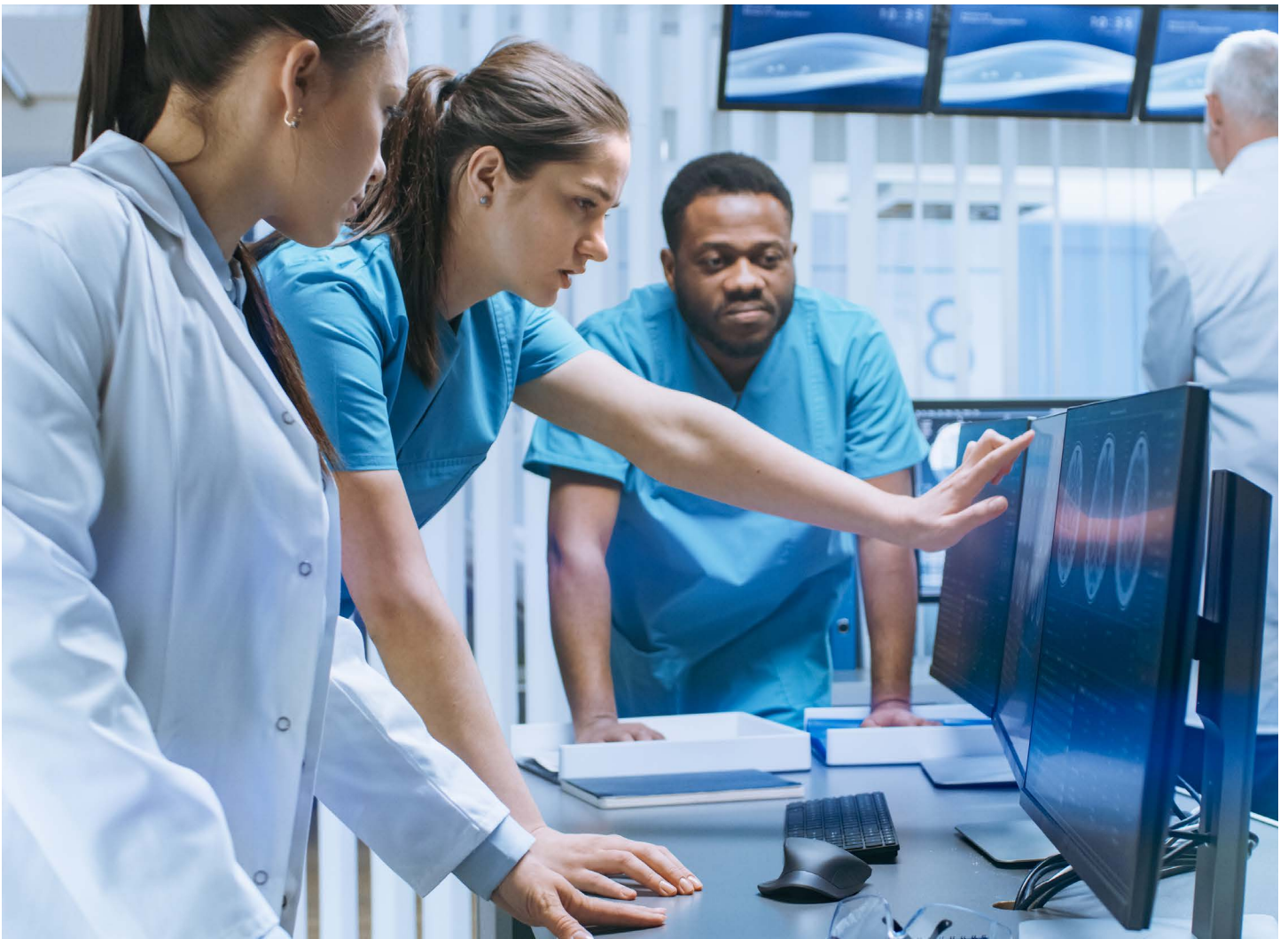




Arizona Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan Fall 2024



About This Healthcare Workforce Plan

We are delighted to introduce the Arizona Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan. In March 2024, the Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, under the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation, brought together a community of stakeholders from healthcare, workforce development, nonprofit, government, and educational institutions throughout Arizona. Our collaborative efforts have identified key priorities and strategies to address the significant healthcare workforce shortage our state is experiencing.

Arizona currently falls below the national average of workers in nearly all healthcare professions, with demand outpacing supply both locally and nationally. The Arizona Department of Health Services projects that by 2032, our state will face a shortfall of 4,679 registered nurses, 412 nurse practitioners, and 4,131 physicians. Furthermore, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that employment in healthcare will grow much faster than the average for all occupations, accounting for forty-five percent of all jobs added through 2032.

The Arizona Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan offers valuable insights to help leaders across various sectors identify priorities and implement strategies to mitigate this shortage. We are deeply grateful to all participating facilities and professionals for their valuable contributions and commitment to this endeavor. Your input and suggestions have been invaluable.

We invite you to join us as we collaborate to ensure Arizona has the healthcare talent it needs to thrive. Should you have any recommendations or wish to actively participate in this work, please contact us at workforce@phoenixchamber.com. Your leadership and involvement are crucial as we work together to build a robust and resilient healthcare workforce for our state.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Jennifer Mellor
Chief Innovation Officer
Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation

Compiled for a coalition of healthcare employers and workforce and education ecosystem partners by the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation, with support from Joe Quick and Erin Duckett, Senior Technical Assistance Consultants, American Institutes for Research.

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Executive Summary

The healthcare industry is critical to Arizona's economy, to maintaining a healthy and active workforce, and to caring for its growing population. With an abundance of top hospitals and medical systems, revered academic and training institutions, and a growing medical research and development community, Arizona's healthcare industry is at the epicenter of innovation and growth. While the state has successfully diversified the economy since the Great Recession—resulting in several new sectors with high-wage, high-demand job opportunities—a parallel growth in population has led to an increased demand for skilled talent, especially in the healthcare sector. Arizona's healthcare industry employed approximately 413,300 individuals in 2022.¹ Over the last decade, the healthcare industry in Arizona has grown at a rate of 2.9% per year on average, outpacing the national average growth rate of 1.7%.²

Despite this innovation and growth, Arizona is facing a critical shortage of healthcare workers. According to the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation's (the Foundation) 2023 Healthcare Workforce Report³, Arizona will need to fill 132,800 new healthcare jobs created over the next ten years. With a projected supply of only 56,800 new healthcare workers to fill those roles, Arizona may see a gap of 76,000 additional workers needed in the healthcare industry alone. Cultivating a skilled and sustained talent pipeline to keep pace with the industry's continued growth and diversification will be critical to Arizona's economic future.

A Coordinated Statewide Plan

A statewide, coordinated, “all-hands-on-deck” strategy to addressing the state's ongoing growth and talent gaps is essential. Through various in-person and virtual statewide healthcare workforce convenings (detailed later in this plan), healthcare system partners indicated a need for comprehensive, collaborative, and consistent strategies to address workforce shortages, indicating a need to:

- Obtain better supply and demand data to fully understand needs, gaps, and opportunity for critical occupations.
- Expand training opportunities and pipeline strategies for critical roles.
- Increase awareness of the variety of healthcare occupations and required education and training pathways to employment.
- Coordinate sustained programmatic and funding approaches to solving healthcare workforce skill gaps for critical occupations across multiple partners.

The full “Arizona Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan” reflects critical pain points and initiatives identified by a variety of employer and partner stakeholders across the state and details high-level priorities and strategies for improving Arizona's healthcare workforce pipeline. Stakeholders should consider this plan a starting point for a coordinated, comprehensive, and action-oriented effort to streamline and deliver talent pipeline solutions for critical healthcare roles and to mitigate a variety of talent management challenges that transcend individual healthcare roles and pathways.

