

**WORKFORCE ARIZONA COUNCIL  
Q4 2025 Full Council Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, November 20th, 2025 | 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting

In-Person Location: 1700 W Washington Street Phoenix, AZ 2nd Floor Conference Room  
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89868719530?pwd=rbPoyZchFVeHY8ceM6FDvV2uOIXRA2.1>  
Meeting ID: 898 6871 9530 Passcode: 284748

<p><b>Council Members Present:</b> Alisa Wren Freeport-McMoRan Angie Rodgers, proxy for Director Michael Wisehart, Dept of Economic Security, Titles I &amp; III Beverly Wilson, AZ Dept of Education, Title II Chet Samuelson, BOK Financial Debra Margraf, NECA Dennis Anthony, Arizona Public Services Jackie Elliott, Central Arizona College Jenna Rowell, Local First Arizona Jim Corning, Novakinetics Aerosystems John Walters, Vice Chair, Comparion Insurance Agency Josh DeSpain, IBEW Local 570 Kristen Mackey, Dept of Economic Services, Title IV Mark Gaspers, Chairman, Boeing Michael Cruz, Lucid Motors Rose Castanares, TSMC Scott Holman, Amkor Technology Zenji Reynolds, Southwest Shoulder Elbow and Hand Center</p>	<p><b>Council Members Absent:</b> Alexander Horvath, Tucson Medical Center Bill Ruiz, Western States Regional Council of Carpenters Danny Seiden, AZ Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry Ian O’Grady, Policy Advisor, Governor Hobbs Jeffrey McClure, Supervisor, Pinal County Justin Wilmeth, Arizona House of Representatives Karla Moran, SRP Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair, Tenet Healthcare Regina Romero, Mayor of Tucson Sandra Watson, Arizona Commerce Authority Shawn Hutchinson, Phoenix Electrical Skylie Estep, South32 Thomas Winkel, Arizona Coalition for Military Families</p>
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**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Gaspers welcomes all members of the Workforce Arizona Council and the public to the Q4 2025 Full Council meeting. The meeting is called to order at 1:06pm.

**2. Roll Call**

Giselle Retana, Workforce Arizona Council Administrative Coordinator conducted roll call, a quorum was present.

**3. Call to the Public**

Chairman Gaspers opens the call to the public. No one spoke.

**4. Success Story**

Chairman Gaspers highlighted the success story shared by Council Member Kristen Mackey. The video showcased a story spearheaded through Arizona’s Vocational Rehabilitation program . ([Video: Full Success Story](#))

**5. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of minutes from September 18th, 2025 Full Council meeting
- b. LWDB Job Center Certification (New Center)
  - i. Pima County

**MOTION:** Chair Gaspers called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Dennis Anthony made a motion; Vice Chair John Walters seconded the motion.

**ALL IN FAVOR:** Angie Rodgers (proxy for Director Michael Wisehart), Beverly Wilson, Chet Samuelson, Debra Margraf, Dennis Anthony, Jackie Elliott, Jenna Rowell, Jim Corning, John Walters, Josh DeSpain, Kristen Mackey, Mark Gaspers, Michael Cruz, Rose Castanares, Scott Holman, Zenji Reynolds

**OPPOSED:** None

**ABSTAINED:** None

**MOTION PASSES**

## 6. 2025 Recertification Update

Deseret Romero, Governance and Compliance Advisor, provided an update on the status of the 2025 Local Workforce Development Board recertifications, noting that while most Arizona boards have been approved, three remain pending: Northeastern Arizona, Coconino County, and the Arizona Tribal Workforce Development Board. The discussion emphasized the importance of recertification in ensuring strong governance, financial accountability, and compliance with WIOA requirements through submission of documents such as board membership, financial management, agreements, and policies. Pending statuses are tied to recent developments, including Gila County's inquiry into separating from the Northeastern Arizona board, which has paused its recommendation; compliance concerns and leadership changes in Coconino County prompting a formal review; and delays within the Arizona Tribal board caused by challenges in securing a fiscal agent, now addressed through OEO's involvement and ongoing technical assistance. Council staff will continue monitoring progress and provide updates as each board moves toward completing required recertification components.

## 7. Workforce Arizona Council Annual Report

Janice Garza, Workforce Policy Manager, presented the Workforce Arizona Council Annual Report by providing an overview of the statutory requirements for the Workforce Arizona Council's annual report, due December 1 to the Governor and Legislature under [ARS 41-5501](#). The report outlines statewide performance across six WIOA primary indicators, includes disaggregated data for individuals with barriers to employment, and reports participant counts, exits, costs, and federal expenditures for career and training services. For PY24, the report will also include supplemental information required by Executive Order 2024-04 related to the Governor's Talent-Ready Arizona Workforce Cabinet.

