcare
Auditing & Accounting	Business & Financial Services
Human Services	Social Assistance & Nonprofit Sectors
Treatment Planning & Rehabilitation	Healthcare, Counseling, and Human Services



Skill Gaps & Workforce Readiness Issues

Despite demand in healthcare, finance, and skilled trades, several skill gaps exist that limit employment opportunities in high-growth fields.

- **Shortage of Business, Finance, and IT Skills:** Employers report difficulty finding candidates with strong business operations, data management, and technical finance skills.
- **Lack of Industry Certifications & Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Many workers have some college but no degree, requiring alternative credentials or on-the-job training to transition into higher-paying jobs.

- **Digital & Technological Skill Gaps:** As remote work and automation increase, job seekers need better access to digital literacy and software training to remain competitive.

KEY OBSERVATIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Labor Force Participation Decline:** The region has seen a declining labor force participation rate, requiring targeted interventions to engage underrepresented populations and promote workforce reintegration.
- **Persistent Unemployment & Underemployment:** Unemployment is most prevalent among individuals aged 25-44, and underemployment is significant among degree holders due to mismatches between education levels and job market demand
- **Sectoral Shifts & Job Stability Risks:**
 - Retail and service sector employment is declining, signaling a need for upskilling and career transitions into stable industries.
 - Construction and healthcare occupations are growing, reinforcing the need for apprenticeships, certifications, and training expansion.
- **Workforce Skill Gaps:** The strongest demand exists for healthcare, business, and skilled trades professionals, but many workers lack the necessary certifications or technical skills.
- **Education & Training Deficiencies:** While 30.8% of the workforce holds only a high school diploma, only 10.6% have a bachelor's degree—10.8% below the national average. Additionally, the pipeline of new graduates has shrunk by 13% over the past five years, limiting the region's ability to fill in-demand jobs.
- **Need for Expanded Work-Based Learning & Digital Access:** Registered Apprenticeships (RAs), on-the-job training, and workforce mobility solutions will be crucial in addressing rural employment barriers and industry-specific talent shortages.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING PRIORITIES FOR NORTHEAST ARIZONA

The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) of Northeast Arizona is committed to expanding access to workforce development, education, and training activities to meet the evolving needs of job seekers, employers, and industries across Gila, Apache, and Navajo Counties. These priorities align with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates and federal workforce policies, ensuring equitable access to training, career advancement opportunities, and employer-driven workforce solutions.

Expanding Access To Credentials, Training, And Education

- The LWDA prioritizes access to industry-recognized credentials, education, and training programs to improve the career prospects of participants and align with in-demand occupations.
- High-growth industries in the region (construction, healthcare, and business/finance) require credentialed workers, yet many job seekers lack the necessary qualifications.

- The Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs will continue to fund occupational training, stackable credentials, and certifications to support career progression (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)).
- The region will expand partnerships with community colleges, vocational institutions, and apprenticeship programs to ensure education pipelines align with industry needs.
- Outreach efforts will be enhanced for underemployed workers, supporting skills-based hiring practices and career advancement through short-term training programs and technical education.

Policy Alignment:

- **TEGL 10-16, Change 1** – Expanding the use of Industry-Recognized Credentials and Work-Based Learning Programs.
- **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E)** – Prioritizing workforce training to increase employment and earnings potential for participants.

Enhancing Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeship Opportunities

- A key workforce development strategy is scaling work-based learning (WBL) initiatives to provide job seekers with hands-on training, work experience, and employer connections.
- Apprenticeship programs will be expanded in construction, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing to support sustainable career pathways.
- Work Experience (WEX) placements will be enhanced through Title I-B partnerships with local employers, ensuring participants gain practical, industry-relevant experience.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs will be leveraged to support skills development for new hires and upskilling of current employees (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(H)).
- The region will implement targeted sector-based strategies to ensure WBL programs meet the needs of high-growth and emerging industries (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A)).

Policy Alignment:

- **WIOA Sec. 122** – Promoting and Expanding Apprenticeships.
- **TEGL 13-16** – Best practices in Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Models.

Strengthening Youth Workforce Engagement & School Partnerships

- The LWDA is committed to engaging young workers and preparing them for career success by increasing outreach to schools, educators, and youth-serving organizations.
- Title I-B Youth Programs will prioritize expanding Work Experience (WEX) placements to ensure young adults develop essential job skills and workplace readiness.
- Partnerships with K-12 schools, career and technical education (CTE) programs, and alternative education providers will increase awareness of workforce opportunities and pathways into apprenticeships, training programs, and postsecondary education.
- A youth-centered outreach campaign will be launched to increase awareness and participation in workforce development services, particularly for out-of-school youth and those facing barriers to employment.
- Employer engagement strategies will be strengthened to create internship and mentorship opportunities that enhance early career development and exposure to in-demand industries.

Policy Alignment:

- **WIOA Sec. 129** – Youth Workforce Programs & Work-Based Learning Requirements.
- **TEGL 21-16** – Best practices in Youth Work Experience, Internships, and Pre-Apprenticeship Models.

WORKFORCE OUTREACH & SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

To ensure equitable access to employment and training programs, the LWDA will enhance outreach and workforce services delivery.

- Mobile workforce solutions and virtual career services will be expanded to increase access for rural job seekers.
- Coordination among workforce system partners (Title I-IV, local employers, education institutions) will be strengthened to improve service integration and maximize funding resources.
- Sector-based partnerships will be leveraged to align education and workforce training programs with employer demand, particularly in construction, healthcare, business, and skilled trades.

Policy Alignment:

- **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A)** – Strengthening Workforce System Partnerships & Service Coordination.
- **TEGL 19-16** – Guidance on Aligning Workforce Services with Economic & Industry Needs.

STRENGTHS OF THE REGIONAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Customer Service & Teamwork – Strong collaboration among workforce partners was recognized as a key asset. The team takes pride in providing high-quality customer service and building strong networking relationships across the region.

Employer & Partner Engagement Successes – Past efforts in workshops, training sessions, and outreach events helped strengthen employer relationships and improve partner coordination. These should be revived and expanded.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement – Despite challenges, there is strong enthusiasm from staff and partners to improve workforce service delivery.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Rural Access & Infrastructure Limitations – Limited Wi-Fi, transportation, and job access in remote areas make it difficult for job seekers to engage with workforce programs.

Lack of Standardized Referral Process – The Atlas system is used for referrals, but partners face challenges due to different program requirements and lack of standardization.

Funding Constraints – Decreasing WIOA funding is forcing difficult choices in service delivery, limiting the ability to serve all job seekers effectively.

VISION TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND ECONOMIC SUFFICIENCY

Expand Career Pathways in High-Growth Sectors

- Strengthen partnerships between community colleges, training providers, and employers to develop clear career pathways in construction, healthcare, and business operations.
- Align workforce training programs with industry needs, prioritizing certifications and technical skills development.

Strengthen Business Engagement & Workforce Integration

- Actively engage with economic development partners, including city and county staff, small business leaders, and industry associations. These partnerships allow for:
- Utilize real-time workforce intelligence – Understanding labor market trends and ensuring training programs align with employer demand.
- Expand business services – Increasing employer utilization of ARIZONA@WORK programs, including job posting assistance through Arizona Job Connection (AJC).
- Increase entrepreneurial and small business support – Engaging local businesses to develop customized workforce solutions, including on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training (IWT), and apprenticeships.

Address Underemployment Through Skills-Based Hiring & Reskilling

- Partner with employers to shift hiring practices toward skills-based approaches rather than degree requirements.
- Enhance WIOA-funded programs to help underemployed workers transition into high-wage careers through upskilling and stackable credentials.

Strengthen Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeship Programs

- Expand Registered Apprenticeships (RAs), on-the-job training, and industry-recognized credentials to support career mobility in healthcare, construction, and skilled trades (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)).
- Foster sector-based partnerships to improve workforce alignment with business needs and support economic growth (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A)).

Enhance Workforce Awareness, Digital Access & Outreach Strategies

- Improve career navigation and workforce services marketing, ensuring job seekers understand available training and employment pathways.
- Invest in mobile workforce solutions and virtual career services to enhance accessibility for rural and underserved populations.

Increase Workforce Equity & Support for Disadvantaged Populations

- Expand youth workforce development initiatives (WIOA Sec. 129) and targeted re-employment programs for older workers (WIOA Sec. 134(a)(3)(A)).

- Address labor market disparities by investing in economic mobility initiatives, particularly for low-income and rural job seekers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Our strategy to work with entities that carry out core programs and required partners to achieve the vision described above is as follows:

Virtual Workforce Partner Roundtables

- Establish quarterly virtual partner roundtables to facilitate ongoing collaboration and information-sharing among workforce system partners.
- Rotate topics based on emerging labor market trends, policy updates, and service coordination challenges.
- Utilize ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, or Webex to ensure broad participation from rural and urban partners alike.

Regional Workforce Collaboration Portal

- Develop a shared online portal where partners can access workforce resources, training materials, and service coordination tools.
- Provide real-time updates on funding opportunities, employer engagement initiatives, and workforce system developments.
- Implement discussion forums for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and cross-agency collaboration.

Employer & Industry Roundtables with Partners

- Establish quarterly employer engagement roundtables with partners and local businesses to ensure alignment between workforce development efforts and industry needs.
- Focus on high-growth sectors, such as healthcare, construction, business operations, and skilled trades.
- Integrate WIOA-funded training opportunities, such as Registered Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training programs, into employer discussions.

Partner Training & Capacity-Building Series

- Implement a virtual training series for workforce system partners to increase knowledge of WIOA policies, best practices, and service coordination strategies.
- Include topics such as eligibility determination, referral best practices, digital workforce solutions, and employer engagement.
- Offer certificates of completion to encourage participation and recognize professional development efforts.

STATEWIDE STRATEGY ASSURANCES

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to aligning with and upholding the ARIZONA@WORK statewide workforce strategies to ensure a cohesive, high-performing workforce system that meets the needs of businesses and job seekers. The LWDB actively supports and implements statewide workforce initiatives in coordination with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), the Office of Economic

Opportunity (OEO), and other state-level partners to maintain compliance with federal and state workforce policies.

To ensure strategic alignment with Arizona's statewide workforce goals, the Northeastern LWDB adheres to the following governance and operational commitments:

Active Participation in Statewide Workforce Initiatives

- The LWDB actively engages in statewide planning sessions, interagency meetings, and policy discussions convened by DES and OEO. This ensures that local workforce strategies are aligned with Arizona's statewide vision for workforce and economic development.
- The LWDB contributes to statewide data-sharing efforts, labor market analyses, and workforce program evaluations to help inform evidence-based policy decisions that benefit the region and the state as a whole.
- WIOA Policy Alignment: The LWDB ensures that all workforce programs are in compliance with WIOA Sec. 106(c), which mandates regional coordination with statewide strategies, as well as TEGL 27-14, which outlines the role of local boards in aligning service delivery with state workforce priorities.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement & Best Practices

- The Northeastern LWDB strives to be a model of best practices, actively identifying and implementing innovative workforce strategies that enhance service delivery, employer engagement, and participant outcomes.
- Each LWDB member is encouraged to pursue ongoing education, professional development, and state-provided training to remain informed on WIOA regulations, labor market trends, and workforce service innovations.
- Regulatory Compliance: WIOA Sec. 107(d) requires local boards to develop policies and strategies that align with state objectives. Additionally, TEGL 10-16, Change 1 emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement and professional development in workforce system operations.

Strengthening Partnerships & System-Wide Collaboration

- The LWDB maintains direct, ongoing engagement with state oversight staff, system partners, and required stakeholders to ensure programmatic consistency, compliance, and operational efficiency.
- The board supports cross-agency collaboration by integrating Title I, II, III, and IV programs, strengthening partnerships with economic development agencies, education providers, and community-based organizations.
- **Service Integration Assurance:** Per **WIOA Sec. 121(b)(1)(A)** and **TEGL 16-16**, the LWDB ensures seamless service delivery by maintaining strong interagency coordination and referral mechanisms.

Transparency, Accountability & Performance Monitoring

- The LWDB regularly reviews and evaluates performance metrics to ensure local programs are meeting state and federal workforce development goals.
- The board contributes to Arizona's statewide workforce reports, ensuring data transparency and alignment with statewide key performance indicators (KPIs).

- **Policy Compliance:** The LWDB adheres to **WIOA Sec. 116** regarding performance accountability and **TEGL 11-19**, which outlines statewide and local area reporting requirements to ensure transparency and data integrity.

Adapting to Emerging State & National Workforce Priorities

- The LWDB remains proactively engaged with national and state-level workforce initiatives, including efforts related to economic transitions (e.g., coal transition workforce planning), broadband infrastructure, green energy workforce development, and digital equity initiatives.
- The board ensures that its programs are flexible and responsive to emerging workforce needs, making necessary policy and funding adjustments as required.
- **Strategic Adaptability: TEGL 23-19** highlights the importance of adapting workforce strategies to economic shifts and sectoral workforce changes. The LWDB remains engaged in this process to ensure local economic resiliency.

SECTION 3: ARIZONA@WORK SYSTEM COORDINATION

EXPANDING ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to ensuring equitable access to workforce services, particularly for individuals facing barriers to employment. By strengthening WIOA core program (Titles I-IV) coordination, leveraging technology, and expanding outreach efforts, the LWDB aims to enhance service delivery and economic mobility across Gila, Apache, and Navajo Counties.

Enhancing Coordination and Referral Processes

The Google-based referral system will improve cross-agency referrals, data tracking, and service coordination, ensuring job seekers quickly access training, education, and supportive services. Workforce partners receive ongoing training to promote program awareness and efficient service navigation.

Policy Alignment: WIOA Sec. 121(c), TEGL 16-16

Expanding Outreach & Workforce Accessibility

To reach rural and underserved populations, the LWDB will:

- Strengthen partnerships with schools, chambers of commerce, and community-based organizations.
- Deploy mobile workforce solutions to provide services in remote areas.
- Increase virtual career services and digital workforce solutions to expand access.

Policy Alignment: WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A), TEGL 02-23

Leveraging Technology & Employer Engagement

Technology-driven strategies will enhance workforce services, including:

- Google-based referral system for seamless partner collaboration and service tracking.
- Quarterly employer engagement forums to align training programs with industry needs.
- Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs, including Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Work Experience (WEX).

Policy Alignment: WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A), TEGL 19-16

Strengthening Coordination Across WIOA Titles I-IV

The LWDB ensures an integrated workforce system by:

- Aligning Title I training programs with high-growth industry needs.
- Connecting Title II (Adult Education) with career pathway models.
- Enhancing Title III (Wagner-Peyser) job matching services.
- Expanding Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) support for individuals with disabilities.

