



Zafer Genc
Workforce Development Board
Chairperson

700 W. Beale Street
Mailing: P O Box 7000
Kingman, AZ 86402

Phone: (928) 753-0723
Fax: (928) 753-0776
Website: www.mohave.gov

MEETING MINUTES

**MOHAVE/LA PAZ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
AUGUST 16, 2025 – 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M
MOHAVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TRAINING CENTER
4415 N WINDROSE LN., KINGMAN, AZ 86401**

**MEMBERS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WILL ATTEND
IN PERSON**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
AGENDA**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Zafer Genc, Jean Bishop, Bennett Bradley, Lisa Brownfield, Vicki De Los Reyes, Mitzi Esgro, Jason Gee, Jerry Hardy, Chandra Johnson, Michael Kelly, Eric Morey, Adam Rodriguez, Brandi Rowe, Tami Ursenbach, Amy West

OTHERS PRESENT:

Director the board Michael Smith, Chris Register, Sara Ungaro, Desiree Hamodey, David Shinder

ABSENT:

Nancy Campbell, John Diemer, Allen Bell, John Bennett, Laureen Iannucci, Chonna Marshall, Michael Quinn, Davy Spurlock, Thomas Taylor, Dru Waggoner

I. Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Director Michael Smith initiates the meeting and thanks everyone for their attendance. Desiree Hamodey conducts roll call to confirm the presence of members. Director Michael Smith thanks all for their time and mentions the agenda and the Chairman's request to Move item VII. up to the top of the agenda. All agreed to move the item forward. After the review of item VII, Director Michael Smith asked the board if they would first enjoy a tour of the facility and then return to the regular agenda. The Board Agreed to the AMTC Facility Tour.

VII. Review of and Discussion of MOU-WDB Conflict of Interest.

Director Michael Smith explains the procedural aspect of the board's decision with the MOU-WDB conflict of interest, and it is the Board's choice to outsource the overseeing of the WDB. He explains that it provides protection of firewalls that allows Mohave County to interact with the WDB, emphasizing the county's ability to hold the program and the importance of in-house services that are provided. He discusses the board's procedural requirement to review the MOU annually. Chairman Zafer Genc suggests extending the MOU to a multi-year basis to avoid unnecessary annual reviews, but Director Michael Smith explains the legal and state agreement requirements that require it to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Motion: Tami Ursenbach made a motion to accept the MOU-WDB Conflict of Interest

2nd: Jean Bishop seconded the motion.

Vote: 13/0

It was noted during the meeting that an administrative oversight had occurred, and Agenda Item VII was not agendized appropriately. As a result, the vote taken was rescinded, and Director Michael Smith requested Item VII to be included on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

Motion: Adam Rodriguez made a motion to rescind the MOU-WDB Conflict of Interest vote.

2nd: Vicki De Los Reyes seconded the motion.

Vote: 13/0

Director Michael Smith Turned the floor to Jason Gee.

Jason Gee welcomes everyone and provides an overview of the AMTC (Advanced Manufacturing Tracing Center) facility and provides detailed tour of the AMTC facility, showcasing various training spaces, including a maker space with 3D printing, CAD units, and VR training. He also discussed the industrial maintenance and manufacturing space, the robotics and VR training area, and the student lounge with forklift and CDL training simulators. The tour concluded with a discussion on the potential for proctoring for Tabe Tests and the cost-effectiveness of the makerspace.

II. Review of and Discussion on Board's Workforce System Priorities Outlined in its Four-Year Local Plan

Director Michael Smith introduces David Shinder, Workforce Development Consultant. David Shinder welcomed the board members, expressing appreciation for their attendance on a weekend, which was chosen to minimize interruptions. The main goals for the meeting were outlined:

- to engage in planning discussions.
- review the local workforce development plan.
- consider additional work suggested by the plan.
- discuss the broader state and national context of workforce development.

David Shinder explained that the board had approved a four-year local plan about a year ago, which aligns with state workforce goals but is tailored to the specific needs and priorities of Mohave and La Paz counties. The board's responsibilities, as required by federal law, include developing and getting approval for a local workforce plan. David emphasized that the plan belongs to the board, not just the staff, and that the board is responsible for supporting state goals while addressing local priorities. The session aimed to discuss how to turn these priorities into actionable steps.

David Shinder reviews the state's four goals:

- promoting a customer-driven workforce system
- fostering business engagement
- investing in opportunity and growth
- promoting youth participation.

