



Innovative Workforce Solutions

**WORKFORCE ARIZONA COUNCIL
Q2 Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, April 9th, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82228161039?pwd=RxabjwrHX1sod6sMmXUd5k0roNgMDr.1>

Meeting ID: 822 2816 1039 Passcode: 520469

1. Welcome & Call to Order

Chair Mark Gaspers welcomed Executive Committee members and the public to the Executive Committee meeting. Reminding those attending that only members of the Executive Committee are permitted to vote and to be respectful and remember to mute your microphones.

2. Roll Call

Giselle Retana, the Council Administrative Coordinator, conducted a roll call - a quorum was present.

Attending: Chair Mark Gaspers, Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair Skylie Estep, Director Michael Wisehart, Kristen Mackey, Karla Moran, Alex Horvath, Beverly Wilson (Absent: Jenna Rowell)

3. Call to the Public

Chair Gaspers opened the call to the public. No members of the public spoke.

4. Approval of Q1 February 12th, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Chair Gaspers called for a motion to approve the minutes for the Q1 February 12th, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting. Alex Horvath made a motion; Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton seconded the motion.

All in Favor Vote Held:

In Favor: Chair Mark Gaspers, Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair Skylie Estep, Director Michael Wisehart, Kristen Mackey, Karla Moran, Alex Horvath, Beverly Wilson (Absent: Jenna Rowell)

Opposed: None

Motion Passed

5. Chairman Reports

Chair Gaspers provided a brief recap of participation in the National Governors Association Workforce Symposium, where members engaged in national discussions on evolving federal workforce priorities. A key topic was Workforce Pell integration, with insights shared from other states on their progress. Teams from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity and the Arizona Department of Education plan to further explore these opportunities. Recognition was given to Director Foote for presenting on the Rural Health Transformation Program, showcasing Arizona's leadership in this area.

6. Governance and Compliance

a. LWDB Job Center Recertification (NEW CENTER), Vote

- i. Yavapai County Comprehensive One-Stop #1, American Job Center, Yavapai College Prescott Campus
- Yavapai County Comprehensive One-Stop #1, American Job Center, Yavapai College Prescott Campus

Patrick Brown, the Council's Administrator, presented Yavapai's LWDB Job Center Recertification (New Center) to the Executive Committee.

MOTION: Chair Gaspers called for a motion to approve the recommended Yavapai County Workforce Investment Board's new Comprehensive One-Stop #1, American Job Center - Job Center Certification moving to the Full Council for consideration. Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton made a motion; Beverly Wilson seconded the motion.

All in Favor Vote Held:

In Favor: Chair Mark Gaspers, Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair Skylic Estep, Director Michael Wisehart, Kristen Mackey, Karla Moran, Alex Horvath, Beverly Wilson (Absent: Jenna Rowell)

Opposed: None
Motion Passed

b. 2025 LWDB Recertification Updates

Patrick Brown, presented on the status of pending Local Workforce Development Board recertifications, focusing on Coconino County and the Arizona Tribal Workforce Development Boards. The highlights are as follows:

i. Coconino County Workforce Development Board:

2025 LWDB Recertification Updates

Coconino County Workforce Development Board

- **Compliance Report**
 - CCWDB has approved the appointment of a new Executive Director
- **Recertification**
 - CCWD approved its bylaws, Shared Governance Agreement (SGA), and overall recertification package at its most recent meeting.
 - CCWDB is looking at addressing board composition and filling membership openings on the board
 - Currently on track for Q2 recertification recommendation to the WAC



ii. Arizona Tribal Workforce Development Board:

2025 LWDB Recertification Updates

Arizona Tribal Workforce Development Board

- **Key Outcomes:** Established a timeline for completion and submission of remaining recertification documents
- **Documents successfully submitted:**
 - Signed Consortium Agreements (all 13 tribal governments)
 - Signed Shared Governance Agreements (all 13 tribal governments)
 - MOUs (all 13 Tribal Governments)
- **Remaining/ongoing items:**
 - Local Plan in progress; anticipated completion: June 2026
 - One-Stop Operator: ATW had considered "sole-source option" to meet the OSO requirement. DES and Council staff presented a new option: pursue a federal waiver for both requirements and allow each of the 13 tribal nations to define how services will be delivered in their own communities.
- **Staff summary / next steps:**
 - ATW is making measurable progress toward recertification
 - Staff will continue technical assistance, monitor the timeline, and provide additional updates and recommendations as submissions are received and reviewed



Council discussion followed, noting the great work and progress for the ATWDB up to this point.

