



PINAL COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 - 2023

Pinal County Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning Process

The Pinal County Workforce Development Board (PCWDB) established a strategic planning initiative to clarify, unify, and direct the workforce development system in the local area. This system serves the Board of Supervisors, cities and towns, and employers and job seekers throughout the County.

The PCWDB recognizes that strategic thinking, systems and design thinking, and critical and creative thinking are required to design a future that positively affects the jobseekers and businesses throughout the local area. The strategic plan provides an overarching direction that responds to the substantial endeavors of workforce and economic development throughout the County.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment was conducted for the purpose of informing the design of the strategic plan for the Pinal County Workforce Development Board. The data collection for this assessment included reading documents, conducting interviews, conducting a focus group, administering a survey, and performing an overall environmental scan.

A rich array of perspectives resulted and facilitated the emergence of a clear picture that enriches the context for strategic planning to serve the Local Workforce Development Area. The findings that emerged are arranged in three categories: assets, needs, and recommendations.

Assets

1. Strong base of accessible leaders supportive of Workforce Development, including elected officials and executive officers representing County and City government.
2. Strong stakeholder initiatives that create public value represent a point of pride for Pinal County. Two signature examples: Achieve Pinal involves seniors in contributing to education. Central Arizona College partners with industry to prepare youth and adults for careers. Active non-profit organizations with committed members who contribute their time to developing youth and adults in the local area.

3. Effective staff to the Board highly knowledgeable of Workforce Development and relevant statistical support to guide the Board's deliberations in support of Pinal County.
4. Newly reconfigured, representative, legally compliant Board including industry sectors, Core Partners, and Workforce Development professionals.
5. Powerful economic growth and development in Pinal County, that has been driving complementary workforce development strategy and performance. Current and planned relocation of major businesses to Pinal County that will help transform the local area to a thriving business center.

Needs

1. Talent pipeline designed to respond to economic growth and development.
2. Even more proactive outreach to employers, communities, elected officials and citizens throughout Pinal County leading to workforce development services County-wide.
3. Unified direction for workforce development that demonstrates innovative thinking about how to address the needs.
4. Structure for Board and partner activities, communication, and follow up.
5. Strategic communication versus compliance-based communication.
6. Unified core and other partner efforts within the job center.
7. Vehicle for acquiring additional revenues to supplement WIOA funds to serve workforce development comprehensively County-wide.

Recommendations

1. Define a clear sense of purpose for the Workforce Development Board and structure all Board effort to produce meaningful outcomes and results.
2. Think and communicate in more strategic, systems, future, critical, and creative way that encompasses the complexity of opportunity in Pinal County.
3. Incorporate planning for potential layoffs that may arise due to the current health and economic crisis.

4. Establish an intentional communication network that brings together cities and towns within the County and joins with state government in support of Pinal County Economic and Workforce Development.
5. Design a comprehensive talent pipeline strategy that methodically includes exposure, education, and career development beginning with early childhood education.

SWOT Analysis

Figure 1 synthesizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in the needs assessment.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Compliant, representative Board provides diverse thinking -Knowledgeable staff to the Board guides the Board in remaining compliant with WIOA, provides data, and supports innovative thinking -Record of strong economic growth and development -Elected officials engaged in outreach to support economic and workforce development -Strong stakeholder initiatives contributing to talent pipeline development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unclear sense of purpose for Workforce Development Board -Lack of coordinated outreach to communities, employers, and citizens County-wide -Insufficient structure to guide Board performance
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clarify sense of direction from Board -Think and communicate strategically and systemically -Establish communication network of cities and towns -Design and communicate talent pipeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Potential layoffs due to health crisis -Competition with other communities for business relocation -Absence of supplemental funds to meet growth needs

Figure 1. SWOT Analysis

Pinal County Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Overview

The Pinal County Workforce Development Board recognized the importance of developing the strategic plan prior to the start of the 2020 fiscal year. The original schedule entailed a face-to-face session in May 2020. In face of the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, the Board made the decision to convene the sessions online using the Zoom platform.