The discussion highlighted statewide performance outcomes—such as employment rates, median wages, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains—along with how results vary across demographic groups and barrier populations. It was noted that Title II program data was received late but will be incorporated before submission, which will adjust statewide totals and indicator outcomes, though Council members did not have the opportunity to review the finalized Title II data prior to the vote.

**MOTION:** Chair Gaspers called for a motion to approve the Program Year 2024 Workforce Arizona Council Annual Report, as presented to Council in the fourth quarter packet on November 20th, to follow inclusion of material, noting Council had not reviewed Title II and updated statewide data before submission of December 1st. Dennis Anthony made a motion; Beverly Wilson seconded the motion.

**ALL IN FAVOR:** Angie Rodgers (proxy for Director Michael Wisehart), Alisa Wren, Beverly Wilson, Chet Samuelson, Debra Margraf, Dennis Anthony, Jackie Elliott, Jenna Rowell, Jim Corning, John Walters, Josh DeSpain, Kristen Mackey, Mark Gaspers, Michael Cruz, Rose Castanares, Scott Holman, Zenji Reynolds

**OPPOSED:** None

**ABSTAINED:** None

**MOTION PASSES**

## 8. Chairman Updates

Chairman Gaspers expressed his appreciation for the extensive work across OEO, DES, and local areas throughout 2025, noting significant transitions and new Council membership representing diverse industries statewide. To support strategic planning and deeper collaboration beyond what regular Council

meetings allow, the Council will hold a facilitated retreat on February 20 at the OEO offices, intended to strengthen cohesion, review progress, align on priorities for the next two years, and provide space for shared input from members. Staff will bring in a professional facilitator, with recognition given to Vice Chair Michelle Bolton for initiating the concept. Members were encouraged to provide feedback on agenda topics to ensure the retreat is valuable and aligned with Council needs.

## 9. Workgroup Updates

### a. Training Effectiveness

Kristen Mackey, the Executive Sponsor, to the Training Effectiveness Workgroup, provided an update on the workgroups progress toward the Council's strategic goal of increasing enrollment in high-impact training programs by 60% by 2029, noting current enrollment at approximately 14%, a slight decline from baseline but not unexpected during early implementation. Additionally, she highlighted that two dashboards have been launched—one for [job seekers](#) to identify qualifying high-impact programs and one for [leaders](#) to analyze regional offerings and support enrollment strategies—with annual rolling updates planned and opportunities for user feedback to inform improvements. A survey to poll the local directors is underway, due December 5, to identify support needed to increase enrollment. Lastly, it was noted that the workgroup is transitioning from broad planning to action-oriented efforts, seeking additional representatives from local areas to participate. Presentations to local areas will continue in the next quarter, with the goal of reporting positive enrollment gains in Q2.

### b. Continuous Improvement

Vice Chair John Walters provided an update on the Continuous Improvement Workgroup as the Executive Sponsor. The update centered on enhancing consistent performance alignment across the workforce system, emphasizing the need to incorporate best practices from peer states and increase participation from local workforce areas, whose perspectives are critical given their direct impact from policy decisions. The group discussed clarifying roles in the process of recaptured funds—where the Council sets strategic priorities, DES manages distribution and procurement aligned to those priorities, and outcomes are reported back with greater transparency on impact. Upcoming efforts include developing outcome-focused dashboards to track progress, reduce duplication, and support data-driven decision making. The group is also finalizing a policy framework but is seeking additional discussion to avoid redundant work and ensure clarity of roles. Participation from local partners and council members was strongly encouraged to guide future direction.

### c. Increasing Apprentices

Dennis Anthony, Executive Sponsor to the Increasing Apprentices Workgroup highlighted the recent work of the workgroup. The workgroup reconvened in November 2025 following leadership transitions at OEO to realign priorities with the Workforce Arizona Council's mission, shifting focus from simply increasing apprentice counts to expanding statewide apprenticeship infrastructure through employer engagement, policy development, and data-informed strategy. The group reaffirmed that sustainable growth requires expanding the number and diversity of employer sponsors—particularly beyond construction and utility sectors, which have reached capacity—and emphasized developing consistent statewide messaging, defining quality apprenticeship benchmarks, and creating performance indicators in collaboration with DES's new data analysis unit. Key efforts include building multi-employer partnerships, increasing rural and emerging sector participation (e.g., healthcare, IT, manufacturing, semiconductors), and pursuing policy levers such as state contract requirements, incentives, and alignment with short-term Pell and ETPL criteria. The relaunch marks a strategic shift toward coordinated statewide expansion of high-quality apprenticeships and reinforces the Council's role in supporting workforce needs through actionable, measurable policy and system improvements.