7. Coconino County Local Workforce Development Board Inquiry Report, Vote

Patrick Brown presented to the Executive Committee the Coconino County Local Workforce Development Inquiry Report. The report identified past concerns related to governance structure, documentation, transparency, and role clarity, which created risks to accountability and compliance.

Coconino County has since taken corrective steps during recertification to address these issues. Key governance documents have been updated, roles clarified, and alignment with the WIOA and state policies has been restored.

The Workforce Arizona Council is being asked to formally accept the report (*reference meeting materials for full inquiry report*) into record, acknowledge both the initial concerns and the corrective actions, and close the inquiry while reinforcing expectations for ongoing governance compliance.

MOTION: Chair Gaspers called for a motion to approve the recommendations of the report to the Full Council and subsequently notify the Coconino County Workforce Development Board to the Full Council for consideration. Alex Horvath made a motion; Beverly Wilson seconded the motion.

All in Favor Vote Held:

In Favor: Chair Mark Gaspers, Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair Skylic Estep, Director Michael Wisehart, Kristen Mackey, Karla Moran, Alex Horvath, Beverly Wilson (Absent: Jenna Rowell)

Opposed: None

Motion Passed

8. State Plan Modification Updates

Patrick Brown shared an update on the progress of the WIOA State Plan Modification, which has reached key milestones, including completion of the draft and the close of the public comment period (highlighted below):

WIOA Unified Plan Modification

The workstreams below maps to the ICR structure and address identified gaps in the current Arizona plan (e.g., an unfinished Executive Summary, updated LMI Data) and narratives framing Arizona WIOA State Plan PY 2024-2027.

Key Milestones

MILESTONE	TARGET DATE	CITATION
Governor's designee letter/email submitted	2/2/2026 - submitted	TEGL 07-25, p. 8
Full draft compiled	3/6/2026 - Completed	
WAC Full Council Update	3/12/2026 - Completed	
Public comment complete + responses finalized	3/23 - 4/3/2026 - Completed	TEGL 07-25, p. 6-7
WAC Executive Committee Update	4/9/2026	
WAC Special Meeting: Final approval complete	4/16/2026	
Submission to State Plan Portal	4/30/2026	TEGL 07-25, p. 1-2



The plan modification is a critical update that outlines how Arizona will align workforce, education, and partner programs under the WIOA for the next two years, ensuring responsiveness to current labor market conditions and stakeholder input.

Next steps include finalizing the document and executive summary, and presenting the plan to the Workforce Arizona Council for approval at the special meeting on April 16th. Once approved, it will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor to meet federal requirements.

9. Workgroup Updates

Janice Garza, Workforce Policy Manager, provided an update on the Workforce Arizona Council's workgroups:

a. Continuous Improvement

Update on the WAC Policy 15 - Strategic Recapture and Reinvestment Policy

i. Policy Progress:

- Continued work on the WAC Policy 15
- Progress was slightly delayed due to required state plan modifications requested by the U.S. Department of Labor, due by the end of April
- Refined Approach:
 - Shift from a narrow focus (specific recaptured funds and timelines)
 - Moving toward a broader, more sustainable policy framework addressing:
 - i. Use of statewide funds
 - ii. Long-term workforce investment strategy
- Next Steps:
 - Present proposed expanded policy direction at the next workgroup meeting on 4/23
 - Gather feedback and address concerns from partners
 - Additional details to be shared at the full Council meeting

b. Training Effectiveness

The Training Effectiveness Workgroup shared progress on improving program quality and engagement across local workforce areas.