Optimizing the utilization of the Zoom platform necessitated the thoughtful design of short, focused sessions structured to emphasize background knowledge and perspective and the collective production of components of the strategic plan. The targeted result was to create a complete strategic plan encompassing the mission, vision, goals, and strategies. This strategic plan will then guide implementation design, scheduled for Phase 2 of the strategic planning process in July 2020.

Toward that end, a series of public sessions was scheduled and conducted as follows:

Session 1: Thursday, April 23rd, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Needs Assessment: Key Points
- 13 Functions of a Local Board
- Mission

Session 2: Thursday, April 30th, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Vision Development

Session 3: Thursday, May 7th, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Aligning Goals with Mission and Vision
- Systems Thinking

Session 4: Monday, May 11th, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Goal Development

Session 5: Strategy Development Sessions held Tuesday, May 12th:

- Strategy Session A: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- Strategy Session B: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Strategy Session C: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

- Strategy Session D: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Strategy Session E: 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Strategy Session F: 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sessions 1 – 4 were designed for contributions by members of the Board. The multiple segments of Session 5 were designed for Board and stakeholder input to design strategies to support the goals developed by the Board.

All sessions were structured to balance the input delivered by participants. Two methods of input were utilized: voice and chat box. These methods offered an array of rich and detailed idea sharing and facilitated the integration of critical and creative thinking that characterize strong and vital strategic planning. Discussion was focused, lively, and encompassing of multiple points of view that characterized diverse thinking.

A framework for learning and participation was utilized to provide an efficient mechanism for anchoring the base of knowledge represented by organizational systems theory and the practical focus on designing a strategic plan. During each session, formal principles were introduced, activities were provided, and design endeavors were facilitated. At the conclusion of each of the initial four sessions, a reflection question was provided to guide preparation for all participants to take part in the upcoming session.

Throughout the strategic planning sessions, Board members engaged in productive discussion pertinent to a systems-based view of the design of workforce development across Pinal County. It was agreed by Board members that its role as a Board is to design, guide, and steer a unified strategic direction for workforce development endeavors through multi-organizational system that comprises workforce development in the County. Four key definitions were established and confirmed at each of the strategic planning design sessions:

Mission: Authorizing legislation that defines the organization’s purpose.

Vision: What the future will look like once the mission has been fulfilled; a shared, aspirational, inspirational direction.

Goal: Broad, qualitative statement of what the organization hopes to achieve.

Strategy: The primary driving direction to ensure achievement of a goal.

Mission:

The mission of the Pinal County Workforce Development Board is to fulfill the Six Purposes of WIOA.

Unlike private sector mission identification, governing bodies of public organizations are authorized by law, in this case the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). This law establishes Six Purposes that describe the legislative intent for guiding productive change. The Six Purposes of WIOA specify the reason for the law, whom the law serves, and what is to be accomplished. The Six Purposes are listed below and synthesized in Figure 2.

Six Purposes of WIOA

- (1) To increase, for individuals in the United States, particularly those individuals with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services they need to succeed in the labor market.
- (2) To support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system in the United States.
- (3) To improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide America's workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages and to provide America's employers with the skilled workers the employers need to succeed in a global economy.
- (4) To promote improvement in the structure of and delivery of services through the United States workforce development system to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- (5) To increase the prosperity of workers and employers in the United States, the economic growth of communities, regions, and States, and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- (6) For purposes of subtitle A and B of title I, to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic

self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation¹.



Figure 2: Six Purposes of WIOA

The PCWDB confirmed that its mission is to fulfill the Six Purposes of the Workforce Development and Opportunity Act. Such fulfillment positions the County to engage in aligned and purposeful strategic endeavors designed to contribute meaningfully to competitive economic viability while ensuring quality of life for families and businesses throughout cities and towns in Pinal County.

¹ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § § 3101- 3361 (2018).

