

Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development
Collaborative

Event 8 – Yavapai



The **Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative** is the Arizona Department of Education's opportunity to strengthen communication and collaboration among employers and community partners, and to gather their feedback with a concentrated focus on developing a strategic talent pipeline with regional Career Technical Education (CTE) and Adult Education programs. The work of the regional collaboratives is an effort to address the regional CTE Superintendent's and CTE directors' challenges and connect CTE programs, and the post-secondary and adult education programs to align more closely with the regional and statewide industry workforce needs.

To facilitate these workforce goals, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) will plan and deliver twelve collaborative meetings throughout 2025 with every county in Arizona. These meetings will be held in partnership with District Superintendents, CTE Work-Based Learning Directors, CTE Directors, Arizona Adult Education Programs, Community Colleges, Workforce Agencies, Economic Development Partners, and Industry Leaders. The meetings include presentations from the venue host, ADE leadership staff, and members from regional economic development organizations. The meetings include roundtable discussions with attendees focused on current partnerships and recommendations to strengthen or to develop talent pipelines and to create Work-Based Learning activities between regional employers and CTE and Adult Education Programs.

Information will be collected from each of the regional roundtable discussions, and a follow-up survey will be sent to meeting attendees. The information received is compiled by ADE and included in this report.

The Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative – Yavapai County

On October 8, 2025, ADE held the eighth of 12 scheduled events in Yavapai County and sponsored by Yavapai County Education Service Agency.

Location:

2970 Centerpointe E Dr

Prescott, AZ 86301

Time:

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

147 people were invited to the meeting, 62 registered, and 49 people attended. The event was arranged to encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue and create an environment for innovative ideas and partnerships. The attendance make up was 13 individuals from business industry, six from higher education or adult education, six from workforce development, five from economic development, 13 from CTE schools and six from ADE. Attendees were from the following organizations:

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Department of Economic Security - Apprenticeship Office	Northern Arizona Council of Governments – Head Start
American Job Center at Yavapai College	Dignity Health	Prescott High School
Arizona@Work	Elevate Business Solutions	Regional Economic Development Center at Yavapai College
Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation	First Things First	SciTech Institute
Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training	FrameTec	St. Vincent de Paul
Bagdad High School	Bradshaw High School	Town of Prescott Valley
Camp Verde Unified School District	Lawler Construction LLC	Town of Prescott
Childcare Resources and Referral	Mountain Institute - Career and Technical Education District	Valley Academy for Career and Technology Education
Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District	Mingus Union High School	Verde Sol Air Services
Village of Hope	WaFd	Yavapai College
Yavapai County	Yavapai County Education Service Agency	AZ Department of Education

Feedback from the Meeting

To encourage opportunities for improvement, ADE presented four questions. These questions will be the same at each of the 12 events to enable a comparison of responses received across the state. This will also be useful in providing information for other projects. The design of each question was predicated on inquiries ADE receives from community stakeholders, school leaders, and industries. The questions are:

1. What Work-Based Learning (WBL)/Apprenticeship opportunities are currently taking place in your organization/community?
2. Based on economic development information, what gaps in your school/college need to be addressed to develop a talent pipeline to meet employment needs?
3. Who else from this community needs to be involved in this discussion?
4. What are the next steps?

Question Number One:

What WBL/Apprenticeships opportunities are currently taking place in your organization/community? The responses were diversified as the respondents covered the spectrum of WBL and Apprenticeship experiences. The most mentioned activities are registered apprenticeships in the construction field, and dental and medical clinicals or apprenticeships. These opportunities are cited as being available through CTE schools, community colleges, and universities.

Additional responses to other activities and WBL techniques were mentioned. Although some of the activity or program definitions provided may not be specifically WBL or apprenticeship programs, they did show the willingness to create meaningful programs that connect students with career development. The takeaway is that there are many opportunities for WBL and career development in addition to the recognized programs. Below are the types of programs and mention count as provided by the participants.