Policy Alignment: WIOA Sec. 121(b)(1)(A), TEGL 16-16

FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAYS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to developing clear, employer-driven career pathways that align with regional labor market needs and provide job seekers with structured, progressive career advancement opportunities. By engaging local employers, community colleges, and industry stakeholders, the LWDB ensures that training and education programs effectively prepare individuals for in-demand occupations.

Employer-Driven Career Pathway Development

The LWDB prioritizes strong employer partnerships to ensure career pathways reflect real workforce needs. Employers will be actively engaged in:

- Identifying key industry skill gaps and informing curriculum development.
- Supporting work-based learning opportunities, such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Experience (WEX), and Registered Apprenticeships.
- Participating in industry roundtables to provide direct input on workforce priorities and career progression models.

These partnerships will help create sector-based career pathways in healthcare, skilled trades, construction, and business operations, aligning with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A) and TEGL 19-16**.

Expanding Community College & Education Partnerships

Local community colleges and training providers play a key role in delivering industry-aligned education and credentialing. The LWDB will:

- Collaborate with Northland Pioneer College, Diné College, and other training institutions to expand career-focused degree and certification programs.
- Align educational offerings with state and national industry standards, ensuring students can transition from classroom learning to employment seamlessly.
- Promote stackable credentials that provide multiple entry points and career advancement opportunities in high-demand sectors.

These efforts support WIOA Sec. 122, which promotes industry-recognized credentials and employer-driven training models.

Strengthening Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeships

To ensure that career pathways lead to direct employment opportunities, the LWDB will:

- Expand Registered Apprenticeships in collaboration with employers and industry groups.
- Promote Pre-Apprenticeship programs to provide foundational training for youth and career changers.
- Integrate Work-Based Learning (WBL) models, including internships and mentorship programs, to bridge the gap between education and employment.

These strategies align with **TEGL 13-16**, which emphasizes apprenticeships as a critical workforce development tool.

FACILITATING THE COORDINATION OF CO-ENROLLMENT WITH ARIZONA@WORK PARTNERS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to strengthening co-enrollment strategies to ensure job seekers receive comprehensive, seamless services across WIOA core programs

and ARIZONA@WORK partners. Through technology-driven solutions, staff training, and enhanced partner collaboration, the LWDB ensures that participants benefit from integrated workforce development services, improved credential attainment, and expanded career opportunities.

Leveraging Technology to Enhance Co-Enrollment

The implementation of the Google-based referral system plays a critical role in coordinating co-enrollment across Titles I-IV programs by:

- Automating referrals and tracking participant progress across multiple workforce programs.
- Facilitating real-time data sharing among partners to ensure individuals are enrolled in complementary services that support career advancement.
- Improving case management efficiency to reduce duplication and increase service alignment for participants.

These strategies align with **WIOA Sec. 121(c)**, which mandates **integrated service delivery among WIOA programs**, and **TEGL 16-16**, which provides guidance on ensuring **effective partner coordination and co-enrollment processes**.

Strengthening Staff Training & Professional Development

To enhance coordination between ARIZONA@WORK partners, the LWDB and One-Stop Operator (OSO) facilitate ongoing training and professional development, including:

- Group training sessions within job centers to ensure staff understand co-enrollment opportunities and program eligibility requirements.
- Partner presentations at operations meetings, allowing staff from Titles I-IV programs to share updates, best practices, and strategies for improving service integration.
- Regular communication with program supervisors to identify challenges, address gaps in co-enrollment, and develop solutions that enhance workforce accessibility.

This commitment to cross-training and professional development aligns with **WIOA Sec. 107(d)(3)**, which encourages local boards to support capacity-building efforts among ARIZONA@WORK partners.

Expanding Access to Industry-Recognized Credentials

A core goal of co-enrollment efforts is to ensure that participants can access postsecondary credentials that are portable, stackable, and industry recognized. The LWDB promotes:

- Co-enrollment in Title II (Adult Education) and Title I (Workforce Training) programs, ensuring that individuals receive both educational and vocational training support.
- Alignment with community colleges and training providers to streamline access to high-value credentials in healthcare, skilled trades, and business services.
- Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities that allow participants to earn credentials while gaining hands-on experience through apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Work Experience (WEX) placements.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)**, which prioritizes access to credential-driven workforce training, and **TEGL 10-16**, which provides guidance on expanding industry-recognized credential attainment through workforce programs.

FACILITATING BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to fostering strong employer partnerships to align workforce development programs with regional labor market needs. By prioritizing business engagement, work-based learning opportunities, and strategic collaboration, the LWDB ensures that employers—particularly small businesses and those in in-demand industries—are actively involved in shaping talent development efforts.

Business Services Team & Employer Coordination

The Business Services Team plays a critical role in employer engagement by:

- Conducting regular check-ins with employers to assess hiring needs and workforce challenges.
- Connecting businesses with Work Experience (WEX) opportunities, ensuring on-the-job training for job seekers.
- Assisting employers in posting job listings in Arizona Job Connection (AJC) to expand recruitment efforts.
- Collaborating with Title III Wagner-Peyser services to match job seekers with employer needs.

These efforts support **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A)**, which prioritizes sector-based workforce strategies, and **TEGL 13-16**, which highlights business-led workforce development models.

Expanding Employer Participation in Workforce Programs

The LWDB is enhancing employer engagement by:

- Hosting quarterly industry roundtables to strengthen business input on workforce strategies.
- Developing sector partnerships to align training programs with employer needs, particularly in healthcare, construction, and skilled trades.
- Expanding access to Registered Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training (OJT) to help businesses build a skilled workforce.
- Providing customized training programs in collaboration with community colleges and training providers to meet industry-specific skill needs.

These strategies align with WIOA Sec. 122, which emphasizes employer-driven training programs, and TEGL 19-16, which encourages industry partnerships in workforce development.

Supporting Small Business Engagement & Workforce Solutions

To ensure small businesses benefit from workforce services, the LWDB will:

- Offer tailored recruitment and hiring support to help small businesses access qualified talent.
- Connect small businesses with ARIZONA@WORK services, including training grants, hiring incentives, and work-based learning programs.
- Increase outreach to chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and industry groups to raise awareness of available workforce resources.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)**, which encourages small business workforce development initiatives, and **TEGL 10-16**, which supports customized workforce solutions for business needs.

Business-Driven Workforce Solutions

The Business Services Team works closely with local employers and economic development staff to:

- Conduct regular employer consultations to assess workforce challenges and hiring needs.
- Develop customized workforce solutions, including hiring support, training resources, and upskilling initiatives.
- Assist businesses in navigating ARIZONA@WORK services, ensuring they can leverage state and federal workforce resources.
- Provide case-by-case workforce planning assistance, allowing businesses to access targeted services that meet their specific needs.

Expanding Work-Based Learning & Talent Pipeline Development

To help businesses build a sustainable talent pipeline, the LWDB will:

- Expand Registered Apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs to address industry skill gaps.
- Work with community colleges and training providers to ensure education and training programs align with employer needs.
- Develop sector-based training initiatives to create clear career pathways in high-growth industries.

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

A well-integrated workforce and economic development system is essential to fostering a business-friendly environment in Northeastern Arizona. The LWDB actively collaborates with economic development organizations, local chambers of commerce, and regional industry groups to ensure that the ARIZONA@WORK system is aligned with business needs and labor market demands.

The Business Services Team and Economic Development Staff/Director play a key role in this partnership by:

- Aligning workforce strategies with economic growth initiatives, ensuring that workforce development efforts support business expansion, industry diversification, and infrastructure projects such as broadband development and renewable energy growth.
- Coordinating regional labor market analysis to help businesses, training providers, and job seekers stay informed about emerging industry trends, hiring needs, and skill demands.
- Identifying economic transitions that impact workforce needs, such as the shift away from coal-related industries, and designing targeted workforce interventions to support affected workers.
- Promoting workforce incentives and funding opportunities available through WIOA and other state/federal workforce programs to help businesses invest in training, upskilling, and job creation.

Additionally, the LWDB engages key stakeholders in strategic workforce planning, including:

- Local and regional chambers of commerce, which provide employer perspectives on workforce challenges and hiring needs.

- Industry-specific advisory councils, ensuring that workforce development programs reflect the needs of healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and business services—the region’s most in-demand sectors.
- Small business development organizations, helping new and expanding businesses access recruitment services, training resources, and hiring support through ARIZONA@WORK.
- These partnerships support **WIOA Sec. 106(c)**, which mandates collaboration between workforce and economic development entities, and **TEGL 16-16**, which provides guidance on integrating economic and workforce planning efforts to maximize regional impact.

STRENGTHENING LINKAGES BETWEEN THE LOCAL ARIZONA@WORK SYSTEM AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to strengthening the connection between the ARIZONA@WORK system and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program to ensure that UI claimants have access to timely assistance, workforce services, and reemployment opportunities. By equipping workforce staff with UI program knowledge and facilitating the transition from unemployment benefits to sustainable employment, the LWDB enhances service accessibility and economic mobility for job seekers.

Providing UI Information & Assistance to Job Seekers

Many UI claimants face challenges connecting with the Unemployment Insurance program due to long wait times, lack of internet access, or limited familiarity with the claims process. To address these barriers, ARIZONA@WORK staff:

- Answer general UI-related questions, ensuring that claimants understand eligibility, application processes, and claim status procedures.
- Provide direct referrals to the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) UI division for more complex claim inquiries.
- Assist UI recipients with accessing online resources, helping them navigate Arizona’s UI website, claim submission portals, and required documentation.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 121(b)(1)(A)**, which mandates integrated service delivery among ARIZONA@WORK programs, and **TEGL 3-15**, which provides guidance on assisting UI claimants with workforce system navigation.

Connecting UI Claimants to Employment & Training Services

Beyond UI assistance, the LWDB ensures that claimants are enrolled in employment services to help them transition into the workforce quickly and reduce dependency on unemployment benefits. The ARIZONA@WORK system supports UI claimants by:

- Enrolling them in Wagner-Peyser (Title III) employment services, providing access to job search assistance, resume workshops, and career coaching.
- Encouraging participation in Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities, such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Experience (WEX), and Registered Apprenticeships to help claimants gain new skills and career advancement opportunities.

- Offering short-term credentialing programs through WIOA Title I training services, ensuring UI claimants can enter high-demand industries such as healthcare, skilled trades, and business operations.

These strategies align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)**, which prioritizes reemployment services for dislocated workers and UI recipients, and **TEGL 10-15**, which highlights effective UI and workforce system coordination.

Improving Service Coordination with UI Partners

To enhance workforce-UI integration, the LWDB will continue to:

- Train ARIZONA@WORK staff on UI program updates and best practices, ensuring frontline staff can effectively guide claimants through the process.
- Strengthen communication with DES UI administrators, providing feedback on service barriers and streamlining claim referral processes.
- Encourage UI recipients to actively engage in reemployment services, utilizing data-driven strategies to identify claimants at risk of long-term unemployment and connect them to career navigation support.

These efforts support **WIOA Sec. 116(b)**, which requires performance accountability for reemployment services, and **TEGL 8-20**, which emphasizes the role of workforce boards in assisting UI claimants with career transitions.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to implementing targeted workforce development initiatives that strengthen employer engagement, address workforce needs, and provide businesses with a skilled and adaptable labor force. The following programs and strategies support the integration of training, sector strategies, and employer-driven workforce solutions in the region.

Incumbent Worker Training Programs

To support upskilling and retention of existing employees, the LWDB promotes Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs that:

- Assist regional employers in training their current workforce to meet evolving industry demands.
- Provide cost-sharing incentives for businesses investing in technical training, leadership development, and industry-specific certifications.
- Strengthen employee retention and career advancement pathways, particularly in healthcare, construction, and skilled trades.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)**, which encourages local boards to fund incumbent worker training for business competitiveness.

Customized Training Programs

The LWDB collaborates with employers, training providers, and community colleges to develop customized training programs tailored to business needs. These initiatives:

- Address specific industry skill gaps by creating employer-driven training curricula.
- Offer rapid credentialing programs in partnership with Northland Pioneer College, Diné College, and technical training centers.
- Provide training reimbursements for employers who invest in custom workforce development programs.

These programs support **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)**, which promotes business-led training models that enhance workforce readiness.

Industry and Sector Strategies

The LWDB utilizes sector-based workforce development strategies to:

- Identify high-growth industries, such as healthcare, construction, business operations, and green energy.
- Establish sector partnerships that bring together employers, education providers, and workforce system partners to align training with industry demands.
- Expand access to career pathways, stackable credentials, and work-based learning opportunities to build talent pipelines.

These strategies align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(1)(A)**, which emphasizes sector partnerships as a workforce development priority, and **TEGL 19-16**, which provides guidance on industry-driven workforce alignment.

Utilization of Effective Business Intermediaries

To enhance employer engagement, the LWDB collaborates with business intermediaries, including:

- Local chambers of commerce and economic development agencies, which provide employer insights on hiring trends and workforce challenges.
- Industry associations and employer advisory boards, ensuring businesses actively contribute to workforce planning.
- Business Services Representatives (BSRs), who work directly with employers to connect them with workforce services, training programs, and hiring support.

These efforts support **WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(A)**, which prioritizes business-led workforce development boards, and **TEGL 13-16**, which emphasizes the role of employer partnerships in workforce system success.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs

The LWDB expands On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs to:

- Reduce hiring costs for employers by reimbursing up to 50% of wages for eligible trainees.
- Support businesses in hard-to-fill occupations, such as skilled trades, IT, and healthcare support roles.
- Ensure participants gain real-world experience and industry-specific competencies while earning wages.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(H)**, which promotes OJT programs as a key workforce strategy, and **TEGL 19-16**, which provides best practices for scaling OJT initiatives.

Registered Apprenticeships

To address long-term workforce needs, the LWDB collaborates with employers and training providers to expand Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities in:

- Healthcare, including nursing apprenticeships and medical technician pathways.
- Construction and skilled trades, providing hands-on training for electricians, plumbers, and HVAC technicians.
- Business and financial operations, ensuring career advancement opportunities in management and leadership roles.

The LWDB also supports Pre-Apprenticeship programs to prepare workers for full apprenticeship placement, aligning with **WIOA Sec. 122** and **TEGL 13-16**, which promote workforce expansion through apprenticeship models.

Work Experience (WEX) Programs

The LWDB enhances Work Experience (WEX) programs to:

- Provide youth and dislocated workers with real-world job exposure and career exploration opportunities.
- Assist employers in identifying and training future talent, particularly in industries facing workforce shortages.
- Connect out-of-school youth and underserved populations with workforce entry opportunities that lead to sustainable employment.

