

CITY OF MESA WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Respond. Support. Adapt. 





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Respond. Support. Adapt.

CITY OF MESA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

Executive Summary

A GROWING AND THRIVING WORKFORCE HELPS BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY.

“Workforce Development” is a broad topic that touches a wide spectrum of our community and the Office of Economic Development is proud to be part of a multi-departmental effort that is exploring how the City, along with its partners, provides resources to meet the needs of our residents, regardless of their situation or position in life.

To accomplish this, the City proposes a strategy designed to respond, support and adapt to the needs of our residents and business community.

The labor market in 2022 presented both challenges and opportunities for economic developers across Arizona and the country; the City of Mesa has been no exception. Since the beginning of the year, Mesa’s Office of Economic Development (OED) has taken actions to understand the root causes of the challenges for Mesa employers and is working with partners on a multi-pronged approach to provide short and long-term solutions.

Feedback from ongoing business outreach led the City to launch a speaker series designed to help employers with their immediate hiring needs. In addition to the seminars, OED conducted an in-depth labor market analysis and surveyed Mesa employers regarding their short-term hiring needs. Generally, small businesses communicated a need for greater assistance connecting to and being educated on the availability of workforce services. Larger enterprises need better data on workforce availability, experience, and qualifications to improve their recruitment marketing. Stakeholder focus groups were then held to uncover new opportunities to meet the collective aspirational goals. Many of their suggestions are included in this plan.

A special thank you to the **175 Mesa companies** who met with us in person, the **71 businesses** who responded electronically to the City’s survey and the **56 individuals** who participated in the stakeholder focus groups. This feedback was critical to the development of this initiative.

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Job openings in the U.S. in August 2022

3.4%

Mesa’s Unemployment Rate (Aug 2022)

2.5x

Growth rate of employment over labor force in Mesa since April 2020

268K

Mesa Residents in the labor force

(Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

In this document, Workforce Development responsibilities are categorized by the time-scale of their impacts. Additionally, the responsibilities are grouped into two distinct audiences: business and individuals in the community. Each audience will be served by various departments within the City of Mesa and opportunities for collaboration are highlighted.

Responsive to immediate needs (less than six months):



SERVICES TO BUSINESS: Filling employer hiring pipelines with qualified talent and training employees to carry out required job activities through connection to educators and other service providers.

SERVICES TO COMMUNITY: Providing stabilizing social and human services to individuals who may be in low to moderate income households that require immediate assistance in employment, shelter, nutrition, clothing, and safety. Upskilling individuals who have left the workforce or are at risk of losing employment due to obsolete job and life skills, competencies and knowledge.

Supportive of actualizing potential (six months to multiple years):



SERVICES TO BUSINESS: Providing technical assistance for employers to deploy management and/or recruitment best practices to maximize productivity and employee satisfaction. Improving talent retention to make Mesa businesses employers of choice.

SERVICES TO COMMUNITY: Offering programs that improve learner and worker outcomes and readiness for the next step of their academic or professional career such as Mesa K-Ready and early literacy, Mesa College Promise and career navigation services to students, as well as incumbent workers at the City's Main Library and its Workforce Center @ Mesa.

Adaptive to changing environments (continuous):



SERVICES TO BUSINESS: Collecting and disseminating timely market intelligence through hiring data and convening employers to improve decision-making for Mesa businesses and educators.

SERVICES TO COMMUNITY: Improving access to educational attainment through programs such as the Mesa College Promise and expanding opportunities through recruiting high quality institutions such as the ASU Mix Center and Benedictine University in the City of Mesa. Growing local workforce development services based on data that demonstrate success in participation by removing barriers to employment for all Mesa residents.

Hiring and Placement

STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS AND IMPROVE COORDINATION – There are numerous, no-cost resources for hiring managers and businesses seeking new employees. The City currently connects incoming, new businesses to the ARIZONA@WORK network and PipelineAZ to post jobs and assist in recruiting. OED will work with all workforce partners to develop a better system to connect employers to potential labor.

WORKFORCE RESOURCES DIRECTORY – The City’s OED will develop and deploy an online workforce resource directory to facilitate connection and communication between employers and workforce or human service providers such as the non-profit referral network, libraries and educator career services.