Apprenticeships with FMI – 1

Embry-Riddle internships – 1

Medical related apprenticeships or clinicals – 7

WIOA – 2

Construction registered apprenticeships – 8

Pharmacy and physician residency – 1

Law and public safety ride along and dispatch – 2

Paraprofessional observations – 2

Mining internships – 2

Catering – 1

Fire Science – 1

Heavy equipment certification programs – 1

Supervised agricultural experience – 3

Yearbook marketing and print shop – 2

Summer internships – 2

Barber and cosmetology apprenticeships – 1

Business internships – 2

Question Number Two:

Based on economic development information, what are the gaps in your school / college that need to be

addressed to develop a talent pipeline to meet employment needs? Responses from this question are annotated in three categories:

- Industry / School Connection
- Program Gaps
- Partnerships

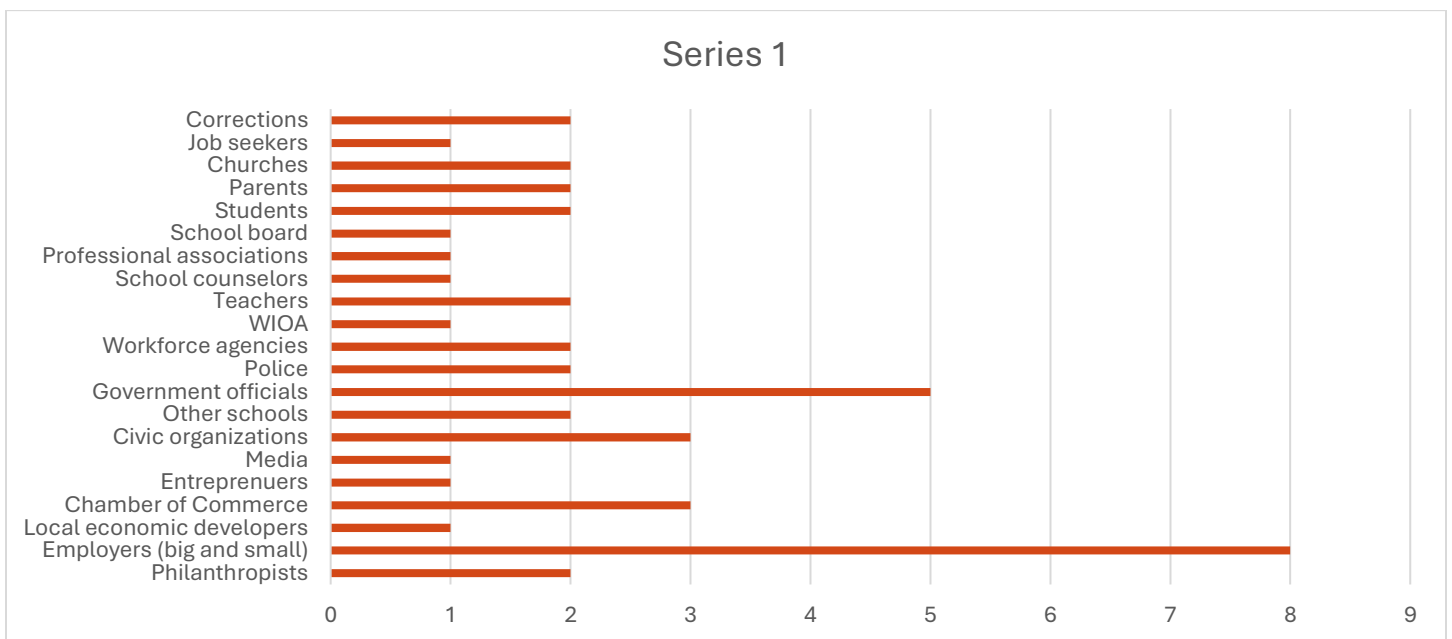
Industry / School Connection refers to program alignment between the CTE and/or adult education programs, community college, and industry/employers. The comments reflect the attendee's perceptions and experiences with CTE programs or CTE students or community colleges. **Program** gaps are perceived or experienced deficiencies, challenges, or feedback on the performance of CTE or community college programs, or the makeup of the students in these programs. **Partnerships** are proposed or perceived gaps in collaboration, communication, or awareness of CTE programs or post-secondary opportunities.