These initiatives align with **WIOA Sec. 129**, which requires youth workforce programs to include work-based learning opportunities, and **TEGL 21-16**, which highlights best practices for WEX implementation.

Other Business Services & Strategies to Meet Employer Needs

To ensure businesses across Gila, Apache, and Navajo Counties have access to comprehensive workforce solutions, the LWDB also provides:

- Business Service Workshops, offering employer training on workforce laws, talent retention, and hiring best practices.
- Recruitment Assistance, helping employers navigate Arizona Job Connection (AJC) and streamline the hiring process.
- Virtual Job Fairs & Hiring Events, expanding access to regional talent pools through online and in-person hiring events.

These strategies align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A)**, which prioritizes employer engagement and workforce service accessibility, and **TEGL 10-16**, which provides guidance on business-focused workforce solutions.

ROLE OF THE LWDB IN THE ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER (ETP) PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB plays a critical role in the ETP program approval process in accordance with 20 CFR 680.430(c). The LWDB is responsible for conducting local-level evaluation, review, and recommendations for training providers and their programs seeking placement on the Arizona Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The LWDB ensures that only training providers whose programs align with regional labor market demand and meet WIOA performance expectations are recommended to the State of Arizona's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) for final approval.

LWDB Responsibilities in the ETP Approval Process

- **Local Review of Applications:** The LWDB conducts a formal review of each ETP application received from the State to determine if the provider and program meet local workforce needs and WIOA standards.
- **Labor Market Relevance Assessment:** The LWDB verifies that training programs lead to occupations that are in-demand within Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties, based on regional labor market data.
- **Employer Consultation:** The LWDB consults with local employers, business intermediaries, and economic development organizations to validate the relevance and responsiveness of proposed training programs.

- Performance Standards Review: The LWDB evaluates provider-submitted data, including program completion rates, employment outcomes, credential attainment, and wage progression, as required under **20 CFR 680.430(b)**.
- Recommendations from the LWDB are submitted to the State for final determination, in accordance with **WIOA Sec. 122** and **20 CFR 680.430**.

Local ETP Program Requirements and Performance Standards

Training providers must meet the following local standards to be recommended for inclusion on the ETPL:

- Be licensed, registered, or accredited by the appropriate state or federal authority.
- Offer training aligned with high-growth sectors, such as healthcare, construction, business operations, and skilled trades.
- Deliver programs that lead to industry-recognized, portable, and stackable credentials.
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes related to:
 - Program completion rates.
 - Credential attainment aligned with occupational demand.
 - Post-training employment rates and wage gains.

The LWDB may recommend removal from the ETPL if a provider fails to meet the above performance expectations or if the training becomes misaligned with regional workforce needs. Outreach to Employers and Training Providers

The LWDB, through its Business Services Team and partner agencies, engages in continuous outreach to:

- Identify gaps in training offerings by regularly consulting with local employers, chambers of commerce, and economic development agencies to understand emerging skills needs.
- Promote training provider partnerships by encouraging education and training institutions—including community colleges, technical schools, and non-traditional providers—to develop programs aligned with the in-demand occupations identified in regional labor market analysis.
- Facilitate sector partnerships that bring together employers and training providers to co-design programs that respond to industry-specific workforce challenges, consistent with **TEGL 19-16**.

Policy Reference

The LWDB has established a formal ETPL Selection and Approval Process, which outlines in detail:

- The review process for training provider applications.
- Local requirements and performance expectations.
- Procedures for engaging employers and stakeholders to ensure labor market alignment.

ETPL Selection and Approval Process can be found in Appendix V

COORDINATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) recognizes the vital connection between workforce development and regional economic growth. In accordance with **20 CFR § 679.560(b)(4)**, the LWDB is committed to establishing strong partnerships with economic development entities across Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties to align workforce

strategies with the region's evolving economic priorities. This coordination ensures that ARIZONA@WORK services remain responsive to employer demand, support business sustainability, and promote innovation-driven job creation.

Economic Development Collaboration Strategy

The LWDB will strengthen regional coordination through the following actions:

Engagement with Economic Development Stakeholders

- Maintain regular communication and participation in strategic planning activities with county and municipal economic development offices, regional chambers of commerce, and local business alliances.
- Include economic development professionals in sector partnership conversations, business services initiatives, and ARIZONA@WORK-hosted job fairs and employer forums.
- Align workforce investment planning with local and regional development priorities such as broadband expansion, energy sector transitions (e.g., coal-to-renewables), infrastructure development, and tourism revitalization.

Data Sharing and Joint Planning

- Share regional labor market information (LMI) with economic development agencies to support business attraction and expansion efforts.
- Coordinate workforce forecasts, skills gap analyses, and talent pipeline development with industry clusters identified by economic development partners.

Integrated Business Services Model

- Leverage the Business Services Team to conduct joint employer outreach with economic development representatives, supporting business retention and customized talent solutions.
- Engage employers early in the design of training programs, registered apprenticeships, and work-based learning models to align workforce supply with anticipated economic shifts.

Promotion of Entrepreneurial Skills And Microenterprise Services

The LWDB recognizes that entrepreneurship and small business development are key drivers of economic resilience, particularly in rural and underserved communities. To promote entrepreneurial skill-building and microenterprise development, the LWDB will pursue the following strategies:

- Partner with local Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Chambers of Commerce, and regional business incubators to refer participants for technical assistance, mentorship, and small business startup services.
- Integrate entrepreneurship modules and workshops into career services and youth programming, covering topics such as business planning, financial literacy, digital marketing, and accessing startup capital.
- Explore the development of microenterprise-focused career pathways, particularly in sectors with strong self-employment potential (e.g., skilled trades, agriculture, and creative industries).

- Promote access to WIOA-funded training for participants seeking certifications or credentials related to small business operations, including bookkeeping, e-commerce, and business technology platforms.

These efforts will be aligned with the broader ARIZONA@WORK system strategy to foster economic opportunity and support diverse career outcomes—including business ownership—for individuals throughout the LWDA.

EVALUATION OF JOB CENTER OPERATING HOURS TO MEET WORKFORCE NEEDS

In accordance with **20 CFR § 678.800**, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to ensuring that ARIZONA@WORK Job Centers are accessible and responsive to the needs of job seekers and employers throughout the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). This includes evaluating whether services must be available beyond normal business hours to accommodate individuals with non-traditional schedules or limited daytime availability.

Given the rural and geographically expansive nature of Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties—combined with barriers such as limited transportation and internet access—the LWDB recognizes that flexibility in service hours may enhance access and improve workforce outcomes.

Planned Evaluation Strategy

To determine if expanded hours are necessary, the LWDB will implement a three-phase evaluation process in coordination with the One-Stop Operator and Title I-B service providers:

Customer Feedback and Data Collection

- Incorporate targeted questions in customer satisfaction surveys, intake forms, and case management interactions to assess client preferences and barriers related to standard business hours.
- Analyze appointment “no-show” rates, walk-in traffic patterns, and peak usage times to identify gaps in service accessibility.
- Gather qualitative input from partner organizations, including Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Economic Development, regarding unmet community needs.

Labor Market and Demographic Review

- Examine local labor force characteristics, including shift-based employment trends, commuting patterns, and demographic data for working families, youth, and underserved populations.
- Identify communities with higher concentrations of dislocated workers, single parents, or individuals working irregular hours who may benefit from extended service availability.

Operational Feasibility and Partner Coordination

- Evaluate staffing capacity, security considerations, and cost implications for offering evening or weekend hours at comprehensive and affiliate job centers.
- Pilot extended service hours on a quarterly or event-based basis (e.g., late-day job fairs or evening workshops) to assess demand and usage.
- Coordinate with core and required partners to identify opportunities for virtual coverage, rotating schedules, or mobile service delivery to supplement fixed hours.

Continuous Review And Improvement

The LWDB will conduct annual reviews of job center accessibility as part of its continuous improvement strategy, in collaboration with the One-Stop Operator and partner leadership teams. Any recommended changes to hours of operation will be incorporated into the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and communicated publicly through the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona website and outreach channels.

This approach ensures alignment with WIOA's customer-centered design principles and promotes equitable access to workforce services across the LWDA, especially for individuals with scheduling or transportation constraints.

CAREER SERVICES

The LWDA offers Career Services categorized into **Basic**, **Individualized**, and **Follow-up Services**:

- **Basic Career Services** - Accessible to all job seekers, these services include:
 - Eligibility determination for program participation.
 - Outreach, intake, and orientation to available services.
 - Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, and supportive service needs.
 - Labor market information provision.
 - Job search assistance and placement services.
- **Individualized Career Services** - For participants requiring more intensive assistance, services include:
 - Comprehensive assessments to identify employment barriers and develop employment goals.
 - Development of Individual Employment Plans (IEPs).
 - Career planning and counseling.
 - Work experience opportunities, including internships and job shadowing.
 - Financial literacy education.
 - English language acquisition and integrated education programs.
- **Follow-up Services** - Provided for at least 12 months after employment begins, these services include:
 - Counseling regarding workplace issues.
 - Assistance with career pathway development.
 - Supportive service referrals.
 - These services ensure that individuals receive tailored support to secure and retain employment.

TRAINING SERVICES

To equip individuals with in-demand skills, the LWDA provides Training Services such as:

- **Occupational Skills Training**: Classroom-based instruction leading to industry-recognized credentials.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**: Participants receive training directly from employers, with a portion of wages reimbursed during the training period.
- **Incumbent Worker Training**: Designed to assist currently employed workers in obtaining skills necessary to retain employment or avert layoffs.

- **Registered Apprenticeships:** Combining paid work experience with classroom instruction, apprenticeships offer pathways to high-demand occupations.
- **Work Experience (WEX) Programs:** Short-term, structured learning experiences in a work setting, primarily for individuals with limited work history.

These training options are developed in collaboration with local employers and educational institutions to ensure alignment with labor market needs.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

To address barriers to employment, the LWDA offers Supportive Services, including:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Providing bus passes or fuel vouchers to ensure participants can attend training and job interviews.
- **Child Care Assistance:** Subsidizing childcare costs to enable participation in program activities.
- **Work Attire and Tools:** Supplying necessary clothing or equipment required for employment or training.
- **Tuition Assistance:** Covering costs associated with approved training programs.
- These services are critical in supporting participants' successful engagement in employment and training activities.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DELIVERY

The ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona system ensures service accessibility through:\

- **Multiple Access Points:** Job centers located throughout the region provide in-person assistance.
- **Virtual Services:** Online platforms offer workshops, job search tools, and training resources accessible remotely.
- **Partner Collaboration:** Coordination with community colleges, vocational schools, and community-based organizations to deliver comprehensive services.

This multi-faceted approach ensures that services are available to a diverse population, including those in remote areas.

PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES

The LWDA regularly evaluates program effectiveness by monitoring:

- **Employment Rates:** Tracking the percentage of participants who secure employment after program completion.
- **Credential Attainment:** Measuring the number of individuals earning industry-recognized credentials.
- **Earnings:** Assessing wage gains post-participation to ensure economic self-sufficiency.
- **Employer Satisfaction:** Gathering feedback from businesses to improve service delivery and ensure workforce needs are met.

Continuous improvement processes are in place to adapt services based on performance data and emerging workforce trends.

DEFINITION OF “GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT” FOR DISLOCATED WORKER ELIGIBILITY

In alignment with the definition of a “Dislocated Worker” under WIOA Section 3(15), the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) defines a **General Announcement** as any formal or informal communication issued by an employer that provides notice of an impending business closure, permanent layoff, or substantial workforce reduction. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices** submitted to state and local authorities.
- **Direct communications** from the employer to employees, whether written (e.g., letters or emails) or verbal (e.g., in-person meetings or recorded announcements);
- **Public announcements**, such as press releases, media reports, or posts made through digital platforms and social media channels that indicate planned downsizing, facility closures, or reductions in force.

The LWDB considers any such general announcement sufficient evidence of potential eligibility for WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker services, subject to verification of additional criteria under 20 CFR § 680.130 and related WIOA guidelines. This approach ensures responsiveness to labor market disruptions and enables timely intervention and support for affected workers. This definition supports proactive engagement with impacted individuals and coordination with Rapid Response services, in accordance with **20 CFR § 682.300** and **TEGL 19-16**, to facilitate early access to reemployment and training services.

DEFINITION OF “UNLIKELY TO RETURN TO PREVIOUS OCCUPATION OR INDUSTRY” FOR DISLOCATED WORKER ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with **WIOA Section 3(15)(A)(iii)** and **20 CFR § 680.130(b)(3)**, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) defines an individual as “**unlikely to return to their previous occupation or industry**” when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- **Labor Market Conditions:** Current labor market information (LMI) demonstrates zero or negative projected growth for the individual’s prior occupation or industry, indicating diminished employment prospects in the local area.
- **Regional Economic Indicators:** The local Chamber of Commerce, economic development officials, or other recognized labor market authorities confirm a significant and sustained employment decline within the relevant industry or occupation.
- **Lack of Employer Demand:** The ARIZONA@WORK Employment Service program verifies that, over the preceding 60 days, no job orders for positions in the individual’s former occupation have been listed within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA).
- **Recent Industry Disruption:** A documented plant closure, mass layoff, or workforce reduction has occurred in the same industry or occupational field within the LWDA in the past six months.
- **Extended Job Search Without Success:** The individual has actively sought reemployment in their previous field for at least 90 days following separation but remains unemployed or underemployed due to limited job availability.

- **Credentialing Barriers:** The individual was laid off from a prior position due to lack of required occupational certification, licensure, or credentials, and such qualifications are now essential for reentry into the same occupation.

This definition ensures that dislocated worker determinations are rooted in both quantitative labor data and contextualized regional economic insight. It further supports the delivery of timely and appropriate individualized career and training services under WIOA Title I-B, with the goal of accelerating reemployment and long-term economic stability for affected individuals.

DEFINITION OF “UNEMPLOYED AS A RESULT OF GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OR A NATURAL DISASTER” FOR DISLOCATED WORKER ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with WIOA Section 3(15)(A)(iv) and related federal guidance, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) recognizes the unique circumstances that may render individuals eligible for dislocated worker services due to broader economic or environmental disruptions.

Unemployed as a Result of General Economic Conditions

An individual is considered to be unemployed as a result of general economic conditions when they have separated from employment during a period in which the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) is experiencing:

- A **marked increase in the unemployment rate** over the prior quarter, as indicated by official labor market data; or
- **Sustained regional unemployment or poverty rates** that exceed state or national averages, as reported by the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity or other recognized data sources.
- This designation allows the LWDB to respond to regional economic downturns or industry-specific contractions that lead to widespread job losses, even in the absence of an employer-specific layoff event.

