

MAKING THE GREATER TUCSON REGION HOME TO THE
SINGLE BEST PREPARED WORKFORCE IN THE WORLD

TUCSON'S WORKFORCE BLUEPRINT



This report synthesizes the three main components of the Tucson Workforce Blueprint project into five actionable strategic recommendations. The labor market analysis, employer survey and inputs of the steering committee combined to inform this vision for the future of the region's workforce.

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THE TUCSON METRO CHAMBER

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The Tucson Metro Chamber is a membership-based business advocacy and community development organization that represents 1,500 businesses, employing more than 160,000 employees in Tucson and Pima County. The Tucson Metro Chamber champions an environment where your business thrives and our community prospers.

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THE PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION [REPORT'S AUTHOR AND LEAD CONSULTANT]

The Partnership for Workforce Innovation is making the world of work understandable. PWI provides labor market analysis, curriculum development and strategic planning services that align education and workforce development strategies with the realities of local and regional economic trends. Business organizations, school districts, workforce boards and economic development organizations around the country have worked with PWI for more than a decade to create strategies, curricula and policies that position education as an engine of economic success rather than a byproduct of it. PWI's award-winning approach to labor market analysis and career-driven education brings the full spectrum of community stakeholders, including industry, education and economic development, to the table to inventory their perspectives and priorities and build talent development strategies that are rigorous, responsive and relevant to real-world career opportunities.



SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

STRATEGY ONE: The Greater Tucson Region should be an incubator for innovative industry-specific workforce and educational strategies, including high quality and well-funded career and technical education that aligns to the needs of the business community and prepares students for 21st Century careers.

- **PROFILES:** Pima Community College, Southern Arizona Manufacturing Partnership, Tucson Metro Chamber Workforce Collaboratives

STRATEGY TWO: A collaborative of regional employers and stakeholders should fund and launch the Tucson Move IT Up initiative.

- **PROFILES:** The Tucson Metro Chamber Talent Attraction Taskforce

STRATEGY THREE: The Tucson Metro Chamber, in conjunction with the City of Tucson and Pima County, should establish the Tucson Employer Development program, an education and outreach program that provides resources, training and certification to the region's employers.

- **PROFILES:** ARIZONA@WORK Business Services

STRATEGY FOUR: The Greater Tucson Region should make efforts to effectively highlight the career opportunities in the region to attract high-level talent in critical industries.

- **PROFILES:** Connect Tucson

STRATEGY FIVE: The Greater Tucson Career Literacy Initiative should organize business and community leaders to bring information, connections and exposure related to high-quality careers into Pima County's classrooms.

Profiles: Pathways to Prosperity

- **PROFILES:** Pathways to Prosperity, CommunityShare

The mission of the Tucson Metro Chamber is to champion an environment where your business thrives and our community prospers. Simply put, businesses thrive when they can easily find and hire the right people. Our community prospers when education, workforce development officials and businesses are working hand-in-hand to develop programs that teach and train the skills our region needs.

There is little space between the worlds of economic growth and talent development. Education and workforce development should be the engines of regional economic growth, not byproducts of it. Across America's communities, the line between education and economy is blurring. One cannot succeed without the other, and organizations like the Tucson Metro Chamber are blazing the trail by bringing education, workforce development and economic development to the same table and aligning those disparate agendas to create comprehensive regional strategies that ensure businesses are contributing strategically to the educational experience and that educational strategies are part and parcel of the region's plan to improve the economic well-being of the families that call it home.

I am encouraged by the work completed by our Steering Committee working in tandem with the Partnership for Workforce Innovation. The Chamber will create actionable outcomes either by coordinating or facilitating the completion of each of these strategies by developing collaborative partnerships community-wide.

Sincerely,



Tim Medcoff
Chair
Farhang and Medcoff



Amber Smith
President & CEO



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THANKS TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Tucson Metro Chamber and the Partnership for Workforce Innovation would like to express heartfelt admiration and appreciation to the members of the Tucson Workforce Blueprint Steering Committee. These community leaders committed time, energy and expertise to this project, and continue to set the direction for the future of the Greater Tucson Region.

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STATEMENT ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The project was undertaken prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, and much of the work was done during the peak of the crisis. As a result, many of the demographics and labor market data analyzed in the labor market analysis are different as of this writing. The project labored under the assumption that at the point the regional economy eventually recovers from the current crisis, the economy and labor market will have slowly regained many of its pre-pandemic characteristics. For that reason, the key findings and strategic recommendations that came from the analysis of the regional labor market remain in their original content and are presented per the original report.

The survey of employers in the Greater Tucson Region, however, was re-imagined as it was being deployed. The depth and unique nature of the crisis was becoming apparent, and in addition to the original intent of a survey of long-term hiring and talent development perspectives, the project team also decided to solicit the perspectives and intentions of employers vis-à-vis the COVID-19 pandemic.

The end result of this project, the strategic recommendations, were informed by a combination of three factors: the regional labor market as it existed prior to the public health crisis, employers' expectations for the recovery and the inputs of the volunteer steering committee throughout the project.

IMPETUS

Employers of all shapes and sizes and from every industry imaginable grapple with the issues of talent sourcing and talent development. Over recent years, employers across the spectrum have consistently reported difficulties finding, hiring and developing qualified talent. Because there is no issue more critical to business success, we consider workforce development an integral component of regional economic development and overall economic success. We intend for the Greater Tucson Region to become home to the single best-prepared workforce anywhere in the country.

Furthermore, our region will not be able to attract, retain and develop the high-quality employers we desire as the foundation of our regional economy without a workforce that is prepared with the skills, knowledge and experiences necessary for success in the 21st Century workplace. Site selectors and businesses looking for a location for expansion or relocation increasingly cite the available workforce as a key differentiator.