1. [Workforce Analysis Healthcare Summer 2023](#)

2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Executive Summary

Key Priorities and Strategies at a Glance

Based on critical pain points discussed through various stakeholder engagement opportunities, employer and workforce and education ecosystem partners identified the following four priorities and associated strategy recommendations. The full “Arizona Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan” further details each of these priorities and high-level strategies and provides various approaches for consideration.

| Priority 1: Improve Talent Demand and Supply Data to Support Informed Decision-Making | |
|---|--|
| Establish a statewide process for regular collection of primary and secondary data to support a full understanding of employer demand for critical healthcare occupations, training and education provider ability to meet that demand, and any factors contributing to talent and/or skill gaps. | |
| Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority | |
| 1a: Produce Yearly Industry and Occupational Demand Reports | Leverage the expertise of statewide economic and workforce development organizations (e.g., AZ Office of Economic Opportunity, Arizona Commerce Authority) to obtain industry and occupational data about healthcare workforce needs on an annual basis. Data reports should represent statewide and regional snapshots. |
| 1b: Improve the Quality and Completeness of Talent Supply Data | Collect comprehensive supply-side data—from both public sources (e.g., IPEDS) and directly from institutions—to evaluate education and training provider enrollment, completions, and capacity against healthcare workforce demand data. Include data and employer intelligence on additional dynamics like projected retirements and talent pipeline leakage (i.e., graduates employed in non-healthcare occupations, talent out-migration). Additionally leverage databases. |
| 1c: Validate and Supplement Statewide Occupational Data with Employer Intel | Provide regular opportunities to validate and supplement statewide occupational data with employer intelligence about criticality, shorter-term projections, nuanced needs, and talent management pain points that transcend occupations. Establish regular industry validation opportunities (e.g., quarterly or semi-annual workforce summits and a process for individuals that cannot attend meetings to provide input) and launch supplemental employer surveys to obtain primary data and additional nuance. |

Executive Summary

Priority 2: Expand and Diversify the Healthcare Talent Pipeline through a Statewide Career Awareness Campaign

Create a coordinated and comprehensive statewide strategy to attract diverse learners and workers to the healthcare workforce pipeline for critical roles and clearly communicate pathways of opportunity, variety of work environments, education, training, and credential requirements.

Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority

| | |
|--|--|
| 2a: Market the Variety of Healthcare Career Opportunities and Environments in Arizona | Enhance awareness of the healthcare industry and its critical occupations, various healthcare career tracks, and work environments (e.g., hospital/acute care, clinic, laboratory, long-term care) available to workers and learners. Focus on increasing awareness and exposure and shifting perceptions to increase program enrollment, recruitment, promotion, and retention, through industry and occupational profiles, multi-media marketing and messaging (including social channels), career awareness events, and others. |
| 2b: Promote Critical Healthcare Career Pathways | Leverage and amplify existing career pathway maps that promote multiple on-and-off ramps to training, education, and employment for critical healthcare occupations and career tracks. Include career progression opportunities, wage potential, projected growth, education and training requirements for entry, apprenticeable occupations, and other relevant information. |
| 2c: Disseminate Career Awareness Information to Diverse Talent Sources and Partners | Catalogue and create meaningful relationships with community organizations and talent sourcing partners that serve underrepresented populations in the industry and expand and diversify the talent pipeline. Leverage partner expertise to craft programmatic approaches that resonate with various talent populations including those with a justice background and an understanding of what positions may be available to those with varying backgrounds. Include students, educators, counselors, case workers, community leaders, and others in overall outreach. |
| 2d: Enhance and Scale Employer Involvement in Career Exposure Activities | Create interest, awareness, and pipeline growth through enhanced employer involvement in career awareness and exposure opportunities, including a concerted effort to increase work-experience, job shadow, and internship experiences. Produce and/or promote enticing industry and occupational video content to engage audiences through social media. Bridge these activities with comprehensive work-based learning (WBL) opportunities like paid internships, apprenticeships, and experiential education and training (e.g., CTE programs, Registered Apprenticeships). |

Executive Summary

Priority 3: Increase Availability and Flexibility of Incentives and Funding Streams

Assess current funding streams and gaps, identify opportunities for enhanced flexibility, and explore national promising practices in funding innovation and braided resourcing that support learners and workers, employers, and education and training ecosystems. Ensure that these mechanisms are targeted to the most critical healthcare industry and worker and learner needs.

Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority

| | |
|---|---|
| 3a: Catalogue Existing Funding Streams | Catalogue federal, state, regional, and private sector assets to support healthcare workforce education and training (including upskilling), supportive services to learners and workers, incentives to employers, nurse educator incentives, and funds to support sector-based strategies to solve talent challenges. Crosswalk available funds to identify braided funding approaches and create a regular cadence of updates and clear communication patterns to communicate available statewide healthcare workforce funding to all stakeholders. |
| 3b: Ensure Alignment of Existing and Future Funding Streams to Critical Healthcare Needs | Engage healthcare employers and healthcare workers and learners to ensure that existing and future funding support is focused on the most critical healthcare occupations, industry talent management challenges, and worker and learner needs (i.e., training and education, ongoing learning, supportive services). |
| 3c: Explore National Promising Practices in Funding Innovation | Launch a concerted effort to explore promising funding approaches to expand and diversify healthcare talent pipelines, both across Arizona and throughout the nation, as described in Strategy 3a. Catalogue these promising practices and explore viability in Arizona, taking note of both existing and needed structures, funding sources, legislation and policy, and other elements. |
| 3d: Advocate for Enhanced Funding Sources and Flexibilities | Identify gaps in funding, funding constraints, and additional flexibilities needed to support effective and efficient talent pipeline expansion and coordinate advocacy to support legislative changes, funding program adjustments, and grant and philanthropic efforts. |

Executive Summary

Priority 4: Address Healthcare Educator and Preceptor Shortages

Formulate a statewide working group to better define nurse preceptor and educator shortages—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and devise innovative, flexible solutions and funding mechanisms to expand clinical opportunities and increase the healthcare educator workforce.

Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority

| | |
|--|---|
| 4a: Form a Statewide Working Group to Explore and Implement Solutions | Establish an official, action-oriented working group to better identify—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and describe healthcare preceptor and healthcare educator shortages, and to explore and implement innovative solutions that benefit healthcare workers and learners, avoid overburdensome processes for healthcare systems, and support talent pipeline growth for critical roles. |
| 4b: Expand Clinical Opportunities for Critical Roles | Identify and share promising regional, statewide, and national practices that allow for the expansion of preceptor opportunities through exploration of innovative and flexible models (e.g., innovative structures and schedules, incorporation of simulation), potential changes to education and certification/licensing standards, etc. Efforts should ensure quality learning outcomes and experiences and consider healthcare systems' financial and operational constraints. |
| 4c: Explore and Establish Innovative Funding Models for Preceptor Expansion | Collectively explore, advocate for, and implement innovative funding and incentive models to encourage expansion of preceptor opportunities. Supports might address the challenges experienced by healthcare systems, students/workers, preceptors, and nurse educators. Focus on the development of establishing requirements for accrediting preceptors. |
| 4d: Explore and Establish Incentives for Nurse Educators | Explore the root causes of the nurse educator shortage and devise solutions for both reducing barriers and providing meaningful incentives to encourage growth in the nurse educator pipeline. |



Introduction

Healthcare Workforce Needs in Arizona

The healthcare industry is critical to Arizona's economy in order to maintain a healthy and active workforce, and care for its growing population. With an abundance of top hospitals and medical systems, revered academic and training institutions, and a growing medical research and development community, Arizona's healthcare industry is at the epicenter of innovation and growth. In addition to large and well-known hospital systems like the Mayo Clinic, Banner Health, Dignity Health, HonorHealth, Phoenix Children's Hospital, and many others, the state specializes in health information technologies, neurosciences, diagnostics, precision medicine and biomarkers, and cancer research, among others.⁴

While the state has successfully diversified the economy since the Great Recession—resulting in several new sectors with high-wage, high-demand job opportunities—a parallel growth in population has led to an increased demand for skilled talent, especially in the healthcare sector. Arizona's healthcare industry employed approximately 413,300 individuals in 2022. Over the last decade, the healthcare industry in Arizona has grown at a rate of 2.9% per year on average, outpacing the national average growth rate of 1.7%.

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A statewide, coordinated, “all-hands-on-deck” strategy to addressing the state's ongoing growth and talent gaps is essential. Through various in-person and virtual statewide healthcare workforce convenings (detailed later in this plan), healthcare system partners specified a need for comprehensive, collaborative, and consistent strategies to address workforce shortages, indicating a need to:

- Obtain better supply and demand data to fully understand needs, gaps, and opportunity for critical occupations.
- Expand training opportunities and pipeline strategies for critical roles.
- Increase awareness of the variety of healthcare occupations and required education and training pathways to employment.
- Coordinate sustained programmatic and funding approaches to solving healthcare workforce skill gaps for critical occupations across multiple partners.

4. [Workforce Analysis Healthcare Summer 2023](#)

Introduction

An Analysis of Critical Healthcare Occupations

The following table displays the top occupations within the healthcare industry, and detailed information pertaining to mean wages, the expected 10-year growth rates, and the educational attainment needed for entry into each occupation.