Unemployed as a Result of a Natural Disaster

- An individual is also considered dislocated if they have become unemployed due to a natural disaster occurring within the LWDA. This includes, but is not limited to:
- **Wildfires**, floods, or other environmental catastrophes that result in direct business closures, layoffs, or reductions in workforce;
- **Public health emergencies or safety incidents**, such as pandemics or hazardous material events, that force employer shutdowns or restrict normal business operations for a sustained period.

The LWDB uses documented evidence of disaster declarations, business impact assessments, or employer attestations to support eligibility determinations under this category. This ensures the timely provision of workforce services to those most affected by external and uncontrollable disruptions.

Through these locally defined criteria, the LWDB is positioned to offer responsive, equitable access to WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker services for individuals impacted by

macroeconomic trends and natural disasters, consistent with 20 CFR § 680.130 and the intent of WIOA to support economic resilience and reemployment outcomes.

COORDINATION OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES WITH STATEWIDE RAPID RESPONSE AND LAYOFF AVERSION EFFORTS

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB collaborates closely with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) Rapid Response Team to coordinate workforce investment activities and implement proactive layoff aversion strategies. These efforts ensure that businesses facing workforce challenges receive timely intervention and support, while dislocated workers gain rapid access to employment and training opportunities.

Business Engagement and Layoff Aversion Strategies

The Business Engagement Team (BET) plays a key role in early intervention efforts by:

- Conducting proactive employer consultations through Local Chamber of Commerce partnerships to assess business health, workforce needs, and layoff risks.
- Providing customized layoff aversion strategies, including incumbent worker training, business transition planning, and access to workforce funding programs.
- Facilitating one-year workforce outlook assessments for businesses to identify potential risks and develop retention strategies.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(a)(2)(A)**, which emphasizes rapid response and layoff aversion services, and **TEGL 19-16**, which provides guidance on effective business engagement strategies.

Workforce Investment & Rapid Response Coordination

To support workers affected by layoffs, the LWDB and Business Engagement Team implement rapid response workforce services, including:

- Targeted job fairs and hiring events to connect dislocated workers with local employers in high-demand industries.
- Comprehensive career services through ARIZONA@WORK, including resume workshops, job search assistance, and retraining opportunities.
- Co-enrollment in WIOA Title I training programs, ensuring that displaced workers have access to credentialing programs, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and apprenticeships.

These strategies align with **WIOA Sec. 3(51)**, which defines dislocated worker services, and **TEGL 03-15**, which outlines best practices for coordinating workforce investment activities with rapid response efforts.

Business Services Representative (BSR) Support

Each geographic area within the LWDA is assigned a Business Services Representative (BSR) who:

- Provides direct employer support and workforce planning assistance.
- Connects businesses with layoff aversion funding, customized training programs, and retention resources.
- Acts as a liaison between businesses and ARIZONA@WORK to ensure rapid deployment of workforce services.

This localized approach ensures that businesses receive tailored workforce solutions, strengthening employer engagement and mitigating layoffs before they occur.

Statewide Rapid Response Coordination

The Business Engagement Coordinator serves as the primary liaison between the LWDB and the DES Rapid Response Team, ensuring:

- Timely information-sharing and coordinated service delivery for affected businesses and workers.
- Integration of state and local workforce resources, maximizing the impact of layoff aversion strategies.
- Alignment with Arizona's statewide rapid response framework, ensuring compliance with WIOA and state policy directives.

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA LWDA

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) is dedicated to delivering comprehensive youth workforce investment activities that align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. These activities are designed to support youth, including those with disabilities, in acquiring the skills and experiences necessary for successful integration into the workforce.

Activities for Youth with Disabilities

The LWDA ensures that youth with disabilities receive tailored services to facilitate their transition into the workforce:

- **Collaborative Workshops:** A workshop titled "Guiding Students Through Their Transition: Preparing for Life Beyond High School" will be held in Snowflake. This event aims to assist both general and special education students in developing practical life skills, career readiness, emotional and social support, navigating higher education and vocational training, and building independence.
- **Partnerships with Title IV Services:** Youth with documented disabilities are referred to Title IV services for specialized support. In certain cases, dual enrollment in Title IB and Title IV programs is facilitated to provide comprehensive assistance.
- **Engagement with Specialized Organizations:** The LWDA collaborates with entities such as the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, which offers financial literacy classes, and Arizona Youth Partnership, providing services to pregnant and parenting youth. Additionally, partnerships with organizations like WOWZA in Gila County support clients overcoming opioid addiction, with subsequent assistance in employment and training opportunities.

These initiatives align with **20 CFR 681.460** and **20 CFR 681.420(b)(8)**, ensuring that the required 14 program elements are accessible to all youth participants, including those with disabilities.

Design Framework for Youth Programs and Availability of the 14 Program Elements

The LWDA's youth programs are structured to incorporate the 14 WIOA-mandated program elements within a cohesive framework:

- **Tutoring and Study Skills Training:** Case managers conduct career exploration activities and resume classes, utilizing resources like Transfr, O*Net, and My Future AZ. For instance, in Pinetop, a case manager engages high school students every Thursday at Northern Arizona Academy and conducts resume classes at Show Low Library every Friday.
- **Alternative Secondary School Services:** In Winslow, case managers assist students at Navajo County Instruction for Success, an alternative high school catering to students with various barriers.
- **Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences:** Case managers collaborate with local Business Service Representatives to identify Work Experience (WEX) opportunities for youth, facilitating practical work engagements.
- **Occupational Skills Training:** In St. Johns, case managers work with youth clients enrolled at Way Point Recovery, providing support in career exploration, assessments, occupational skills training, and GED options.
- **Leadership Development Opportunities:** Workshops and programs are designed to foster leadership skills, such as the upcoming transition workshop in Snowflake.
- **Supportive Services:** The LWDA offers services like financial literacy classes through partnerships with organizations such as the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.
- **Adult Mentoring:** Case managers provide guidance and support, assisting youth in navigating educational and career pathways.
- **Follow-up Services:** Continuous support is provided to ensure successful integration into the workforce and to address any emerging challenges.
- **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:** Collaboration with organizations like Arizona Youth Partnership offers services to pregnant and parenting youth, addressing specific needs.
- **Financial Literacy Education:** Financial literacy is promoted through classes provided by partners such as the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.
- **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** Programs are developed to cultivate entrepreneurial skills among interested youth.
- **Labor Market and Employment Information:** Resources like O*Net and My Future AZ are utilized to provide current labor market information to youth.
- **Activities for Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training:** Workshops and counseling sessions are conducted to prepare youth for higher education and vocational training.
- **Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation:** Programs are designed to integrate education with workforce preparation activities, ensuring a holistic approach to youth development.

These elements are integrated into the LWDA's youth programs, ensuring compliance with **20 CFR 681.460** and **20 CFR 681.420(b)(8)**.

PROVISION OF TRAINING SERVICES

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB provides occupational training through Individual Training Account (ITA) Vouchers, ensuring that job seekers—particularly those facing substantial employment barriers—have access to industry-recognized credentials and career-aligned training opportunities. ITAs serve as the primary service delivery model for training services, equipping participants with the technical skills necessary to secure employment in high-demand industries within the region.

Individual Training Account (ITA) Eligibility & Career Planning

ITA-funded training is a component of individualized career services, which includes:

- Comprehensive career pathway planning, ensuring training aligns with regional labor market demands.
- Labor market research to confirm that selected training programs lead to employment in sustainable career fields.
- O*Net online assessments, utilized to evaluate participant aptitudes and suitability for specific occupational pathways.
- Supportive Services, integrated into Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) to assist participants with transportation, childcare, work attire, and other essential resources needed to complete training successfully.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)**, which prioritizes training services for individuals facing barriers to employment, and **TEGL 19-16**, which emphasizes the role of ITAs in workforce development strategies.

ITA Funding Limits & Duration

Under Northeastern Arizona LWDB policy, ITAs are subject to the following parameters:

- Maximum funding amount: \$6000 per participant.
- Maximum duration: 24 months.

On a case-by-case basis, the Title I-B Service Provider may approve exceptions to these limits when justified by programmatic necessity and labor market demand.

This policy ensures that funding is allocated equitably and effectively, while maintaining flexibility for high-need participants in specialized training programs. These provisions align with **20 CFR 680.310**, which governs the use and administration of ITAs under WIOA.

USE OF CONTRACTS FOR TRAINING SERVICES

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB primarily utilizes Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as the preferred service delivery model for occupational skills training, consistent with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G) and 20 CFR 680.300-680.340**. Participants select training programs from the Arizona Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure access to industry-recognized credentials and in-demand career pathways.

Circumstances Allowing for Training Contracts

While ITAs remain the standard approach, the LWDB recognizes that, in alignment with **TEGL 19-16 (Section 8) and 20 CFR 680.320**, training contracts may be utilized under one or more of the following five conditions

- When providing On-the-Job Training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional jobs.
- When there is a documented insufficient number of Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) in the Northeastern Arizona LWDA to meet participant or industry demand.
- When a contract is necessary to most effectively serve **individuals with barriers to employment**, including youth, individuals with disabilities, and populations in remote or rural areas.
- When a cohort-based training model is necessary, particularly when partnered with local employers in priority sectors such as healthcare, construction, or skilled trades.

- When implementing a pay-for-performance contract strategy designed to enhance accountability and training outcomes.

Process for Determining Contract Use

The LWDB will consider the use of training contracts only after:

- Assessing labor market data and regional workforce demand through collaboration with the Business Services Team and economic development partners.
- Conducting a needs assessment with employers and workforce partners to determine the feasibility and necessity of contract-based training models.
- Evaluating the current availability of training providers on the ETPL and identifying gaps that may impact service delivery.

If it is determined that there are insufficient ETPs to meet local workforce needs, the LWDB will initiate a 30-day public comment period, in accordance with **20 CFR 680.320(b)**, to allow interested training providers and stakeholders to submit feedback and proposals. The outcome of this process will be documented and incorporated into the LWDB's service strategy.

Ensuring Compliance and Transparency

All training contracts will:

- Be procured in compliance with federal, state, and local procurement regulations.
- Ensure that training programs are aligned with in-demand industries and lead to recognized postsecondary credentials.
- Be performance-based, ensuring accountability for participant outcomes and alignment with WIOA's priority on labor market-driven training solutions.

Conclusion

While ITAs remain the preferred mechanism for delivering training services, the Northeastern Arizona LWDB will utilize training contracts in limited situations where they are the most effective method to meet regional workforce needs. All contract decisions will be guided by **TEGL 19-16**, **WIOA Sec. 134**, and **20 CFR 680.320**, ensuring the LWDB maintains flexibility while promoting consumer choice, transparency, and alignment with Arizona's workforce development priorities.

ENSURING INFORMED CONSUMER CHOICE IN TRAINING PROGRAM SELECTION

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB is committed to ensuring that participants have full access to training options and are empowered to make informed decisions regarding their career pathways. Consumer choice is a fundamental principle of WIOA and is upheld through comprehensive case management, career exploration, and clear guidance on available training providers and funding mechanisms.

Career Pathway Guidance & Comprehensive Case Management

Service providers play a **critical role** in supporting informed decision-making by:

- Conducting career exploration activities to assess participant interests, skills, and labor market alignment.
- Providing structured case management that ensures job seekers understand available training programs, funding options, and long-term career prospects.
- Reviewing industry-driven career pathways, ensuring participants select training aligned with regional in-demand occupations.

- Developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that includes training goals, supportive service needs, and a clear path to employment.

These efforts align with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(F)**, which mandates the provision of consumer choice in training services, and **TEGL 19-16**, which outlines best practices for ensuring participants receive career-aligned training opportunities.

Selection of Training Programs & Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

For participants pursuing Occupational Skills Training, service providers ensure:

- Review of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to explore approved training programs that align with industry demand and participant career goals.
- Evaluation of key training provider details, including:
 - Program curriculum and credentials offered
 - Length of training and program completion rates
 - Tuition costs and available financial assistance
 - Employment outcomes associated with program completion

This process ensures that training meets both participant needs and labor market demands, in compliance with **WIOA Sec. 122**, which governs training provider eligibility and selection.

Training Contracts Outside of the ITA System

For training contracts outside of the ITA system, participants will:

- Work closely with service providers to determine the most appropriate training solution based on program availability, cost-effectiveness, and career alignment.
- Receive guidance on alternative funding mechanisms, including apprenticeships, employer-sponsored training, and sector partnerships.
- Engage in work-based learning options, such as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and customized training programs, when applicable.

These provisions align with **20 CFR 679.560(b)(18)**, ensuring that participants receive fair and transparent access to training services while maintaining flexibility in program selection.

COORDINATION OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) recognizes that supportive services are critical to reducing barriers to employment and training, particularly in a large, rural region where access to basic resources—especially transportation—is limited. In accordance with 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(10), the LWDB has implemented a policy framework to ensure that WIOA Title I-B supportive services are coordinated, accessible, and responsive to participant needs.

Transportation as a Priority Barrier

Given the limited availability of public transportation across Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties, the LWDB considers transportation assistance a high-priority supportive service. The region's geography and sparse transit options necessitate tailored interventions. Transportation-related assistance may include:

- Gas cards (issued on a case-by-case basis, with a maximum of \$500 annually)
- Bus passes (up to \$400 for Adults/Dislocated Workers and \$500 for Youth)
- Limited auto repair assistance (up to \$1,000 for Adults/Dislocated Workers and up to \$2,000 for Youth)

- Relocation assistance (including housing deposit and utilities, where necessary)

These supports are provided to eligible participants actively engaged in WIOA-funded career or training services, and only when such services are not available through other funding streams or partner agencies.

Coordination and Service Delivery

Supportive services are coordinated through contracted Title I-B service providers, who assess participant needs as part of the comprehensive intake and employment planning process. All supportive services must be documented in the participant's **Individual Employment Plan (IEP)** or **Individual Service Strategy (ISS)** and recorded in **Arizona Job Connection (AJC)** in accordance with **20 CFR § 680.930**.

The LWDB's policy (Section 300) outlines that services must be reasonable, necessary, and based on demonstrated need. Payments are made directly to vendors, and all expenditures are verified through receipts, invoices, and case documentation. Coordination with external providers—such as DES Childcare Services, housing agencies, or transportation authorities—is encouraged to prevent duplication and maximize resources.

Types of Supportive Services

Per local policy and 20 CFR §§ 680.900–680.970 and 681.570, WIOA Title I-B funds may support the following services:

- Childcare and dependent care (up to \$1,000–\$2,000 based on participant type)
- Housing assistance and utility payments (up to \$500–\$1,500)
- Work-related clothing, tools, and safety equipment
- Eyeglasses and eye exams
- Testing, licensing, and certification fees
- Medical or dental assistance related to employment readiness
- Referrals to healthcare, mental health, or legal aid services
- Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities

A full list of eligible supportive services and their annual funding limits is maintained in the LWDB's Supportive Services Policy.