The purpose of incorporating the whole workforce development ecosystem in these round table conversations is to discover room for improvement or challenges experienced by these partners. The information provided was expressed by the participants. (See comments below)



Question Number Three:

Who else from this community needs to be involved in this discussion? This question asks the attendees from their perspective, who, not in attendance, would benefit from attending the event. Although there were representatives present from many of these organizations and many organizations mentioned were invited, the desire to have more representation was apparent. The population most identified as critical to include in these discussions was employers. Respondents wanted to see more companies present in the conversation. Others include Chamber of Commerce and civic organizations. The table below displays the responses.



Question Number Four:

From the information collected, what should your next steps be? This question explores from the perspective of the attendees what they have learned and what they are experiencing, what the next steps can be or what they are interested in exploring. Below are the comments provided:

- Economic development plan with Yavapai County Board of Supervisors
- Develop middle school career pathways
- Engage industry partners
- Develop relationships between institutions
- Network with new contacts
- Synchronize efforts
- Continued networking and collaboration
- Strategic planning
- Locate funding options
- Encourage teachers to use advisory council
- More CTSO engagement
- Identify grants to be used for CTE facilities
- Share information learned today with colleagues
- Encourage learners to enter high demand trades
- Develop soft skills development workshops for learners
- Host job/career fairs

The Survey

As stated, the purpose of the meeting was to gather information from the region regarding CTE and Adult Education Programs. In addition to the roundtable discussion and presentations, ADE distributed a survey to all attendees. The survey was designed to capture more feedback on the programs and ideas and use the comments to develop an actionable plan. Another objective was to discover who the participants would prefer to continue the conversation to address barriers or enhancements to CTE, Adult Education programs. We sent the survey to every participant after the Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative meeting. The survey asked the following seven questions.

1. Based on what you have learned, how likely are you going to start (or change) a work-based learning opportunity?
2. What do you need to know more about to participate in a successful WBL? program (select up to three)?
3. What are the main benefits of partnering with CTE programs?

4. Which partnerships would you like to expand or learn more about (select all that apply)?
5. Who should lead this conversation going forward? (Select Two).
6. What industry-education partnerships or initiatives are currently operating in your area?
7. How valuable was the event to you or your organization?

Of the 49 people who attended the event, 12 (24%) responded to the survey. It is common that survey participation ranges from 25-40%, 24% falls just below the common response rate. A reminder or follow-up efforts may have increased this number.

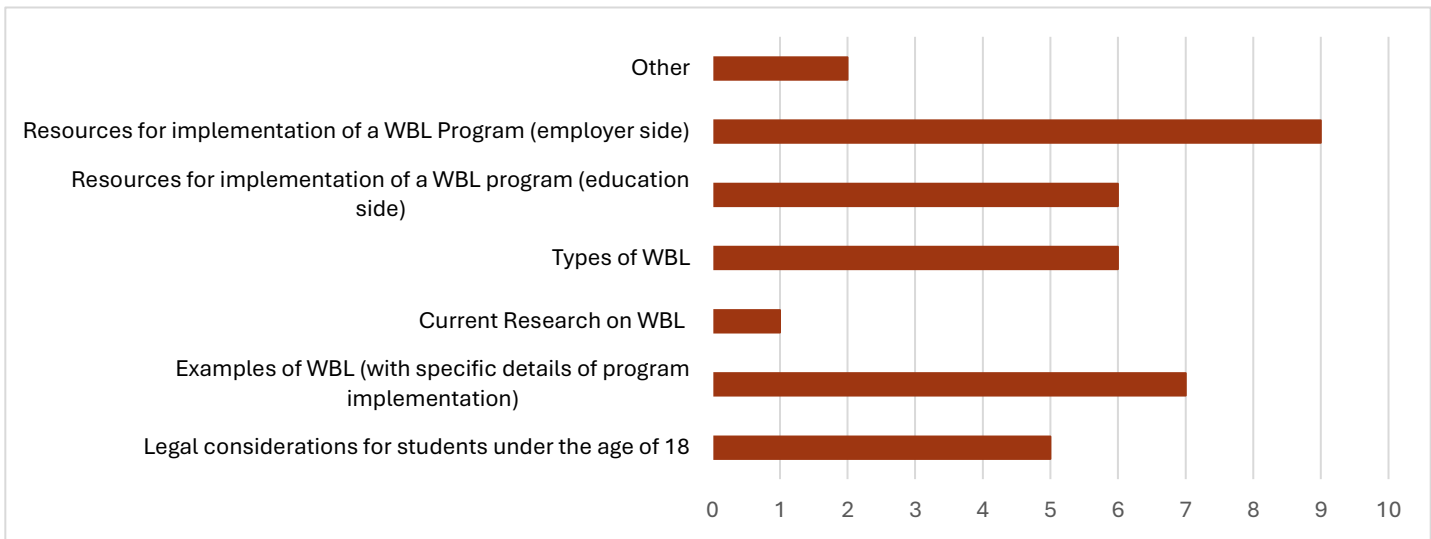
Question Number One:

Based on what you have learned, how likely are you going to start (or change) a work-based learning opportunity?

The results were based on a 5-point scale (1 = least likely, 5 = most likely). The average rating of 4.17 (83%) indicates that most participants either plan to begin or continue engaging in work-based learning (WBL) programs or opportunities. However, the survey comments and feedback suggest that a lack of industry resources to implement WBL may undermine participants’ confidence in the concept.

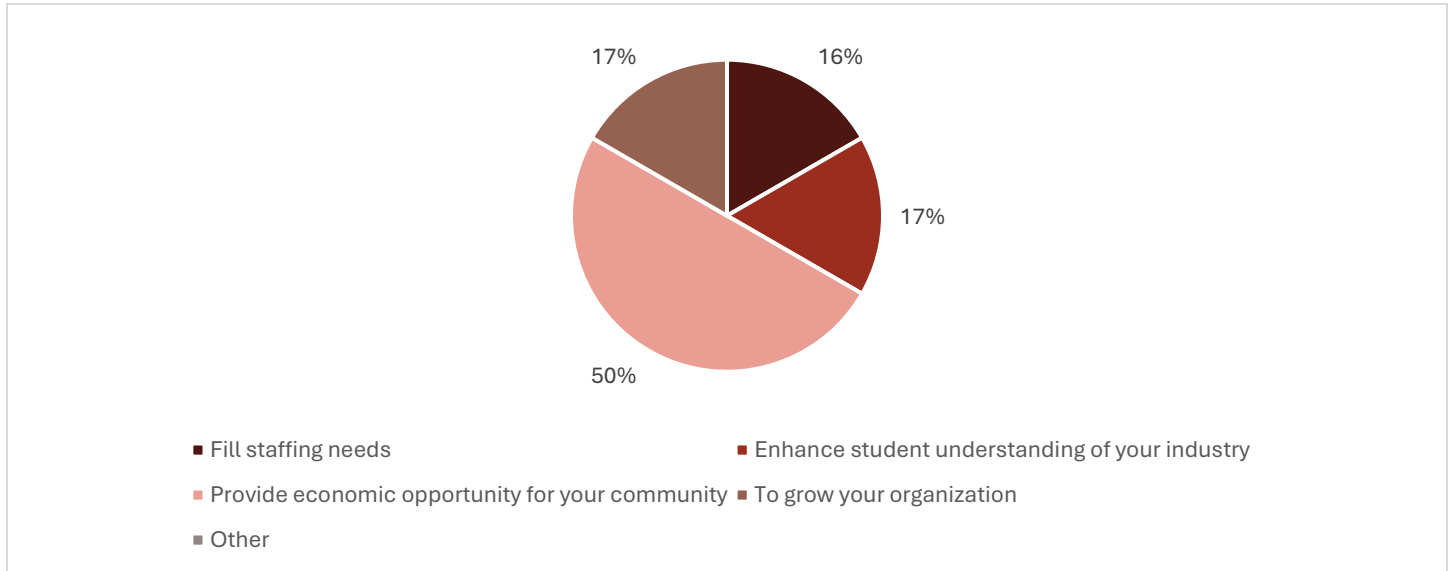
Question Number Two:

What do you need to know more about to participate in a successful WBL program (select up to three)? The findings indicate a clear need for employer resources to implement WBL experience. In discussions from the meeting the same sentiment was expressed that employers are not investing in education or wages for local learners and job seekers. The top three indicators show that there is a need for both industry and educational resources, examples of a successful WBL program, and clarity on what types of WBL are active in the area. Participants also stated they need more information about legal considerations for students under 18 years old. Efforts are currently underway to improve statewide communication of program guidelines and success stories. Additional insights are presented in the chart below.



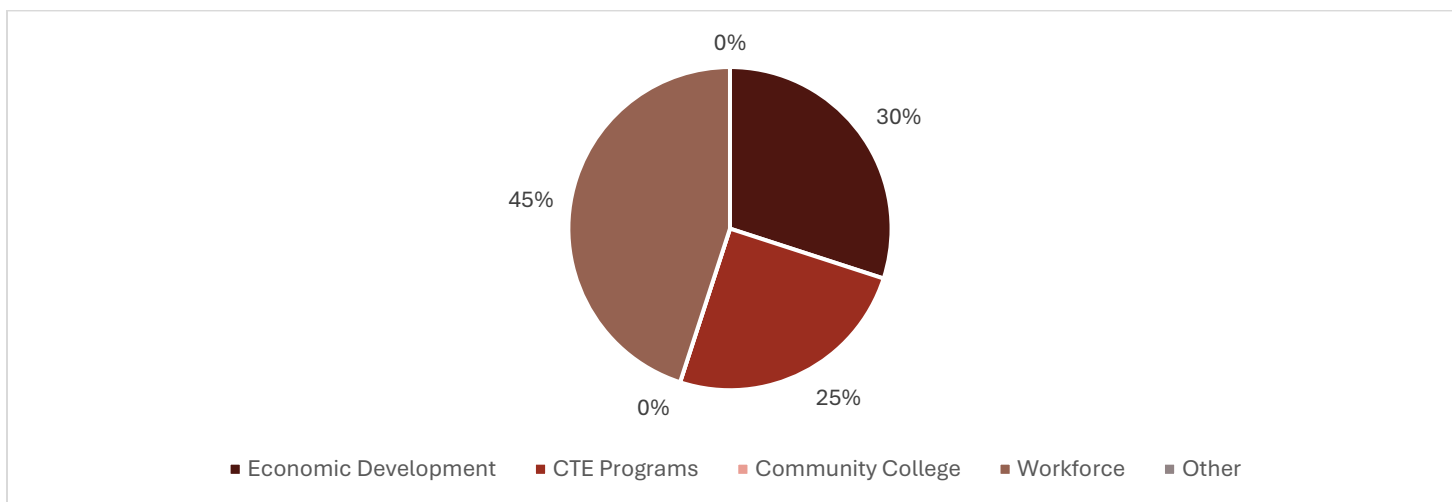
Question Number Three:

What are the main benefits of partnering with CTE programs? The purpose of this question is to discover from the participant's perspective the benefit of working with a CTE program. The majority responses (50%) said to “provide an economic opportunity for your community.” This indicates the local investment perspective on how the participants value CTE programs and an understanding that CTE programs add value to economic development.



