

**YUMA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD -
FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Yuma Private Industry Council, Administration Building
3834 W. 16th Street, Yuma, AZ 85364
Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86077377263>
Meeting ID: 860 7737 7263, Phone: +1 253 215 8782 US
August 21, 2025
10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Samuel G. Loveless called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Michael J. Sabath led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

The roll was called, and those present and absent were:

Members Present (Virtually)	Members Absent
1. Samuel G. Loveless	
2. Laura Wisniewski	
3. Antonio Zuniga	
4. Michael J. Sabath	
5. Maria Chavoya	
6. Jenny Torres	

Thereby a quorum was established.

Guest/Staff Present (Virtually)

Beatriz Aguilar, Clerk of the Board
Nidia Herrera, Executive Director
Patrick Goetz, Operations Director
Steve Barba, Finance & Accounting Manager

Nidia Herrera informed the committee, Board staff worked on the budget based on preliminary numbers that the state had initially provided. The state sent the final official numbers last week and board staff was able to finalize the board budget. Nidia Herrera gave kudos to the team that worked on the budget.

Nidia Herrera welcomed Jenny Torres from the City of San Luis who was recently appointed to the committee as a non board member. Jenny Torres was a prior Board member for several years and is familiar with the services we offer.

Maria Chavoya joined the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

IV. REVIEW THE PROPOSED FY 2025/2026 YUMA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD BUDGET

Steve Barba presented the Proposed FY 2025/2026 Yuma County Workforce Development Board Budget. Information is as follows:

- Reviewed income for FY2025/2026
- There was a remainder of 5 million from PY2024-FY2025
- PY2025-FY2026 funding is 9.3 million, with a reserve of 20%
- Total income for FY2025-2026 is 12.5 million
- Reviewed funds and provided a breakdown for youth, adult, dislocated worker, rapid response and administration
- There was an increase in rapid response funding, it may be challenging but funds should be spent by the end of this year

Maria Chavoya asked regarding rapid response, is it due to everything that is going on out in the community that funds will be spent? Steve Barba replied all local areas received the same amount of funds for rapid response and it's challenging because funding is limited on what it can be used for. Patrick Goetz commented, the rapid response and business services team will be working on incumbent worker training which is a rapid response and layoff aversion function. The first incumbent worker training is currently in progress with the San Luis Police Department. Nidia Herrera commented there are other ongoing projects where rapid response funds will be used.

Mr. Barba reviewed other budget totals, program expenditures and service provider funds.

Maria Chavoya asked if the contract with one provider started this fiscal year or last year? Steve Barba replied it started on July 1, 2025. Patrick Goetz stated the contract is a four contract but is renewable each year. Ms. Chavoya asked if there is a plan in place to keep track of how the provider is performing? Nidia Herrera replied the program and operation directors are having meetings with the provider to make sure the transition is going well. There is also a monthly meeting to go over the budget, expenditures, and the compliance department also reviews their files for any errors or issues and discuss overall how the program is running. The transition was somewhat difficult as it was a big transition from three providers to one provider. Nidia Herrera stated enrollment numbers were lowered due to the transition. A conversation took place regarding enrollment numbers and delays on services.

Steve Barba shared a comparison between this year and last year's budgets. Laura Wisniewski asked regarding the major increases for youth participant payments & contracts and adult & dislocated worker subrecipient contracts? Mr. Barba replied the increase is due to the last year providers not spending the full contract amount and the new funds for this year.

V. ON THE JOB TRAINING INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT RATE

Nidia Herrera informed the committee that with additional funding Board staff is proposing to increase the percentage of on the job training as they lead to immediate employment. The current reimbursement rate to employers is 50% while participants are in training. Board staff are proposing to temporarily raise this to 75%, through May 2026. Employers must still meet policy criteria and company maximum amount.

Laura Wisniewski asked, the proposed action seems like a similar one that's happened in previous years as funding is higher, is this correct? Nidia Herrera replied yes, the on the job training rate was increased during COVID. The additional funding allows us to raise the on the job training numbers again. This approach will help gauge employer interest and willingness to collaborate more on expanding the number of on the job trainings. Will also be able to evaluate the impact and continue to assess the full benefits as the program progresses and when it concludes.