Needs-Related Payments

In accordance with local policy and 20 CFR § 680.930, ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona does not currently offer Needs-Related Payments under Title I-B. All supportive service expenditures must be tied directly to the participant's ability to access or complete an education or employment activity.

ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS

Initial Identification During Intake

Job center staff are trained to assess potential skill deficiencies as part of the intake and eligibility determination process. During this stage, staff:

- Engage in structured interviews and observations to assess whether a participant exhibits difficulties in reading, writing, numeracy, or English proficiency.
- Identify signs of BSD, such as challenges in completing intake forms, employment applications, or comprehension of written materials.
- Determine potential barriers to employment that may stem from low literacy or problem-solving skills.

This process aligns with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(2)(A)(i)**, which mandates the assessment of participants to determine educational and skill levels.

Formal Assessment of Basic Skills Deficiency

When an initial review suggests a potential basic skills deficiency, participants are referred for formal assessment using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or other standardized diagnostic tools. The TABE:

- Measures literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills, ensuring an objective determination of skill deficiencies.
- Provides quantifiable data to support individualized career and education planning.
- Identifies areas where remedial instruction or supportive services may be required.

For individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), referrals to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learning (ELL) programs are made to ensure they receive targeted language and literacy support.

These practices align with WIOA Sec. 203(1), which defines Adult Education and Literacy activities, and 20 CFR 681.290, which governs the assessment of basic skills deficiency in workforce programs.

Referral and Supportive Services

Once a participant is identified as basic skills deficient, the LWDB ensures access to:

- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services, providing remedial education and workforce preparation.
- Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, allowing participants to improve literacy skills while gaining workforce credentials.
- Career and technical education pathways, ensuring that BSD individuals receive targeted skill development to enhance employability.

ENSURING PRIORITY OF SERVICE IN THE WIOA TITLE I-B ADULT PROGRAM

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB upholds the statutory requirements of **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR 680.600** by implementing and enforcing a Priority of Service Policy that ensures WIOA Title I-B Adult program services are first made available to individuals who face the greatest barriers to employment. This includes individuals who are low-income, recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

Local Policy and Implementation Requirements

The LWDB's policy mandates that ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona staff determine a participant's eligibility for priority of service before providing any individualized career or training services. Specifically, priority must be given to:

- Low-income individuals, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(36).
- Recipients of public assistance, including TANF, SNAP, or SSI.
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(5) and verified through assessments such as the TABE.

Service providers are trained on the priority of service policy and are required to document determinations in the Arizona Job Connection (AJC) case management system as part of the intake process. Priority determinations must be in place before accessing funding for training services or intensive career services.

Monitoring and Oversight

To ensure fidelity to the policy, the LWDB conducts annual monitoring of priority of service implementation by WIOA Title I-B service providers. Monitoring activities include:

- Desk reviews of participant files for proper documentation of priority status.
- Onsite monitoring visits and staff interviews to assess procedural consistency and understanding.
- Review of AJC case notes and service delivery timelines, ensuring compliance with both state and local policies.

These oversight activities ensure that priority groups are not only identified but also actively served, in alignment with the intent of WIOA to increase access to employment and training for populations with significant barriers to employment.

VETERANS PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB fully complies with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E)** and **20 CFR 680.650** by ensuring that veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service across all U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)-funded employment, training, and placement services, including WIOA Title I-B programs. This commitment ensures that individuals who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces—and their eligible spouses—are given timely and prioritized access to services that support their career advancement and economic reintegration.

Identification and Service at Point of Entry

ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona has established protocols to identify veterans and eligible spouses at the initial point of entry, whether services are accessed in-person at a job center or virtually through online platforms. All individuals are asked if they are a veteran or a qualifying spouse, and once identified, they are:

- Informed of their entitlement to priority of service under federal workforce programs.
- Provided with information on the full range of employment, training, and support services available.
- Briefed on eligibility requirements for WIOA Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

This approach ensures that veterans and their families are not only recognized but also actively supported in accessing high-impact workforce services.

Priority in Career and Training Services

Once identified, veterans and eligible spouses receive priority consideration for individualized career services and training, provided they meet the program's basic eligibility requirements. If resources are limited, individuals entitled to veterans' priority are served before non-covered individuals, in accordance with DOL guidance (**TEGL 10-09**).

Veterans may also be co-enrolled in other supportive programs—including those administered by the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) or Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)—to ensure seamless, coordinated service delivery.

Monitoring and Oversight

The LWDB conducts annual monitoring of service provider compliance with veterans' priority requirements. Monitoring activities may include:

- Desk reviews of participant records and intake documentation.

- Onsite monitoring visits and interviews with staff and participants.
- Review of data entered into the Arizona Job Connection (AJC) system, ensuring correct identification and service delivery.

These efforts ensure alignment with both WIOA and Arizona@WORK State Policy, and reinforce the LWDB's commitment to honoring veterans through equitable access, prompt service, and meaningful workforce outcomes.

DEFINITION OF UNDEREMPLOYMENT

In alignment with TEGL 19-16, Section 11, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) defines an *underemployed individual* as a person whose household income is less than 200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) for their respective family size. This definition is applied consistently across both the WIOA Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs to assess whether currently employed individuals may still qualify for individualized career and training services based on economic self-sufficiency.

To ensure consistency with federal and state guidance, the LWDB utilizes the annually published LLSIL income matrix for non-metro areas, as provided by the U.S. Department of Labor and reflected in the table below. The self-sufficiency thresholds are reviewed annually and updated accordingly to reflect changes in regional economic conditions and cost of living.

Application of Income Matrix (2024) – Apache County Example

The chart below outlines income levels used to determine underemployment within Apache County, part of the Northeastern Arizona LWDA. For example:

- A family of three is considered underemployed if their annual household income is below \$88,324, which represents 200% of the LLSIL for that family size.
- For larger families, the self-sufficiency threshold increases proportionally. A family of six would have a self-sufficiency benchmark of \$150,482.

This income threshold reflects the local cost of living and is designed to capture individuals who may be employed, but whose earnings are insufficient to achieve economic self-sufficiency in the region.

The LWDB applies this standard to support the equitable provision of services and to ensure that employed individuals who are economically struggling still have access to upskilling opportunities, career advancement pathways, and supportive services.

Apache County (Northeastern Arizona LWDA)
70% LLSIL, 100% LLSIL and Self-Sufficiency
Income Matrix (2024)

Non-Metro Area

Family Size	HHS Poverty Guidelines	70% LLSIL	100% LLSIL	Self-Sufficiency (Adult Program)	Self-Sufficiency (Dislocated Worker Program)
				200% LLSIL	200% LLSIL
1	\$15,060	\$13,739	\$19,627	\$39,254	\$39,254
2	\$20,440	\$22,516	\$32,166	\$64,332	\$64,332
3	\$25,820	\$30,913	\$44,162	\$88,324	\$88,324
4	\$31,200	\$38,157	\$54,510	\$109,020	\$109,020
5	\$36,580	\$45,033	\$64,333	\$128,666	\$128,666
6	\$41,960	\$52,669	\$75,241	\$150,482	\$150,482
7	\$47,340	\$60,305	\$86,149	\$172,298	\$172,298
8	\$52,720	\$67,941	\$97,057	\$194,114	\$194,114
Poverty Level Additional Per Person > 8	\$5,380				
LLSIL Additional Per Person > 6		\$7,636	\$10,908	\$21,816	\$21,816

Policy Context and Justification

Under WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A) and 20 CFR 680.210, employed individuals may receive training services if they are determined to be in need of such services to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency. The Northeastern Arizona LWDB’s adoption of the 200% LLSIL benchmark as the local definition of underemployment satisfies this provision and reflects a commitment to serving individuals who are working but remain economically vulnerable.

This approach ensures that career services and training investments are directed toward those most in need, including individuals working in low-wage, part-time, or non-benefit-eligible positions, or those employed in occupations not aligned with their skills or career goals.

Monitoring and Review

The LWDB will continue to monitor self-sufficiency thresholds annually, as required, to ensure alignment with federal guidelines and local economic conditions, and to guarantee that underemployed individuals are accurately identified and appropriately served through the ARIZONA@WORK system.

DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTATION FOR “REQUIRES ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE” FOR YOUTH ELIGIBILITY

In alignment with WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 681.300 and 681.310, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) has established a locally defined criterion for determining whether youth “require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.” This definition is used to support the enrollment of both Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School Youth (ISY) participants in the WIOA Title I-B Youth Program.

Out-Of-School Youth (OSY)

The LWDB defines “requires additional assistance” for Out-of-School Youth as a youth who meets WIOA low-income eligibility criteria and faces at least one of the following barriers:

- **Poor Work History or Unemployment** – The individual has limited, inconsistent, or no employment history and has been unemployed or underemployed for the past two months while actively seeking work.
- **Parental Incarceration** – One or both parents of the youth are currently or were formerly incarcerated.
- **Occupational or Educational Deficiency** – The youth lacks technical, occupational, or academic training that limits employment and contributes to poverty or low-income status.
- **Counseling or Rehabilitation Needs** – The youth is currently receiving or has previously received services from a licensed counseling or rehabilitation agency.

Documentation to support OSY eligibility under this criterion may include self-attestation, case notes, work history forms, legal documents, or referral letters, as outlined in the accompanying eligibility matrix.

Out of School Youth (OSY): A youth who needs additional assistance may be eligible for WIOA Youth services if they meet the low-income eligibility criteria in addition to one or more of the following criteria:		
Section	Policy Provision	Documentation Required
Poor work history/unemployed	Has poor, limited, or no work history and/or sporadic employment and is no longer employed or is seeking employment for the last 2 months but remains unemployed or underemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work history form • Case notes

Has incarcerated parents	One or both parents is incarcerated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal document • Self-attestation • Case notes
Occupational skills/ Further education deficiency	Lack of educational, occupational and/or technical training that reduces employment and contributes to low income or poverty; poor access to quality education and job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work history form • Self-attestation • Case notes
Counseling services	Is receiving or has received additional services through a licensed counseling/ rehabilitation agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral/letter from agency

In-School Youth (ISY)

For In-School Youth, the “requires additional assistance” criterion applies to low-income youth who meet one or more of the following conditions:

- **Chronic Poor Attendance** – The youth has an attendance rate below 85% during the current school quarter.
- **Alternative School Enrollment** – The youth is enrolled in an alternative education program leading to a high school diploma or equivalent.
- **At Risk of Dropping Out** – Determined by school staff, probation officers, or other qualified professionals based on unsatisfactory academic performance or GPA, low credit attainment, or behavioral indicators.
- **Disciplinary Issues** – The youth has a history of school-based disciplinary actions or is under academic probation.
- **Counseling or Rehabilitation Needs** – The youth is receiving or has received services from a licensed counseling or rehabilitation provider.

Supporting documentation for ISY eligibility includes school records, written referrals from professionals, case notes, and agency letters.

In School Youth (ISY): A youth who needs additional assistance may be eligible for WIOA Youth services if they meet the low-income eligibility criteria in addition to one or more of the following criteria:		
Section	Policy Provision	Documentation Required
Poor school attendance	Has displayed chronic poor attendance within the school quarter and/or has an	School record

	attendance rate of less than 85%.	
Alternative schooling	Is currently attending an alternative school/ education program that leads to a High School Diploma or High School Equivalency.	School record
At risk of dropout	Is currently at risk of dropping out of school, as determined by referral from a school staff person, probation officer, or other responsible person with proper documentation and/or possesses unsatisfactory grades, GPA and/or number of credits.	School record
School disciplinary	Has received or is receiving continuous disciplinary actions and/or is under a type of academic probation.	School record
Counseling services	Is receiving or has received additional services through a licensed counseling/ rehabilitation agency.	Referral/letter from agency

Programmatic Considerations

Per 20 CFR 681.310(b), no more than five percent of all ISY participants in a given program year may be enrolled based solely on this criterion. The LWDB ensures compliance through ongoing eligibility reviews and internal monitoring procedures.

This locally defined framework allows ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona to equitably serve youth who face significant challenges to educational and employment success, while remaining compliant with federal WIOA requirements. The criteria and documentation requirements are regularly reviewed to ensure consistency with **TEGL 21-16** and evolving state guidance.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) ensures that all subgrants and contracts awarded under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are procured through a competitive and transparent process in full compliance with

applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including **2 CFR 200, 20 CFR 679.560(15), WIOA Section 107(d)(10)(A)-(E)**, and the procurement policies established by the Workforce Arizona Council.

The LWDB has adopted a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process to competitively procure services, including the selection of service providers and One-Stop Operators. This process includes:

- **Joint Oversight and Governance:** The LWDB, in collaboration with the Chief Elected Official (CEO), oversees the competitive selection of providers, ensuring that final decisions reflect both board and CEO agreement, in accordance with WIOA and state policy.
- **Administrative Agent Role:** Navajo County, serving as the administrative and fiscal agent for the LWDB, conducts all procurement activities on behalf of the Board, in accordance with its established procurement policy and in alignment with Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200 and relevant Arizona state laws.
- **Proposal Review and Scoring:** A designated review workgroup, comprised of LWDB members and staff, conducts an impartial evaluation of all submitted proposals. This includes scoring proposals against pre-determined criteria outlined in the RFP and selecting the most responsive and responsible bidder(s).
- **Facilitation and Oversight:** The Navajo County Procurement Director facilitates the proposal review meeting to ensure that evaluation procedures are followed and that procurement integrity is maintained.
- **Recommendation and Award:** Following review and scoring, the workgroup issues a formal recommendation to the full LWDB for approval. Upon board approval, a contract is drafted and submitted to the CEO for final agreement and signature, completing the procurement cycle.

All procurement activities are conducted with full assurance of compliance with WIOA Title I procurement requirements, conflict of interest provisions, and applicable federal and state guidance. The LWDB maintains detailed records of all procurement actions to support transparency, monitor performance, and facilitate audits and monitoring reviews.

COORDINATION WITH SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, INCLUDING ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to strengthening alignment and collaboration with secondary and postsecondary education institutions, including Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs, to support a seamless education-to-employment continuum for individuals in the region. Coordination with these entities is vital to achieving the LWDB's vision for expanding equitable access to education, employment, and career advancement, particularly for those facing significant barriers to employment.

Title II Adult Education Provider Grantees

The LWDA is served by two Title II Adult Education providers:

- **Northland Pioneer College (NPC)** – Serves Apache and Navajo Counties.
- **Gila County Education Service Agency** – Serves Gila County through the Gila County Adult Education and Literacy Program.