Arizona Healthcare Occupation Projections 2022-2032

| SOC Code | Occupation Title | Based Employment | Projected Employment | Annual Growth | Annual Percent Change | Total Annual Openings | 2022 Median Wage | Typical Education for Entry |
|----------|--|------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 31-1120 | Home Health and Personal Care Aides | 68,552.00 | 96,115.00 | 2,756.00 | 3.4% | 14,835.00 | \$30,067 | High School diploma or equivalent |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 59,107.00 | 72,052.00 | 1,294.00 | 2.0% | 4,820.00 | \$82,330 | Bachelor's Degree |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistants | 20,200.00 | 27,006.00 | 681.00 | 2.9% | 3,685.00 | \$38,931 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 31-1131 | Nursing Assistants | 17,833.00 | 22,017.00 | 418.00 | 2.1% | 3,239.00 | \$37,240 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 31-9091 | Dental Assistants | 9,211.00 | 11,568.00 | 236.00 | 2.3% | 1,659.00 | \$45,988 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 29-2052 | Pharmacy Technicians | 11,552.00 | 14,370.00 | 282.00 | 2.2% | 1,442.00 | \$41,590 | High School diploma or equivalent |
| 21-1018 | Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors | 9,406.00 | 13,090.00 | 368.00 | 3.4% | 1,292.00 | \$50,459 | Master's Degree |
| 29-2053 | Psychiatric Technicians | 7,389.00 | 9,693.00 | 230.00 | 2.8% | 924.00 | \$38,202 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 29-1171 | Nurse Practitioners | 6,544.00 | 11,196.00 | 465.00 | 5.5% | 858.00 | \$120,476 | Master's Degree |
| 21-1093 | Social and Human Service Assistants | 5,954.00 | 7,408.00 | 145.00 | 2.2% | 822.00 | \$37,025 | High School diploma or equivalent |
| 29-2010 | Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians | 8,190.00 | 10,097.00 | 191.00 | 2.1% | 771.00 | \$46,604 | Bachelor's Degree |
| 29-2061 | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses | 6,537.00 | 8,208.00 | 167.00 | 2.3% | 725.00 | \$61,836 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 31-9097 | Phlebotomists | 3,660.00 | 4,610.00 | 95.00 | 2.3% | 620.00 | \$38,033 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 31-9094 | Medical Transcriptionists | 2,660.00 | 2,950.00 | 29.00 | 1.0% | 511.00 | \$32,940 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 29-1292 | Dental Hygienists | 4,874.00 | 6,125.00 | 125.00 | 2.3% | 481.00 | \$91,281 | Associates Degree |
| 31-9099 | Healthcare Support Workers, All Other | 2,776.00 | 3,378.00 | 60.00 | 2.0% | 468.00 | \$40,447 | High School diploma or equivalent |
| 29-1051 | Pharmacists | 7,861.00 | 9,278.00 | 142.00 | 1.7% | 459.00 | \$134,833 | Doctoral or professional degree |
| 21-1022 | Healthcare Social Workers | 3,623.00 | 4,571.00 | 95.00 | 2.4% | 440.00 | \$61,766 | Master's Degree |
| 29-2057 | Ophthalmic Medical Technicians | 2,550.00 | 3,416.00 | 87.00 | 3.0% | 405.00 | \$36,814 | Post-secondary non-degree award |
| 29-1071 | Physician Assistants | 3,441.00 | 5,182.00 | 174.00 | 4.2% | 387.00 | \$126,240 | Master's Degree |

Stakeholder Engagement and Prioritization of Efforts

Total job counts, projected growth rates, and wage information are helpful starting points for identifying high-demand, high-wage occupations. It is essential to engage healthcare systems to further define these needs, identify those roles most critical to their operations, determine which roles are hardest to fill, and discuss nuances related to hiring cycles, timing, and training and education requirements. Throughout the first half of 2024, healthcare leaders and various training, education, workforce, chamber, and community partners gathered to refine a list of critical occupations and talent management challenges, which are detailed in the “Stakeholder Engagement and Prioritization of Efforts” section of this report.

In early 2024, the Foundation engaged with workforce experts from American Institutes for Research (AIR) to support a series of statewide activities aimed at identifying, documenting, and addressing healthcare talent pain points, existing talent solutions, and potential gaps in Arizona. Throughout 2024, the Foundation hosted a series of quarterly healthcare workforce convenings and interim partner conversations, with initial support from AIR. These convenings brought—and will continue to bring—together employers, workforce and education practitioners, the Arizona Governor’s Office (Governor’s Office), and other partners for facilitated conversations that identify critical workforce issues and related skills gaps, and that both prioritize existing efforts for replication and scaling as well as gaps in available solutions and approaches to solve critical pain points. Ultimately, these convenings led to the creation of this plan and will serve to implement it through action-oriented and collaborative working groups and statewide implementation efforts.

Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities

AIR and the Foundation provided several initial opportunities for stakeholder feedback regarding occupational and talent management pain points, challenges in workforce and education systems solutions delivery, and actionable next steps to address the growing need for healthcare talent across the state. These interactions were instrumental in building this collaborative statewide plan.

1. Statewide Healthcare Workforce Convening 1 (March 19, 2024). This three-part convening began an employer-led conversation about statewide healthcare workforce and education ecosystem challenges, and progressed to include messages from leadership, including the Arizona Office of the Governor and Arizona Board of Regents, and a collaborative discussion with workforce and education partners about pain points, gaps, priorities, successful approaches, and ongoing opportunities to strengthen the healthcare workforce pipeline.
2. Spring Virtual Follow-Up Convening 2 (April 11, 2024). Discussion from the March 19 convening continued in a virtual setting to further validate priorities, highlight promising practices that could be replicated and scaled to solve critical healthcare workforce challenges, and brainstorm additional priorities for this Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan.
3. Statewide Healthcare Workforce Convening 3 (June 18, 2024). The second in-person convening of the quarterly series focused on validation of the priorities and high-level strategies presented in this plan as well as an opportunity to identify existing efforts, programs, strategies, and resources that could be mobilized, replicated, and/or scaled as part of the plan’s implementation. In addition, many of the “Promising Approaches in Action” captured in this plan were identified through attendee report-outs.
4. Summer Healthcare Collaborative Convening 4 (August 28, 2024). This discussion continued important priority and strategy validation discussions associated with this plan and identified additional “Promising Practices in Action” for consideration.

Through the various interactions above, the Foundation and AIR engaged with 14 employers and over 40 workforce and education partners. For a full list of partners that participated in these convenings and planning sessions, please see “Appendix B. Participating Organization Acknowledgements.”

Stakeholder Engagement and Prioritization of Efforts

Critical Jobs and Talent Management Challenges Identified

Employers involved in these discussions identified the following healthcare occupations as those most critical to statewide healthcare workforce planning efforts. Criticality is defined by those roles that employers experience as hardest to fill and crucial to healthcare system operations. In implementing strategies to address the priorities outlined in this healthcare workforce plan, this prioritization should be considered, in addition to the data presented above regarding occupational workforce needs and growth.

Critical Occupations Identified through Healthcare Employer Engagement

- **Registered Nurses (RNs), including:**
 - **Pediatric specialty RN**
 - Skilled nurses within assisted living facilities
 - Med-surg RNs
 - Progressive care unit (PCU) RNs
 - Intensive care unit (ICU) RNs
 - Perioperative RNs
- **Radiology imaging roles/radiology technicians**
- **Physical and other therapy roles**
- **Clinical/medical lab scientists**
- **Respiratory therapists**
- **Nurse practitioners**
- Phlebotomists
- Clinical/medical lab technicians
- OBGYN physicians
- Primary care physicians
- Nurse midwives
- Surgical techs
- Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA)
- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)
- Sterile processing techs/instrument techs
- Behavioral health technical and licensed clinical social workers
- Direct care workers
- Dental hygienists
- Registered dietitians
- Nurse faculty
- Primary care physicians
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) for behavioral health providers
- Behavioral health specialists
- Respiratory therapists
- Dental hygienists
- Community health workers (CHW)

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Stakeholder Engagement and Prioritization of Efforts

In addition, employers identified the following high-level talent management challenges—those which transcend specific occupations and impact healthcare talent pipelines overall—and workforce and education system challenges to be addressed in a coordinated statewide effort to close healthcare skills gaps.

Healthcare Industry Talent Management Pain Points

- Lack of awareness and the variety of healthcare roles, environments, and educational pathways associated with healthcare careers.
- Lack of clarity regarding the various on-and-off ramps to training, education, and employment for healthcare roles—especially those less understood by the public.
- Lack of clinical placement opportunities for critical healthcare occupations.
- Incomplete data to fully understand gaps between employer occupational demand and training and education provider talent “output” (i.e., enrollments, completions, capacity).
- Challenges to effectively balancing education and training with work schedules, for both entry-level employment in the industry and for upskilling into more advanced roles.
- “Job-hopping,” including frequent movement across employers, occupations, and industries.
- Negative trends in poor work ethic and “desire to work.”
- Issues of age and liability for high school students when providing career exposure, on-the-job and work-based learning experience, and career exposure opportunities for certain roles.
- Inconsistency of role names and terminologies across healthcare systems/individual employers.

Workforce and Education System Challenges

The following challenges, whether real or perceived, were discussed as important to addressing a coordinated statewide approach to closing healthcare workforce and skill gaps.

