

**PHOENIX BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
INSTILL HOPE STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**January 22, 2026
9:02 a.m.**

Members Present:

Christian Bearden
Karen Carter
Lorraine Field

Ginger Lane
Jason Schaffner
Sam Wolo

Members Absent:

Daniel Barajas

Public Attendees:

Gregg Bach
Dominic Cota
Diana Figueroa
Thomas Flynn
LaSetta Hogans
James Montoya
Jovanna Parkhouse
Angie Parra

Demitria Robles
Rebecca Tierney
Brenda Urquidi
Ariadna Valentin
Stephanie Varela
Justin West
Laura Whitehead

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

1) Call to Order / Roll Call/Introductions:

The Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board (Board) Instill Hope Steering Committee (IHSC) Chair Karen Carter called the January 22, 2026, meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call was completed, and there was a quorum of five members.

2) Approval of the December 18, 2025 IHSC Meeting Minutes:

IHSC Vice Chair Jason Schaffner motioned to approve the December 18, 2025 IHSC Meeting Minutes, IHSC Member Ginger Lane seconded the motion.

Approved: Christian Bearden, Karen Carter and Lorraine Field

Opposed: None

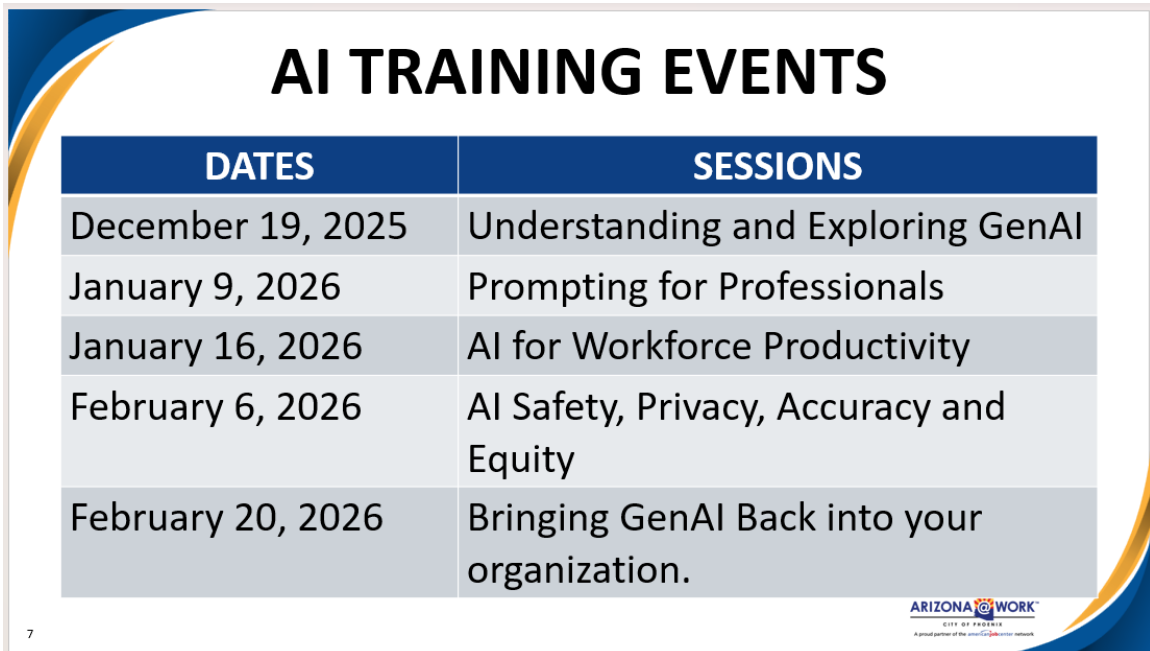
Abstained: None

Motion passed unanimously

IHSC Member Sam Wolo joined the meeting at 9:18 a.m.

