



**PHOENIX BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
ALIGN INVESTMENT STEERING COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

**June 26, 2025
2:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Members Present:

Elizabeth Cole

Samantha Hansen

Micha Harris

Mavrick Knoles

Brandon Ramsey

Alison Rapping

Stephanie Rimmer

Public Attendees:

LaSetta Hogans

Laura Whitehead

Jovanna Parkhouse

Hayden Maynard

Justin West

Linda Scott

Gina Harper

Thomas Flynn

Demitria Robles

Christina Lira

Rebecca Tierney

Mari Hicks

Cassandra Avery

Dawn Fitzhugh

Desmond Wilcox

Brandon White

Rebecca Tierney

Precious Randolph

Amanda Keams

Sebastian Blackwell

Stacey VanEmst

Action items taken are noted in **bold** print.

1. Call to Order / Roll Call:

The Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board (Board) Align Investment Steering Committee (AISC) Chair Brandon Ramsey called June 26, 2025, meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Roll call was completed and there was a quorum of seven members.

2. May 22, 2025, Align Investment Steering Committee Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve May 22, 2025, Meeting Minutes was made by AISC Ad-Hoc Member Micha Harris and seconded by AISC Member Stephanie Rimmer.

Approved: Elizabeth Cole, Samantha Hansen, Mavrick Knoles, Brandon Ramsey, Alison Rapping

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Motion passed.

3. Unite Us Platform Demonstration:

The Contexture team introduced their team. Project Manager Eddie Limon shared information about Community Cares and the Unite Us platform technology. The platform is funded by ACCHS. Three thousand partners from Solari 2-1-1 are included as resources in the Unite Us platform. The goal is to have one platform throughout Arizona that connects healthcare providers with resources throughout the state.

Sebastian Blackwell shared the flow of the referral process on Unite Us platform including intake, referral, resolution, and feedback. He shared that no referral can be made within the system without explicit client consent. He shared a demonstration of the referral platform. He shared there is a live chat option that connects users to the support team. Sebastian shared information that providers can access through their dashboard and then shared how providers can input a referral, including accessibility options for low proficiency English speakers. After completing the referral, Sebastian shared what the referral looks like when an organization receives them and how organizations take action on the referrals and how action can be taken on the referral.

AISC Vice-Chair Alison Rapping asked how organizations are compensated when organizations come to them. Eddie shared that organizations who join are entered on an incentives basis, besides food resource pilots, there's no funding for referrals. Alison is concerned about being able to handle the workload generated by the platform. Eddie encouraged us to become an ACCHS provider so that ACCHS can be billed. If entities are not able to become ACCHS providers, there is currently no way to bill for services.

4. Referral Platform Feedback:

City of Phoenix Community and Economic Development (CEDD) Workforce Development Supervisor Rebecca Tierney shared feedback about the Unite Us platform from participating One-Stop System partners.

The Adult/Dislocated Worker feels like the referral submissions are efficient and some of the features do serve Spanish-speaking clients. However, they felt that the referrals are often not appropriate for the program, the contact information is often incomplete, and it takes a lot of staff time and there is a low referral conversion rate.

Youth providers shared that they felt the referral platform was an extra step, though they only received 1-2 referrals a month. They shared sometimes people did not know they were referred to or why. There is a lot of extra staff time for a low number of referrals.

Title II providers shared they felt that tool was useful and it helped them in searching for referrals through the program. There is some disconnect between the Title IB experience and the Title II provider feedback.

Chicanos Por La Causa and YMCA are newly added to the UniteUs. Title III Providers utilize the VOS system for referrals, but they are working to utilize the platform and Title IV is working with the One-Stop Operator and UniteUs to be onboarded. AISC Chair Brandon Ramsey suggested that there be an education component to make sure UniteUs users understand the services offered by organizations on the platform and for the team, how to reduce the duplication of efforts.

5. Vocational Rehabilitation Update:

Arizona Department of Economic Security Employment Outreach Supervisor Cassandra Avery shared an update about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the services available in Phoenix. Cassandra shared that according to the Center for Disease control, 70 million adults across the United States are living with a disability, either visible or invisible. The current unemployment rate in Arizona is 4.0%, the unemployment rate for people living with disabilities is 8.1%.

Cassandra shared that VR works with individuals living with disabilities who wish to obtain, maintain, or regain employment. They provide support to employers and job seekers. She shared a roadmap for intake of VR participants and the flow of services after being found eligible to receive services. VR offers no-cost training for employers and community partners to increase awareness of individuals living with disabilities, focused on universal design and legal requirements and accommodations.

The VR Employment Outreach Team fosters relationships with employers, workforce partners, and community organizations. They have established regular communications with Local Workforce Development Boards and establishing contacts with stakeholders to ensure connections and contacts are maintained and efficient services are provided to individuals and employers.

They want to partner with the Board to fill Arizona's workforce needs. AISC Chair Brandon Ramsey asked if VR is on the UniteUs platform. She said she has a note to follow up with her leadership.

6. Future Agenda Items:

- MOU/IFA Update

- Partner presentations

7. Call to the Public:

- Board Staff Board Updates
- Linda Scott seconded, keeping discussions around the referral platform discussions moving forward.
- Thank you to Brandon Ramsey and Alison Rapping for their leadership

8. Adjournment:

AISC Chair Brandon Ramsey adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.