- An abundance of statewide, regional, and local healthcare workforce solutions, programs, and funding streams to track and understand.
- A lack of overall coordination of efforts and delivery of solutions.
- A shortage of the education and training opportunities required for critical roles to keep pace with demand.
- Inconsistency of program offerings and requirements (across institutions and regions)

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

The priorities, strategies, and approaches presented for consideration in this Statewide Healthcare Workforce Plan are intended to address many of the occupational, talent management, and system-oriented pain points identified above. The plan does not attempt to address every challenge identified by stakeholders, but to elevate key strategic priorities, and facilitate coordinated action planning and statewide alignment of resources and programming, and address prioritized statewide healthcare workforce pain points.

Stakeholders identified the following four action-oriented priorities—with the assistance of the team at AIR—as key to addressing Arizona’s statewide healthcare workforce needs.

- Priority 1: Improve Talent Demand and Supply Data to Support Informed Decision-Making
- Priority 2: Expand and Diversify the Healthcare Talent Pipeline through a Statewide Career Awareness Campaign
- Priority 3: Increase Availability and Flexibility of Incentives and Funding Streams
- Priority 4: Address Healthcare Educator and Preceptor Shortages

For each priority, this report provides a set of recommended strategies and approaches for consideration, and compiles some “Promising Approaches in Action” at the end that elevate strong talent strategies already solving critical healthcare workforce challenges across Arizona. It is not the intent to “reinvent the wheel” with this plan. Instead, the plan seeks to identify core strategies to statewide progress on each priority, to ensure consensus on key statewide efforts, and to provide a structure for coordinated, collaborative action (see “Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template”).



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

| Priority 1: Improve Talent Demand and Supply Data to Support Informed Decision-Making | |
|---|--|
| Establish a statewide process for regular collection of primary and secondary data to support a full understanding of employer demand for critical healthcare occupations, training and education provider ability to meet that demand, and any factors contributing to talent and/or skill gaps. | |
| Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority | |
| 1a: Produce Yearly Industry and Occupational Demand Reports | Leverage the expertise of statewide economic and workforce development organizations (e.g., AZ Office of Economic Opportunity, Arizona Commerce Authority) to obtain industry and occupational data about healthcare workforce needs on an annual basis. Such reports should represent statewide and regional snapshots. |
| 1b: Improve the Quality and Completeness of Talent Supply Data | Collect comprehensive supply-side data—from both public sources (e.g., IPEDS) and directly from institutions—to evaluate education and training provider enrollment, completions, and capacity against healthcare workforce demand data. Include data and employer intelligence on additional dynamics like projected retirements and talent pipeline leakage (i.e., graduates employed in non-healthcare occupations, talent out-migration). Completeness should include shortage variances by metropolitan area and county, as available as well as intent to hire numbers, not just job postings. |
| 1c: Validate and Supplement Statewide Occupational Data with Employer Intel | Provide regular opportunities to validate and supplement statewide occupational data with employer intelligence about criticality, shorter-term projections, nuanced needs, and talent management pain points that transcend occupation. Establish regular industry validation opportunities (e.g., quarterly or semi-annual workforce summits) and launch supplemental employer surveys to obtain primary data and additional nuance. |

Convening discussions illuminated a need for consistent data collection, analysis, and reporting to include not only traditional and real-time labor market information—as traditionally provided by government entities—but to create regular opportunities for coordinated, statewide validation of that data by healthcare employers in Arizona and nuanced discussion about critical occupational priorities and hiring dynamics. In addition, both employers and workforce and education ecosystem partners discussed the need for regular comparison of growth projections and employer demand data against “supply side” data about the available healthcare workforce (including impending retirement waves) and healthcare training and education system outputs (e.g., enrollments, completions, program capacity). Additionally, stakeholders discussed the potential for large variances in shortages by metropolitan area as well as by county. Any data produced and analyzed should examine various geographic nuances. The following strategies and approaches for consideration are intended to address this critical need.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 1a: Produce Yearly Industry and Occupational Demand Reports

Leverage the expertise of statewide economic and workforce development organizations (e.g., AZ Office of Economic Opportunity and the Arizona Commerce Authority) to obtain industry and occupational data about healthcare workforce needs on an annual basis. Data reports should represent statewide and regional snapshots.

Approaches for Consideration

- Establish a data leadership committee: Leverage key organizations mentioned above and other data experts to create a data leadership committee responsible for establishing a standard (at least yearly) process for healthcare workforce data collection, analysis, and dissemination (see below).
- Yearly data collection: Create a process to collect, analyze, and disseminate data from statewide economic and workforce development organizations and their employer members. Produce a data collection tool as well as consistent data reports and gap analyses at the state, regional, and county levels.
- Report dissemination: Distribute data reports to key stakeholders (e.g., workforce and economic development partners, chambers, education and training institutions, and employers) and provide opportunities to attend presentations, ask questions, and provide feedback. Be sure to position data reports as a starting point for collaborative conversation and emphasize the need for employer validation.



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 1b: Improve the Quality and Completeness of Talent Supply Data

- Collect comprehensive supply-side data—from both public sources (e.g., IPEDS) and directly from institutions—to evaluate education and training provider enrollment, completions, and capacity against healthcare workforce demand data. Include data and employer intelligence on additional dynamics like projected retirements and talent pipeline leakage (i.e., graduates employed in non-healthcare occupations, talent out-migration).

Approaches for Consideration

- **Collaborate with statewide LMI experts to obtain education and training data:** Work with state LMI experts to obtain available public education and training program data for critical roles. Collected data should include enrollment and completion/graduation data for programming associated with the critical roles identified in this plan (or a prioritized subset).
- **Connect with public providers to supplement public data:** Connect with public education and training partners to obtain any data missing from public data sets, including, perhaps, institution capacity for programs relevant to/required for critical jobs.
- **Connect with private education and training providers:** Create a process to collect additional data from private and proprietary education and training providers on enrollment, completion, and capacity numbers for programs associated with critical roles. Combine this information with state LMI data and direct provider data collected for public programs.
- **Collect employer data on relevant talent sources, attrition, and other pipeline nuances:** In alignment with efforts to validate and supplement publicly available LMI data with employers (see Strategy 1c), discuss current and projected turnover rates and/or “leakage” of talent from their pipelines due to retirements, regional outmigration, natural attrition/losing talent to competitors, talent leaving for other industries, etc.
- **Convene Providers:** Hold a statewide provider convening (or one-on-one meetings) to discuss data projections including enrollment, completion, and capacity (if available) data for critical roles. Use the opportunity to discuss any program expansion needs, as appropriate. Note: It is crucial that this activity occurs after the employer validation strategies described in Strategy 1c.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 1c: Validate and Supplement Statewide Occupational Data with Employer Intel

Provide regular opportunities to validate and supplement statewide occupational data with employer intelligence about criticality, shorter-term projections, nuanced needs, and talent management pain points that transcend occupations. Establish regular industry validation opportunities (e.g., quarterly or semi-annual workforce summits) and launch supplemental employer surveys to obtain primary data and additional nuance.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Convene employers to validate data and obtain additional intelligence:** Create a regular cadence of coordinated, statewide employer convenings following annual data collection, to confirm data projections, discuss more critical and nuanced needs, and design and implement data-driven solutions (i.e., quarterly statewide healthcare workforce convenings). Leveraging the work of regional sector partnerships, employer collaboratives, and industry associations can strengthen consensus around priorities and obtain additional feedback and nuance from a representative sample of healthcare employers.
- **Survey employers:** Design and disseminate surveys to collect primary demand data for the critical roles identified. Combine this primary data with LMI data to fully analyze and discuss trends and priorities. Include mechanism for employers to rank the most critical occupational and skills needs and include critical talent management pain points that transcend occupations (i.e., impact more than one role/a full pathway of roles).
- **Leverage innovative employer strategies to understand workplace shortages, operational bottlenecks, and turnover nuances:** Explore with Arizona healthcare systems the innovative ways they are tracking occupational shortages and operational constraints through various technical solutions (e.g., those that track real-time shift/floor shortages), employee performance and attrition tracking, employee engagement and satisfaction metrics, and exit- and stay-interview data, among others.
- **Leverage state and regional employer-serving organizations to expand scope and reach:** Provide annual data to statewide workforce, economic development, and chamber organizations for them to validate with additional employers (i.e., members, key employer accounts/champions) and/or collect additional demand projection data through these organizations. This will extend the reach of employer validation and primary data collection efforts from those employers not able to devote time and resources to regular healthcare workforce convening (or sector partnership/employer collaborative) participation.

Promising Approaches in Action

[Healthcare Workforce Center](#), a data-driven initiative in Massachusetts which could be replicated in Arizona.