David discusses with the board that the local plan includes specific priorities for each state goal, such as building upon successes, regularly surveying the economic landscape, and expanding customer feedback processes.

III. Opportunities to Strengthen the Effectiveness of the Local Workforce System's Focus on Sector Strategies

David Shinder emphasizes the importance of aligning system services and partner services, surveying the economic landscape, and ensuring customer feedback. David engages the board with discussion on the need for better listening posts for businesses, linking business services and workforce development, and building a bigger tent of partners.

David Shinder held a discussion centered on how the board can move from planning to action, particularly regarding the regular reassessment of priority sectors.

Zafer Genc reflected on the recent annual review, noting that while IT as a standalone industry has

seen a decrease in job growth statewide.

David Shinder describes IT as a “horizontal” sector, meaning its skills and technologies are now essential in fields like construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and more. The conversation also touches on the growing influence of artificial intelligence and technology in everyday work and life, emphasizing that workforce development should focus on integrating IT skills into all areas, rather than treating IT as an isolated field.

Amy West emphasizes that IT skills are increasingly essential across all sectors, not just within traditional IT roles. She gives examples from healthcare and technical trades, noting that everyone from office staff to those repairing equipment now needs IT competencies. She also observes that technical workers are developing more advanced skills, sometimes blurring the lines between engineers and hands-on staff. Amy concludes that workforce development should focus on integrating IT training within each sector, rather than treating IT as a separate area of expertise.

Jason Gee discusses how remote work has fundamentally changed the IT sector, making it no longer tied to a specific location. Many IT professionals can now work from anywhere, which makes the sector less visible in the local economy compared to traditional industries. The pandemic greatly accelerated the shift to remote work, even in roles previously thought to require in-person presence, such as teaching. Jason points out that workforce planning should consider whether local businesses are meeting their IT needs locally or through remote workers, and that remote work opportunities should be factored into strategies for workforce development and economic prosperity in the region. He also notes that a full return to exclusively on-site work is unlikely in the future.

Lisa Brownfield highlights the importance of stability and maintaining human connections in the workplace, especially as remote work becomes more prevalent. She stresses that regular engagement, support, and acknowledgment are essential for both staff and students to feel valued and secure. Without these elements, people may feel disconnected and be more likely to leave. Lisa’s comments reinforce the idea that workforce development should prioritize relationships and a supportive environment, aligning with the goal of building a customer-driven system that values ongoing feedback and personal connection.

David Shinder suggests to AI and technology as a standing agenda item as it will continue to be present and grow within each sector. This approach ensures that job seekers and businesses are better prepared for the evolving demands of the modern workforce.

Director Michael Smith highlights the importance of improving coordination and efficiency in how the board and its partners engage with local businesses. He suggests that rather than having multiple, fragmented surveys and outreach efforts, there should be a unified approach—such as regularly updated tailored employment plans—where all partners share information and work together. Michael stresses the need for regular collaboration, consensus-building, and structured processes to ensure that business needs are fully understood and addressed. He cautions against a disorganized approach and encourages the board to develop systems that facilitate effective partnerships, especially as they pursue new initiatives like apprenticeships and grant funding.

Jason Gee mentions the issue of business fatigue and emphasizes the need for a clear strategy and messaging to communicate the board’s position and priorities.

The suggestion was made to create a workgroup to be tasked with surveying the businesses and following through with Tailored Employment Plans (TEP) with the emphasis on collaboration and action. Jason Gee emphasizes that instead of asking broad, high-level questions, workforce discussions should focus on identifying the specific skills employees need.

Amy West highlights the value of directly talking to employers to identify the specific skills and needs for each sector, rather than relying only on general surveys or assumptions.

Jason Gee explains that conducting detailed, skill-specific surveys allowed them to align training programs with industry needs in one sector, but a lack of similar assessments in other areas has resulted in a mismatch between training and workforce requirements.

Amy West emphasizes that overcoming self-interest and fostering collaboration among educational partners is essential for developing effective programs that truly meet community needs.

Sara Ungaro explains that tailored employment plans require collaborative, step-by-step action and shared responsibility among partners to effectively address workforce needs and ensure ongoing progress.

David Shinder emphasizes that achieving effective business engagement requires coordinated efforts among board members and partners, much like well-orchestrated music, to fulfill the board’s responsibilities under federal workforce legislation.

