



DRAFT

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
MARICOPA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Anne Landers, Barbara Coakley, Che' Collins, Dr. Meredith Critchfield, Jessica Ruiz, Robert Garcia, Tina Drews, Yvonnda Shelton

Members Absent:

Anna Yap, Brittany Holmes, Danielle Lertique, Eric Cultum, JakinDee Kosaka, Jessica Rivera-Garcia, Marie Raymond, Tiffany Bellows

Call to Order.

Chair Anne Landers called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and requested roll call.

Roll Call.

Roll call was conducted by Management Analyst, Madison Ginsberg. Quorum was not confirmed.

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Objectives.

Chair Landers welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the objectives and goals for the committee.

Consent Agenda.

Meeting Minutes: March 5, 2026

Chair Landers announced that the consent agenda will be postponed to the next meeting where quorum is present.

Information/Discussion Only.

MCWDB Youth Job and Volunteer Fair/Youth Activities

Workforce Development Program Supervisor, Zach Lynch, provided an update on the results from the annual Youth Volunteer and Job Fair held in partnership with the City of Tempe on May 6, 2026. The event included 12 employers and community resources and attracted 91 youth job seekers. Outcomes included 19 on-the-spot interviews, 65 follow-up interviews scheduled, and 14 same-day hires or volunteer placements. Participating industries included customer service, healthcare, government, hospitality, information technology, manufacturing, retail, and social services. Feedback from attendees and partners

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highlighted the event's successful location, scheduling, and strong resource availability. Mr. Lynch thanked the City of Tempe for its continued partnership and recognized staff members involved in supporting the event.

Mr. Lynch also presented an overview of career pathway trends within the Maricopa County Youth Workforce Program, highlighting historical data on occupational skills training and apprenticeship participation from Program Years 2023–2025. Occupational skills training trends showed transportation-related programs, primarily CDL training, previously leading participation; however, in the current program year, healthcare training programs surpassed transportation, accounting for 57% of enrollments. Healthcare pathways included medical assisting, dental assisting, and certified nursing assistant training. Transportation programs accounted for 37%, while other fields such as IT represented 6%. Apprenticeship program data showed electrical trades remaining the most common pathway across all years, though participation decreased slightly from 82% to 74% in the current program year. Additional apprenticeship opportunities expanded to include sheet metal, heavy machinery, carpentry, healthcare, airplane mechanics, construction, and manufacturing, reflecting efforts by the apprenticeship team to diversify available career options for youth participants.

Workforce Development Career Advisor, Ethel Cunningham, shared the youth success story. After leaving high school at age 16, she earned her GED while working at McDonald's to support herself and her family. Following a tour of Arizona College of Dental Assisting, she enrolled in the dental assisting program and quickly demonstrated strong commitment and initiative, consistently excelling in coursework, lab practice, and internship performance. Supportive services, including gas cards, helped ensure reliable participation in training and work experience activities.

Although employment was not immediately available after her internship, her Youth Career Advisor connected her with additional work experience at a dental clinic to strengthen her skills. Through persistence and dedication, she secured permanent employment as a Dental Assistant with Arrowhead Foothills Dentistry, working 36 hours per week at \$18 per hour. She plans to begin studies at Arizona State University in the fall, pursuing a biology degree with the long-term goal of attending dental school and becoming a dentist. Her success reflects the impact of mentorship, supportive services, and career pathway programming in helping youth achieve long-term career goals.

SEMI Foundation

Perla DeBaggis, Senior Specialist for Career and Industry Awareness with the SEMI Foundation, and Contractor Scott Ellsworth presented an overview of the organization's workforce, education, and apprenticeship initiatives supporting Arizona's growing semiconductor industry. Ms. DeBaggis explained that the SEMI Foundation serves as the workforce development arm of the semiconductor industry that increases awareness of semiconductor career opportunities to students. She noted that the organization partners with K-12 schools, higher education institutions, CTE programs, and workforce organizations to provide career exposure through guest speakers, events, industry panels, and experiential learning opportunities.

Ms. DeBaggis highlighted the Foundation's partnerships with organizations including Arizona State University, Maricopa Community Colleges, West-MEC, Chandler Unified School District CTE programs, and the Arizona Department of Education's CTE standards committee. The presentation also highlighted

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SemiQuest, a semiconductor industry exhibition hosted at the Arizona Science Center during Semicon West, which brought together semiconductor manufacturers, suppliers, educators, and workforce partners to increase public awareness of the industry. The exhibit attracted more than 85,000 visitors and featured hands-on experiences for students and community members. Ms. DeBaggis shared that portions of the exhibit will continue traveling throughout Arizona through partnerships with the Arizona Science Center's Science on Wheels program and Arizona State University's SHIELD program to expand statewide access to semiconductor career awareness activities. Ms. DeBaggis also introduced "Chip Path," an online platform developed through the National Microelectronics Network for Education that connects students, job seekers, apprentices, and career changers to semiconductor career opportunities. The platform provides job listings, resume support, interview preparation, and personalized career pathway guidance based on a user's education and experience.

Scott Ellsworth discussed the SEMI Foundation's apprenticeship initiatives and emphasized the value of registered apprenticeships as a workforce development strategy within advanced manufacturing and semiconductor industries. He explained that the SEMI Foundation serves as a national group sponsor for apprenticeship programs, helping employers reduce administrative burdens associated with registering and managing apprenticeship programs. Mr. Ellsworth also discussed barriers to youth participation in semiconductor apprenticeships, including intellectual property and NDA requirements for workers under age 18. He encouraged workforce and education partners to continue promoting career pathways into the semiconductor industry through apprenticeships, technical training, and entry-level opportunities that provide long-term advancement potential. He further noted that many federal incentives for advanced manufacturing employers are tied to participation in registered apprenticeship programs, creating additional opportunities for employer engagement.

West-MEC – Jessica Ruiz

Jessica Ruiz, Director of Career Services at West-MEC, provided an overview of the organization's career and technical education programs, campus expansion plans, and advanced manufacturing initiatives. She highlighted West-MEC's role in Arizona's workforce ecosystem, primarily serving high school students through six campuses offering programs in healthcare, construction trades, IT, transportation, public safety, manufacturing, and human services.

Ms. Ruiz shared updates on significant campus growth planned over the next several years, including the opening of the new Southeast Campus near Loop 101 and Thomas Road in August, which will offer programs in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, IT security, medical assisting, physical therapy, and welding. Additional campus expansions and new locations are planned through the 2029–2030 school year.

The presentation focused heavily on West-MEC's Advanced Manufacturing Program located at the Northeast Campus near the TSMC facility. Developed in partnership with industry leaders including TSMC, the program prepares students for careers in semiconductor and advanced manufacturing industries through hands-on training in robotics, automation, clean room operations, photolithography, wafer design, and semiconductor processing. Ms. Ruiz noted that West-MEC recently opened the nation's first K-12 semiconductor clean room training facility, allowing students to gain industry-standard experience in a simulated fabrication environment.

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Students in the program can earn multiple industry-recognized certifications, including robotics, mechatronics, OSHA 10, and clean room certifications, while also earning dual enrollment college credit. Ms. Ruiz stated that local employers including TSMC, Honeywell Aerospace, Boeing, and Amkor are actively supporting and recruiting from the program, with entry-level wages for graduates ranging from approximately \$20 to \$24 per hour.

Call to Public.

Chair Landers called for public comment. No public comments were made.

Adjourn.

Chair Landers asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Jessica Ruiz moved to adjourn. Yvonda Shelton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

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