Arizona Healthcare Action Network is being developed by Center for the Future of Arizona through funding from AHCCCS, focused initially on direct care workforce needs.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

| Priority 2: Expand and Diversify the Healthcare Talent Pipeline through a Statewide Career Awareness Campaign | |
|---|---|
| Create a coordinated and comprehensive statewide strategy to attract diverse learners and workers to the healthcare workforce pipeline for critical roles and clearly communicate pathways of opportunity, environmental nuances, and education, training, and credential requirements. | |
| Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority | |
| 2a: Market the Variety of Healthcare Career Opportunities and Environments in Arizona | Enhance awareness of the healthcare industry and its critical occupations, various healthcare career tracks, and work environments (e.g., hospital/acute care, clinic, laboratory, long-term care) available to workers and learners. Focus on increasing awareness and exposure and shifting perceptions to increase program enrollment, recruitment, promotion, and retention, through industry and occupational profiles, multi-media marketing and messaging (including social channels), career awareness and exposure events, and others. |
| 2b: Promote Critical Healthcare Career Pathways | Leverage and amplify existing career pathway maps that promote multiple on-and-off ramps to training, education, and employment for critical healthcare occupations and career tracks. Include career progression opportunities, wage potential, projected growth, education and training requirements for entry, apprenticeable occupations, and other relevant information. |
| 2c: Disseminate Career Awareness Information to Diverse Talent Sources and Partners | Catalogue and create meaningful relationships with community organizations and talent sourcing partners that serve underrepresented populations in the industry and expand and diversify the talent pipeline. Leverage partner expertise to craft programmatic approaches that resonate with various talent populations. Include students, educators, counselors, case workers, employers HR departments, community leaders, and others in overall outreach. |
| 2d: Enhance and Scale Employer Involvement in Career Exposure Activities | Create interest, awareness, and pipeline growth through enhanced employer involvement in career awareness and exposure opportunities, including a concerted effort to increase work-experience, job shadow, and internship experiences. Produce and/or promote engaging industry and occupational video content to engage audiences through social media. Bridge these activities with more comprehensive work-based learning (WBL) opportunities like paid internships, apprenticeships, and experiential education and training (e.g., CTE programs, registered apprenticeships). |

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Employers and workforce and education ecosystem partners identified a critical need for better communicating the vast array of healthcare job opportunities and career pathways available in Arizona. Many of the critical roles identified in the “Stakeholder Engagement and Prioritization of Efforts” section of this report experience talent shortages because of a lack of awareness of each role, its importance to the industry, and the education, training, and licensure pathways associated with them. The following recommended strategies are intended to increase awareness of various healthcare occupations; reach a wider, more diverse talent pool for critical roles; address misperceptions about the industry and its most critical roles; manage worker and learner expectations; and create a sustained pipeline of interested and skilled talent for healthcare employers.

Recommended Strategy 2a: Market the Variety of Healthcare Career Opportunities and Environments in Arizona

Enhance awareness of the healthcare industry and its critical occupations, various healthcare career tracks, and work environments (e.g., hospital/acute care, clinic, laboratory, long-term care) available to workers and learners. Focus on increasing awareness and exposure and shifting perceptions to increase program enrollment, recruitment, promotion, and retention, through industry and occupational profiles, multi-media marketing and messaging (including social channels), career awareness and exposure events, and others.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Create healthcare role descriptions:** Create detailed profiles for critical occupations that includes their typical duties, associated skills and credentials, required education and training, pathway opportunities (e.g., advancement and specializations), and “who might make a great (fill in the role)” statements. Employers may use these profiles for external recruitment and promotion of internal upskilling/ advancement opportunities, and education providers and workforce partners may use the profiles to increase awareness and understanding of healthcare roles with the learners and jobseekers they serve.
- **Market the variety of healthcare career opportunities and healthcare work environments in Arizona:** Create and disseminate marketing and outreach materials that speak to the variety of healthcare jobs available. Also, promote the various work environments individuals may work in, often in the same role. For example, promote opportunities for nurses to work in small clinic environments, hospitals, telehealth, and long-term care facilities, and describe how each environment differs. Clarifying these differences may allow jobseekers and learners to understand the pace and environment best suited for them, including their current family needs and scheduling constraints.
- **Create a multimedia campaign (e.g., videos, social media campaigns) to engage various audiences:** Use video and social and interactive media to engage workers and learners; parents, teachers, counselors, and other influencers; and community leaders and policy makers. Highlight “a day in the life of” experiences for critical jobs. Align distribution of various career awareness materials to the sources each audience consults when looking for career information.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 2b: Promote Critical Healthcare Career Pathways

Leverage and amplify existing career pathway maps that promote multiple on-and-off ramps to training, education, and employment for critical healthcare occupations and career tracks. Include career progression opportunities, wage potential, projected growth, education and training requirements for entry, apprenticeable occupations, and other relevant information.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Leverage and amplify existing career pathway maps and resources:** Use existing, employer validated career pathway information to promote various healthcare pathways, from entry-level to more advanced roles. Ensure that existing resources clarify opportunities to progress in level of responsibility, specialization, and leadership in each pathway; the education, training, and/or certification required to do so; and the various on- and off-ramps to job preparation and advancement.
- **Identify additional career pathways:** Identify any gaps in career pathway information, either creating new career pathway maps and resources, or adding valuable data and information to existing resources. As applicable, include alternative pathways for students that may not easily enter nursing or other high wage fields.



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 2c: Disseminate Career Awareness Information to Diverse Talent Sources and Partners

Catalogue and create meaningful relationships with community organizations and talent sourcing partners that serve underrepresented populations in the industry and expand and diversify the talent pipeline. Leverage partner expertise to craft programmatic approaches that resonate with various talent populations. Include students, educators, counselors, case workers, employers HR departments, community leaders, and others in overall outreach.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Identify existing and potential partners for dissemination:** Identify and catalogue partners who might benefit from career awareness and career pathway resources and amplify access to and use of these tools with various talent populations.
- **Intentionally include opportunity population serving organizations in outreach:** Identify and cultivate relationships with community-based, non-profit, and other organizations that serve those historically marginalized, underrepresented in high-wage, high-demand healthcare roles, and that traditionally experience barriers to education and employment.
- **Prioritize outreach efforts to underrepresented (in the industry or in specific roles), underserved, opportunity populations (those who have traditionally experienced barriers to education or employment), or other prioritized populations, which may include:**
 - The justice-involved
 - Refugees
 - Opportunity youth
 - Underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities
 - The LGBTQ+ community
 - Others identified by employers and workforce and education ecosystem partners
- **Launch an informational training series to promote career pathways:** Promote new and existing career pathway resources and explain their value and use through a training series for career counselors, case workers, and other workforce and education ecosystem partners. Leverage employers to deliver these sessions.
- **Create a communication and resource distribution plan:** Leverage the leadership of statewide and regional organizations and/or marketing and communications expertise to devise a statewide, coordinated plan for career awareness and inspiration. Promote career awareness and career pathway resources and highlight the experiences of talent currently working in critical occupations.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 2d: Enhance and Scale Employer Involvement in Career Exposure Activities

Create interest, awareness, and pipeline growth through enhanced employer involvement in career awareness and exposure opportunities, including a concerted effort to increase work-experience, job shadow, and internship experiences. Produce and/or promote engaging industry and occupational video content to engage audiences through social media. Bridge these activities with more comprehensive work-based learning (WBL) opportunities like paid internships, apprenticeships, and experiential education and training (e.g., CTE programs, registered apprenticeships).

Approaches for Consideration

- **Employer site visits:** Develop a process and schedule for employer site visits where local high school and interested individuals can sign up to visit employer partner facilities and experience healthcare professionals in action.
- **Large scale career awareness events:** Plan and host yearly career awareness events where employers from various sectors (could partner with other sections to grow to a larger scale) bring employees, equipment, simulators, and information so students can visit stations and learn more about the work in the healthcare sector.
- **High school visits:** Develop a plan and schedule for employers to go on a high school “road show” to share information with juniors and seniors about available career tracks and occupations.
- **Encourage career exposure experiences:** Work with employers to encourage and expand the use of internships, externships, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships as additional opportunities for work-based learning to promote career interest, industry awareness, and pipeline expansion.

Promising Approaches in Action

AHCCCS Funding to Expand Behavioral Workforce Training

<https://azhealthworkforce.org/expansion-of-behavioral-health-workforce-training/>

Dignity Health GME Program

<https://azhealthworkforce.org/dignity-health-graduate-medical-education-program/>

ElevateEdAZ secured 300 high school internships last year (289% year over year growth) and nearly 2,000 job shadows. Consider partnering with this program to scale career awareness activities specific to high demand, high wage healthcare positions.

