

Arizona Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (AAAC) Public Meeting Minutes for October 8th, 2025

Attendance

Committee Members Present (Virtually)

Mr. Dennis Anthony, Chairman (Phoenix Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee)
Ms. Allison Moore (Rummel Construction)
Ms. Deb Furlong (City of Phoenix Workforce Development)
Ms. Jill Smith (Careers through Culinary Arts Program)
Ms. Karen King (Tucson Electrical JATC)
Ms. Kimberly Faust (Maricopa Community College District)
Ms. Linda Vedo (Central Arizona Project)
Mr. Mike Greenawalt (Rosendin Electric)
Mr. Phil Murphy (Industrial Commission of Arizona)

Committee Members Absent

Mr. Michael Malloy (Arizona Pipe Trades)

Staff Present For Dept. Of Economic Security (DES)/Arizona Apprenticeship Office (AAO)

Joann Bueno, State Apprenticeship Program Director
Betsy Nelson, Registered Apprenticeship Supervisor
Brynn Gieron, Apprenticeship Compliance Specialist
Andre Prince, Apprenticeship and Training Representative
John Aguirre, Apprenticeship and Training Representative
Mariah Charley, Apprenticeship and Training Representative

Minutes of the Meeting

Call To Order

Mr. Dennis Anthony called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Welcome And Introductions

Mr. Anthony welcomed all Committee members and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves.

Acceptance Of July 9, 2025 Minutes

Mr. Anthony requested a motion to accept the July 9, 2025, AAAC meeting minutes. Ms. Vedo moved the motion, which Ms. Faust seconded. The motion to accept minutes was unanimously approved by those present as submitted.

New Business

AZ Apprenticeship 85th Year Anniversary

Ms. Bueno reminded the Committee of Arizona Apprenticeship's upcoming 85th anniversary in June 2026. She shared that DES is working closely with its Office of Strategic Communications (OSC) to plan several activities leading up to the celebration.

Registered Apprenticeship Summit 2026

Ms. Bueno shared that one of the activities planned to highlight the event is another summit. However, this time, the event is slated to be bigger and better. The team is considering potential breakout sessions, vendor exhibits, and sponsorship opportunities for networking hours. It is not yet confirmed whether the event will take place in April, to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week, or in June, to coincide with the actual anniversary date. The AAO has been assured by DES leadership regarding the budget and will commence planning and coordination in the coming weeks. The AAO will share progress updates with the Committee leading up to the event.

Old Business

Update Department of Labor State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) Compliance Review

Ms. Bueno shared with the Committee that the State of Kansas, whose SAA Compliance Review took place in September 2024, had received their notification of findings three weeks prior to this meeting. It was then speculated that the findings for Arizona would not be too far along. However, with the government shutdown, it is not certain when Arizona will receive its findings.

There was further speculation that the delay in issuance of the findings may have been due to the reevaluation of its content in light of the recent Executive Orders on prohibiting illegal non-discrimination, which is also evidenced in the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) recent non-enforcement of Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 30 (29 CFR 30), coinciding with the release of its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).

Update On State Apprenticeship and EEO plan based on 29 CFR 29 and 29 CFR 30

Ms. Bueno reported on the progress of the rules package that was brought up for public comment in August, underwent a public hearing in September, and is now with the Governance and Innovation Administration (GIA), which will be submitting it to the Governor's Regulatory

Review Council (GRRC) for further review. It is estimated that this will take about ninety to one hundred twenty days to complete.

Update on Proposed Rules for Prohibiting Illegal Discrimination in Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Ms. Bueno shared that the public comment period for the NPRM on 29 CFR 30 ended on September 2, 2025. In light of the government shutdown, it is challenging to determine when the proposed rules will be implemented.

Ms. Bueno also shared that the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors (NASTAD) did not submit a formal comment on this matter due to the wide range of opinions among different states and the potential impact of the NPRM on individual states and their operations. There was no unified response among the SAAs during the comment period.