Lisa Brownfield illustrates how collaboration and mutual support helped her overcome challenges,

enhance program effectiveness, and create positive, transformative outcomes for individuals and the broader community.

David Shinder stresses that while collaboration yields exponential benefits, overcoming territorial attitudes and ensuring coordinated, consistent messaging are essential to prevent business fatigue and achieve effective business engagement.

Tami Ursenbach explains that while the software for a new collaborative system CRM (Customer Relation Management) has not yet been selected, once implemented, it will help connect students, job services, and businesses, enabling better tracking of needs and coordinated follow-up actions—an approach she has seen work successfully elsewhere.

Director Michael Smith requests a detailed presentation at a future meeting to better understand how a newly presented program and its software align with existing initiatives and go beyond basic surveys.

David Shinder asks for clarification on whether the initiative begins with conducting needs-based surveys for businesses across all sectors and inquires if the survey has already been designed.

Tami Ursenbach describes how merging separate surveys from different organizations into a single, collaborative survey reduces business fatigue, streamlines data collection, and has proven effective in supporting workforce needs and job growth.

David Shinder asks Bennett Bratley if they are currently utilizing a CRM software as well.

Bennet Bratley informs the city's economic development department does but has only conducted a few business surveys since 2018, and these surveys are generally high-level and limited in scope. Due to resource constraints, they survey a small number of businesses and use that information to inform their understanding of broader business needs. Economic development covers a wide range of issues beyond workforce, such as utilities and infrastructure. The department's approach is mostly reactive, responding to specific issues as they arise rather than proactively surveying all businesses. When a business need is identified, whether related to workforce, utilities, or another area, the department connects the business to the appropriate resources or experts.

David Shinder poses the question that if a survey is sent out and an employer identifies various needs such as training or workforce needs, infrastructure needs, utility needs, finance needs, etc., through this CRM could it then break that information out and parse it to the entity that needs it. David then suggested using Salesforce AI as an option.

Tami Ursenbach informed that she did look at that option and although it is desirable, it is out of the budget.

Director Michael Smith discusses the importance of utilizing tailored employment plans (TEP), which involve tracking how many businesses are hiring in each sector, how many on-the-job training placements are made, and monitoring workforce development outcomes on a rolling basis. They highlight a unique local approach to evaluating training providers, where feedback is collected from both participants and businesses to assess the effectiveness of training programs. He explains this data-driven feedback loop allows for adjustments to ensure the right participants are being served and the training is meeting local needs. Director Michael Smith notes that while business surveys are useful, they represent only a small part of the overall process. The majority of effective workforce development comes from ongoing engagement with businesses, tracking employee training and placements, and continuously evaluating outcomes to improve programs.

David Shinder moves the conversation from business engagement to the topic of funding opportunities for workforce development. He emphasizes that, as federal funding priorities change, it will become increasingly important for the board to collaborate, leverage resources, and pursue joint funding applications. The board is encouraged to adopt a more entrepreneurial mindset, taking an active role in fundraising and seeking new sources of support beyond traditional government funding. This proactive approach is necessary to ensure that the workforce system can continue to meet the needs of local businesses and job seekers, even if federal or state funding decreases.

Director Michael Smith suggested the creation of having a workgroup dedicated to identifying and reviewing grant opportunities along with fundraising opportunities.

Chris Register describes a youth workforce program (for individuals up to age 24) that is funded through local business sponsorships and community fundraising, rather than traditional grants. This approach allows participation by young people who may not qualify for other programs due to income limits, ensuring broader access to workforce readiness opportunities. Businesses play an active role by sponsoring youth, participating in interviews, and supporting readiness activities.

Sara Ungaro emphasizes that the program, known as the Coyote Program, has had a lasting positive impact on the community, creating a legacy of engagement and opportunity, and serves as an example of how non-grant fundraising and business partnerships can help fill gaps in workforce development.

services.

David Shinder advocates for creating a responsive committee to coordinate grant and funding efforts, emphasizing the need to be strategic and avoid overburdening small businesses by focusing fundraising on larger corporations with established giving programs.

Director Michael Smith recommends using strategic tools like GuideStar to target appropriate businesses and corporations for grant funding, encouraging a focused, creative, and collaborative approach to securing resources for workforce initiatives.

David Shinder moves the conversation to the final state goal and highlights the need to build an action plan that involves key community organizations and emphasizes strengthening partnerships with K-12 education to more effectively prepare youth for future success.

