



Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board

Minutes

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 / 12:00 pm - 01:30 pm
2150 N. Congress Dr. Courtroom A
Nogales, AZ 85621

<u>Board Members Present</u>	<u>Board Members Absent</u>	<u>Staff and Guests Present:</u>
Dina Rojas-Sanchez	Richard Brennan	Zaida Bustamante (Director)
Greg Lucero	Pedro Osete	Karina Guerrero (Program Manager)
Guillermo Oton	Luis Bustamante	Adrian Chamberlain (SCC WIOA)
Olivia Ainza-Kramer	Roy Bermudez	Jim Mize (OSO)
Ana Quick	Luis Padilla	Luis Carlos Davis (district #1 supervisor)
Marcela Parra (Title II)	Fernando Sandoval	Mauricio Chavez (CMP Deputy Manager SCC)
Juan Balderas	Desiree Galaz	Christine Nelson (PEPP)
Karen King	Blanca Acosta	Dominica Dominguez
Maria E. Kinder		Adam Begody
Tom McAlpine		Rudy "Bugs" Molera (District #2 Supervisor)
Skylie Estep		Chris Young
		Kate Hoffman

- A. Call to order
 - a) *Chairwoman D. Sanchez called the meeting to order at 12:03 P.M.*
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
- C. Roll call
 - a) *Roll call was conducted. A quorum was not initially met at roll call, with one additional board member needed to establish quorum*
- D. Call to the public
 - a) *No public comments were received.*
- E. Public Comment on Agenda items:
 - a) *No Comments recieved*
- F. Adoption of Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2025 Regular Board Meeting
 - a) *No quorum was in attendance for approval of previous board meeting.*
 - b) *This Item was temporarily deferred and reopened later in the meeting.*
- G. [Budget Report](#)- Finance Department
 - a) *Santa Cruz County Finance Director / Deputy County Manager, M. Chavez presented the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) [financial Summary through December 2025](#), providing a detailed year-to-date overview of Program Year (PY) 2024 and Fiscal Year (FY 2025 allocations.*
 - b) *Key Highlights included:*
 - i) *Total WIOA funding of \$1,137,599 with \$696,074 expended and \$441,525, reflecting and overall expenditure of rate of 61%*
 - ii) *Youth Programs: (In-School and Out-of-School): \$389,308 awarded, with 67% expended and funding available through June 30, 2026.*
 - iii) *Adult Programs: Combined PY24 and FY25 expenditures totaling 76% expended, with PY24 fully expended and FY25 funds actively being utilized*
 - iv) *Dislocated Worker Programs: PY24 funds fully expended, while FY25 expenditures remain at 21% leaving significant remaining balance to support ongoing and future activities.*
 - v) *Administrative Costs: Total administration expenditures at 44%, remaining within allowable thresholds.*
 - vi) *Rapid Response: PY24 Rapid Response funds are 55% expended, with remaining funds available through June 30, 2026.*
 - c) *M. Chavez noted that all expenditures remain compliant with state-approved contracts and timelines, and staff continues to monitor spending to ensure full utilization of funds prior to expiration dates.*
- H. Presentation: [Earn to Learn](#): Invest in college success:
 - a) *Adam Begody, Director of Corporate Engagement and Development for Earn to Learn, along with Kate Hoffman, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, presented a comprehensive overview of the organization and its relevance to workforce development partnership*
 - b) *Earn to Learn is a nonprofit organization founded in 2008 that supports post-secondary success through a matched-savings scholarship model, in which participants receive an 8-to-1 match on savings (up to \$4,000 annually) for tuition and other education-related expenses. The program also incorporates financial literacy education, success coaching, and workforce-aligned supports.*
 - c) *Presentation highlights included:*

- i) Active regional initiatives in Santa Cruz, Cochise, Yuma, and Maricopa Counties.
 - ii) Partnerships with higher education institutions and workforce systems across Arizona and other states.
 - iii) Workforce-aligned training and credential pathways in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, construction trades, energy, and utilities.
 - iv) Strong outcomes, including a first-year retention rate approaching 87%, projected six-year graduation rates near 80%, and over \$40 million in matched grant aid distributed to date.
 - v) Alignment with workforce initiatives such as the Ford ASSET Program and APS Line worker Program, demonstrating the program's ability to support participants through training completion and workforce entry.
- d) *Mr. Begody and Ms. Hoffman emphasized Earn to Learn's ability to leverage and complement WIOA funding, reduce financial barriers for participants, and improve persistence and completion outcomes for individuals pursuing education and industry-recognized credentials.*
- e) *Board Questions and Discussion:*
- i) G. Lucero asked whether Earn to Learn operates in other states.
 - ii) Kate Hoffman responded that Earn to Learn has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a workforce board in Michigan.
 - iii) *M. Chavez asked the Earn to Learn team if they have any contracts with other WIOA organizations in the state or across the U.S.*
 - iv) *G. Lucero requested that the MOU be shared so it may be provided to the legal team for reference.*
 - v) *K. Hoffman responded that one will be provided for a reference.*
- I. The One-Stop Operator Report:
- a) *Presented by J. Mize. No questions were raised by the Board. The One-Stop Operator Report was presented by J. Mize. No questions were raised by the Board.*
- J. LWDB Executive Director Report
- a) *Z. Bustamante, Executive Director, provided the Local Workforce Development Board report and program updates.*
- K. Partner Reports (Title I-B, Title II, Title III, Title IV, WIOA Title ID (MSFW) Fred G. Acosta, Job Corps (Partner Program), One Stop Operator)
- a) *Title 1-B K. Guerrero provided a Title I-B report, including updates on collaboration with Nogales Unified School District for the Automotive CTE program, outreach efforts for out-of-school youth, and reported that 37 industry-recognized certifications were achieved during the prior program year. No questions were raised by the Board.*
 - b) *Title II Dr. Marcela Parra provided the Title II report, highlighting the establishment of a digital literacy course with approximately 35 participants currently enrolled and ongoing enrollment requests. She also reported exploration of additional career pathways and*

courses, including collaboration with Pima Community College to improve intake, orientation, and expand educational pathways for youth and adult learners in Santa Cruz County. No questions were raised by the Board.