Both providers are actively engaged in the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona workforce system and are core partners in regional strategic planning and service delivery.

Coordination With Adult Education and Literacy and The Review Of Title II Applications

The LWDB ensures coordination with Title II Adult Education and Literacy providers through active participation in partner convenings, cross-referral development, and joint planning sessions. A primary focus of this coordination is on the co-development of customer flow models that promote a “no wrong door” approach to service delivery, ensuring job seekers receive timely access to educational and workforce services.

The LWDB collaborates with Title II providers to facilitate co-enrollment, eliminate duplication of services, and promote participation in Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. These efforts include alignment of intake processes, shared service delivery strategies, and the development of career pathways that begin with adult basic education and build toward recognized postsecondary credentials.

As required under WIOA Section 107(d)(11)(A)-(B)(i) and Section 232, the LWDB participates in **the review of Title II applications** submitted to the Arizona Department of Education. The board evaluates whether applications align with local workforce development priorities, including alignment with in-demand industry sectors and career pathways. Feedback and recommendations are formally submitted to the State to strengthen alignment and coordination.

Program Delivery And Integration

Northland Pioneer College’s College and Career Preparation (CCP) department delivers AEL services through in-person, virtual, and hybrid instruction at four full-service campuses, five centers, and additional classroom sites throughout Apache and Navajo Counties. CCP provides services in Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Civics Instruction, English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA), Integrated Education and Technology, and pre-intake orientation designed to establish educational goals and connect students to ARIZONA@WORK support services.

In Gila County, the Gila County Education Service Agency operates AEL services from multiple sites, including the Payson Adult Education Center, Rim Country Literacy, and the Globe Comprehensive One-Stop. Offerings include Adult Basic and Secondary Education, ELAA, Integrated Education and Training, and distance learning options. GED testing and tutoring are also conducted in the Comprehensive Job Center, with a robust referral process in place to support co-enrollment and access to supportive services.

These partnerships are further supported by close collaboration with the K-12 system—particularly charter and alternative schools—and by the inclusion of Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) counselors and transition specialists within the ARIZONA@WORK Job Centers to assist students preparing for postsecondary transition.

Strategic Impact

This multi-tiered coordination ensures that Adult Education and Literacy is not siloed, but instead fully embedded within the region's broader workforce strategy. By aligning Title I and Title II efforts and participating in the Title II provider selection process, the LWDB helps create a unified talent development system that meets the needs of employers and enhances the economic mobility of learners across Northeastern Arizona.

This approach is consistent with **20 CFR § 679.560(b)(9) and (12)** and **WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11)(A)-(B)**, which require active engagement in aligning education and workforce activities. The region will continue to build upon these relationships to ensure all jobseekers—especially those beginning with foundational education—have a clear path to self-sufficiency and career success.

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF WAGNER-PEYSER ACT SERVICES (TITLE III)

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to ensuring that services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (Title III) are fully integrated within the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona service delivery system. In accordance with **20 CFR § 679.560(b)(11)** and WIOA's emphasis on coordinated, non-duplicative service delivery, the LWDB has established a collaborative framework that maximizes alignment between Title III and other core WIOA programs.

Wagner-Peyser is a core partner and actively participates in operational planning and service alignment under the leadership of the One-Stop Operator. Program management has been engaged in developing shared processes, including a unified customer flow model, cross-program referral procedures, and co-located service strategies that support a "no wrong door" approach to workforce services. All job seekers entering any ARIZONA@WORK site—whether comprehensive or affiliate—are registered in the Arizona Job Connection (AJC) system, receive a system orientation, and are offered access to basic career services.

Wagner-Peyser services for job seekers include job search assistance, job referral support, job placement, and reemployment services for UI claimants. Services are delivered in three modes—self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted—ensuring accessibility for individuals with varied needs and capacities. These services are available at the Comprehensive Job Center and affiliate sites in Show Low, Winslow, and Payson, and are increasingly supported through virtual platforms in line with evolving service delivery models.

In addition to job seeker services, Wagner-Peyser plays a vital role in employer engagement. Staff assist employers with job postings, candidate matching, specialized recruitment needs, and planning for job fairs or hiring events. Employers are also supported in addressing hard-to-fill positions and workforce restructuring. Title III staff participate in the local Integrated Business Services Team, working in concert with Title I, Title II, and Title IV partners to ensure employer services are coordinated and not duplicated.

Priority of service is upheld for veterans and eligible spouses in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR § 680.650. Wagner-Peyser staff also provide targeted services to individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, seasonal farmworkers, older adults, and other populations facing barriers to employment. These efforts are consistent with WIOA Sec.

121(b)(1)(A) and TEGL 16-16, which emphasize inclusion, integration, and accessibility in one-stop operations.

Additionally, Wagner-Peyser staff share responsibility for resource room coverage and deliver basic career services workshops, both in-person and virtually. This includes support with resumes, job applications, interview preparation, and labor market information. These services are coordinated with the One-Stop Operator to ensure consistency, reduce duplication, and maintain a high-quality customer experience across delivery modes.

Through its ongoing collaboration with core program partners, Wagner-Peyser is a fully integrated component of the Northeastern Arizona workforce system. Its presence strengthens service delivery, enhances access for jobseekers, and supports employers through coordinated talent solutions that respond to local labor market needs.

COORDINATION WITH TITLE IV – VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to advancing inclusive, coordinated service delivery across the ARIZONA@WORK system, including close alignment with Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security – Rehabilitation Services Administration (DES-RSA). In accordance with 29 U.S.C. § 721(a)(11) and 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(11), the LWDB works proactively to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to workforce development services and that duplication is minimized through formalized coordination and collaborative planning.

Vocational Rehabilitation plays an integral role in supporting the region’s broader workforce strategies by offering individualized, specialized services that address the unique employment needs of individuals with disabilities. These services include:

- Orientation, intake, and assessment services specific to disabled job seekers.
- Development of Individualized Employment Plans (IEPs) based on comprehensive evaluations and eligibility criteria.
- Vocational counseling, training, accommodations, and assistive technology to support employment readiness.
- Follow-up services to ensure successful job retention.
- Pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities as young as 14, including those with IEPs or 504 plans.
- Technical assistance and cross-training for workforce system staff on disability-related accommodations and accessibility strategies.
- Targeted employer engagement through dedicated business liaisons promoting inclusive hiring practices.

To ensure accessibility and consistent service delivery, VR Counselors are co-located at the Comprehensive Job Center and affiliate sites in Payson and Show Low, with regular coverage at the Winslow location. These counselors are available weekly to provide on-site support and collaborate with Title I and Title III staff on coordinated referrals and co-enrollment strategies. VR staff also participate in system-wide training, referral planning, and customer flow mapping to uphold the “no wrong door” approach embraced by all ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona partners. The Vocational Rehabilitation Service Specialists coordinate regularly with partner programs to ensure that job seekers with disabilities are connected to appropriate supports, including Adult Basic Education and post-secondary transition services.

These efforts are reinforced through active VR representation on the LWDB and participation in all relevant strategic and operational planning activities. In alignment with WIOA Sec. 121(c) and TEGL 16-16, the LWDB and VR collaborate to promote seamless service integration, minimize redundancy, and support the success of individuals with disabilities across education, training, and employment outcomes. This cross-partner commitment ensures that the Northeastern Arizona workforce system is both inclusive and responsive to the needs of all populations served.

SECTION IV: ARIZONA@WORK JOB CENTER DELIVERY

ARIZONA@WORK JOB CENTERS IN THE NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA LWDA

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (**WIOA**) **Section 121 (29 U.S.C. 3151) and 20 CFR Part 678** – Description of the One-Stop System Under WIOA, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) ensures that a comprehensive network of ARIZONA@WORK Job Centers is available to serve job seekers and employers across the region.

These centers provide access to WIOA Title I-B services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Adult Education and Literacy programs (Title II), and other partner services in alignment with **TEGL 16-16**: One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center (AJC) Network.

The NEAZ LWDB's One-Stop Delivery System consists of a Comprehensive Job Center, several Affiliate Sites, and community-based access points to ensure equitable service provision throughout the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA).

Comprehensive Job Center

As defined in **20 CFR § 678.305**, a Comprehensive Job Center provides access to all required WIOA partner services either on-site or through coordinated referral agreements.

Pinetop-Lakeside Comprehensive Job Center

20 E White Mountain Blvd
Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ 85929

The Pinetop-Lakeside Comprehensive Job Center serves as the primary access point for full-service workforce development programs, including WIOA Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV), and other workforce system partners.

Affiliate Job Centers

Affiliate Job Centers, as defined in 20 CFR § 678.310, provide access to one or more of the WIOA partner programs, allowing flexibility in service delivery while maintaining strong ties to the Comprehensive Job Center.

Winslow DES Office

319 E. 3rd Street, Winslow, AZ 86047

Payson DES Office

100 Tonto St, Suite 200, Payson, AZ 85541

Recent Changes in Job Center Locations

Since the previous Local Plan period, the White Mountain Blvd Job Center in Show Low has been relocated to a DES facility in Pinetop-Lakeside. This transition has significantly improved service accessibility and the ability of program staff to connect with the local service population in a more appropriate and supportive environment.

Service Access In Apache County

Due to the closure of the Eagar DES Office, the NEAZ LWDB has implemented a community-based service delivery approach in Apache County to ensure continued access to WIOA-funded programs. In the absence of a dedicated Job Center, the LWDB has:

- Assigned a Title I-B staff member to provide workforce services to Apache County residents.
- Explored additional access points, such as libraries and other community organizations, to expand service reach.

This decentralized approach aligns with **TEGL 16-16**, which emphasizes the importance of flexible and innovative service delivery models to ensure workforce services remain accessible to all populations, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The LWDB continues to explore formal partnerships with local governments, community-based organizations, and educational institutions to increase workforce system access points for Apache County job seekers.

Commitment To Accessibility And Continuous Improvement

The NEAZ LWDB remains committed to expanding workforce system access and continuously evaluating service delivery locations to ensure that all job seekers and employers can benefit from the full range of ARIZONA@WORK services. Future modifications to the One-Stop Delivery System will be conducted in accordance with WIOA regulations (20 CFR Part 678), Arizona state policies, and LWDB strategic priorities.

ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of eligible providers within the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona system. In compliance with **WIOA Sections 116 and 122 (29 U.S.C. 3141, 3152), 20 CFR Part 677** – Performance Accountability, and **20 CFR § 680.400-490** – Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Requirements, the LWDB regularly monitors provider performance to ensure that workforce services align with the evolving needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

The LWDB's oversight efforts focus on:

- Holding providers accountable for meeting WIOA performance standards.
- Facilitating training and technical assistance to improve service delivery.
- Ensuring programs align with in-demand industries and local labor market needs.

Monitoring And Performance Accountability

As required by WIOA Section 116 and 20 CFR § 677.155, all Title I, II, III, and IV programs are subject to state-defined performance measures. These measures include:

- Employment Rate (2nd and 4th Quarter after Exit)
- Median Earnings (2nd Quarter after Exit)

- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Each year, performance expectations are renegotiated with the state to ensure continuous improvement and progress toward higher performance standards.

The One-Stop Operator (OSO) and LWDB staff actively monitor program performance throughout the program year. This includes:

- Monthly performance reviews to assess provider effectiveness.
- Quarterly data validation to verify compliance with WIOA data reporting requirements.
- Facilitating technical assistance and targeted training for provider staff to improve outcomes.

If a provider does not meet performance expectations, the LWDB will require a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) in compliance with **20 CFR § 683.410**, which will be monitored for progress to ensure corrective measures are implemented.

Additional Program Metrics And Local Oversight

Beyond WIOA-mandated performance measures, the NEAZ LWDB has established additional key programmatic metrics that are monitored by the One-Stop Operator and presented at the LWDB's bimonthly meetings. These metrics provide greater insight into service effectiveness and regional workforce needs and include:

- Total participants enrolled in each program
- Number of participants served by center and program
- Referral-to-enrollment ratios for partner programs
- Credential or certification attainment in in-demand industries
- Total number of participants placed in employment
- Industries/occupations of job placements
- Wages of individuals placed in employment

This data informs continuous improvement efforts, strategic decision-making, and local workforce development investments.

Continuous Improvement And Ongoing Collaboration

To ensure continuous communication and proactive oversight, the LWDB staff meet weekly with the One-Stop Operator to review:

- Program performance trends
- Audit and monitoring reports
- Compliance tasks and updates
- Operational concerns within job centers

The One-Stop Operator is responsible for implementing continuous improvement plans, coordinating with job center partners and LWDB staff to address performance challenges and enhance service delivery.

Additionally, the LWDB and Chief Elected Official (CEO) meet at least annually to review:

- Partnership agreements and operational procedures
- Oversight responsibilities of both the LWDB and CEO
- Strategies for system-wide workforce improvements

This structured oversight aligns with **WIOA Section 107(d)(8) (29 U.S.C. 3122), 20 CFR § 683.410, and TEGL 10-16 Change 1**, which emphasize the importance of local board oversight in maintaining high-quality workforce services.

Commitment To Meeting the Needs of Employers, Workers, And Job Seekers

The NEAZ LWDB ensures that all workforce programs remain responsive to the needs of local businesses, job seekers, and incumbent workers. Strategies include:

- Aligning provider services with in-demand industries, as identified in state and local labor market analysis.
- Strengthening employer engagement initiatives to ensure workforce programs meet evolving business needs.
- Enhancing training opportunities that lead to industry-recognized credentials and sustainable employment.

Through rigorous performance monitoring, technical assistance, and strategic planning, the NEAZ LWDB ensures the continuous improvement of eligible providers, fostering a high-performing workforce system that drives economic growth and employment success in Northeastern Arizona.

ENSURING PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to ensuring full physical and programmatic accessibility of ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. In compliance with **Section 188 of WIOA (29 U.S.C. 3248), 29 CFR Part 38, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, the LWDB and its partners ensure that reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, and program modifications are available to all participants.

The One-Stop Operator (OSO) and WIOA service providers conduct annual accessibility evaluations and ongoing monitoring to assess compliance with accessibility requirements and ensure that individuals with disabilities receive equitable access to workforce development services. These efforts align with **TEGL 37-14: Updates to WIOA Section 188 Guidance**, which outlines key compliance expectations for serving individuals with disabilities.

Determining The Need for Assistive Technology and Ensuring Equipment is Functional

The One-Stop Operator (CPLC), in partnership with ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona staff, ensures that assistive technology equipment is available, in working order, and properly utilized at all job centers. Key actions include:

- Annual Safety and Accessibility Evaluations:

- The One-Stop Operator conducts annual walk-through assessments of all ARIZONA@WORK job centers to evaluate the need for assistive technology, adaptive workstations, and other accessibility enhancements.