Vision:

Pinal County: A vibrant, affordable community, home to a skilled, diverse workforce; providing innovative opportunities for job seekers, employers, and employees to learn, grow, and prosper.

Upon confirmation of the mission for Workforce Development, the PCWDB engaged in the design of a vision for Workforce Development for the County. Emphasis was placed on the definition of the vision as: What the future will look like once the mission has been fulfilled; a shared, aspirational, inspirational direction.

That future is intended to express the vision that describes a desirable future. The vision statement is expressed in present tense, to heighten its potential for a meaningful reality. The vision provides an opportunity for communication and clarity of messaging around optimizing services for residents and businesses in the County.

To that end, strategic planning participants engaged in an activity designed to identify language, specifically words and phrases, that characterize how workforce development can enrich the economic viability and quality of life and opportunity for all jobseekers, employees, and employers.

Participants utilized both the chat box and voice to specify words and phrases that potentially would contribute to a vision statement. Two rounds were conducted for identifying words and phrases. The first round involved pure brainstorming. The second round involved synthesizing words and phrases from the larger list.

Upon completing that list, participants were asked to craft a single sentence that characterized the vision for workforce development in Pinal County. Board members drafted multiple versions of the comprehensive dialogue, seeking to explore what the vision might mean to different jobseekers and employers in the County.

Three draft sentences were crafted, and Board members voted on the three, resulting in a consensus view of the vision, followed by shared editing, and resulting in the vision statement listed above.

Systems Thinking

Board members were asked a stimulus question to guide its exploration of system connectivity among partners and services:

“What is the best way to bring the parts of the workforce system together?”

Throughout Session 3, participants explored the concept of a multi-organizational system as it applies to workforce development. The system involves numerous partner agencies working together to realize a single vision established by the Board.

As part of the discussion about the workforce development system in Pinal County, a system diagram, or systemigram, was developed to demonstrate how the parts of the system connect. The diagram is displayed in Figure 3 on the next page, and was based on data collected during the needs assessment.

Participants examined the systemigram in three different segments and as a totality, and addressed the following questions:

1. Select one of the system stakeholders from the diagram. How might they view the workforce development system?
2. How could their perspective contribute to a more effective workforce development system?

Participants addressed the relevance of exploring different opportunities to introduce youth and young adults to areas of career opportunity both present and anticipated in the near-term future. These areas were recognized as focal points that should guide the development of goals to serve the County’s workforce development system.

Opportunities to include individuals facing barriers to employment were identified as mutually beneficial to employers, communities, and individual job seekers.

Of significance as well was the Board’s recognition that proactive outreach was a necessary component of developing an understanding of the reach of workforce development, the multiple roles in the system itself, and the importance of connectivity among partners and consumers of workforce development programs and services.