c) Title III, Zaida Bustamante provided the Title III report on behalf of the program. She reported updates on the Arizona Job Connection Program, noting 127 participant registrations to date and a total of 593 services provided, including job search assistance, résumé support, financial literacy, and Unemployment Insurance services. She also reported 138 referrals to employment, 62 job placements, five referrals to WIOA services, and the entry of 90 job orders representing 176 job openings. No questions were raised by the Board.

d) Title IV Presented by Maria E. Kinder provided the Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation Services) report, noting continued services supporting individuals with disabilities entering the workforce. She reported the launch of a new database effective July 1, which allowed for the inclusion of prior-quarter data and first-quarter data for the current fiscal year. She also reported recent staffing updates, including being fully staffed last month, the promotion of a master's-level counselor, and ongoing efforts to recruit a replacement. No questions were raised by the Board.

e) NFJP, Christine Nelson provided the report for the National Farmworker Jobs Program, noting current enrollment levels in Santa Cruz County, including two active participants, one of whom is currently in training, and several exited participants in follow-up status. She also reported employer engagement efforts with a local greenhouse to explore a potential on-the-job training opportunity. Ms. Nelson introduced Ana Lopez, Workforce Development Specialist, who began in late October and is conducting outreach and community engagement activities across Santa Cruz and Pima counties. No questions were raised by the Board.

f) Job Corp was not present and no report was presented.

L. Adoption of Meeting Minutes (Return to Deferred Action)

a) Chairwoman D. Sanchez confirmed that a quorum was present following the arrival of Karen King. Quorum was confirmed. A motion was made by G. Lucero and seconded by J. Balderas to approve Item C. The motion passed unanimously.

M. Roundtable

a) C. Young provided an update on the Workforce Development Strategic Plan. He congratulated the Board and staff on strong performance measures and the positive fiscal status of the budget. He reported that a consulting firm has been selected through a public RFQ process funded by South32, with contract approval anticipated in early

February. Mr. Young noted the plan will take approximately six months to complete, include a stakeholder engagement component, and will be community-focused across all industries. No action was taken.

- b) S. Estep provided follow-up comments regarding the Workforce Development Strategic Plan, emphasizing South32's support of the county-led planning process. She noted that the strategic plan will serve as a framework to guide future workforce investments, funding opportunities, and partnerships, while continuing collaboration with the community college on workforce training initiatives. Ms. Estep emphasized the importance of a community-wide, collaborative approach to ensure workforce needs across Santa Cruz County are addressed. Chairwoman Dina Sanchez and Chris Young echoed the importance of aligning the planning process with both South32 workforce needs and broader community workforce development goals. No action was taken.
- c) Supervisor Dr. Luis Carlos Davis District #1, provided round table comments referencing the Title I report and noted efforts to coordinate with Nogales High School on a proposed "Government 101" presentation. He expressed interest in involving ARIZONA@WORK and other partners to support student outreach and engagement, and acknowledged the progress of the Automotive CTE program. No action was taken.
- d) J. Balderas provided round table comments highlighting a new partnership with the Arizona Cyber Initiative, which was recently awarded \$3 million in funding from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). He reported plans to collaborate on mentorship, internship, and job opportunities for students, including coordination with regional partners and exploration of WIOA funding to expand opportunities for students and local employers. No action was taken.
- e) A. Quick provided round table comments regarding a partnership with Nogales Unified School District and Pearson to support medical assistant externships. She reported that beginning February 23, twenty medical assistant students will complete 120-hour externships at Mariposa Community Health Center, concluding in early April. In response to a question from Chairwoman Dina Sanchez, Ms. Quick confirmed an ongoing demand for medical assistants at Mariposa due to organizational growth and upcoming facility expansion. No action was taken.
- f) G. Lucero provided round table comments highlighting recent activity at the community college, including engagement with Arizona State University to explore pilot programs and stackable credential pathways. She noted regional stakeholder discussions related to semiconductors, cybersecurity, and workforce needs across multiple industries, including potential mentorships and apprenticeships. Ms. Bustamante also reported ongoing collaboration to expand medical assistant and other training programs, and announced a joint governing board meeting with Pima Community College scheduled for February 20 to discuss long-term workforce planning and anticipated regional growth. No action was taken.
- g) K. King provided round table comments noting current activity within the electrical apprenticeship programs, reporting approximately 200 active apprentices. She stated that work has been slow due to recent government shutdown impacts, with expectations that activity and job placements will increase as conditions improve. No action was taken.

N. Adjournment

- a) *The next LWDB meeting was announced for March 11.*
 - i) *D. Sanchez entertained a motion for adjournment.*
 - ii) *Motion: G. Lucero moved to adjourn*
 - iii) *J. Balderas, seconded the motion.*
 - iv) *Vote: Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:09PM*