The AAO's stance is to remain "business as usual" until the proposed rules have been finalized. In the meantime, not much emphasis will be given to EEO compliance in RAP provisional and quality assessment reviews. However, instead of citing noncompliance on items related to EEO and noted as a deficiency, the AAO will simply note this as an area of opportunity to apply best practices. Furthermore, Ms. Bueno shared that the AAO, in its efforts to offer effective technical assistance, will incorporate best practices in future training modules to be conducted with new program sponsors by the team's Compliance Specialist.

Ms. Furlong asked if the AAO plans to align itself with the OA's non-enforcement and removal of the EEO requirements in RA. Ms. Bueno explained that the current 29 CFR 30 is the standard, and therefore, with the revisions hinting at leniency on EEO requirements, states with laws that may be deemed more restrictive may be perceived as being noncompliant. Regarding Arizona, it currently has Article II, Section 36 of its state constitution, which prohibits affirmative action. However, the AAO provided assurance that, despite impending changes to 29 CFR 30, this does not mean discrimination will be allowed. Discriminatory practices will still be reported, and instead of the Apprenticeship Agencies handling the cases, the appropriate agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Department of Justice (DOJ), will maintain oversight and be the enforcer in the matter.

Update On Outstanding Apprentice Awards (OAA) 2025

Ms. King updated the Committee on the Outstanding Apprenticeship Awards (OAA). A total of forty-four apprentices will be honored. The event is expected to have 550 attendees, having secured 14 Platinum Sponsorships, 7 Diamond sponsorships, 1 Gold sponsorship, and 1 Silver sponsorship. The total event cost was approximately \$55,000.

Ms. King acknowledged Ms. Furlong's initiative in stepping up to help with the PayPal transactions for the event. Ms. Furlong reciprocated the gesture by citing Ms. Karen's grace under all the stress and pressure of organizing the event annually.

Ms. King also shared that the program is being prepared for printing. She requested that the Governor's proclamation be included. Ms. Bueno explained that no proclamation was requested for the November event because a proclamation had already been issued in April to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week. Mr. Anthony suggested using the April-dated proclamation anyway to demonstrate that a proclamation was issued for the year.

Ms. King also added and confirmed that Frank Piatt will be the guest speaker for the evening.

Ms. Bueno added that the Governor had been requested to attend the event, but was advised that confirmation would not be received until one month prior to the event.

Ms. Furlong chimed in and asked about consideration for live music or entertainment while guests are waiting or walking up on stage to receive their awards. Ms. King relayed that a few arrangements have been made, but she can certainly look into the possibility for future OAAs.

Mr. Anthony conferred with the Committee regarding any objections to Ms. King and Ms. Furlong, and suggested taking this discussion offline. Hearing none, Ms. King and Ms. Furlong have agreed to continue discussions at a later date.

Registered Apprenticeship Training For AAAC Members

Ms. Bueno shared that, in light of recent developments concerning 29 CFR 30, state rules, and the implementation of RA policies, many changes are anticipated. Therefore, it would be advisable to postpone the Committee Member training until these changes are implemented.

Status Reports

Chairman's Report

Mr. Anthony shared that workgroup meetings to increase registered apprentices, spearheaded by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), will be resuming next month. With the current changes at the OEO, beginning with the departure of Stacey Faulkner, former administrator for the Workforce Arizona Council, followed by the non-confirmation of Carlos Contreras as its Director, the workgroup meetings for the initiative were temporarily paused. It will now be resumed under the leadership of Director Mary Foote, with the first workgroup meeting scheduled for November 3rd.

Mr. Anthony also shared that there is a current slowdown in construction work, and most programs have apprentices temporarily without work at the moment. He also expressed that due to this, many apprentices are filing for Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims and have been struggling with the process. He added that he will try to set a meeting with DES leadership to discuss and find a resolution to this matter.

Apprenticeship Activity Report

Ms. Bueno shared the current metrics, which currently stand at 8,262 active apprentices registered across 307 active programs. She reported that there has been a slight decline in participation of people with disabilities, sitting at 1.79%, females at 11.21% and veterans at 5%. She added that with the anticipated changes relating to EEO, the data on these demographics may no longer be closely monitored, and that voluntary self-identification may even decrease.