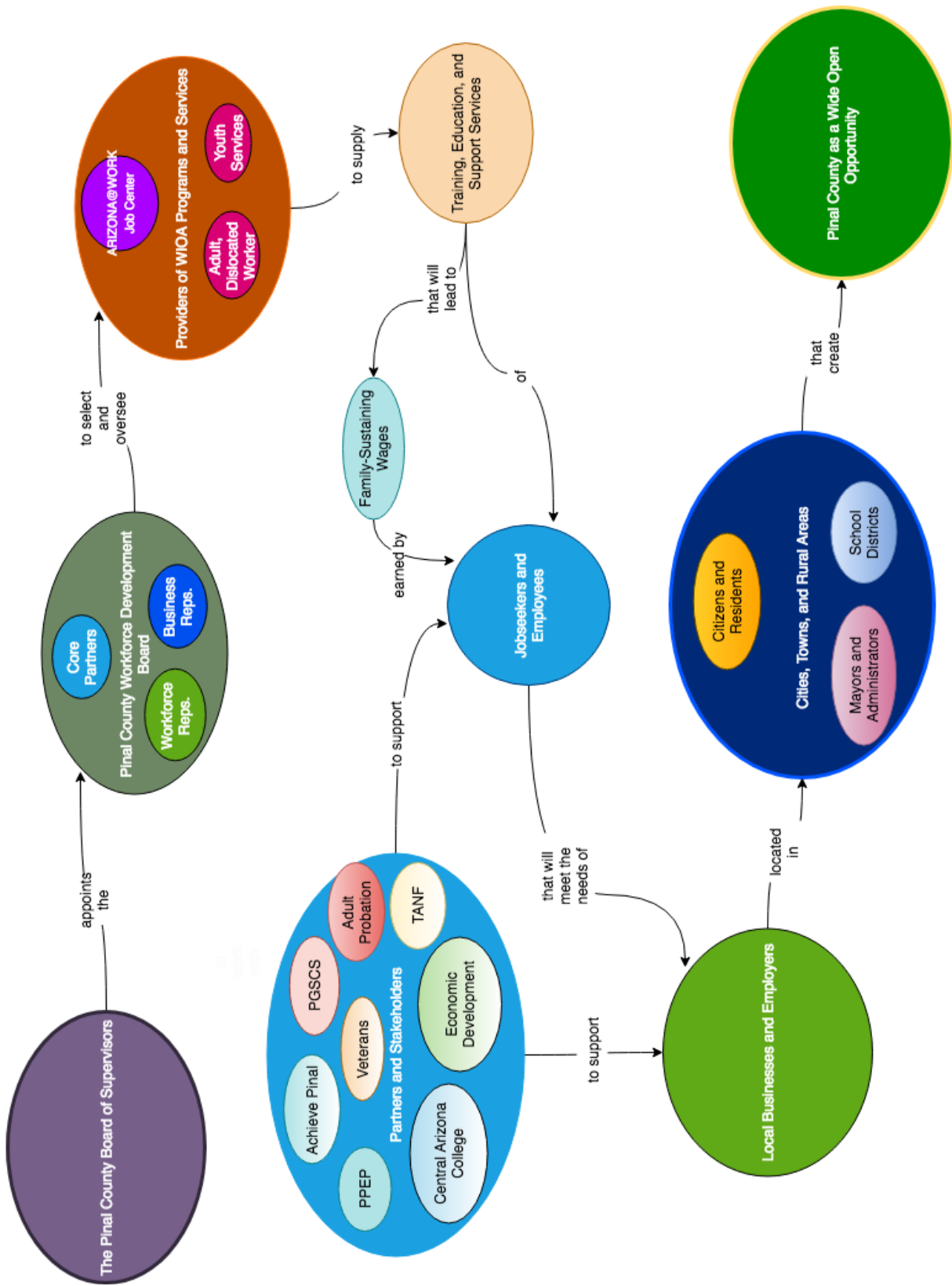


Figure 3. Systemigram of Pinal County Workforce Development System

Goals:

Goal 1:

Enhance the talent pipeline of work-ready individuals and connect that diverse workforce with high quality, sustainable jobs.

Goal 2:

Establish the Pinal County Workforce Development Board as the central convener facilitating workforce activities in the region, rural and non-rural.

Goal 3:

Create aligned and innovative methods of service delivery that demonstrate relevance and responsiveness in a changing economy.

Goal Design

The PCWDB Board explored the realization of the vision established for workforce development to serve employers and jobseekers of the County. Toward that end, the Board recognized that a goal is defined as a qualitative statement of what the organization hopes to achieve. In discussion, Board members emphasized that the goals together must be achieved to ensure that the vision is brought to life.

Members of the Board deliberated on the range of focal areas that goals must encompass to ensure that the vision can be realized.

The focal question for goal design was introduced: What goals will best support the fulfillment of the Six Purposes and realize the vision of workforce development in Pinal County?

Board members were encouraged to consider the sufficiency of the goals together for ensuring realization of the vision designed by the Board. In

addition, Board members explored the strength of each goal to fulfill the mission for Workforce Development as outlined in the Six Purposes.

Goal 1:

Enhance the talent pipeline of work-ready individuals and connect that diverse workforce with high quality, sustainable jobs.