Banner Health and Mayo Clinic have worked diligently to reduce barriers to internships in healthcare for students under 18 years old. Consider creating a central location to share information with other healthcare companies that outline how they were able to achieve these outcomes.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

| Priority 3: Increase Availability and Flexibility of Incentives and Funding Streams | |
|---|---|
| Assess current funding streams and gaps, identify opportunities for enhanced flexibility, and explore national promising practices in funding innovation and braided resourcing that support learners and workers, employers, and education and training ecosystems. Ensure that these mechanisms are targeted to the most critical healthcare industry and worker and learner needs. | |
| Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority | |
| 3a: Catalogue Existing Funding Streams | Catalogue federal, state, regional, and private sector assets to support healthcare workforce education and training (including upskilling), supportive services to learners and workers, incentives to employers, nurse educator incentives, and funds to support sector-based strategies to solve talent challenges. Crosswalk available funds to identify braided funding approaches and create a regular cadence of updates and clear communication patterns to communicate available statewide healthcare workforce funding to all stakeholders. |
| 3b: Ensure Alignment of Existing and Future Funding Streams to Critical Healthcare Needs | Engage healthcare employers and healthcare workers and learners to ensure that existing and future funding support is focused on the most critical healthcare occupations, including integrated care and long-term/direct care; industry talent management challenges, and worker and learner needs (i.e., training and education, ongoing learning, and supportive services). |
| 3c: Explore National Promising Practices in Funding Innovation | Launch a concerted effort to explore promising funding approaches to expand and diversify healthcare talent pipelines, both across Arizona and throughout the nation, as described in Strategy 3a. Catalogue these promising practices and explore viability in Arizona, taking note of both existing and needed structures, funding sources, legislation and policy, and other elements. |
| 3d: Advocate for Enhanced Funding Sources and Flexibilities | Identify gaps in funding, funding constraints, and additional flexibilities needed to support effective and efficient talent pipeline expansion and coordinate advocacy to support legislative changes, funding program adjustments, and grant and philanthropic efforts. |

There is no shortage of strategic focus on expanding the healthcare workforce pipeline across Arizona. Stakeholders indicated that the growing concern for keeping pace with healthcare industry growth and talent needs has resulted in an influx of strategies, funding sources, and attention from state and regional lawmakers, as well as workforce and education ecosystem partners. Stakeholders identified a critical need to take stock of existing funding sources and programmatic efforts, identify gaps in funding to solve complex healthcare workforce issues, better align existing resources (i.e., identify braided funding opportunities), and explore new funding models and flexibilities to solve critical pain points. The following strategies are intended to generate planning for funding expansion and innovation to support the healthcare talent pipeline.

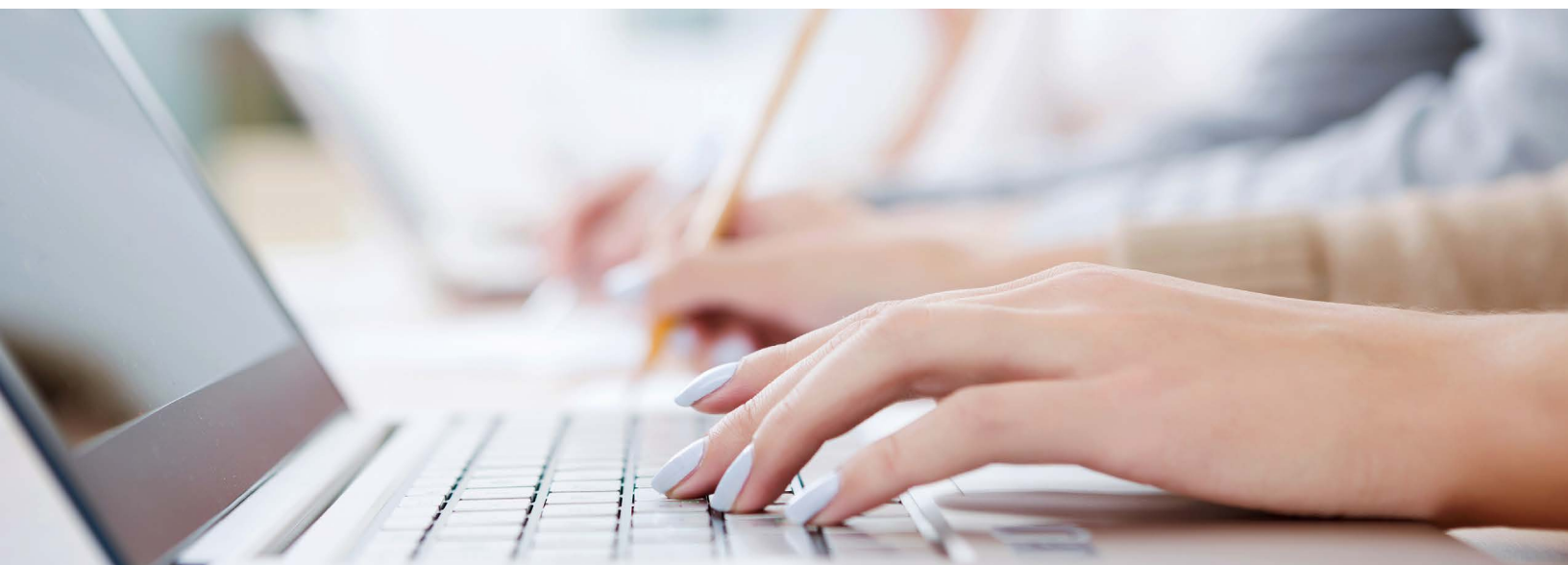
Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 3a: Catalogue Existing Funding Streams

Catalogue federal, state, regional, and private sector assets to support healthcare workforce education and training (including upskilling), supportive services to learners and workers, incentives to employers, nurse educator incentives, and funds to support sector-based strategies to solve talent challenges. Crosswalk available funds to identify braided funding approaches and create a regular cadence of updates and clear communication patterns to communicate available statewide healthcare workforce funding to all stakeholders.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Identify and catalogue existing funding streams and determine potential gaps:** Create a state-level asset map—perhaps differentiated by region—that includes information on various funding mechanisms to support education and training activities. Include funding sources (i.e., organization and funding stream), start and end dates, acceptable uses, key contacts, and application cycles.
- **Create a crosswalk resource to compare funding sources and identify braided funding opportunities:** Build off the asset map described above to create a matrix that indicates opportunities to braid multiple funding streams for more comprehensive support to workers and learners, employers, and training and education providers. Be sure to indicate where braided funding is not allowed across specific funding mechanisms.
- **Identify and prioritize funding gaps:** Identify gaps in funding to support the priorities and strategies identified in this plan, keeping front-and-center the critical pain points occupations and talent management challenges identified through stakeholder engagement activities. Prioritize those gaps for which resolution would create the most significant impact on healthcare workforce pipelines.



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 3b: Ensure Alignment of Existing and Future Funding Streams to Critical Healthcare Needs

Engage healthcare employers and healthcare workers and learners to ensure that existing and future funding support is focused on the most critical healthcare occupations, including integrated care and long-term/direct care; industry talent management challenges, and worker and learner needs (i.e., training and education, ongoing learning, supportive services).

Approaches for Consideration

- **Evaluate current funding sources for their alignment with critical priorities:** Utilize regular (i.e., quarterly) healthcare workforce convenings and intelligence gathered from regional sector partnerships and/or employer collaboratives to verify that current funding streams and priorities align with healthcare workforce needs.
- **Engage workers and learners to determine and/or refine funding priorities:** Be sure to engage HR departments, workforce development and community support service organizations, and education and training institutions to collect worker and learner feedback on barriers to education, training, and employment.



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 3c: Explore National Promising Practices in Funding Innovation

Launch a concerted effort to explore promising funding approaches to expand and diversify healthcare talent pipelines, both across Arizona and throughout the nation, as described in Strategy 3a. Catalogue these promising practices and explore viability in Arizona, taking note of both existing and needed structures, funding sources, legislation and policy, and other elements.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Explore national practices to overcome identified pipeline challenges through funding innovation.** These practices may include:
 - Overcoming lack of pay while in clinical experiences.
 - Creating paid internship opportunities.
 - Exploring tax credits and other incentive models that encourage healthcare systems to upskill their workforce, increase available clinical opportunities, etc.
 - Exploring models for enhanced and flexible scholarships, loan forgiveness, and other incentives and innovations to support upskilling into critical roles and/or serving in educator and preceptor capacities (see Priority 4).
- **Include a focus on supportive services to workers and learners:** Ensure that funding innovation efforts include a focus on supportive services to ensure learner success in education and training for critical jobs—whether for students or incumbent workers—and to mitigate barriers to stable and consistent employment.
- **Create a working group to identify needed structural, policy, and legislative changes and advocate for flexibility and innovation:** Leverage employer and partner expertise through the formation of a working group to explore funding innovation; national (or international) promising practices; and structural, legislative, regulatory, or state or national education/licensing standard hurdles to funding innovation.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 3d: Advocate for Enhanced Funding Sources and Flexibilities

Identify gaps in funding, funding constraints, and additional flexibilities needed to support effective and efficient talent pipeline expansion and coordinate advocacy to support legislative changes, funding program adjustments, and grant and philanthropic efforts.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Explore government grant-making and philanthropic funding opportunities:** Review and apply for relevant government and foundation funding to support training and education of current and future healthcare talent.
- **Identify and advocate for increased legislative funding and flexibility:** Advocate for legislative appropriations to support and enhance healthcare workforce training, work-based learning, and/or apprenticeships in critical healthcare occupations. Identify policy changes that support access to flexible funding streams to support healthcare talent pipeline development,
- **Engage with Arizona registered apprenticeship programs and resources:** Engage closer with the AZ Apprenticeship Office to determine if there is funding that can support the development of apprenticeship programs in high-need healthcare roles and occupations.