In contrast, Ms. Bueno shared that despite the work slowdown Mr. Anthony mentioned, the growth in program registrations has increased, with 25 registrations from the previous quarter alone. With preparations underway for the reinstatement of the employment rules package, the AAO is working closely with DES Policy teams to develop and refine policies surrounding the program, further enhancing its recognition as a State Apprenticeship Agency.

Ms. Bueno also informed the Committee of a recent grant that was awarded to DES by the Department of Labor (DOL) through its Industry Grant TEGL 02-25. The grant is for \$5 million, to be used towards growing the workforce for skilled trades. DES will meet internally to determine the coordination and management of the grant, which will be shared with local workforce development areas (LWDAs), specifically Maricopa, the City of Phoenix, and Pinal County.

US DOL Multi-State Navigator Report

US DOL's OA Multi-State Navigator was unable to attend and provide an update due to the government shutdown.

Council Members Report

Ms. Allison Moore (Rummel Construction)

Concurring with Mr. Anthony's earlier statement, Rummel Construction is also experiencing a slowdown as it enters the 4th quarter. Historically, the company, as well as the industry, recovers early in the following year, and they are certainly hoping for this to happen.

Rummel Construction will be attending the OAA and anticipates graduating ten equipment operators in December. With the graduation late in the year, they will also be welcoming twenty new apprentices in January – ten heavy equipment operators and ten heavy equipment mechanics. They also anticipate adding two more to their construction craft labor apprenticeship.

Ms. Deb Furlong (City of Phoenix Workforce Development)

Ms. Furlong shared that Melissa Huffman, the program coordinator for other City of Phoenix RAPs, has left the organization. The City of Phoenix Human Resources Department is now transitioning from having only one individual well-versed in apprenticeships to having all HR professionals in each division at the City of Phoenix knowledgeable about the program. This will ensure that the apprenticeship concept and culture will be deeply ingrained in the City's talent development culture and processes.

Ms. Furlong adds that her own RAP for semiconductors will also see some growth as they work with the AAO to amend their standards to incorporate occupations that utilize career lattices. She also adds that the original cohort of eight apprentices is set to graduate this week as they complete their assessment testing.

Ms. Furlong also acknowledges the great collaboration she is experiencing with the Maricopa Community College District, particularly through Rio Salado College and Estrella Mountain Community College, for the flexibility in providing Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for apprenticeship despite compromising completion rate outcomes. The partnerships are going very well, and TSMC has expressed interest in conducting a second recruitment in 2026. Technically speaking, this would be considered their third cohort, as the first cohort was comprised of their incumbent workers.

Ms. Furlong also shares that their program has signed on a new employer. And that part of the technical assistance and education they provide to these employers is knowledge on potential-based hiring. Ms. Furlong requests that if anyone has additional insights or information about this topic, please share it with her.

Ms. Furlong concludes by informing everyone of their participation at SEMICON WEST and acknowledging Ms. Bueno for presenting at the Peer-to-Peer Learning session hosted by Safal Partners, which featured Arizona, along with five other states, on best practices regarding state workforce agency and Registered Apprenticeship alignment.

Ms. Jill Smith (Careers through Culinary Arts Program [C-CAP])

C-CAP has launched its pre-apprenticeship program through the high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs throughout the state. All high school students participating in the CTEs are automatically part of the pre-apprenticeship program. This will enable C-CAP to produce high-quality candidates for the RAP.

Ms. Kimberly Faust (Maricopa Community College District [MCCD])

Ms. Faust acknowledges and thanks Ms. Furlong for her praise of Rio Salado College and Estrella Mountain Community College.

She shares that the MCCD is undergoing numerous changes, including the hiring of a new Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). Citing what Ms. Furlong shared about integrating RAPs into the City of Phoenix's talent development strategies, Ms. Faust recognizes the opportunity to initiate this at MCCD. She shares that she will be meeting with the CHRO and will ensure that apprenticeships are an important topic for discussion.