Participants emphasized that designing a desirable future for jobseekers and employers means creating a pipeline of qualified individuals who are ready to respond with interest, skill, and eagerness to contribute to their organizations and communities. Of particular importance is the early exposure of young students to the range of career choices available to them.

The Board recognized the considerable efforts by stakeholders within the County, including Achieve Pinal, to drive career education and understanding of students by such initiatives as Careertopia. This initiative spans multiple towns within the County, and includes a diverse range of youth in an introduction and orientation to career education important to youth development of confidence and competence for choices of career.

An orchestrated, well-aligned approach to integrating career readiness through Career Pathways and apprenticeships was determined to be an effective way to plan and design Goal 1 that serves both employers and job seekers in a manner that is relevant and responsive in a changing economic environment.

Goal 2:

Establish the Pinal County Workforce Development Board as the central convener facilitating workforce activities in the region, rural and non-rural.

Based on the 13 Functions of a Local Workforce Development Board in WIOA the Board cited its role as convener as central to the range of workforce partner endeavors across Pinal County.

Discussion of this goal included a recognition that a diverse array of providers currently performs important roles relevant to providing education

and training, workplace readiness, employer engagement, and other services necessary to ensure a coherent system of workforce development.

Members of the Board further recognized the importance of addressing the distinctive needs of all locations within the County, notably rural locations with fewer immediate career opportunities than their counterparts in more populated areas.

Of vital importance to Goal 2 is the integration and communication of one, focal system of workforce development, steered by the combined expertise of Board members representing key industry sectors identified for Pinal County as well as expertise in core partner areas established in WIOA.

Goal 3:

Create aligned and innovative methods of service delivery that demonstrate relevance and responsiveness in a changing economy.

The Board acknowledged the importance of ensuring that its status as a Board in compliance with federal and state policies positions it to design innovative approaches that uniquely serve the local workforce development area.

Critical to this direction is the alignment of services that demonstrate the systemic capacity to withstand environmental and economic changes.

Fully understood linkages among partner services, employer customer requirements, and the reality of job seeker capability and opportunities to learn and develop are integral to a strong system of workforce development.

Strategies

Board members and stakeholder partner representatives collaborated on the design of strategies intended to drive the achievement of the three goals established by the Pinal County Workforce Development Board. Strategies were defined as the primary driving directions to ensure achievement of a goal.

All participants actively engaged in designing strategies intended to encompass the primary directions needed to increase the probability of realizing the goals.

Each of the strategies functions as a directive designed to stimulate tangible actions and metrics within a timeline that ensures realization of the associated goal.

Goal 1: Enhance the talent pipeline of work-ready individuals and connect that diverse workforce with high quality, sustainable jobs.

Strategies for Goal 1:

- Direct and shape work readiness through education (K-12), GED/HSE preparation, and workforce development.
- Coordinate training including post-secondary initiatives directed toward the workplace.
- Integrate quality of education at all levels to support a strong talent pipeline with longevity of purpose.
- Invest in Career Pathways that respond to employers' needs and job seekers' interests.
- Design a robust system of referrals to community-based services to transcend barriers to employment.
- Connect people seeking jobs with high-quality, sustainable jobs.

Goal 2: Establish the Pinal County Workforce Development Board as the central convener facilitating workforce activities in the region, rural and non-rural.

Strategies for Goal 2:

- Engage with employers in targeted sectors.
 - Become the strategic convener to familiarize everyone in Pinal County with programs and services.
 - Establish connections among programs and services to meet employers' and job seekers' goals.
 - Facilitate workforce activities in northern and eastern rural portions of the County.
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Strategies for Goal 2 (cont.):

- Establish a broad service direction by the Workforce Development Board that guides program directions.
 - Establish a clear outreach initiative for employers, job seekers, and community members.
 - Explore funding alternatives and options for enhancing workforce development services.
 - Be the strategic voice between goals of PCWDB and state-level workforce development organizations (DES and ACA) to drive innovative change as a whole.
 - Facilitate partnership endeavor that integrates workforce providers in Pinal County.
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Goal 3: Create aligned and innovative methods of service delivery that demonstrate relevance and responsiveness in a changing economy.