Lastly, as our economy grows and our investments in economic development and business attraction bear fruit, it is important the new opportunities contribute greatly to the benefit of our citizens. Skills are the currency of the new economy, and our vision is that Tucson's workforce is well equipped with the knowledge, abilities and competencies that bring value in the modern workforce.

The Tucson Metro Chamber commissioned the Workforce Blueprint Initiative to enable a regional approach to the issues associated with the region's workforce and the talent development ecosystem. While the Chamber is not a direct provider of education or workforce development services, this initiative is intended to leverage the Chamber's role as the voice of business and position the Chamber as the "air traffic controller" for workforce and career-driven education efforts in the region. The objectives are to inventory current assets and roadblocks, develop targeted strategies, and build partnerships and structures that will deliver value for years to come.



APPROACH

The project utilized a deliberate, three-phase approach to developing the strategy:

- Labor market analysis
- Employer survey
- Steering Committee

The labor market analysis was conducted by the Partnership for Workforce Innovation and leveraged public demographics, employment and wage data to create a data-driven perspective on the economy and the labor market in the Greater Tucson Region. Demographics trends were evaluated, profiles of leading industries were created, and the region's recovery from the Great Recession was summarized.

Seven key findings from the demographics analysis, four related to the labor market and three from the industry profiles were assembled to form the initial parameters for the project.

The employer survey sought to refine the findings of the labor market analysis with the real-world perspectives of the region’s employers. In particular, the survey solicited employers’ thoughts on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our public response to it. The accounts and recommendations of the region’s employers refined the findings of the labor market analysis and provided the framework for the strategies of the Tucson Workforce Blueprint Initiative.

The volunteer **Steering Committee** provided guidance and expertise throughout the initiative, and at each step, their input helped direct, refine and finalize the strategic recommendations. The broad perspective and deep expertise of these community leaders provided made the final product more practical, more actionable and more likely to have broad, lasting impact on the region’s talent development ecosystem.

There are three components within each of the five strategic recommendations: an aspirational statement, practical strategies and profiles of relevant programs. The plan also includes commitments from the Chamber on certain strategies as well as calls to the business community to engage in this plan and to bring resources to bear alongside the Chamber as it seeks to support the region’s talent development ecosystem.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This project included an analysis of demographics and employment in the region, the perspectives of a broad spectrum of business leaders on their workforce goals and strategies, an overview of the community’s view on our recovery from the pandemic, and the inputs of public and business leaders in focused efforts to translate all that intelligence into actionable strategies that will position the region as the home of an extraordinarily skilled workforce and a destination of choice for the most high-value employers in the country.

The strategic plan that follows is organized into **five strategies**. Each strategy is summarized by an aspirational statement, followed by a rationale based on the intelligence gathered through this process and details about the implementation we envision. Because this initiative intended from the beginning not to reinvent any wheels, but rather to unify and empower the assets already making a difference in our community, we also include profiles of existing programs and initiatives that are relevant to each strategy. Some of the strategies include actions to which the Tucson Metro Chamber is committing, while others are a call to the business community and/or civic leadership.

It is the belief of the sponsors and partners in this project that deployment and management of these initiatives with even a fraction of the dedication, expertise and passion that went into designing them will redound to the benefit of the Greater Tucson Region for generations