## 10. Agency Updates

### a. OEO: Director Mary Foote

#### i. Workforce Arizona Council Summit: Recap and Next Steps

Mary Foote, OEO Director, provided updates on the Workforce Arizona Council Summit, highlighting that the 2025 Summit was a major success, drawing over 400 workforce professionals statewide and earning strong engagement from attendees, including Vice Chair John Walters and Second Vice Chair Michelle Bolton who led Day 2 programming. A key enhancement this year was the addition of sessions focused on labor market, economic, and demographic trends, which emerged as the most popular content. Planning is already underway for the 2026 Summit—a two-day event in mid-June in Maricopa County—with efforts aimed at increasing participation from Workforce Arizona Council members. A survey and save-the-date will be released in December to gather input on themes, session formats, and priority topics. The next summit will also feature a new awards dinner, and organizers are seeking sponsors and participation from council members and partners to help shape and support the event.

#### ii. 2024 - 2034 Industry Employment Projections

Doug Walls, Director of Labor Market Information, addressed the 2024-2034 Industry Employment Projections. The discussion showcased Arizona's latest long-term industry and occupational projections forecast continued statewide employment growth through 2034, with more than 450,000 new jobs expected—an annual growth rate of 1.2%, significantly outpacing national projections due to strong population growth and industry composition. The data, covering over 100 industries and 700 occupations across all 15 counties and local workforce areas, highlights healthcare as the fastest-growing sector due to demographic shifts and sustained demand across all education levels. Construction is projected to see the second-highest growth, driven by industrial investments despite moderating from its post-recession surge, followed by strong growth in durable goods manufacturing and continued expansion in leisure and hospitality supported by tourism. Maricopa County will account for over 80% of total job gains, though all counties are expected to grow. Overall, Arizona is positioned for broad, sector-diverse expansion with strong opportunities in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and population-driven service sectors.

#### iii. New Workforce Evaluation Reports

Rachael Tashbook, Economic Analysis Unit and Ferris Ramadan, Longitudinal Data System Director announced the upcoming release of three major reports beginning December 2nd, including an updated evaluation of WIOA Title I Adult training programs that measures employment and wage outcomes and incorporates new analyses on training-to-employment alignment, inflation impacts, and program participation changes, with nearly half of evaluated ETPL programs identified as high impact. Additional reports will analyze barriers to program completion and long-term trainee outcomes using Arizona's Integrated Data System, and measure whether training leads participants into jobs within aligned industries. Findings highlight strong outcomes in fields such as healthcare, transportation, homeland security, and mechanics, while also identifying wide variance across programs and opportunities to improve completion rates for populations with multiple barriers. In January 2026, localized provider-level reports and updated dashboards will be released with training, technical support, and opportunities for feedback, followed later by deeper analyses on AI labor market exposure and return-on-investment impacts to inform statewide program improvement.

a. DES: DERS Assistant Director, Anna Hunter

DES Assistant Director for the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services, Anna Hunter provided the Committee updates related to recaptured and reallocated funds, unemployment insurance benefits, rapid response efforts, and the TEGL 02-25: Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund Grant Program.

i. Recapture & Reallocation

The state reported \$1.78 million in recaptured WIOA funds from Program Year 23—primarily from the Arizona Tribal Workforce Development Board and smaller amounts from Coconino, Santa Cruz, and Yavapai—reflecting unspent funds that return to the state for statewide initiatives after the final year of the funding cycle.

Local Area	Youth	Adult	DW	DW to Adult	Admin	Total
Cochise	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Coconino	\$ 68,032	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,965	\$ 75,997
Pinal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Maricopa	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mohave	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NEAZ	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Phoenix, City of	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Pima	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Santa Cruz	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,628	\$ 41,628
Yavapai	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 83,771	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 83,771
Yuma	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>City/County Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 68,032</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 83,771</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 49,593</b>	<b>\$ 201,396</b>
Cocopah Indian Tribe	\$ 14,258	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ 178	\$ 17,936
Cocopah NTN	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Colorado River Indian Tribes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,926	\$ -	\$ 338	\$ 13,264
Gila River Indian Community	\$ 192,085	\$ 175,443	\$ 28,780	\$ -	\$ 3,879	\$ 400,187
GRIC - NTN	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Hopi Tribe	\$ 67,874	\$ 85,133	\$ 41,019	\$ -	\$ 4,838	\$ 198,864
Hualapai Tribe	\$ 64,552	\$ 61,545	\$ 6,794	\$ -	\$ 2,802	\$ 135,693
Fort Mojave	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,081	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,081
Pascua Yaqui Tribe	\$ -	\$ 2,878	\$ 1,342	\$ 23,716	\$ 3,748	\$ 31,684
Quechan Indian Tribe	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,508	\$ -	\$ 1,705	\$ 11,213
Salt River PMIC	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,361	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,361
San Carlos Apache Tribe	\$ 120,879	\$ 89,565	\$ 48,112	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 258,556
Tohono O'Odham Nation	\$ 165,345	\$ 166,634	\$ 102,685	\$ -	\$ 6,742	\$ 441,406
White Mountain Apache Tribe	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 48,378	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 48,378
Yavapai-Apache Nation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,657	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,657
<b>Tribal Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 624,993</b>	<b>\$ 581,198</b>	<b>\$ 327,143</b>	<b>\$ 23,716</b>	<b>\$ 24,230</b>	<b>\$ 1,581,280</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 693,025</b>	<b>\$ 581,198</b>	<b>\$ 410,914</b>	<b>\$ 23,716</b>	<b>\$ 73,823</b>	<b>\$ 1,782,676</b>