Promising Approaches in Action

UnitedHealth Group's Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program which has strong outcomes in a high demand healthcare position.

Collaborate with Arizona Department of Economic Security, ARIZONA@WORK, Maricopa County Workforce Development, and other key stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts.

Consider a resource guide for policy that can help employers and workforce agencies advocate more effectively for change.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

| Priority 4: Address Healthcare Educator and Preceptor Shortages | |
|---|---|
| Formulate a statewide working group to better define nurse preceptor and educator shortages—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and devise innovative, flexible solutions and funding mechanisms to expand clinical opportunities and increase the healthcare educator workforce. | |
| Recommended Strategies to Address This Priority | |
| 4a: Form a Statewide Working Group to Explore and Implement Solutions | Establish an official, action-oriented working group to better identify—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and describe healthcare preceptor and healthcare educator shortages, and to explore and implement innovative solutions that benefit healthcare workers and learners, avoid overburdensome processes for healthcare systems, and support talent pipeline growth for critical roles. |
| 4b: Expand Clinical Opportunities for Critical Roles | Identify and share promising regional, statewide, and national practices that allow for the expansion of preceptor opportunities through exploration of innovative and flexible models (e.g., innovative structures and schedules, incorporation of simulation), potential changes to education and certification/licensing standards, etc. Efforts should ensure quality learning outcomes and experiences and consider healthcare systems' financial and operational constraints. |
| 4c: Explore and Establish Innovative Funding Models for Preceptor Expansion | Collectively explore, advocate for, and implement innovative funding and incentive models to encourage expansion of preceptor opportunities. Supports might address the challenges experienced by healthcare systems, students/workers, preceptors, and nurse educators. |
| 4d: Explore and Establish Incentives for Nurse Educators | Explore the root causes of the nurse educator shortage and devise solutions for both reducing barriers and providing meaningful incentives to encourage growth in the nurse educator pipeline. |

Employers and workforce and education ecosystem stakeholders identified the lack of a sustained pipeline of healthcare educators and limited clinical placement opportunities as significant risks to keeping pace with statewide healthcare workforce needs. The following recommendations intend to address this challenge through intentional, coordinated exploration of statewide and national strategies to overcome healthcare educator and preceptor capacity issues, and through examination of funding supports, incentives, and innovations in certification/licensing standards and healthcare system operating models.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 4a: Form a Statewide Working Group to Explore and Implement Solutions

Establish an official, action-oriented working group to better identify—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and describe healthcare preceptor and healthcare educator shortages, and to explore and implement innovative solutions that benefit healthcare workers and learners, avoid overburdensome processes for healthcare systems, and support talent pipeline growth for critical roles.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Create a statewide, strategic working group to study challenges and devise solutions:** Develop and launch a nomination process for the statewide working group to mitigate preceptor and educator shortages. Consider diversity of individuals and geography when nominating workgroup members and ensuring the inclusion of both rural and urban representation.
- **Leverage existing groups and efforts:** Be sure to leverage employer and partner leaders that are already implementing creative preceptor and education expansion solutions. Balance voices at the table by ensuring the inclusion of both employer and partner leaders.



Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 4b: Expand Clinical Opportunities for Critical Roles

Identify and share promising regional, statewide, and national practices that allow for the expansion of preceptor opportunities through exploration of innovative and flexible models (e.g., innovative structures and schedules, incorporation of simulation), potential changes to education and certification/licensing standards, etc. Efforts should ensure quality learning outcomes and experiences and consider healthcare systems' financial and operational constraints.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Explore clinical placement innovations:** Review with employers and partner stakeholders any national best practices that address challenges with clinical opportunity scheduling. Review and rank potential innovations to support clinical opportunity growth. As briefly discussed in stakeholder engagement sessions, innovations may include (as allowed within licensing standards, etc.):
 - Creating a co-op or pool of preceptors from which multiple healthcare systems can draw.
 - Leveraging healthcare retirees to continue part-time careers in preceptor roles.
 - Phased retirement models for preceptors.
 - Exploring adjustments to preceptor ratios.
 - Expanding clinical opportunities to nights and weekends to accommodate work schedules, expand opportunities.
 - Creating preceptor staffing structures that support less experienced preceptors with “super-preceptor” or preceptor supervisor roles to distribute responsibilities, create an experienced preceptor pipeline, and effectively leverage super-preceptor expertise.
 - Exploring increased use of simulation tools to supplement supervised clinical time, as appropriate.
- **Identify constraints:** Review, identify, discuss, and elevate constraints imposed by legislation and/or state or licensing board policies and licensure requirements. Engage in discussion about the possible steps required to overcome these challenges.

Workforce Plan Priorities and Strategies

Recommended Strategy 4c: Explore and Establish Innovative Funding Models for Preceptor Expansion

Collectively explore, advocate for, and implement innovative funding and incentive models to encourage expansion of preceptor opportunities. Supports might address the challenges experienced by healthcare systems, students/workers, preceptors, and nurse educators. The group will also consider and take into account any relevant outcomes from the Arizona Board of Nursing preceptor grants.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Complete a national scan of promising funding models and incentive programs:** Document practices and reach out to key contacts to further explore models, stumbling blocks, lessons learned, and keys to success.
- **Identify constraints. Review, identify, discuss, and elevate constraints in expanding the nurse educator pipeline:** Engage in discussion about the possible steps required to overcome these challenges.
- **Incentivize preceptors through a variety of funding approaches:** This may include various financial incentives to preceptors, including salary incentives, loan forgiveness, and others.

Recommended Strategy 4d: Explore and Establish Incentives for Nurse Educators

Explore the root causes of the nurse educator shortage and devise solutions for both reducing barriers and providing meaningful incentives to encourage growth in the nurse educator pipeline.

Approaches for Consideration

- **Review best practices in the provision of nurse educator incentives:** Complete a national review of how other states, regions, and/or workforce systems are addressing nurse educator shortages and providing incentives to grow the educator pipeline. Review top strategies with employers to determine next steps. Learn from national H-1B Nursing Expansion Grant Program efforts and grantees to leverage new and scaled models for expanding the nursing educator workforce, among other national efforts.
- **Interview nurse educators to guide strategy:** Hold focus groups or interviews with nurse educators to discuss and determine what relevant and valuable incentives might make an impact/incentivize growth of the nurse educator pipeline.

Promising Approaches in Action

Arizona Board of Nursing 1803 grant. Support the distribution of effective practices that have come out of this work, such as HonorHealth's work to expand clinical opportunities to night and weekends and Super Preceptor program.

[State of Arizona Grant Program for Preceptors](#)

Mobilizing This Plan through Implementation

This plan details the high-level priorities and healthcare workforce pipeline development strategies identified by stakeholders and reflects critical pain points and initiatives identified throughout this process. Stakeholders should consider this plan a starting point for a coordinated and comprehensive, action-oriented effort to streamline improvements to the talent pipeline for critical healthcare roles and to mitigate a variety of talent management challenges that transcend individual healthcare roles and pathways. This plan should be adapted as necessary, using the “Approaches for Consideration” presented as a starting point for working group action toward comprehensive and coordinated statewide and regional solutions.

To manage collective action on these priorities, an “Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template” is included as Appendix A. This resource is designed to further detail specific steps required to fully explore, design (or replicate), implement, and monitor new solutions, and to replicate and scale existing promising practices.

For more information about how to get involved in the efforts described in this plan, please contact workforce@phoenixchamber.com.



Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template

This action planning template supports implementation of the Arizona Healthcare Workforce Plan. It aligns to the four key priorities of the plan and each priority's associated strategies. To inform this action plan, please refer to the strategy details provided in the plan document. Then, use this action planning tool to further detail the actions required to implement each strategy, assign timelines and responsibilities, and monitor progress toward successful implementation. As necessary, add additional columns to accommodate detailed progress updates and/or modify formats to accommodate the nuances and styles of each partner and employer workgroup seeking to accomplish each priority and/or strategy.

Priority 1: Improve Talent Demand and Supply Data to Support Informed Decision-Making

Establish a statewide process for regular collection of primary and secondary data to support a full understanding of employer demand for critical healthcare occupations, training and education provider ability to meet that demand, and any factors contributing to talent and/or skill gaps.



Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template

| Associated Strategies | How will we get there? | How long will this take? | Who is responsible? | How will we know we are successful? |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Taken from Arizona Healthcare Workforce Plan – 2024 | What steps are required to implement this strategy? | Assign a timeline | Individual / org accountable | Describe success |
| 1a: Produce Yearly Industry and Occupational Demand Reports Leverage the expertise of statewide economic and workforce development organizations (e.g., AZ Office of Economic Opportunity, Arizona Commerce Authority) to obtain industry and occupational data about healthcare workforce needs on an annual basis. Data reports should represent statewide and regional snapshots. | | | | |
| 1b: Improve the Quality and Completeness of Talent Supply Data Collect comprehensive supply-side data—from both public sources (e.g., IPEDS) and directly from institutions—to evaluate education and training provider enrollment, completions, and capacity against healthcare workforce demand data. Include data and employer intelligence on additional dynamics like projected retirements and talent pipeline leakage (i.e., graduates employed in non-healthcare occupations, talent out-migration). | | | | |
| 1c: Validate and Supplement Statewide Occupational Data with Employer Intel Provide regular opportunities to validate and supplement statewide occupational data with employer intelligence about criticality, shorter-term projections, nuanced needs, and talent management pain points that transcend occupation. Establish regular industry validation opportunities (e.g., quarterly or semi-annual workforce summits) and launch supplemental employer surveys to obtain primary data and additional nuance. | | | | |

Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template

Priority 2: Expand and Diversify the Healthcare Talent Pipeline through a Statewide Career Awareness Campaign

Create a coordinated and comprehensive statewide strategy to attract diverse learners and workers to the healthcare workforce pipeline for critical roles and clearly communicate pathways of opportunity, environmental nuances, and education, training, and credential requirements.

| Associated Strategies | How will we get there? | How long will this take? | Who is | How will we know we are successful? |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Taken from Arizona Healthcare Workforce Plan – 2024 | What steps are required to implement this strategy? | Assign a timeline | Individual / org accountable | Describe success |
| 2a: Market the Variety of Healthcare Career Opportunities and Environments in Arizona Enhance awareness of the healthcare industry and its critical occupations, various healthcare career tracks, and work environments (e.g., hospital/acute care, clinic, laboratory, long-term care) available to workers and learners. Focus on increasing awareness and exposure and shifting perceptions to increase program enrollment, recruitment, promotion, and retention, through industry and occupational profiles, multi-media marketing and messaging (including social channels), career awareness and exposure events, and others. | | | | |
| 2b: Promote Critical Healthcare Career Pathways Leverage and amplify existing career pathway maps that promote multiple on- and off-ramps to training, education, and employment for critical healthcare occupations and career tracks. Include career progression opportunities, wage potential, projected growth, education and training requirements for entry, apprenticeable occupations, and other relevant information. | | | | |
| 2c: Disseminate Career Awareness Information to Diverse Talent Sources and Partners Catalogue and create meaningful relationships with community organizations and talent sourcing partners that serve underrepresented populations in the industry and expand and diversify the talent pipeline. Leverage partner expertise to craft programmatic approaches that resonate with various talent populations. Include students, educators, counselors, case workers, employers HR departments, community leaders, and others in overall outreach. | | | | |
| 2d: Enhance and Scale Employer Involvement in Career Exposure Activities Create interest, awareness, and pipeline growth through enhanced employer involvement in career awareness and exposure opportunities, including a concerted effort to increase work-experience, job shadow, and internship experiences. Produce and/or promote engaging industry and occupational video content to engage audiences through social media. Bridge these activities with more comprehensive work-based learning (WBL) opportunities like paid internships, apprenticeships, and experiential education and training (e.g., CTE programs, registered apprenticeships). | | | | |

Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template

Priority 3: Increase Availability and Flexibility of Incentives and Funding Streams

Assess current funding streams and gaps, identify opportunities for enhanced flexibility, and explore national promising practices in funding innovation and braided resourcing that support learners and workers, employers, and education and training ecosystems. Ensure that these mechanisms are targeted to the most critical healthcare industry and worker and learner needs.

| Associated Strategies | How will we get there? | How long will this take? | Who is responsible? | How will we know we are successful? |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Taken from Arizona Healthcare Workforce Plan – 2024 | What steps are required to implement this strategy? | Assign a timeline | Individual / org accountable | Describe success |
| 3a: Catalogue Existing Funding Streams Catalogue federal, state, regional, and private sector assets to support healthcare workforce education and training (including upskilling), supportive services to learners and workers, incentives to employers, nurse educator incentives, and funds to support sector-based strategies to solve talent challenges. Crosswalk available funds to identify braided funding approaches and create a regular cadence of updates and clear communication patterns to communicate available statewide healthcare workforce funding to all stakeholders. | | | | |
| 3b: Ensure Alignment of Existing Funding Streams to Critical Healthcare Needs Engage healthcare employers and healthcare workers and learners to ensure that existing and future funding support is focused on the most critical healthcare occupations, industry talent management challenges, and worker and learner needs (i.e., training and education, ongoing learning, supportive services). | | | | |
| 3c: Explore National Promising Practices in Funding Innovation Launch a concerted effort to explore promising funding approaches to expand and diversify healthcare talent pipelines, both across Arizona and throughout the nation, as described in Strategy 3a. Catalogue these promising practices and explore viability in Arizona, taking note of both existing and needed structures, funding sources, legislation and policy, and other elements. | | | | |
| 3d: Advocate for Enhanced Funding Sources and Flexibilities Identify gaps in funding, funding constraints, and additional flexibilities needed to support effective and efficient talent pipeline expansion and coordinate advocacy to support legislative changes, funding program adjustments, and grant and philanthropic efforts. | | | | |

Appendix A. Arizona Healthcare Workforce Action Planning Template

Priority 4: Address Healthcare Educator and Preceptor Shortages

Formulate a statewide working group to better define nurse preceptor and educator shortages—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and devise innovative, flexible solutions and funding mechanisms to expand clinical opportunities and increase the healthcare educator workforce.

| Associated Strategies | How will we get there? | How long will this take? | Who is responsible? | How will we know we are successful? |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Taken from Arizona Healthcare Workforce Plan – 2024 | What steps are required to implement this strategy? | Assign a timeline | Individual / org accountable | Describe success |
| 4a: Form a Statewide Working Group to Explore and Implement Solutions Establish an official, action-oriented working group to better identify—through quantitative and qualitative analysis—and describe healthcare preceptor and healthcare educator shortages, and to explore and implement innovative solutions that benefit healthcare workers and learners, avoid overburdensome processes for healthcare systems, and support talent pipeline growth for critical roles. | | | | |
| 4b: Expand Clinical Opportunities for Critical Roles Identify and share promising regional, statewide, and national practices that allow for the expansion of preceptor opportunities through exploration of innovative and flexible models (e.g., innovative structures and schedules, incorporation of simulation), potential changes to education and certification/licensing standards, etc. Efforts should ensure quality learning outcomes and experiences and consider healthcare systems' financial and operational constraints. | | | | |
| 4c: Explore and Establish Innovative Funding Models for Preceptor Expansion Collectively explore, advocate for, and implement innovative funding and incentive models to encourage expansion of preceptor opportunities. Supports might address the challenges experienced by healthcare systems, students/workers, preceptors, and nurse educators. | | | | |
| 4d: Explore and Establish Incentives for Nurse Educators Explore the root causes of the nurse educator shortage and devise solutions for both reducing barriers and providing meaningful incentives to encourage growth in the nurse educator pipeline. | | | | |

Appendix B. Participating Organization Acknowledgements

The following healthcare employers and partners participated in stakeholder engagement and healthcare workforce planning activities from March to June 2024. We thank the following organizations for their time, leadership and expertise, staff capacity, and candid feedback regarding priorities and promising practices in healthcare workforce talent pipeline preparation.

Employers

- Adelante Healthcare
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Banner Health
- CommonSpirit / Dignity Health
- Health System Alliance of Arizona
- Home Assist Health
- HonorHealth
- Mayo Clinic
- Mercy Care
- Phoenix Children's Hospital
- Phoenix Indian Center
- Sonora Quest Laboratories
- Sun Life Health
- Terros Health

Education and Workforce Organizations

- Ability360
- Academy On-Demand
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Arizona Career Pathways
- Arizona Commerce Authority
- Arizona Complete Health
- Arizona Health Care Association
- Arizona Nurses Association
- Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity
- Arizona State University
- ARIZONA@WORK
- Arouet
- Career Connectors
- Center for the Future of Arizona
- City of Buckeye
- City of Chandler
- City of Phoenix
- Department of Economic Security
- Dress for Success Phoenix
- Elevation Academy
- Fresh Start Women's Foundation
- Friendly House, Inc.
- Gateway Community College
- Grand Canyon University
- Maricopa County
- Maricopa County Workforce Development Board
- Maricopa Community College District
- Northern Arizona University
- Paradise Valley Community College
- Phoenix Union High School District
- PHX Bioscience Core
- Pima Medical Institute
- Pinal County
- Pipeline AZ
- Rasa Public Benefit Corporation
- State of Arizona
- University of Arizona
- Valley of the Sun United Way
- West-Mec



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