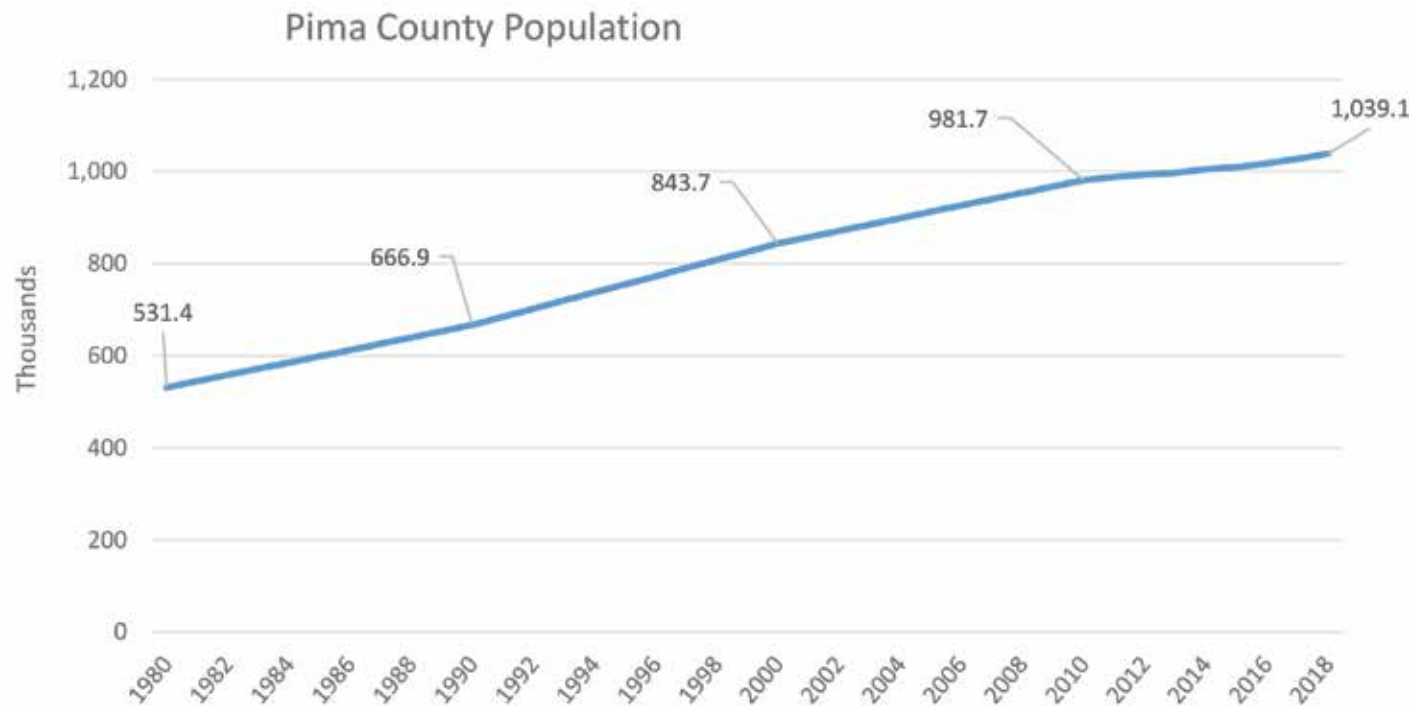


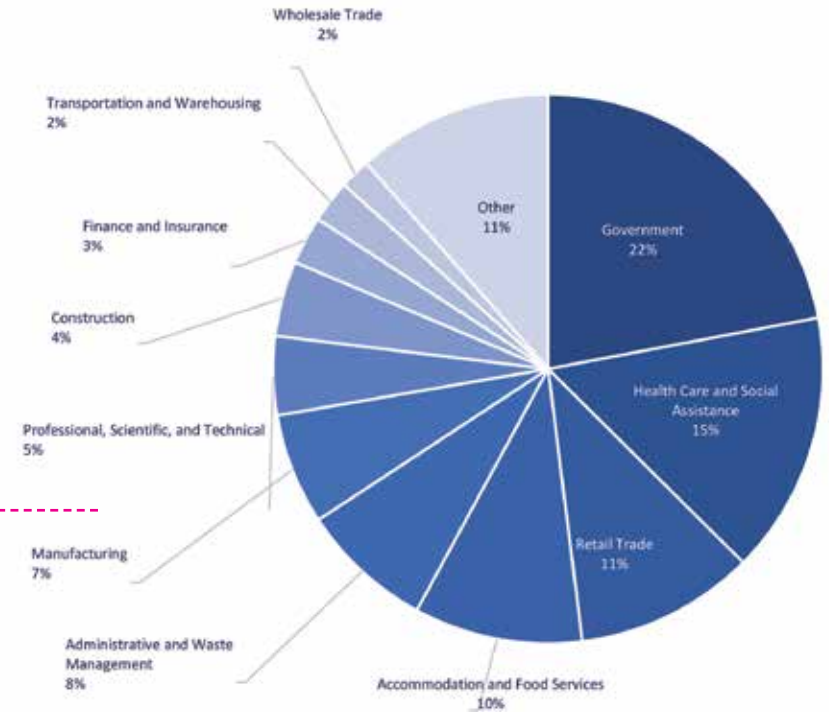
THE LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

The labor market analysis was performed by the Partnership for Workforce Innovation and was refined per the inputs of the Steering Committee. It provided intelligence on three particular elements of the Greater Tucson Region's labor market: demographics, employment and workforce equilibrium.

KEY FINDINGS-DEMOGRAPHICS

- The region's population has roughly doubled since 1980.
- The age profile of the Greater Tucson Region is trending older. The median age of local communities continuing to climb.
- The distribution of retirement-age people becoming a larger share of the total population
- Tucson's population which has attained an educational level below a high school diploma outpaces Pima County, Arizona and the United States.
- The City of Tucson has a significant population with some college experience, but no degree.





KEY FINDINGS-EMPLOYMENT

- The size of the labor force in the Greater Tucson Region declined dramatically during and after the Great Recession and finally stabilized and began to recover in mid-2013. It has now recovered its recession-era losses, including an increase of more than 50,000 workers (11.0%) since its trough in October of 2013.
- The manufacturing sector is responsible for a significant portion of the region’s Gross Regional Product. Government and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing are the only sectors contributing more to the regional economy. Since 2014, economic activity in this sector has increased by more than \$1.3 billion dollars (\$1,362,322). This 36.6% increase makes Manufacturing the fastest-growth sector in the regional economy over that time period.
- Within the government sector are several industries with a notably aging workforce. Approximately 60% of people employed in the Postal Service are 45 years or older. The workforce in elementary and secondary schools is only slightly younger.
- One of every ten dollars of economic activity and one of every seven jobs in the region comes from the health care sector.

KEY FINDINGS-WORKFORCE EQUILIBRIUM

Some of the most striking imbalances were found in health care fields, where for example, the region’s postsecondary institutions awarded 387 degrees and certificates in the Medical and Clinical Assistant programs, while employers tried to fill 450 openings. Imbalances were also found in these fields:

- Employment projections indicate an average of 509 openings per year for Registered Nurses, while our colleges reported 309 awards in related programs last year.
- More than 320 openings per year exist for Nursing Assistants, but our institutions only saw 121 graduates last year.
- In the transportation sector, 971 openings per year are projected for Truck Drivers, while our training providers reported 247 completions of related programs.
- The Business Administration fields included imbalances in Human Resources Management (417 openings vs. 194 awards) and Marketing Management (283 openings vs. 184 awards).

The project sought to refine the findings of the labor market analysis with the first-hand perspectives of business leaders in the Greater Tucson Region. The survey questions were organized into four categories that resulted in both quantitative analysis and direct recommendations from business and community leaders that became integral components of this strategic plan.