- Ongoing Efforts:
 - Continued collaboration with local areas
 - Expanded data outreach and training, with updated data now in use
- Program Enhancements:
 - Identified 32 new high-impact training programs available to adult participants
 - Focus on improving access to effective, in-demand training options
- Recognition & Events:
 - Plans to recognize high-performing training providers and programs at the upcoming workforce summit
 - Developing a breakout session focused on the High Impact Training (HIT) program
- Next Steps:
 - Additional updates to be shared as the summit approaches
 - More detailed project updates to be provided at the next full Council meeting

c. Increasing Apprentices

The Increasing Apprentices Workgroup concluded its work on April 8 and will no longer be meeting.

10. Agency Updates:

a. **OEO: Director Mary Foote**

Director Foote shared with the Committee the Agency Updates as follows:

i. General Updates

Key updates: Focusing on federal engagement and major workforce initiatives.

- Federal & Strategic Engagement:
 - Participated in meetings in Washington, D.C., including with the National Governors Association and the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce
 - Met with federal agencies (Commerce, Education, Labor), the White House, and congressional representatives
 - Key themes included talent marketplaces and aligning with federal workforce strategies
 - Beginning internal planning for the next 5-year state workforce plan, with a focus on a more holistic, statewide strategy
- Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP):
 - Ongoing initiative to address healthcare workforce shortages in rural areas
 - Collaboration with Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)
 - Target timeline: Contracts *expected* by August
 - New website launched to share funding opportunities and program information ([Website Link](#))

ii. Welcome: New Workforce Arizona Council Staff and Council Officers

Shared staffing updates and leadership changes for the Workforce Arizona Council.

- New Staff Welcome:
 - Introduced Jeremy as the new Governance and Compliance Advisor
 - i. Brings over five years of Title II compliance experience with the Arizona Department of Education, Has a strong background in K-12 education, including teaching and coaching
- Leadership Updates:
 - Welcomed Michelle Bolton as First Vice Chair
 - Welcomed Skylie Estep as Second Vice Chair
 - Noted that an announcement regarding a new Council Chair will be made at the next full council meeting

iii. 2026 Arizona Workforce Summit Update

Provided an update on the upcoming Workforce Arizona Summit:

- Event Details:
 - Scheduled for June 9-10 at the Mesa Convention Center
 - Free to attend, but registration is required and expected to fill quickly
 - Registration opens April 30 via the OEO website
- Program & Participation:
 - Agenda is being finalized with a mix of local and national speakers
 - Over 30 session proposals were submitted from various organizations
 - Invitation extended to the Governor to participate
- Media & Promotion:
 - Returning media sponsors include Phoenix Business Journal and AZ Family, who will also serve as session moderators
- Sponsorships:

- Appreciation shared for current sponsors supporting the event
- Limited sponsorship opportunities remain (\$5,000 and \$2,000 levels available)

Overall, the summit is shaping up to be a well-attended, high-impact workforce event, with strong partner engagement, diverse programming, and ongoing opportunities for participation and sponsorship.

iv. Latest AZ Employment Report, Doug Walls

Doug Walls, Labor Market Information Director provided an update on the Arizona Employment which showed that Arizona is experiencing a slowing labor market with emerging signs of weakness, though some trends remain stable. Overall, the data reflects a cooling economy with continued reliance on healthcare for growth and increasing pressure from public sector job losses.

January 2026 EMPLOYMENT REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Over-the-month, Arizona not-seasonally adjusted (NSA) total nonfarm employment decreased by 46,200 jobs (-1.4%)
- The Arizona SA unemployment rate increased to 4.5% in January 2026
- The U.S. SA unemployment rate decreased to 4.3% in January 2026 from 4.4% in December 2025
- The Arizona SA labor force decreased by 710 individuals month-over-month, but increased by 32,986 individuals year-over-year
- Over-the-year, Arizona NSA nonfarm employment decreased by 19,400 jobs (-0.6%)

Source: Produced by the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity in Cooperation with the U.S. Dept. of Labor, BLS.