This process follows **ADA Title III** guidelines and **29 CFR § 38.13**, which require reasonable modifications and auxiliary aids for individuals with disabilities.

Monthly Equipment Inspections and Staff Training:

- The OSO conducts monthly site visits to ensure that assistive technology devices (e.g., hearing assistive devices, screen readers, speech-to-text software, and wheelchair-accessible workstations) are in working condition.
- The OSO coordinates with job center staff to ensure they receive ongoing training on the operation and proper use of assistive technology to better assist individuals with disabilities.

Participant Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

The LWDB collects feedback from participants regarding the effectiveness of assistive technology to identify and address emerging accessibility needs.

Updates to equipment and resources are made in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation partners and other disability advocacy organizations to ensure state-of-the-art accessibility solutions.

Process For Requesting Accommodations And Awareness Of Available Resources

The NEAZ LWDB has established a clear and accessible process for individuals with disabilities to request accommodations in alignment with 29 CFR § 38.14 and ADA reasonable accommodation requirements.

Requesting an Accommodation:

- Individuals with disabilities may request accommodations in-person, by phone, via email, or through a third-party representative (as outlined in 29 CFR § 38.15).
- Job center staff are trained to recognize potential accommodation needs and proactively offer assistance to participants who may require modifications to services.

Notification of Available Accommodations:

- A standardized flyer/poster detailing available assistive technology, accommodations, and ADA-compliant services is posted at all job centers in multiple languages and accessible formats.
- During participant enrollment, staff review accommodation options and document the discussion in the individual's WIOA case file to ensure continued support throughout program participation.

Complaint and Grievance Procedures:

If a participant believes they have been denied reasonable accommodations, they may file a grievance through the LWDB's Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Process in accordance with 29 CFR § 38.69.

Information on the EO complaint process is provided during intake, displayed in job centers, and included in all program outreach materials.

Ensuring Full Participation in Workshops and Workforce Services

The One-Stop Operator and LWDA partners implement several strategies to ensure individuals with disabilities can fully participate in workshops, job fairs, career training, and all workforce services. These efforts align with TEGL 37-14, which emphasizes the need for inclusive service delivery.

Selection of Accessible Venues:

When planning workshops, hiring events, and workforce services, LWDB staff ensure venues meet ADA accessibility standards and have accessible parking, restrooms, seating, and pathways.

Assistive Technology and Remote Access:

Workshops are equipped with assistive listening devices, speech-to-text technology, and captioning services to support hearing-impaired participants.

Online/virtual workshops incorporate automated captioning and screen reader compatibility to enhance accessibility.

Flexible Learning and Training Options:

Participants with disabilities may request modifications to training sessions, including one-on-one support, extended time on assessments, and alternative formats for materials.

LWDB partners collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation and community-based disability organizations to tailor training to individual participant needs.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement and Compliance

The NEAZ LWDB remains committed to ensuring full accessibility in compliance with **Section 188 of WIOA**, the ADA, and related federal regulations. Through ongoing staff training, strategic partnerships, continuous evaluation of assistive technologies, and strong policies on reasonable accommodations, ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona will continue to remove barriers and create an inclusive workforce development system that supports all individuals in achieving their career goals.

ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ONE-STOP PARTNERS

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) ensures that all One-Stop partners contribute equitably to the costs and operations of the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona One-Stop Delivery System, in compliance **with WIOA Section 121(c)(2)(A) (29 U.S.C. 3151) and 20 CFR Part 678, Subpart E – One-Stop Operating Costs**. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) establish cost-sharing arrangements, define partner roles, and outline resource contributions necessary to sustain a high-quality, integrated workforce system that meets the needs of job seekers and employers.

Current One-Stop Partner Contributions

All co-located One-Stop partners in the Northeastern Arizona LWDA contribute to the facility and operational costs of the One-Stop Centers based on:

- Square footage occupied within the One-Stop Center.
- Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff assigned to the facility.

These cost-sharing arrangements align with **WIOA Section 121(h), 20 CFR § 678.700-755, and TEGL 17-16**, which establish the requirement that all co-located WIOA-mandated partners contribute to infrastructure costs in a fair and proportionate manner.

Exploring Expanded Cost-Sharing and System Sustainability

During the upcoming Local Plan period, the NEAZ LWDB will explore additional cost-sharing mechanisms to ensure that critical workforce services and system-wide operational expenses are equitably funded. This includes:

- Expanding shared costs to include system-wide operational expenses such as:
 - One-Stop Operator (OSO) budget contributions.
 - Referral technology service fees and other system-wide service integration tools.
- Developing a collaborative funding model that reduces the financial burden on Title I-B WIOA funds and ensures a more balanced and sustainable cost structure among all One-Stop partners.
- Aligning with WIOA guidance on cost allocation, ensuring that contributions reflect partners' proportionate use of services and system benefits, in compliance with 20 CFR § 678.700-755 and TEGL 17-16.

Leveraging Additional Funding Sources

Recognizing that partner agencies may experience budget constraints, the NEAZ LWDB is committed to pursuing alternative funding streams to support One-Stop operations and service expansion. These efforts include:

- Pursuit of federal funding opportunities, including:
 - U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants, to strengthen workforce development initiatives and employer engagement strategies.
 - Department of Labor (DOL) discretionary grants, to enhance job training and employment programs in high-growth industries.
- Maximizing available state-level funding by closely monitoring opportunities issued by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), ensuring that the LWDA fully leverages available state workforce resources.
- Exploring public-private partnerships, in-kind contributions, and philanthropic funding to expand service offerings and reduce financial strain on WIOA formula funds.

Commitment To Financial Stewardship And Compliance

The NEAZ LWDB remains committed to maintaining a fiscally responsible and compliant workforce system, ensuring that:

- All One-Stop partners contribute in alignment with WIOA cost-sharing requirements.

- Shared infrastructure and operational costs are fairly distributed and documented in the MOU/IFA.
- The system remains sustainable and responsive to workforce needs through proactive funding diversification and resource alignment.

Through enhanced cost-sharing strategies, pursuit of external funding opportunities, and a commitment to financial accountability, the NEAZ LWDB will ensure a strong, collaborative, and well-resourced One-Stop Delivery System that effectively serves the needs of job seekers, workers, and employers throughout Northeastern Arizona.

ENSURING PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR ADULT CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) is committed to ensuring that WIOA Title I-B Adult program service providers deliver career and training services in compliance with priority of service requirements, as outlined in **WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) (29 U.S.C. 3174), 20 CFR § 680.600**, and the State of Arizona WIOA Plan.

As required by WIOA and federal regulations, priority for individualized career services and training services must be given to:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient (BSD)

These priority populations receive precedence regardless of funding availability, ensuring equitable access to workforce development resources that support economic mobility and self-sufficiency.

LWDB Oversight And Monitoring Of Priority Of Service

To ensure strict adherence to priority of service requirements, the NEAZ LWDB conducts annual monitoring of its Title I-B service providers through a structured oversight process that includes:

File Reviews and Data Analysis

- Reviewing participant case files to verify that individuals receiving career and training services meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Assessing Arizona Job Connection (AJC) system data to monitor participant demographics, service levels, and enrollment trends.

Onsite Program Monitoring and Staff Interviews

- Conducting onsite monitoring visits to observe service delivery, ensuring priority groups are appropriately enrolled and receiving services.
- Interviewing service provider staff to assess their understanding and implementation of priority service policies.

Compliance with Federal and State Guidance

- Ensuring alignment with TEGL 19-16: Guidance on Services Provided under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, which outlines priority of service expectations.

- Reviewing WIOA Title I-B program policies to confirm that service providers are prioritizing individuals with barriers to employment.

Provider Accountability and Corrective Action

If monitoring results indicate that priority of service is not being properly implemented, the LWDB will take corrective action by:

- Requiring a corrective action plan (CAP) in accordance with 20 CFR § 683.410, detailing steps the provider must take to increase service access for priority populations.
- Providing technical assistance and training to ensure frontline staff can correctly identify, document, and prioritize eligible individuals.
- Conducting follow-up reviews to ensure compliance with WIOA priority of service mandates and state policy expectations.

Ensuring Equitable Access To Career And Training Services

To enhance awareness and implementation of priority of service, the NEAZ LWDB requires that:

- Service providers proactively outreach to priority populations, ensuring they are aware of and can access available workforce services.
- Enrollment strategies and service delivery models are inclusive, eliminating potential barriers for public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient.
- AJC system data is regularly reviewed, ensuring a data-driven approach to improving access for priority populations.

Through these robust monitoring and compliance strategies, the NEAZ LWDB ensures that WIOA service providers consistently prioritize individuals with the greatest need, in full alignment with federal, state, and local workforce policies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAIVER FOR INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS (ITAS) FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (NEAZ LWDB) recognizes the waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to the State of Arizona, allowing for the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth (ISY) under the WIOA Title I-B Youth Program. This waiver is intended to increase educational and training opportunities for ISY while expanding access to industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning experiences in alignment with local workforce needs.

In accordance with **WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(D) (29 U.S.C. 3164), 20 CFR § 681.550, and TEGL 21-16**: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance, the waiver provides flexibility for WIOA Youth Program providers to utilize ITAs for eligible ISY participants.

Current Implementation and Policy Alignment

The NEAZ LWDB's local policy does not prohibit the use of ITAs for In-School Youth as outlined in the waiver. However, to date, the Youth Program service provider has not elected to utilize this option. The LWDB continues to support this waiver as a means to enhance service delivery for eligible ISY participants who could benefit from training aligned with in-demand occupations.

To ensure effective implementation should the waiver be utilized, the LWDB requires that:

- ITAs for ISY align with local workforce needs and are strategically deployed to support educational and career pathways.
- Training providers offering ITA-funded programs are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), in accordance with **20 CFR § 680.400-490**.
- All expenditures for ITAs serving ISY are documented and monitored to ensure compliance with WIOA cost principles and performance accountability measures.

Monitoring and Future Considerations

While the NEAZ LWDB supports the waiver's intent, the Youth Program provider has not yet utilized ITAs for ISY participants due to programmatic and operational considerations.

The LWDB will continue to assess the feasibility of incorporating ITAs into the WIOA Youth Program and explore how this waiver can enhance educational and career opportunities for in-school youth.

As part of its continuous improvement strategy, the LWDB will:

- Monitor best practices from other Arizona workforce areas that have implemented the waiver successfully.
- Assess demand among ISY participants for ITA-supported training in alignment with local labor market trends.
- Provide technical assistance to the Youth Program provider to explore how ITAs could be integrated into service delivery for ISY.

SECTION V: PERFORMANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED INTAKE AND CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona is actively implementing a **technology-enabled, integrated intake and case management system** designed to streamline service delivery across all WIOA Title I–IV programs and enhance collaboration among one-stop partners. This approach supports the vision of a unified workforce system that is data-driven, customer-centered, and outcomes-focused, in alignment with **20 CFR § 679.560(b)(20)** and **WIOA Sec. 121(c)(2)**.

Core System: Arizona Job Connection (AJC)

The **Arizona Job Connection (AJC)** system serves as the state’s official case management and labor exchange platform. AJC is used consistently across all ARIZONA@WORK Job Centers within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) to facilitate:

- **Standardized intake** across WIOA Title I-B programs, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services.
- **Cross-program enrollment tracking** for co-enrolled participants accessing services from Title II (Adult Education and Literacy), Title III (Wagner-Peyser), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation).
- **Documented service delivery and case management** workflows, including individualized service plans (IEPs/ISS), supportive services, training activities, and measurable skill gains.
- **Performance tracking and federal reporting**, ensuring local compliance with WIOA performance indicators and data validation standards.

Local System Integration: Google-based Referral Tool

To further support cross-partner coordination and streamline service delivery, the LWDA has implemented the Google-based **system**, a web-based referral platform used by one-stop partners to:

- Submit and track referrals between programs and agencies in real time
- Capture client engagement data across multiple organizations
- Reduce duplication of services and improve the speed and effectiveness of partner collaboration
- Monitor referral outcomes and improve case coordination through shared communication features.

Google-based program complements AJC by enhancing **service integration and partner accountability** within the job center network. It is actively used by Title I providers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and other community-based organizations across the region.

Digital Accessibility And Remote Services

Recognizing the geographic scale and rural nature of Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties, ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona is committed to ensuring virtual access to intake, orientation, and case management services. This includes:

- Offering remote intake appointments via phone or video conferencing
- Ensuring clients can access AJC and Atlas remotely to complete applications, upload documents, and participate in case reviews
- Providing digital literacy support and access to technology at job center resource rooms and partner sites
- Continuing to explore improvements in mobile and digital platforms to expand service reach and enhance customer experience.

Continuous Improvement And Partner Engagement

The LWDB and One-Stop Operator facilitate ongoing training and system reviews to ensure frontline staff and partners are fully utilizing available technology tools. This includes:

- Staff development sessions on AJC case management best practices
- Partner onboarding to the Atlas referral system
- Data integrity reviews and performance monitoring to inform system refinements.

By leveraging technology to unify intake, enhance data sharing, and facilitate cross-agency service planning, ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona is creating a more seamless, coordinated experience for both jobseekers and partners—supporting system efficiency and improving workforce outcomes.

LOCAL PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

In accordance with **WIOA Section 116(c)** and **20 CFR § 679.560(b)(16)**, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) utilizes negotiated performance levels to assess the effectiveness of the local workforce system. These performance measures apply to WIOA Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and are used to evaluate the performance of the local fiscal agent (as applicable), eligible training providers, and the one-stop delivery system.

The negotiated indicators include:

- **Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit**
- **Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit**
- **Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit**
- **Credential Attainment Rate**
- **Measurable Skill Gains**
- **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

The **negotiated levels of performance for the current program year** for each indicator and population are provided in **Appendix I** of this plan. These benchmarks reflect the LWDB's commitment to continuous improvement, data-driven decision-making, and alignment with state and federal performance expectations.

SECTION VI: PUBLIC COMMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS FOR LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with **20 CFR § 679.560(19)** and **WIOA Section 108(d)**, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to fostering transparency and inclusivity in the development of the local workforce plan. To achieve this, the LWDB will implement the following structured process to provide a 20-day public comment period, ensuring ample opportunity for input from all stakeholders:

1. Draft Plan Preparation

Collaborative Development: The LWDB, in partnership with the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and key stakeholders, will draft the local workforce plan, incorporating insights from businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, and community partners.

2. Public Notification

Electronic Publication: The draft plan will be published on the official ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona website, ensuring broad accessibility.