- The COVID-19 Crisis and Our Recovery
- Critical Skills and the Future of Work
- Hiring and Promotion Practices
- Community Strategies and Recommendations

THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND OUR RECOVERY

Employers were divided on their short-term outlooks. While many expected not to fill any job openings in the first year after the end of the crisis, several anticipate robust hiring and a few expected to hire more than 100.

More than 80% of respondents have implemented or expanded remote work opportunities for staff. Slightly more than half said they have different expectations for these new remote workers. More than two-thirds said they are encouraging remote staff on training and professional development opportunities.

CRITICAL SKILLS AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

They were almost evenly split on the question of whether they can usually find qualified job candidates. While 49% said high school graduates in the region are not usually well-prepared for the workforce, only 22% said the same of the region's college graduates.

Respondents expect that within a decade they will be hiring people for jobs that don't exist now, but that those jobs will exist alongside traditional roles in their industries rather than supplanting them.

When asked about the personal competencies a worker should develop to stay abreast of evolving technologies, the overwhelming response was "a willingness to learn." Only 8% named foundational academic competencies like mathematics or reading comprehension.

HIRING AND PROMOTION PRACTICES

A plurality of respondents named employee referrals as their most productive source for job applicants.

A large majority (86%) of respondents offer some sort of tuition reimbursement or paid skills development or training program to employees, and nearly 100% of those companies offer the benefit to every full-time employee. However, only five employers estimated that more than 75% of eligible employees took advantage of the benefit, and around half put that number at less than 10%.

STRATEGY ONE

The Greater Tucson Region should be an incubator for innovative industry-specific workforce and educational strategies, including a system of high-quality Career and Technical Education aligned to the needs of the business community.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The labor market analysis that kicked off the Tucson Workforce Blueprint project identified industry sectors that are critical to the region's labor market. The City of Tucson, Pima County, ARIZONA@WORK, Sun Corridor Inc., and other organizations have established plans to support the growth of the region's high-value sectors. It is incumbent on the region's education and workforce development entities to facilitate the development of the skill sets on which these priority sectors depend.

Our region's current workforce needs to be sufficient not only for current demand, but also to support the future our civic leaders and economic development partners are working so hard to build.

No business and no industry can reach its potential without a skilled and available workforce equipped with the skills that enable success. In our employer survey, we found that it is not uncommon for businesses that have never spoken to their regional workforce development resources or local community colleges, even though they struggle mightily to find the talent necessary to support their growth objectives.

Partnerships between education, workforce development and business stakeholders can help align the strategies and offerings of regional training providers with the real-world demand of the business community.

The talent development ecosystem in the Greater Tucson region is marked by a spirit of collaboration. Across the nation, sector strategies are one of the most proven methods for positively impacting the quantity and quality of a region's workforce. Focused partnerships involving educational, workforce development, industry and economic development stakeholders enables the development of practical career pathways and strategies that align to the real-world demands of the workplace and create opportunity for the population that seek improved economic and personal conditions.

Educational models, and indeed the talent development ecosystem as a whole, are evolving. Collaboration and partnership between educational, civic and industry stakeholders is not the rarity it once was, and the Greater Tucson Region continues to set the pace with a number of initiatives of this type.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

It is the recommendation of this project that employers, job seekers, civic leaders, educational entities, workforce development organizations, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders increase participation in and commitment to the many industry-education partnerships currently thriving in the Greater Tucson Region and to explore opportunities to create new efforts that will set the bar for sector-based strategies across the state.

The Tucson Metro Chamber is committing to highlighting existing industry-education partnerships and supporting their efforts where possible. The Chamber will also participate in and provide leadership to new, viable partnerships and initiatives of this type.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

It is the recommendation of this project that employers, job seekers, civic leaders, educational entities, workforce development organizations, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders increase participation in and commitment to the many industry-education partnerships currently thriving in the Greater Tucson Region and to explore opportunities to create new efforts that will set the bar for sector-based strategies across the state.



The Southern Arizona Manufacturing Partnership is a collaboration between a number of manufacturing firms, ARIZONA@WORK and Pima Community College. The Southern Arizona Manufacturing Partners (SAMP) has established a strong industry-led partnership, in which the Pima County One-Stop serves a critical role as the intermediary for work-based learning and pathway development. The program framework begins in high school and ends in college, with students earning industry-recognized credentials in machining. Students participate in a robust internship funded by employers and workforce development and then seamlessly transition into the postsecondary pathway at Pima Community College. For the last five years, student cohorts have participated in this model program that ends with full-time employment.¹

SAMP is a committed group of Tucson manufacturing companies working in close partnership with ARIZONA@WORK Pima County, Pima Community College (PCC), Desert View High School and Tucson Magnet High School to develop the manufacturing workforce of the future. Both Desert View High School and Tucson Magnet High School work in collaboration with Pima County Joint Technical District (JTED) on their student precision machining/manufacturing program.

SAMP member companies participate by employing students through the Internship Program. Interns are enrolled at PCC. The 18-month internship program with the member company reinforces concepts they learn in the classroom and gives interns experience working with modern manufacturing equipment.

By employing interns, SAMP companies are able to engage with educators to close any skill gaps of the students. With the help of SAMP companies, educators have been able to make changes to curriculum that will better prepare students for a career in manufacturing. Curriculum development and redesign has been based on accepted industry standards from the National Institute of Metalworking, Inc. (NIMS).²

¹<https://ptopnetwork.jff.org/network/resources/southern-arizona-manufacturing-partners>

²<http://www.sazmp.com/Members>



Tucson Metro Pipeline is offered at no cost and provides universal access to all area employers and job seekers, along with the capacity to fully integrate with the region’s existing educational and workforce development resources.