Jason Gee explains that providing hands-on experiences and collaborating with K-12 schools is essential for exposing students to career opportunities and stresses the importance of actively communicating these pathways to youth.

Amy West highlights the many collaborative educational initiatives and training opportunities available to students, emphasizing the need for unified messaging to ensure families and students are aware of these valuable programs.

David Shinder emphasizes that intentional collaboration and improved messaging among the many organizations supporting youth employment will create lasting positive outcomes for the community.

IV. Lunch Break

The Workforce Development Board Members took a short break to gather food but decided to have a working lunch to provide more time for engaging discussion.

V. Development of an Annual Report for the Mohave-La Paz Workforce Development Area

Director Michael Smith discusses the importance of annual reports for tracking progress, demonstrating effectiveness, and ensuring compliance. He mentions the need for data from partners to complete the annual report.

Director Michael Smith updates the process in gaining quotes to have the annual report template created and the amount quoted for is \$4,075.00. He requests the partners assist in the funding for the creation of this template.

Amy West suggests involving the junior college and other local partners in the annual report process.

Director Michael Smith emphasizes the need for compelling data to inform grant proposals and demonstrate local impact. He discusses the uncertainty surrounding workforce funding and the potential impact of changes in funding on services relating that this annual report can assist in gaining future funding and attracting businesses to the area.

David Shinder agrees with the importance of collaboration among community colleges, workforce development boards, and other stakeholders.

Director Michael Smith highlights the importance of telling the story of local workforce development successes to attract businesses and suggests creating a welcoming team to engage with businesses and showcase local amenities and opportunities. He suggests that the board should focus on the workforce system's role in sourcing talent for businesses.

VI. Opportunities and Challenges for Local Workforce Development Program

David Shinder opens the discussion topic by inviting feedback from Chandra Johnson on the effectiveness of current strategies to advance the healthcare workforce, noting that messaging remains a significant challenge in the system.

Chandra Johnson highlights the need for streamlined messaging and actionable, real-time data analytics to reduce duplicative efforts and better support industry decision-making and mentions that employers would pay for that type of information.

David Shinder emphasizes the need for surveys to identify specific workforce gaps and skill requirements in healthcare, ensuring that training programs produce job-ready talent.

Chandra Johnson explains that her hospital has addressed this by developing structured externship programs, which provide hands-on experience and help transition students from academic learning to industry readiness, ultimately producing nurses who are better prepared for real-world demands. Both agree that collaboration between education and industry is essential for effective workforce development.

Chairman Zafer Genc explains that while substantial state investment has revamped nursing education through internships and externships, challenges remain in advancing both entry-level and advanced healthcare workforce development and recruitment.

David Shinder requests clarification on what strategies the Healthcare Workgroup has made to overcome these challenges.

Chairman Zafer Genc explains that ongoing meetings with hospital CEOs aim to identify common challenges and goals across both nonprofit and for-profit hospitals, in order to develop unified strategies for advancing healthcare workforce development.

David Shinder commends the approach of developing industry-wide strategies based on shared challenges and asks for updates on progress and strategy development in other key sectors such as manufacturing and transportation/logistics.

Director Michael Smith outlines the Transportation/Logistic committee's efforts to develop targeted training programs in transportation and related fields, while addressing employment barriers and leveraging company-sponsored training to make the most of limited resources.

Sara Ungaro emphasizes the value of apprenticeship programs and direct investment in local training infrastructure, noting that these approaches, supported by federal funding and knowledgeable board members, are key to building a strong workforce pipeline.

Lisa Brownfield explains that while gaining trucking jobs without experience is challenging, workforce development tuition and accessible training resources especially when companies guarantee employment, help overcome barriers and support new drivers entering the field.

David Shinder and Adam Rodriguez discuss the state of warehousing and logistics in the local area, noting that while there are warehouses present, most are smaller in scale and have not widely adopted advanced technologies like robotics—mainly due to size and scope limitations. They reflect on how larger organizations have invested more heavily in automation and technology-driven processes, but local operations are still catching up.

The conversation shifts to the broader impact of technology across industries such as construction, healthcare, and manufacturing.

David Shinder emphasizes that technology is increasingly integrated into all aspects of work, from logistics to architecture, and that its influence is only expected to grow in the coming years. He highlights the importance of ongoing discussions within work groups about how technology will affect each sector and stress the need for workforce development strategies that prepare people not just for today's jobs, but for the evolving roles of tomorrow.