Ms. Linda Vedo (Central Arizona Project [CAP])

The Central Arizona Project currently has seven apprentices. They are currently looking for assessment tests for upcoming mechanical apprentices. They anticipate making updates to their standards and will be reaching out to the AAO for assistance, particularly to their Apprenticeship and Training Representative, Andre Prince. She had expressed that they will most likely utilize the same assessment testing that the AZ Pipe Trades are using.

Mr. Anthony chimed in and praised CAP's new commercials that showcase the value of community service and education.

Ms. Karen King (Tucson Electrical JATC)

The Tucson Electrical JATC currently has 200 apprentices; however, as Mr. Anthony shared earlier, 50 of these apprentices are also currently out of work.

She also expresses her disappointment over the cancellation of this year's Southern AZ Construction Career Days (SACCD). There is speculation, however, that this event will be picked up by Pima Community College, with plans to recruit approximately 300 students from the Joint Technical Education District (JTED). The annual SACCD has been a venue for Southern Arizona's construction and utility companies to feature their apprenticeship programs and conduct recruitment.

Ms. King concludes by celebrating the graduation of 45 apprentices in June, which opens up opportunities for their program to recruit 75 new apprentices.

Mr. Mike Greenawalt (Rosendin Electric)

Rosendin chimes in with optimism about the future. The program currently has 220 apprentices,

of whom 20 were just added in the last quarter. He expressed concern about the nature of the talent pipeline and its growth pattern, and chimed in that the slowdown is truly affecting the market. He attributes the slowdown to a significant amount of renewable energy work that is being eliminated on the electrical side.

He shared the status of the electrical RAPs under Local 640, which currently has over 3,800 apprentices. He advised caution regarding the anticipation of upcoming work, as there is no certainty regarding its influx, citing Amkor and a large hospital that may be forthcoming. However, he assures that their organization is in good standing and is ready to face adversity, if needed. He is optimistic that the state remains relatively strong compared to others.

He adds that managing attrition rates, currently at 30%, is also becoming challenging.

He also highlights the successes of various pre-apprenticeship programs conducted in collaboration with Grand Canyon University (GCU). These pre-apprenticeships are no longer limited to electrical but also cater to semiconductor and advanced manufacturing industries. He was impressed by the number of students participating in the programs, mostly from high schools. He expressed, however, that he would like to see more of these pre-apprenticeship completers naturally enter into RAPs, which is why he is working with GCU to connect these pre-apprenticeships to as many RAPs as possible.

Ms. Furlong chimes in and emphasizes that it is imperative that pre-apprenticeships lead into RAPs. She adds that while 80% of the participants move on to employment, 20% are left without opportunities because some of the so-called “pre-apprenticeships” were not designed to be that, but are only, in fact, just regular training programs. And for this reason, Ms. Furlong applauds Mr. Greenawalt's leadership in this arena.

Mr. Greenawalt adds that a significant factor in transforming pre-apprenticeships into RAPs has to do with the education of employers about the program and attests to his commitment to educating the machining employers in the GCU program about the benefits of RAP to their businesses. He adds that all these efforts to build a much-needed workforce rely on employer involvement and commitment, citing companies like TSMC and Amkor, which are waiting to see who will take the lead first.

He concludes his report by mentioning the publication “Move Over Bob,” which was started by former pre-apprentices from Corbins Electric. The magazine aims to inspire and increase female participation in occupations traditionally associated with males.

Mr. Phil Murphy (Industrial Commission of Arizona)

Nothing to add at this time.

Call To The Public

Mr. Anthony asked the public for any comments.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on January 14, 2026. The meeting may be held in a Hybrid format, offering both in-person and virtual options for attendees, to be confirmed by the AAO.

Committee members will be notified with an invitation to the next meeting, which will include an

agenda for the meeting and draft minutes of this meeting. Future meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month (April, June, and October) from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This schedule is subject to change, pending the logistics for the next meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Anthony adjourned the meeting at 10:56 am.