Through the formation of dynamic skills-based communities utilizing the Pipeline AZ ecosystem to maintain both awareness of job market developments and the professional skills required to ensure job readiness, Pipeline AZ serves both job seekers and employers alike.

Once registered on the Pipeline AZ platform, participants are able to explore local career pathways or be individually matched to jobs, internships, apprenticeships, and mentorships based on their current skills. Pipeline AZ gives access to education and training programs that directly align to careers of interest and supports career pathway progression through connection to workforce offices and other organizations that offer on-site guidance. Additional tools such as assessments for skills and interests, resume refinement assistance, and profile creation across desktop and mobile devices are available.

Employers who register on the Pipeline AZ platform can create a profile page that highlights not only their current employment opportunities, but unique information about upcoming events, perks and benefits, and their company culture. Once an employer posts a position on the platform, they are immediately matched with potential candidates that align to the skills the employer designates are important. The services to both job seekers and employers are offered at no charge.

Streamlining the pathway between talent supply and talent demand, Pipeline AZ is a true public-private partnership designed to grow alongside the initiatives of today and tomorrow.³

The Tucson Metro Chamber has been working with Partnership for Economic Innovation (PEI) in Maricopa County to bring this skills-based matching technology to Pima County to create a seamless, statewide workforce connection system using this scalable systems-level technology solution. This site is designed to assist those affected by COVID-19 get matched to another job or be connected to resources that can help navigate career change.⁴

³<https://www.azpei.org/pipeline-az>

⁴<https://tucsonchamber.org/workforce-development/#>

PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE



Pima Community College is taking initiative and creating the **Center of Excellence** which will focus on Applied Technology, Health Professions, Public Safety and Security, the Arts, and Culinary and Hospitality. The Center of Excellence in Applied Technology, which will house Automotive Technology, is one of six being developed by the College in partnership

with the industry to ensure the seamless integration of education and training to meet the workforce needs now and well into the future. The Applied Technology Center will focus on transportation, logistics, advanced manufacturing, engineering, and a wide range of building and construction trades.⁵

The Advanced Manufacturing and Innovation Center will be a high-tech training facility working in partnership with business and industry. It will be on the far west side of the Campus.

The Campus features programs in Automated Industrial Technology, Automotive Technology, Building and Construction Technology, Energy Technology, Machine Tool Technology, and Welding.

The facility is the first planned in a \$35 million expansion and renovation of Downtown Campus. It will house programs in automotive technology, diesel technology and electronic vehicle technology to meet the growing demand of dealerships and other employers for students certified in today's technology.⁶

⁵<https://chasse.us/pima-community-college-is-changing-education/>

⁶<https://chasse.us/pima-community-college-is-changing-education/>

PROGRAM PROFILE – TUCSON CHAMBER WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVES

A number of **Workforce Collaboratives** are currently being convened by the Tucson Metro Chamber. These collaboratives bring industry, education, civic and workforce development stakeholders to the table to develop strategies that will connect priority sectors like Construction and Healthcare to the pipelines of talent they need to thrive.

PROGRAM PROFILE – PIMA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DISTRICT

Career and Technical Education includes career-driven educational programs in high schools and community colleges. Programs like Introduction to Engineering, Automotive Technologies, Culinary Arts, Business and Marketing, Computer Programming, Welding and Media Technology offer students opportunities to earn industry certifications, gain valuable on-the-job experience and sometimes bank college credits prior to graduating high school.

The Pima Career and Technical Education District offers premier, tuition-free CTE programs to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors from public, private, and charter schools, as well as students who are home-schooled.



The relevance of these programs to real-world career opportunities is one of the reasons that CTE concentrators (those who take at least two CTE courses) in Arizona graduate high school at a rate of 98.7%, more than 20 percentage points higher than the student body as a whole. Students who take these classes are also more likely to attend college. CTE is a critical component of the talent development ecosystem, and there remains room for its footprint in the Greater Tucson Region to grow⁷

⁷<https://pimajted.org/>

STRATEGY TWO

A collaborative of regional employers and stakeholders should fund and launch the Tucson Move IT Up Initiative.

CUTTING EDGE SKILLS

The Tucson Move IT Up initiative will leverage the marketing and public relations capacity of the Tucson Metro Chamber and its partners for an outreach/public relations campaign that encourages underemployed and unemployed adults to develop and validate cybersecurity, networking and software development skills

WHAT WE LEARNED

The labor market analysis identified a surprisingly large percentage of the region's populace that has some college experience, but no degree. While it is possible that many of these people went to college with no intention of earning a degree, but rather of earning an industry certification or participating in a short-term training program, it is also possible that for many residents of the Pima region, the educational experience was interrupted. Life gets in the way, and for many of these people, a college degree likely remains an unrealized goal.

The input of the project leadership team was clear from the onset: a workforce strategy that does not include adult learners and incumbent workers will not be able to meet the goals we have established. At a state level, Arizona has established a goal of seeing 60% of its adult population with a postsecondary credential of some kind by 2030. Even if we dramatically improve our high school graduation rate and our college-going rate, we still will not hit that goal. It is imperative that our workforce strategies provide opportunities for adult learners and

incumbent workers, including those who have some college experience under their belts, to resume an educational experience and validate critical skills by earning a degree or industry certification.