3) Artificial Intelligence Training Update

ARIZONA@WORK City of Phoenix Project Manager James Montoya shared an update on the Community of Practice’s Artificial Intelligence (AI) training sessions. The five-part AI training series, was developed in collaboration with Grand Canyon University, based on feedback received from attendees who participated in the “Building for an AI-Enabled Workforce” convening held in June 2025. The five-part series is focused on training workforce service providers and community partners by equipping them with AI tools that will enable them to better assist participants and students. The goals of the training series include establishing a strong understanding of AI, safe usage of AI, applicable AI tools to improve, streamline and enhance productivity. James emphasized the participants are told AI is a support tool and should not be viewed as a decision-maker. He shared that to-date, three sessions have been facilitated. Some of the organizations who have participated include Boys and Girls Club, Southwest Truck Driving School, Arizona Career Pathways, International Rescue Committee, ARIZONA@WORK partners, and Board staff. Additionally, James explained that during the course, participants are learning how AI can be used as an effective tool to streamline processes, including drafting emails, summarizing documents, and organizing information, among other things. The next session is scheduled for February 6 and will focus on AI data privacy, security, and accuracy.



DATES	SESSIONS
December 19, 2025	Understanding and Exploring GenAI
January 9, 2026	Prompting for Professionals
January 16, 2026	AI for Workforce Productivity
February 6, 2026	AI Safety, Privacy, Accuracy and Equity
February 20, 2026	Bringing GenAI Back into your organization.

7

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4) Upcoming Community of Practice Events

IHSC Chair Karen Carter shared the schedule for the upcoming Community of Practice meetings that will be hosted by IHSC between February 2026 – June 2026.

Community of Practice meetings from February 2026 – June 2026:

- February: Advanced Business Services (Championed by Daniel Barajas)
- April: Semiconductor/Trades/Apprenticeship (Championed by Christian Bearden)
- June: Healthcare (Championed by Karen Carter and potentially Lorraine Field)

ARIZONA@WORK City of Phoenix Project Manager James Montoya shared he has been collaborating with IHSC Member Daniel Barajas in coordinating the next convening, scheduled for February 26 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. James shared Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board (Board) Member Meghan McGilvra will be assisting with securing event panelists. A save the date notification will be sent by next week to all Board Members.

Karen proposed the future Community of Practice events be hosted on scheduled IHSC meeting dates in April and June which would allow for committee members to attend since the dates are already blocked on their calendars. Karen asked if committee members had any conflicts or issues. IHSC Member Christian Bearden asked the time the meetings will be held at. James shared that the events are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Additionally, Karen shared that she and Jason met with Bloomberg Associates to discuss the Board's new strategic plan with an emphasis on IHSC's Community of Practice events, and how they can be a vehicle to map services for jobseekers and employers. They discussed evaluating the impact of initiatives that result from Community of Practice events and the importance of understanding the needs of attendees in order to share information effectively with employers and providers.

Karen shared they agreed to move forward with industry-focused meetings to enhance employer engagement and focus on the role/growth of Artificial Intelligence and how people can be upskilled, if their jobs are being eliminated by AI. IHSC Member Christian Bearden asked what the feedback about AI was. James shared the survey did not include a comment section, overall, the feedback was positive and attendees found the content valuable. Additionally, they talked about refining post-event surveys to gather more detailed feedback for future events, including Advanced Business Services, Trades and Apprenticeships, and Healthcare sessions. IHSC Vice Chair Jason Schaffner shared that the Board's Vice Chair Brandon Ramsey is interested in assisting

with employer engagement. IHSC Member Sam Wolo also shared that he will check if his organization can participate in one of the upcoming events.

5) Strategic Tracker Review

IHSC Chair Karen Carter reviewed and shared the strategic plan tracker. She informed the committee that Goal 4.3 is pending completion no later than February 2026.

6) Call the Public/Open Discussion:

None

7) Future Agenda Items:

None

8) Adjournment:

IHSC Chair Karen Carter adjourned the meeting at **9:35 a.m.**