Additional presentation highlights are as follows:

- Industry impacts:
 - Government (especially education and federal jobs) drove most job losses
 - Healthcare remains the primary source of job growth, accounting for the majority of gains

YEAR-OVER-YEAR EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

Not Seasonally Adjusted, January 2026

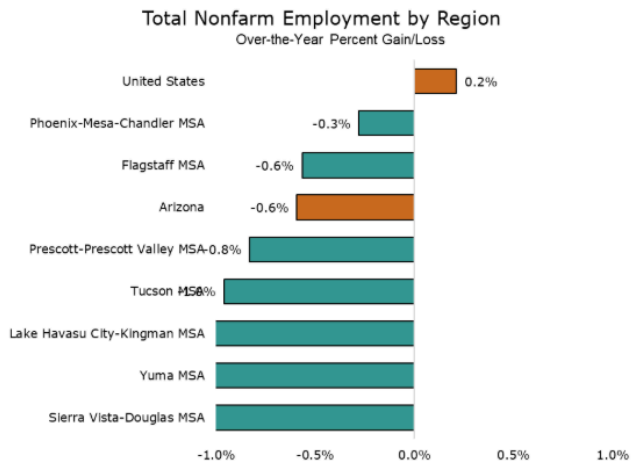


Source: Produced by the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity in Cooperation with the U.S. Dept. of Labor, BLS

- Regional trends: All major metro areas reported year-over-year job losses, largely tied to government sector declines

YEAR-OVER-YEAR EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

Not Seasonally Adjusted, January 2026



Source: Produced by the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity in Cooperation with the U.S. Dept. of Labor, BLS

Similar economic slowdowns are occurring nationally, indicating Arizona's trends are part of wider economic headwinds, though the state is currently underperforming the national average

b. DES: DES Assistant Director, Anna Hunter

i. WIOA Rapid Response Unit

Anna Hunter, DES Assistant Director for the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services provided the Executive Committee information on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Rapid Response Unit, noting recent layoff activity and upcoming service enhancements in the State.

Rapid Response Update

FY26 Layoff Activity Data to Date

(07/01/2025 - 02/28/2026)

- 38 WARNs affecting 7997 workers
- 19 Non-WARNs affecting 996 workers

Top 5 Layoff-Affected Industries by number of companies to date

(07/01/2025 - 02/28/2026)

1. Health care and social assistance - 7
2. Transportation and warehousing - 6
3. Retail trade - 6
4. Manufacturing - 5
5. Accommodation and food services - 5

Top 5 Layoff-Affected Industries by number of affected workers to date

(07/01/2025 - 02/28/2026)

1. Health care and social assistance - 4703
2. Information Technology (IT) - 876
3. Accommodation and food services - 694
4. Transportation and warehousing - 603
5. Professional, scientific and technical services - 511



Additionally, progress was shared on new mobile resource units, which will expand access to workforce services—especially in rural areas. These units are currently in development and testing, with plans for pilot use in summer/fall and a full launch targeted for early 2027



Rapid Response Update - Continued



Mobile Resource Units (MRUs) Project

61% complete as of February 28, 2026
Project Public Launch: January 2027

The Mobile Resource Units (MRUs) will primarily function to conduct statewide Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion activities, especially in high demand areas needing workforce reduction support due to mass layoffs, business closures, disasters, or demographic shifts.

- The MRU Project consists of 11 Phases broken into 100 Project Tasks - 4 phases are 100% complete.
- The project is in the technology, outfitting, administrative, and training phases.
- MRUs will support planned local area Rapid Response Events and activities, State initiatives, and State emergencies.
- When extended services are needed, MRUs will be brought on location to support resource and service delivery.
- MRUs are equipped with 6 workstations, large internal monitor, two external monitors; printer, modem & satellite internet broadband access; lift access.
- An asset management system will be used to reserve the units to be brought and operated on-site (State staff to operate).