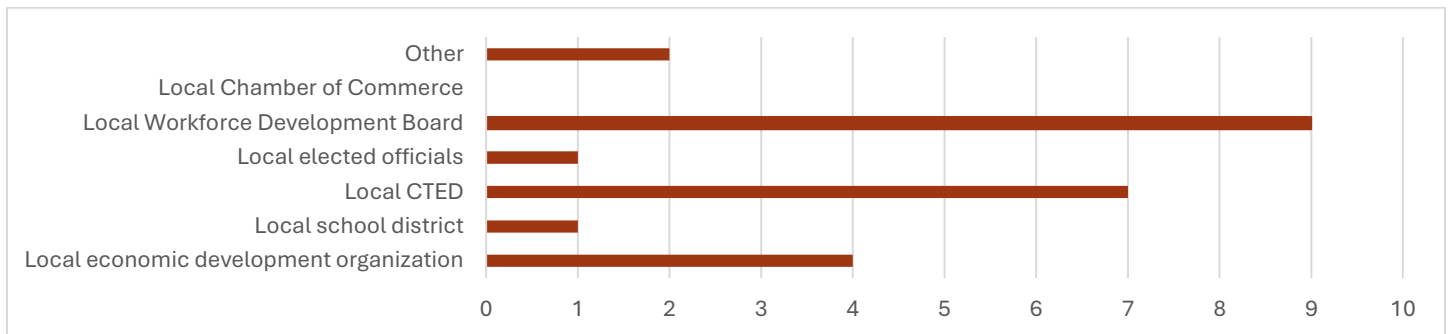
Question Number Four:

Which partnerships would you like to expand or learn more about? This question had four options: economic development, CTE programs, Community College, and workforce. Most participants selected Workforce (45%). Economic Development received 30%, CTE Programs received 25%, Community Colleges received 0%. This is consistent with the other regions, as CTE and adult education programs feed directly into the workforce. This also indicates that the community is interested in better understanding how CTE programs can be used to fill current and future workforce and economic needs.



Question Number Five:

Who should lead this conversation going forward? This question aimed to gather participants' insights on who should lead the ongoing ecosystem collaboration discussions, manage the detailed efforts to enhance student employment opportunities, and support workforce talent pipeline development. Respondents favored the Local Workforce Development Board to lead these conversations moving forward, followed closely by local CTEDs. Local economic development organizations were also selected as best options to lead future conversations. Local school districts, elected officials, and Chamber of Commerce were identified as the least favorable options. One selection of “other” stated that all organizations listed should work collaboratively to further conversations. See the graph below.



Question Number Six:

What industry-education partnerships or initiatives are currently operating in your area? This question asks the attendees to name the current partnerships in their local region. The importance of this information is to identify existing local partnerships that are already working well. Partnerships listed were consistent, noting VACTE, law enforcement, medical and construction partnerships, or initiatives. One comment stated that they learned about several initiatives in the area that they were not aware of before. See additional responses below.

CTEC two-year degree	WIOA programs	On the job training opportunities	Yavapai County Future Ready Council	Engineering registered apprenticeships
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Question Number Seven:

How valuable was the event to you or your organization? This question sought to determine the value of the meeting. Was the meeting meaningful to the attendees or did they feel it was an effective use of their time? Respondents were to answer the question using a 5-point scale (1 = no value, 5 = most valuable).

The average rating was 4.25. Five participants (42%) selected 5, 42% also selected 4. Three participants (25%) selected 3. There were no selections of 2 or 1. This indicates that the meeting was valuable for all participants.

Question Number Eight:

Please explain your answer to number 7. To better understand the ratings given in question 7, respondents were given an opportunity to explain their rating. The most common response was a desire for actionable items to come out of the meeting. Participants also appreciated the networking opportunity and connecting with organizations they had not connected with before. Four responses expressed that the meeting was informational, and they learned about initiatives taking place in the community. The meeting served the intended purpose of sparking connections between education and industry with one attendee stating, “it’s a launching point and we have invited several people to engage in discussion on November 12th.” Efforts to continue communication between stakeholders will continue.

Conclusion

Local schools and businesses have shared interest and shared responsibility to the community they serve. Both entities are affected by the outcomes of schooling, which provide students with learning experience that supports their ability to make a measurable contribution to, and receive meaningful benefits from, the society they will join and lead in the future. While there is a need for more training opportunities in specific skilled trade industries, there are WBL and job training opportunities available throughout Yavapai County, and this meeting created awareness and visibility. The good news is that business, economic development, and local workforce leaders show eagerness to work together to support the career development of students.