Media Outreach: Public notices announcing the availability of the draft plan and inviting comments will be placed in prominent local newspapers, including the *White Mountain Independent*, *Holbrook Tribune*, *Payson Roundup*, and

Direct Communication: Targeted emails will be sent to representatives of businesses, education providers, labor organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, informing them of the draft plan's availability and the public comment period.

3. Public Comment Period

Duration: A public comment period of 20 days will be observed, during which stakeholders and the general public can review the draft plan and submit feedback.

Submission Channels: Comments can be submitted via email to clerk@neazwork.org, as listed on the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona website, using the preferred email format.

Public Hearings: To facilitate direct engagement, at least one public hearing will be scheduled within the 20-day period. This hearing will be accessible both in-person and virtually to accommodate diverse participation.

4. Review and Incorporation of Feedback

Compilation of Comments: All received comments will be compiled and reviewed by the LWDB and relevant committees.

Plan Revisions: Based on the feedback, appropriate modifications will be made to the draft plan to address valid concerns and suggestions.

Documentation: A summary of the public comments and the LWDB's responses, including any disagreements and subsequent actions taken, will be documented and included in the final submission to the State.

5. Final Submission

Approval: The revised plan, incorporating public input, will be presented to the LWDB for final approval.

Submission to State: Upon approval, the final plan will be submitted to the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) within the stipulated timelines.

Ongoing Accessibility: The approved plan will be made available on the ARIZONA@WORK Northeastern Arizona website, ensuring continued public access.

By implementing this comprehensive public comment process, the LWDB ensures that the local workforce plan is reflective of community needs, promotes stakeholder engagement, and adheres to federal regulations governing workforce development planning.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REFLECTING DISAGREEMENT WITH THE LOCAL PLAN

In accordance with **20 CFR § 679.560(21)(e)**, the Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) provides the following summary of public comments received during the 30-day public comment period that expressed disagreement with elements of the local workforce development plan. The LWDB values constructive feedback and recognizes the importance of community input in shaping a responsive and effective workforce system. All submitted comments were reviewed thoroughly, and where appropriate, revisions to the plan were made to address the concerns raised.

The section below outlines the nature of the disagreements, the source or stakeholder group providing the input (when identified), and the LWDB's response or rationale for maintaining the proposed approach.

STAKEHOLDER	PUBLIC COMMENT OF DISAGREEMENT

APPENDIX I – Performance Measures

	Title I-B: Adult Program	
	Program Year: 2024 Final Negotiated Targets	Program Year: 2025 Final Negotiated Targets
Employment (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	72%	73%
Employment (4 th Quarter after Exit)	71%	72%
Median Earnings (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	\$10,500.00	\$10,765.00
Credential Attainment Rate	74%	75%
Measureable Skills Gain	55%	56%

	Title I-B: Dislocated Worker Program	
	Program Year: 2024 Final Negotiated Targets	Program Year: 2025 Final Negotiated Targets
Employment (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	75%	76%
Employment (4 th Quarter after Exit)	70%	71%
Median Earnings (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	\$9000.00	\$9500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	74%	75%
Measurable Skills Gain	55%	56%

	Title I-B: Youth Program	
	Program Year: 2024 Final Negotiated Targets	Program Year: 2025 Final Negotiated Targets
Title I Youth Education and Employment Rate (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	70%	71%
Title I Youth Education and Employment Rate (4 th Quarter after Exit)	70%	71%
Median Earnings (2 nd Quarter after Exit)	\$5500.00	\$6000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	35%	35%
Measurable Skills Gain	55%	56%

APPENDIX II – In-Demand Industries and Occupations

IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

NAICS Code	Industry
90	Government (Local, Federal-Civilian, Education, and Hospital)
62	Healthcare
72	Hospitality and Food Services
23	Construction
44/45	Retail
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Observations on Growth & Earnings

Growth Sectors:

- Federal Government (+3.5%)
- Restaurants & Food Services (+5%)
- Healthcare (Hospitals) (+2.7%)
- Telecom & Info Services (small but growing; +5.8%)

High-Wage Sectors:

- Electric Power Generation (\$166K+)
- Mining & Metal Production (\$100K–\$120K+)
- Federal Government (\$108K)
- Professional & Technical Services (\$95K+)

Strategic Takeaways

- Public Sector Dominates:
 - Government jobs (local, state, and federal) are the primary employment drivers.
 - While stable, these roles typically don't scale rapidly—not ideal for workforce growth pipelines.
- Retail, Hospitality, and Food Services:
 - Strong headcount, low average wages, and high turnover.
 - Best suited for youth employment, WEX, and soft skills pathways.
- Healthcare and Construction:
 - Represent scalable, sustainable career pathways.
 - Require credentialing programs, employer partnerships, and targeted training pipelines.
- Tech, Mining, Energy, and Scientific Services:
 - Undersized locally but high-wage and high-potential.

- Strong opportunities for sector strategies, apprenticeship development, and regional economic diversification.

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

NAICS Code	SOC Code	Occupation Description	2024 Jobs	Growth (2019–2024)	Median Hourly Wage	Automation Risk
72	35-3020	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,176	+27.3%	\$14.13	Very High
56	37-2010	Building Cleaning Workers	2,055	Flat	\$15.44	High
48/49	53-7060	Laborers and Material Movers	1,833	+7.1%	\$16.44	High
44/45	41-2010	Cashiers	1,820	-7.8%	\$14.58	High
44/45	41-2030	Retail Salespersons	~1,700+	Moderate decline	~\$15.00	High
Cross Sector	43-9060	Office Clerks, General	~1,600+	Flat/Decline	~\$17.00	High
61	25-9040	Teacher Assistants	~1,500+	Small growth	~\$13.50	Low
72	35-3030	Waiters and Waitresses	~1,400+	Moderate growth	~\$12.00	High
56	43-4050	Customer Service Representatives	~1,300+	Declining	~\$16.00	Medium-High
Cross Sector	43-6010	Executive Secretaries/Admin Asst.	~1,200+	Declining	~\$22.00	Medium

Observations on Growth and Risk

High Growth, Low Wage:

- Occupations like *Fast Food Workers*, *Building Cleaners*, and *Laborers* are growing fast but offer limited wage growth and high automation risk.

Declining but Large Occupations:

- Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, and Office Clerks continue to employ many, but job counts are decreasing, signaling the need to retrain and upskill.

Moderate-Wage, Stable Demand Roles:

- Teacher Assistants and Administrative roles remain viable entry points into public sector pathways.

Strategic Takeaways

- Workforce at Risk of Automation:
 - Several top occupations (cashiers, laborers, food service) have automation indexes above 100, suggesting displacement potential is high.
 - These should be target audiences for upskilling/reskilling interventions.

- High Volume, Low Stability Sectors:
 - Food service and cleaning roles dominate yet are subject to economic volatility and low wages.
 - Consider embedding career ladders and certifications into programs serving these workers.
- Public Sector & Education Support Roles:
 - Teaching assistants and clerical roles tied to schools and government show stable demand, providing career paths with benefits and mobility.

APPENDIX III – Vision, Goals and Strategies from the Arizona State Workforce Plan

VISION

The vision for Arizona's workforce system is:

- To build a pro-growth economy that provides opportunity for all and fosters prosperous communities by enhancing the skills and abilities of Arizonans to meet employers' workforce needs.

GOALS

The Arizona Workforce Plan outlines four primary goals:

1. **Promote a Strong Arizona Economy:** Support economic growth and resilience by aligning workforce development with industry needs.
2. **Serve Business Needs:** Ensure businesses have access to a skilled workforce to meet their demands.
3. **Prepare Job Seekers; Defend Against Poverty:** Equip individuals with the skills and opportunities needed to secure sustainable employment.
4. **Protect Taxpayers by Providing Efficient, Accountable Government Service:** Deliver workforce services effectively and responsibly.

STRATEGIES

To achieve these goals, the plan identifies 10 strategies, including:

1. **Develop and implement a communication and outreach plan:**
Promote awareness and utilization of the ARIZONA@WORK system to ensure stakeholders are informed about available services.
2. **Increase and improve coordination:**
Enhance collaboration between workforce, education, and economic development efforts at both state and local levels.
3. **Ensure training focuses on transferable skills:**
Provide job seekers and workers with training that emphasizes skills applicable across multiple industries.
4. **Create a comprehensive business engagement plan:**
Develop a consistent approach to engaging businesses and ensuring the availability of workforce services tailored to their needs.
5. **Implement a statewide career pathways framework:**
Support a model based on identified in-demand industries and occupations, incorporating flexibility for regional variations.

6. **Improve co-enrollment processes:**
Streamline processes across ARIZONA@WORK partners to share costs, enhance case management, and better serve customers.
7. **Enhance equity initiatives:**
Focus on supporting populations with barriers to employment, ensuring they receive necessary services.
8. **Expand access to training aligned with labor market needs:**
Ensure training programs align with in-demand industries and provide industry-recognized credentials.
9. **Promote data-driven decision-making:**
Use labor market information and analytics to guide workforce strategies and improve outcomes.
10. **Strengthen partnerships:**
Foster collaboration among workforce development boards, education providers, businesses, and community organizations to create a unified talent pipeline.

APPENDIX IV – Required One-Stop Partners

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title III -Services target individuals who need help with updating or developing a resume and labor exchange assistance that connects them to employment. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the service provider.**

The State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title IV - Services target individuals with disabilities and as per the WIOA will be treated mainstream when accessing the American Job Centers. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 - Services older adults through the Senior Community Service Employment Program with employment and training assistance. **The Arizona Agency on Aging is the provider in Gila County while NACOG is the provider in Navajo and Apache Counties.**

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) activities, authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 - Serves individuals who are eligible workers who lose their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced, because of increased imports or production transfers abroad. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs - Services individuals who are unemployed and eligible to receive unemployment compensation. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) programs, authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C. - Services individuals who are veterans with significant barriers to employment to receive tailored employment and training services. **Arizona Department of Economic Security is the provider.**

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, authorized under WIOA title II - Services target individuals in need of basic education classes with low basic skills and low educational attainment; English language acquisition for eligible learners to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension of the English language; and math skills needed to attain a high school credential and transition to post-secondary education and employment. **Gila County Educational Service Agency and Northland Pioneer College are the current service providers.**

Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) – **Northland Pioneer College is the current service provider for Navajo and Apache Counties.**

Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) – **Gila County Community Services is the current service provider in Gila County.**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, authorized underpart A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under **20 CFR 678.405(b), 34 CFR 361.405(b), and 34 CFR 463.405(b)**.

Funding streams not available in the local area include:

- Employment and Training Housing and Urban Development
- Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) programs (formerly known as Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO))
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- YouthBuild

APPENDIX V - Northeastern Arizona LWDB ETPL Selection and Approval Process

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish a standardized, transparent process for evaluating and recommending training providers and programs for inclusion on the Arizona **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)**, in accordance with **WIOA Sec. 122, 20 CFR 680.400-680.530**, and guidance from **TEGL 8-19** and **TEGL 19-16**.

The Northeastern Arizona Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is responsible for the review and recommendation of eligible training providers to the State of Arizona for final approval and inclusion on the statewide ETPL.

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Promote **consumer choice** for participants selecting occupational skills training.
- Ensure that training programs meet **regional labor market needs**, particularly for **in-demand industries**.
- Ensure that programs lead to **industry-recognized, portable, and stackable credentials**.
- Maintain compliance with federal regulations outlined in **WIOA Sec. 122, 20 CFR 680.410**, and state ETPL policy.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PROVIDERS

To be considered for ETPL recommendation, training providers must:

- Be **licensed, registered, or accredited** by an appropriate state or federal oversight entity (e.g., the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education or equivalent).
- Demonstrate **financial stability** and compliance with state and federal training regulations.
- Offer **training programs leading to occupations identified as in-demand** based on labor market information (LMI) for Apache, Navajo, and Gila Counties.
- Provide **program completion rates, employment outcomes, and credential attainment rates** as part of their application.

Providers must also meet the **performance standards** outlined by the State of Arizona and **WIOA regulations (20 CFR 680.430)**.

3. ETPL APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Step 1: Application Submission

Training providers submit a completed application and all required documentation to the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) via the state's ETPL portal in azjobconnection.gov.

Step 2: LWDB Review and Initial Assessment

Upon notification from DES, the Northeastern Arizona LWDB will:

- Conduct an **initial review of program alignment** with the region's priority sectors (e.g., healthcare, construction, business services, skilled trades).
- Assess the provider's **performance data** against WIOA-defined benchmarks, including **program completion rates, credential attainment, and employment outcomes**.
- Ensure the provider's training program offers **stackable credentials** or certifications that facilitate **career advancement opportunities**.

Step 3: Employer and Stakeholder Consultation

The LWDB will consult with local **employers, economic development agencies, and business intermediaries** to verify that the proposed training program addresses **current workforce needs** and skills gaps.

Step 4: Recommendation to the State

Based on this review, the LWDB will submit a formal recommendation to OEO, either supporting or not supporting the inclusion of the provider/program on the ETPL. This recommendation will include:

- Documentation of the **program's labor market alignment**.
- Summary of **local employer feedback**, if applicable.
- An assessment of **program quality, accessibility, and outcomes**.

Step 5: Public Comment Period (If Applicable)

If the LWDB determines there are **insufficient training providers** to meet regional needs (per **20 CFR 680.320(b)** and **TEGL 19-16 Section 8**), a **30-day public comment period** will be initiated to solicit input from potential training providers and the public.

4. ONGOING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The LWDB will participate in the **State's annual ETPL review process**, evaluating provider performance on **WIOA-required indicators** (credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and employment outcomes).
- Providers that fail to meet performance thresholds or regional workforce needs may be recommended for **removal from the ETPL**.
- Providers will be required to maintain **current and accurate information** in the ETPL portal and submit **annual performance updates**.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **LWDB:** Conduct programmatic and labor market reviews, consult with local stakeholders, and submit recommendations to the state.
- **Business Services Team:** Provide employer feedback on training relevance and assist with identifying industry demand.
- **Service Providers:** Ensure that participants are informed about ETPL-approved options in compliance with **WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(F)** on consumer choice.

6. COMPLIANCE

This process ensures full compliance with:

- **WIOA Sec. 122**
- **20 CFR 680.400 - 680.530**
- **TEGL 8-19: Guidance on ETPL and Provider Requirements**
- **TEGL 19-16: Sector Partnership and Training Guidance**
- Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) ETPL Policies

CONCLUSION

The Northeastern Arizona LWDB's ETPL selection and approval process is designed to uphold program quality, alignment with employer needs, and participant access to career-relevant training opportunities. This process promotes regional economic growth by ensuring that workforce investments are directed toward high-value training opportunities that meet the evolving demands of Northeastern Arizona's labor market.