One of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is a definite shift toward remote work environments. As employers of technical talent move toward distributed workforces and working from home becomes even more generally accepted, a range of opportunities open for communities that are equipped. Working for a cutting-edge IT firm no longer requires being physically present at the firm's headquarters. This trend has the potential to open high-quality IT career pathways to rural and underserved populations if and only if, those populations have access to the communications infrastructure necessary to bring their skills to the 21st Century virtual workplace.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

The new **Tucson Move IT Up** initiative will leverage the marketing and public relations capacity of the Tucson Metro Chamber and its partners for an outreach/public relations campaign that encourages underemployed and unemployed adults to develop and validate cybersecurity, networking and software development skills in relevant college programs of study. It will also seek to create a scholarship fund that enables adult learners with some college experience to return to school to pursue education in one of these high-priority fields.

In the 21st Century economy, every company is a tech company, and every company relies on technically skilled talent. This initiative has the potential to equip the Tucson workforce with cutting edge technical skills, including software development, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. The plan includes:

- Unify the region's IT talent initiatives under a single banner
- Launch a public relations initiative that informs the community of resources and options for returning to school to earn a credential in one of the region's high-demand IT fields.
- Leverage and build on the work of the Pathways to Prosperity initiative to craft a career pathway model that includes experiences from grades 7 through 14 and into employment.
- Nextrio, a member of the project's steering committee, donated the moveITup.com as a hub for the initiative's activities and resources
- Lobby for the development of communications infrastructure that will make every home in the region suitable for remote work.
- The initiative will organize its work into two separate lanes: growing IT careers here in Tucson and attracting existing talent to the region.

The work of the initiative will be organized into two streams: growing IT talent and attracting IT talent. Employers in the Greater Tucson Region employ thousands of workers with advanced IT skills, yet the difficulties these employers report in sourcing, hiring and developing this talent is troubling. It is the intent of this initiative not only to encourage workers in the region to develop and refine critical IT skills, but also to attract established talent from other regions to become valuable components of the Greater Tucson Region's technical workforce. The Tucson Metro Chamber is committed to lobbying for the communications infrastructure that will enable the region to become the most remote-work-ready community in the country.

PROGRAM PROFILE – PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE IT PATHWAY

Pima Community College is a leading institution in Computer Information Systems programming and offers a range of training that maps to industry-recognized credentials like IT Support Specialist, IT Support Technician and Network Administrator.

The college is leading a consortium of eight institutions that offer an entirely online experience that includes multiple certifications with significant value in the labor market.

This five-course online program prepares students with knowledge and skills to become a Google-certified IT Support Specialist. In 6 - 8 months and for only \$99 tuition, adult students could organize study around work requirements, earn the Google IT Support certification and develop the skills to sit for the Comp TIA A+ 1000 series certification. This program provides an excellent entrée into IT careers and can start anyone into a high-demand career pathway that offers real growth in a high-demand field and contributes to the talent pipeline that will position the region's employers for long-term success.

⁸<https://www.pima.edu/academics-programs/degrees-certificates/business-it-hospitality/computer-info-systems/index.html>

STRATEGY THREE

The Tucson Metro Chamber, in conjunction with Pima County, should establish the Tucson Employer Development Program

EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE

Employers will be able to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the labor market by earning the Pima County “Employer of Choice” designation and identifying themselves as organizations who value their human capital, invest in their people and demonstrate a commitment to the standards, ideals and values of the Pima County Business Community.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Employers are facing the most dynamic period of change in our lifetimes. Technology is evolving at an unprecedented pace. The employer-employee relationship is changing dramatically. To remain competitive, businesses must be aware of and connected to every resource and aid that will better enable them to attract qualified talent, develop the skills of the workforce and leverage the power of the 21st Century labor market.

In our employer survey, 44% of respondents said that within five years, their industries would be employing people in jobs that don't yet exist, and 63% said that would be the case within ten years. Only eighteen percent of respondents believe employers themselves are primarily responsible for developing the workforce, while 63% believe it is the responsibility of the educational institutions.

Some of the most striking findings from the survey involved the investments employers are already putting into their workforces. Almost all of the respondents offer some sort of skills development or tuition reimbursement program, but many eligible employees do not avail themselves of the benefit. Roughly half of the respondents reported that fewer than 10% of their eligible employees take advantage of these available programs.

Gone are the days when competition among jobseekers for a scarce career opportunity drove the labor market. The balance has fundamentally shifted, and the war for talent is upon us. Especially in our most technical fields, skills requirements are evolving so rapidly that highly-qualified workers have their pick of employers, and a reputation as an employer who values its people and invests in its workers' career development can mean the difference in having a workforce that can carry the company to its loftiest goals.

The development of a world-class workforce must be a shared responsibility distributed among our region's educational, civic, workforce and business leaders. Pima County's public entities and talent development systems are building programs and pipelines that will supply the talent needs of the region's business community for decades to come. It is tempting to think of employers as the customer and the educational system as the supplier, but employers have primary roles to play, not only as the ultimate consumers of talent, but also as developers of it. The unique position of the Chamber as the voice of the business community, can serve to standardize and elevate the role of Tucson-area businesses in the talent development ecosystem.



WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

The new **Tucson Employer Development Program** will synthesize those standards into training programs and certification options for the region's businesses who want to earn a new Pima County designation as an "Employer of Choice."

As noted in the employer survey, there is a point at which employers want to be responsible for the sourcing, development and/or retention of their own talent. This strategy seeks to connect employers to regional workforce-related resources and to validate their commitments to concepts and standards that align with the values and priorities of the Greater Tucson Region.