Recaptured funds, which have continued to decrease over time as local areas spend more effectively, will support priority initiatives including reentry services (\$3M to expand DES reentry staffing and prison-to-employment pathways), the Office of Registered Apprenticeships (\$500K to sustain state-level program registration and expansion), and maintenance of the Arizona Job Connection system (\$200K). The reentry program aims to strengthen pre-release employment connections, expand probation/parole-based services, and coordinate more closely with Arizona Correctional Industries, while registered apprenticeship funding supports growth in multi-employer sponsorships and statewide employer engagement, despite recent federal apprenticeship grants requiring partial returns of unspent dollars. The discussion also highlighted sustainability concerns, as both reentry and apprenticeship services are heavily dependent on recaptured funds, which are variable and not guaranteed.

ii. Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Anna Hunter apologized for challenges impacting Title II wage data and committed to improving data coordination for future Workforce Arizona Council reporting. The

state recently launched the new CACTUS unemployment insurance system, replacing more than 20 legacy systems with a modern platform that allows claimants and employers to file and track claims, access appeals, and manage benefits online, resulting in more than 179,000 claims filed and \$37 million in benefits paid since its September 2025 launch. While the system rollout has largely been successful, significant service delays and increased walk-in volume at ARIZONA@WORK offices stem from federal funding cuts that forced a 60% reduction in UI staffing effective July 2025, leaving the program operating with only 40% of its former capacity. Leadership acknowledged current service limitations and emphasized their commitment to improving claimant experience despite severe resource constraints.

iii. Rapid Response Update

In response to a request for information, the state outlined its rapid response process for layoffs, noting that each situation varies based on employer needs, timing, and when information is provided about affected workers—sometimes well in advance and other times only after separations occur. The State Rapid Response Team at DES works collaboratively with local Rapid Response Coordinators, with local areas playing a key role in on-the-ground support and helping displaced workers transition quickly to new employment. While the process flow shown represents an ideal scenario, implementation depends on employer cooperation and timing. The state also maintains a public dashboard displaying WARN and non-WARN layoff data on the Arizona@Work website to keep stakeholders informed.

iv. TEGL 02-25: Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund Grant Program

Arizona received a \$5 million Industry-Driven Skills Training Grant (TEGL 02-25) from the U.S. Department of Labor, awarded on September 30, 2025, making the state one of 14 recipients out of 44 applicants. The grant will support advanced manufacturing training in partnership with the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, and Pinal County workforce boards, with over 1,000 participants expected to receive training. DES is finalizing contracts to pass funding through to the local boards and expanding engagement to additional advanced manufacturing employers in those regions. Notably, 90% of the funding will go directly toward training costs, with only 10% allocated for administration. The grant was awarded largely due to Arizona's existing sector strategies and collaboration among employers, workforce boards, and training providers, positioning the state ahead of others in readiness for implementation.

## 11. Council Meeting Dates and Adjournment

Chair Gaspers reminded the Council Members that the next Full Council meeting will be on March 12, 2026 and noted it will be in person and available via Zoom.

**MOTION:** Chair Gaspers called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dennis Anthony made a motion, Vice Chair John Walters seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05pm.

**ALL IN FAVOR:** Angie Rodgers (proxy for Director Michael Wisheart), Alisa Wren, Beverly Wilson, Chet Samuelson, Debra Margraf, Dennis Anthony, Jackie Elliott, Jenna Rowell, Jim Corning, John Walters, Josh DeSpain, Kristen Mackey, Mark Gaspers, Michael Cruz, Rose Castanares, Scott Holman, Zenji Reynolds

**OPPOSED:** None

**ABSTAINED:** None

**MOTION PASSES**

*Persons with a disability may request reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by calling (480) 904-0826. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation. A copy of the material provided to Council members (with the exception of material relating to possible executive sessions) is available for public inspection at the Office of Economic Opportunity, located at 1400 W Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007*

*Under A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3), the Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for the purpose of obtaining legal advice on any item on the agenda.*

*At its discretion, the Council may consider and act upon any agenda item out of order. Members of the Council may appear by telephone.*

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