Rapid Response Comprehensive Communication & Outreach Project (RR CCOP)

84% complete as of February 28, 2026
Project completion date: 06/30/2026

The project will produce a video and print materials library and tool kits for Arizona Rapid Response service delivery that can be utilized and customized by each local area ARIZONA@WORK partner, bringing consistent messaging and resources statewide; Supplying the local areas with additional resources and tools to provide effective Rapid Response service delivery.

These materials include instructional videos, desk aids, and informational flyers to support Rapid Response activities. All materials will be produced in English and Spanish and include English Closed Captioning and ASL in the videos.

The library will include videos and print materials for:

- How to Create a Resume
- How to Prepare for an Interview
- Unemployment Insurance Benefits Initial Application Information
- Job Seeker Resources
- Arizona Rapid Response for Employers
- Transferable Skills -Tools for Employers



11. Title Partner Updates

a. Title IB and Title III, Matthew Smith

Matthew Smith from the Arizona Department of Economic Security provided updates for Title I and III programs.

- PY2024 State Performance Assessment:
 - Annual evaluation results were released in March after federal analysis

- Expanded assessment included new indicators, such as:
 - 2nd quarter employment after exit
 - Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) across all core programs
- Results:
 - All 32 performance indicators were successful (no failures)
 - No corrective actions required
 - Performance categories:
 - Green: met/exceeded targets
 - Yellow: below target but above failure threshold
- PY2025 Quarter 2 Progress (Title I & III):
 - Programs are currently on track to meet performance goals
 - No indicators are below negotiated performance levels at this time
 - Final outcomes may still change after federal statistical adjustments

b. Title II, Beverly Wilson

Beverly Wilson, Council Member and Title II partner, presented on the Title II Updates. The presentation highlighted participant outcomes and performance for Quarter 2 (July–December 2025) in Arizona.

- Participation & outcomes: Over 10,300 adult learners were served, with a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) rate of 48.6%, reflecting significant academic progress requirements (2–2.5 grade-level gains).
- Credentials & education:
 - 239 high school equivalency diplomas issued in the quarter
 - 1,224 industry-recognized credentials earned through training programs
- Participant profile:
 - Majority are English language learners (60%) or below 8th-grade skill level (37%)
 - Many participants are unemployed or underemployed, seeking skills to transition into better jobs
- ii. Trends: Participation and skill gains are increasing over time, along with enrollment in integrated education and training programs
- iii. Data limitations: Some employment and earnings data (Quarter 2) are delayed due to system changes in wage reporting

c. Title IV, Kristen Mackey

Kristen Mackey, Council Member and Title IV partner, shared an update for Title IV, highlighting early challenges with reporting under a new case management system in Arizona. Presentation highlights are as follows:

- Current performance: Reported outcomes are below negotiated targets, largely due to data errors and system transition issues, rather than confirmed program performance gaps
- System challenges: Issues include missing or incorrectly transferred data between the state system and the federal reporting system
- Response efforts:
 - Ongoing collaboration with federal partners, system developers, and program teams
 - Weekly reviews to identify and fix data issues
 - Planned system enhancements and corrections already underway
- Data corrections: Adjustments can be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, though public reports will not be updated retroactively
- Additional note: Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) are reported by quarter (not cumulative) for this program

12. Adjournment

Chair Gaspers provided the following reminders for upcoming meetings and events:

- Thursday, April 16, 2026: Special Full Council meeting focused on the WIOA State Plan Modification.
- Thursday, May 14, 2026: Next Full Council Meeting
- June 9-10, 2026: Arizona Workforce Summit

MOTION: Chair Gaspers called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Beverly Wilson made a motion; Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton seconded the motion.

All in Favor Vote Held:

In Favor: Chair Mark Gaspers, Vice-Chair Michelle Bolton, Second Vice-Chair Skylic Estep, Director Michael Wisheart, Kristen Mackey, Karla Moran, Alex Horvath, Beverly Wilson (Absent: Jenna Rowell)

Opposed: None

Motion Passed