Maria Chavoya asked the following questions: are we placing people in roles that meet the employer's needs and ensuring they have at least some of the necessary qualifications? Do we track whether those employees remain with the employer long-term? Nidia Herrera replied yes, we have to track them for one year after they exit the program for retention. And what happens if the placement doesn't work out? Back then, I noticed that not all participants were truly interested in the field they were placed in. So, how are we selecting and placing these individuals today? Nidia Herrera replied yes, we are placing individuals with employers that meet their needs. The employer is committing to hiring the individual from day one and they are required to keep them unless there's a major issue with the employer or participant. Many employers would rather commit to internships and work experiences since they are not required to hire them. Patrick Goetz commented, in addition to that, if there are any issues during the on the job training like attendance or work performance, case managers step in to address them. They work to resolve the problems and do everything they can to make the placement successful.

Samuel G. Loveless stated he is supportive of increasing it to 75%, the current 50% reimbursement is already a significant benefit as they have hired many who were a great fit and others who may not. For them, it really comes down to the quality of the individual and how well they fit in. Mr. Loveless would be interested in tracking the results to see if it actually impacts placements.

Laura Wisniewski shared her experience with the on the job training, their training programs have mostly been with warehouse, supply chain, and patient access/registration positions. They had participants, and so far retention has been 100%. We've focused on entry-level roles to match with skill development. Ms. Wisniewski asked if they included the maximum amount employers could use? Nidia Herrera replied it is referenced in the document.

Michael J. Sabath asked how many placements are there and are these numbers low for it to be recommended to raise the rate? Nidia Herrera replied she does not have the number of placements, but the reason for increase is to increase the number of on the job trainings as they result in immediate employment. Dr. Sabath asked, does the apprenticeship opportunity fit into this, and would it be funded? Nidia Herrera replied yes, as part of a registered apprenticeship, we can provide on the job training to help support costs. This applies if the employer chooses to move forward with a registered apprenticeship.

Jenny Torres asked, has it been considered requiring employers to keep participants for a period, like six months, since they receive \$30,000 a year for this training? Nidia Herrera replied, the on the job training employers are required to retain participants after completing an on the job training, we track participants for a year after they exit the program and we follow up with both the employer and employee. If an employer doesn't retain, we will contact the employer and will remove them from the employer list for not meeting WIOA requirements. Internships and work experiences don't have this retention requirement.

VI. ARIZONA@WORK YUMA COUNTY TRANSITIONAL JOBS POLICY

Nidia Herrera informed the committee, this is a service we haven't used before, and the state has encouraged local areas to try it. If the board approves, this would be the first time implementing it, Board staff is willing to try it and see how it works in the community. The transitional job is similar to work experiences and internships, but the key differences are:

- Employers are reimbursed 100% of wages for participants
- Participants must face barriers, such as chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history
- Positions can be full- or part-time, up to \$17/hour
- Employers are not required to retain participants
- This program allows individuals to gain workplace skills

A conversation took place regarding the transitional jobs policy, requirements and roadblocks that may be faced. Michael J. Sabath recommended putting more thought into this item in terms of how a program like this will be structured in order for it to work. Maria Chavoya recommended creating a small, separate session or work group to develop a good plan. She agrees it's important, but it might need some focused planning.

VII. REVIEW THE REVISED ARIZONA@WORK YUMA COUNTY ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER AND YOUTH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

Nidia Herrera informed the committee, board staff is recommending updates to the supportive services policies for adults, dislocated workers and youth. Some of the revised areas are as follows;

- Child care, increased to \$200/week, up to \$800/month
- Rental assistance, increased by \$150
- Increased utilities
- Increased transportation, YCAT tickets and gas cards

VIII. REVIEW THE REVISED ARIZONA@WORK YUMA COUNTY ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER AND YOUTH INCENTIVE POLICIES

Nidia Herrera informed the committee, board staff is recommending updates to the incentive payment policies for adults, dislocated workers and youth. Some of the revised areas are as follows;

- Adults, stipend for earning an occupational credential increase to \$250
- Youth, stipend for earning a high school diploma increase to \$250
- Youth academic progress, small \$10 increases for improvements in math, reading, language, or bringing in report cards/credits

All agenda items presented today will be listed under the September 10, 2025 WDB Consent Agenda for approval.

IX. GOOD OF THE ORDER

There was nothing for the good of the order.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Maria Chavoya made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Michael J. Sabath.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Beatriz Aguilar, Clerk of the Board.