Additionally, David points out that while technology can sometimes replace jobs, it often creates new opportunities and better-paying positions, as seen in examples like airport security. The key takeaway is the need for proactive planning and training to ensure the workforce is ready for technological changes and the future demands of local industries.

Director Michael Smith asks the board whether they feel they are keeping up with developments in AI across sectors and how they are ensuring that AI remains a priority in their work.

Jason Gee emphasizes that while it's difficult to keep up with AI, the board must focus on understanding and adapting AI as a tool within each sector, recognizing its varied uses and the importance of learning how to utilize it effectively.

David Shinder suggests that the board should regularly discuss AI and advanced technology as a standing agenda item, since these tools are rapidly changing industries, and the way work is done.

David Shinder and Jason Gee highlight how economic development in the community is increasingly driven by technology, using vertical farming and AI as examples of innovation already in use. They stress that technology is essential across all sectors: construction, manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and should not be treated as a separate funding category, but rather as a core component integrated into every area. The board should ensure its strategies and funding reflect the horizontal, cross-sector importance of technology to meet the needs of current and future businesses.

Sara Ungaro agrees with Jason Gee and emphasizes that support roles like HR, IT, and clerical work are essential across all industries, so workforce development should focus on integrating and funding these roles within each sector rather than treating them as separate fields.

VIII. Summary and Next Steps

David Shinder recaps the discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing local workforce development programs, with an intent focus on current and future funding, board positioning,

messaging, and contingency planning for next steps. He clarified that, despite ongoing rumors, there is currently no new workforce bill in Congress to amend the WIOA program. The previously proposed Stronger Workforce for America Act did not pass, and while the MASA (Making America Skill Again) position paper outlines some federal priorities, it is not legislation.

David Shinder emphasized that future funding will likely be determined by the federal appropriations process rather than new laws, creating uncertainty for the next program year and beyond. Board members were encouraged to consider how changes in funding could impact services and to think about the board's stance and messaging on potential changes to the public workforce system.

David also highlighted the importance of communicating the board's value to stakeholders, noting that the board serves a diverse population including welfare recipients, immigrants, older workers, and youth and acts as a bridge between education, economic development, social services, and business. He reminds that the board's work supports both small and large employers, helping to prepare and connect talent to local business needs. David encouraged board members to reflect on how they would communicate the board's impact to policymakers and to remain apolitical but clear about the board's mission to increase educational and economic opportunities for the community.

Lisa Brownfield commends Mohave Community College and workforce development for continually assessing workforce needs, offering targeted training and education, collaborating across sectors, and addressing barriers like childcare and transportation to help community members find jobs and achieve self-sufficiency.

David Shinder highlights how strong collaboration among community, government, and industry in Mohave and La Paz counties creates effective solutions for economic growth and self-sufficiency and stresses the importance of focusing on the board's mission and achievements rather than politics.

Jean Bishop observes that, thanks to ongoing workforce development and training, the county now has a more skilled and educated workforce, making it a more appealing and cost-effective location for businesses.

David Shinder summarizes that the meeting clarified priorities and strategies aligned with the state plan, emphasized the importance of integrating technology and AI across all sectors, highlighted the value of the annual report, and stressed the need for strong messaging and ongoing vigilance about funding, while thanking everyone for their participation and collaboration.

Director Michael Smith thanks the board and partners for their collaborative efforts and open dialogue, celebrates the county's achievements. He mentions recognition in workforce development and encourages continued teamwork and innovative ideas such as establishing a welcoming team to further support local businesses and community growth.

Director Michael Smith mentions the nomination received by the National Workforce Development Board and credits the members of the Mohave and La Paz Workforce Development board and emphasizes that the Mohave and La Paz counties trendsetting work with the Atlas program has attracted statewide attention and recognition, crediting these achievements to the collective hard work and collaboration of the board and its partners.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to ARS 38-431.01(H) a public body may make an open call to the public during a public meeting, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, to allow individuals to address the public body on any issue within the jurisdiction of the public body. At the conclusion of an open call to the public, individual members of the public body may respond to criticism made by those who have addressed the public body, may ask staff to review a matter or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda. However, members of the public body shall not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.

No Public Comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other topics needing to be discussed, The Chair will adjourn the meeting.
Chairman Zafer Genc Adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.