A taskforce will be assembled by the Chamber in partnership with Pima County and will be tasked with determining the requirements for earning the "Employer of Choice" designation. The detailed standards of the program will be formalized by the taskforce, but at a minimum will include:

- Understanding and accessing the region's workforce-related resources
- Strategies and resources for in-house talent development programs
- Embracing diversity and building a diverse workforce
- Sustainability
- Opportunities to provide leadership in the education and workforce development spaces, including work-based learning opportunities, apprenticeships, and advisory boards

Employers who earn the designation will receive a letter from the county, window/digital decals and/or other tools for displaying their status to potential employees. It is hoped the designation will be a source of pride for individual organizations, as well as a distinguishing characteristic of the community that will aid efforts to attract high-level talent to the region's priority industry sectors. Training classes will be offered regularly at times and locations to be determined by the taskforce.



ARIZONA@WORK's network of employers will be crucial to this initiative. The team of business services representatives who are already actively bringing value to the region's business community by connecting them to workforce-related resources will convey information on this new program as well.

Pima County One-Stop is nationally recognized for pioneering training initiatives and aggressive fund development that has resulted in a rich menu of services for local employers. In addition to formula Workforce Investment Opportunity Act funds, ARIZONA@WORK-Pima County administers discretionary grants for various populations, education funds, target-industry training, and basic-needs assistance programs. The Pima County Board of Supervisors also provides significant local general-fund support to this local workforce system.

Business Services offered in Pima County:

- Projecting future skill needs- Facilitating focus groups and advisory committees to ensure available trainings meet industry workforce needs.
- Recruitment- Responding to staffing needs in the local economy with a range of recruitment services connecting you with trained job seekers. Identifying job leads and employment opportunities and matching them with qualified candidates using system networks as well as in-person screening. Conducting networking and hiring events connecting you with local talent.
- On-the-Job Training provides a wage offset during a new employees' training period in an actual job setting for employers who waive experience requirements and commit to hire and train One-Stop participants.

Other services:

- Providing outplacement services and other strategies to respond to layoffs and plant closures as well as special assistance to companies exploring alternatives to a layoff.
- Serving as an informational resource for your business services, resources and programs available in the community to assist workers and/or training participants.
- Providing information to employers on economic development programs and assisting them in taking advantage of applicable incentives i.e. Empowerment Zone and Work Opportunity Tax Credits.
- Evaluating skills needs for your workforce and determining availability of training suitable to address those needs. Working with you to develop new training and/or apprenticeship programs in high demand occupations. Developing On-the-Job Training contracts with employers.

STRATEGY FOUR

The Greater Tucson Region should organize efforts to effectively highlight the career opportunities in the region and attract high-level talent in critical industries.

A DESTINATION OF CHOICE

Skills are currency in the 21st Century labor market, and attracting talent means attracting wealth to the region's economy.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The labor market analysis made note of the “workforce equilibrium” in some of the region’s most critical economic sectors. This value is an alignment of the emerging supply of talent coming from educational institutions against the projected demand for graduates of those programs. Some of the most striking imbalances were found in health care fields, where for example, the region’s postsecondary institutions awarded 387 degrees and certificates in the Medical and Clinical Assistant programs last year, while employers tried to fill 450 openings. Imbalances also included:

- An average of 509 openings per year for Registered Nurses, while our colleges reported 309 awards in related programs last year.
- More than 320 openings per year exist for Nursing Assistants, but our institutions only saw 121 graduates last year.
- In the transportation sector, 971 openings per year are projected for Truck Drivers, while our training providers reported 247 completions of related programs.
- The Business Administration fields included imbalances in Human Resources Management (417 openings vs. 194 awards) and Marketing Management (283 openings vs. 184 awards).

Tucson is a great place to live, work and develop a career, so why do many employers from our most critical industries struggle to find and hire qualified talent? As noted in the labor market analysis, there is an imbalance between emerging supply and projected demand for many of the region’s critical industries. The math is disconcerting. Put simply, there are not enough warm bodies matriculating through our secondary educational institutions to meet the needs of current employers. If even a healthy part of our projected growth comes to pass, our pipelines of talent will be inadequate to support employers in our priority sectors. To ensure an adequate supply of the talent that will take the region where we want to go, we must attract existing talent who want to develop their careers in an exciting location like Tucson.

According to our survey, employers value the Chamber’s ability to provide a communication platform on which information about the current health crisis, local industry trends and policy direction can be disseminated. They also value the Chamber’s ability to connect regional businesses to new opportunities, business networks and talent pipelines. This strategy is the result of the Chamber’s leaning into this role as the voice of the business community and leveraging its unique position to enable comprehensive talent solutions that include the development of the emerging talent supply as well as the attraction of established talent that can meet the needs of the regional business community.



WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

The Tucson Metro Chamber Talent Attraction & Retention Task Force has been working on this issue for years, and this project recommends the Taskforce be supported by civic, community and business stakeholders.

The Chamber, in partnership with Visit Tucson, the Arizona Tech Council, and other stakeholders, should create an asset bank of content that highlights the region's breadth and depth of high-quality career opportunities. These assets should include videos, industry profiles, talking points and statistics, images and testimonials. The asset bank will be maintained by the Tucson Metro Chamber, and other organizations will be able to use the resources of the Chamber Asset Bank to support talent attraction campaigns.

The region's economic development organizations have an intentional, thoughtful approach to developing a pipeline of business opportunities that could bring new employers and new high-quality jobs to the region. In a similar vein, the Talent Attraction & Retention Taskforce, in partnership with Start Up Tucson, Tucson Young Professionals, Visit Tucson and other partners should develop an intentional, strategic plan for marketing the region as a great home from which to grow a high-tech career. With appropriate funding and leadership, the region could be represented at educational institutions with leading relevant programs of study and in industry associations that represent target economic sectors. These efforts would be aimed not necessarily at attracting businesses and capital investments, but also at attracting talent and marketing the region as an attractive home for professionals in Health Care, Aerospace, Mining, Logistics and other high value sectors.