Strategies for Goal 3:

- Ensure a data-confirmed approach to the location of physical job centers and the need for virtual service delivery.
 - Explore the potential for innovative application of technology and virtual services.
 - Align services in a manner that responds to changing employer and environmental needs.
 - Establish responsibility for connecting systemic needs to existing systemic resources.
 - Design well aligned, inclusive, and proactive hybrid approaches to support small and micro-businesses in Pinal County.
 - Support and encourage entrepreneurial enterprises at the early and continuing stages of development.
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Values

The board expressed a shared commitment to design a system aimed at developing a strong, resilient workforce to respond to a stimulating engine of economic development. Central to the Board's drive to design and integrate opportunities throughout Pinal County via workforce development initiatives are the values embraced by the Board.

Two discussion points guided the Board's exploration of values:

1. Describe the difference the Pinal County Workforce Development Board can make in Pinal County.
2. What does your board representation contribute to making that difference?

Based on the discussion points, the following values emerged as important to the design and delivery of the workforce development system:

Inclusion

- Integrate partners in a productive way to realize the vision. Establish a structure that promotes inclusion.
- Recognize the relevance of inclusion toward building and delivering on a strategic vision.
- Recognize that an inclusive Board can be an influential one.
- Include the needs of northern Pinal County for health education, outreach, and enrollment.
- Recognize the value of collective experience to strengthen decisions for the community.

Unity

- Connect all parts of workforce development into one dynamic, evolving system serving rural and non-rural communities.
- Establish and sustain partnerships with businesses, education, economic development, and job centers.
- Connect job seekers to employers.
- Connect with Central Arizona College and higher education.
- Connect industry and education in integrated Career Pathways design and usage.
- Integrating relationships in the Copper Corridor will represent and support those needs in rural Pinal county.

Engaging Communication

- Invest in proactive communication with employers, emphasizing strategic directions and supporting targeted industry sectors and organizations to build Career Pathways for job seekers.
- Serve as the voice of the employer and potential employee. Stimulate increased usage of ARIZONA@WORK for jobseekers and employers will use this service more.
- Market the Pinal County Workforce Career Centers; educate the public on the benefits of using the job centers and driving programs which support employer needs.
- Remain relevant county wide to rural and non-rural communities now and in the future.

Respect

- Reach diverse job seekers, including those with barriers.
- Create spaces for potential candidates to get the required training in a field or career of their choosing.
- Determine types of barriers and create tools for individuals to overcome them.
- Provide an easy way to navigate the workforce system for all levels of job seekers.
- Make sure services are smooth, aligned, and relevant to the needs of the employer and the job seeker.

Quality of Life

- Provide resources and pathways for training.
- Invest in the availability of comprehensive training centers in the County.
- Identify and apply current resources in the community for both job seekers and employers.
- Increase employment in Pinal County, with fewer people working in Maricopa or Pima counties.
- Stimulate economic growth, targeting the health and prosperity of the people who live and work here in Pinal County.
- Anticipate emerging careers and a skilled, diverse workforce to fill them.

Next Steps

For each of the strategies collaboratively developed by Board members and stakeholders, an implementation plan consisting of actions, metrics, and timelines will be developed by the Board.

The implementation plan will address each of the strategies designed in the Board Strategic Plan. As a living document, the implementation plan will be used to guide workforce development efforts County-wide.

Goal work groups or task forces will be established by the Executive Committee of the Board and members of each group will be appointed by the Board Chair. Each goal work group will be responsible for designing implementation and subsequently managing implementation.

Once the implementation plan has been designed and approved by the full Board, each goal work group or task force will deliver reports to the Board based on the actions, timeline, and metrics for each of the goals.

Reports of accomplishment of actions according to metrics will provide an opportunity for the Board to oversee and communicate progress regarding realization of the vision anchoring its strategic plan.