PROGRAM PROFILE – CONNECT TUCSON



The Tucson Office of Economic Initiatives has assembled an amazing array of information, testimonials and resources that highlight the unique value proposition of the Tucson region and highlight the opportunities to thrive in the region's business community.

Their website at <http://connecttucson.com> includes success stories from some of the world's leading companies like Raytheon and Caterpillar. These employers found a home in Tucson, and this initiative seeks to connect talent and businesses to the resources that will enable them to pursue that same success as a member of the Tucson business community.

STRATEGY FIVE

The Greater Tucson Career Literacy Initiative should organize business and community leaders to bring information, connections and exposure related to high-quality careers into Pima County's classrooms.

INTENTIONAL AND INFORMED

Career literacy holds the promise of making the relevance of education to the world of work clear and compelling for each student. We cannot expect our best and brightest to pursue our highest priority careers if they do not even know those careers exist.

WHAT WE LEARNED

It has been said that education should consider itself an assembly line—a system that takes raw material (students), cuts, stamps and paints it according to the demands of employers (the ultimate consumer), and ultimately produces an asset that the customer will want to purchase (hire). However, if education is an assembly line, it is the only assembly line in the world in which the raw material has a choice about how it is to be cut, stamped and painted. Simply put, people will not enroll in the education and training programs that map to our region's critical industries and to our most high-value careers if they are not aware of these opportunities and do not have a long-term goal of developing skills that position them for success in the 21st Century labor market.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

The Greater Tucson Career Literacy Initiative will partner with school districts, the CTED and the Center for the Future of Arizona to identify opportunities within the educational framework to introduce career-focused content and activities to students.

The Tucson Metro Chamber should convene a taskforce that includes the Pima Career and Technical Education District and representatives from a pilot school district. This taskforce will establish plans for developing a bank of assets that includes a speakers bureau, guided activities for student use of Pipeline AZ, guidelines and materials for industry days, and a Reality Check exercise among other assets. The Lenses on the Future curriculum will be made as widely available as possible to introduce students to the region's highest-value career pathways. It will also develop a model for sharing the assets in the regional education system.



PROGRAM PROFILE – PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA



Arizona Pathways to Prosperity, led by the Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA), is creating seamless educational, training and credentialing opportunities for students that are aligned with industry needs in high-demand, high-growth industry sectors. The initiative's Lenses on the Future curriculum introduces the concepts of high-value careers to middle school students and has been adopted at various levels by 26 school districts, including several in the Tucson region.

Arizona is part of the national Pathways to Prosperity Network — a collaboration of Jobs for the Future, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and member states and regions — which is committed to building systems of college and career pathways. Informed by industry and in partnership with educational institutions, the pathways create new opportunities for young people, provide employers with a talent pipeline of young professionals, and strengthen state and regional economies.

Arizona consistently ranks among the fastest growing states in the nation. This growth in population provides a significant opportunity for Arizona to strengthen its talent pipeline while supporting economic development efforts and increasing opportunity for residents of the state.

CFA brings together high schools, higher education and businesses in key industries to work collaboratively to design college and career pathways, which enable more young people to earn degrees and credentials with labor market value.⁹

Currently, the CFA has advanced pathways implementation with 28 pathway schools through programs of study, career exploration, work-based learning, and teacher professional development. The school system partners include Pima County Career and Technical Education District, Pima Vocational High School, Sunnyside Unified School District, Tucson Unified School District, Amphitheater Public Schools and Tanque Verde Unified High School District.



⁹<https://www.arizonafuture.org/pathways-to-prosperity/overview/>

PROGRAM PROFILE – COMMUNITYSHARE



Tucson-based CommunityShare was recognized in 2019 and 2020 as one of the top 100 education innovations at the Global HunderED summit in Helsinki. CommunityShare believes that our communities are only as strong as the relationships we weave. Relationships between caring adults and young people centered around real-world learning experiences nurture resilient, thriving youth and communities.

In order to realize this vision, CommunityShare developed an online platform that matches educators in schools and out-of-school settings with community partners who serve as mentors, project collaborators, guest speakers, internship hosts, and more.

Community partners include individuals and organizations — STEM professionals, artists, parents, entrepreneurs, retirees, higher education staff, nonprofits, corporations, and more. Through both virtual and in-person learning experiences with community partners, students become more engaged in school and their community because of the real-world relevance, discover new career possibilities and expand their access to caring adults.

CommunityShare partners with regional organizations across the country in developing their own learning ecosystems through this online platform, educator fellowship model, seed grants, participatory storytelling, and community engagement strategies.





The Partnership for Workforce Innovation applauds the efforts of the Tucson Metro Chamber in this initiative. No issue is more critical to the long-term economic success of a community than the workforce on which its businesses rely, and the Tucson Metro Chamber, as the voice of business in the Tucson community, is taking a leadership role and committing real resources and real effort into improving this all-important element of the community's economic vitality. The approach is refreshing in its directness and impressive in its innovation.

Innovation is difficult to find anywhere, but it is impossible to find where there is no effort. The Chamber's efforts in this initiative, as in so many others, is positioning it as an indispensable partner in the region's economic success. As Teddy Roosevelt, once said, "I may not know exactly who will win the battle, but I can guarantee you it will be someone who is in the arena."

The partners in this project encourage business and civic leaders to support the Chamber's efforts in every way possible. It is hoped that these strategies will lay a foundation on which further and even more innovative efforts will be built. The network of businesses, educational institutions, civic leaders and nonprofit organizations who enabled this work are the best hope for the future of the region and for the economic success of the families who call it home.





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