POINT OF COLLABORATION

Report and Refer

The Office of Economic Development and the Education and Workforce Office will develop a communication plan to share information and refer companies and individual job seekers to opportunities within new and expanding Mesa businesses who are working with OED.

Stabilizing and Upskilling

THE WORKFORCE CENTER @ MESA – In partnership with A New Leaf and Maricopa County’s ARIZONA@WORK, the Workforce Center @ Mesa provides career assistance and tailored support services to our adult community. The Center serves the city’s most vulnerable, housing insecure, veterans, re-entry individuals and those who are ready to upskill and change careers. Career Advisors are on site to offer adult career guidance services, training courses, resume and interview assistance, apprenticeship opportunities, and placement/hiring services to local businesses. Services are offered in English and Spanish.



MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY – Public libraries have long been the front door to many job seekers. Mesa Public Library offers a variety of services including free computer classes for online learning. At the Main Library, in partnership with ARIZONA@WORK, a Youth Hub workforce center serves eligible youth ages 16-24. Other programming offered for adults includes basic business development topics and a partnership with ASU. All libraries refer residents to regional workforce resources and non-profit partners.



POINT OF COLLABORATION

Job Training

Staff promotes, refers and connects people and companies to outstanding community partners who offer programs to train future workers and upskill incumbents.

In addition to an exhaustive, statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) that supports Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants, our collaborators include ARIZONA@WORK; Arizona State University; Mesa Community College/Maricopa Corporate College; Mesa United Way; St. Joseph the Worker; Mesa Public Schools; the Arizona Apprenticeship Program and other local non-profits.

Best Practices to Attract, Develop and Retain Talent

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Mesa Office of Economic Development, in collaboration with partners such as the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, will continue the Speaker Series to bring important resources about methods to attract, develop and retain talent to employers in group settings. Topics include but are not limited to, apprenticeship programming, recruiting best practices, and helping employers deploy management best practices to become employers of choice.

EMPLOYER OUTREACH: OED will convene business leaders to discuss career pathways development in high growth industries. A strong focus will be to encourage connections between education institutions and industry in order to equip students with relevant skill sets.

84%

Businesses surveyed need help filling talent pipelines

62%

Businesses surveyed indicated a need for technical assistance

23%

Businesses surveyed indicated a desire to learn about apprenticeships



POINT OF COLLABORATION

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. Apprenticeships, which were once only available in trades such as manufacturing and construction, are now emerging in fields including cyber and information technology (IT), healthcare, sales, professional services, and more.

A tremendous opportunity exists to promote the adoption of apprenticeship programs and filling the pipeline of interested, future apprentices.

Early Learning and Post-Secondary Success

MESA K-READY – In partnership with City of Mesa, Mesa Public Schools, and Mesa United Way, this free program uses a combination of academic lessons, fun learning activities and family support to help Mesa parents become their child’s best first teacher. Mesa K-Ready is an interactive experience, where parents and children attend class together once per week to help parents prepare their 3- and 4-year-olds successful start in kindergarten.



MESA COLLEGE PROMISE – The City of Mesa, Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), and Mesa Community College (MCC) have formed the Mesa College Promise program which is a public-private partnership, last-dollar scholarship program that provides two years of tuition-free education at MCC for qualified Mesa residents who graduate from an accredited high school or GED program. It offers an affordable education with world-class faculty, small class sizes, and innovative programs designed to get students “job-ready”.



33.4%

City of Mesa 3 & 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool (2020)

80.4%

City of Mesa 4-year graduation rate (2020)

233

Total # of Mesa College Promise Scholars (Fall 2022)



POINT OF COLLABORATION

Career and Technical Education / Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning (WBL) engages employers via schools’ career and technical education offices in providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences that are aligned to essential workplace skills and attitudes. These experiences focus on assisting students in developing broad, transferable skills that prepare them for a career and their next step in education or entering the workforce. We are committed to creating a work-based learning continuum that supports lifelong learning and skill development beginning in preschool and continuing through adulthood.

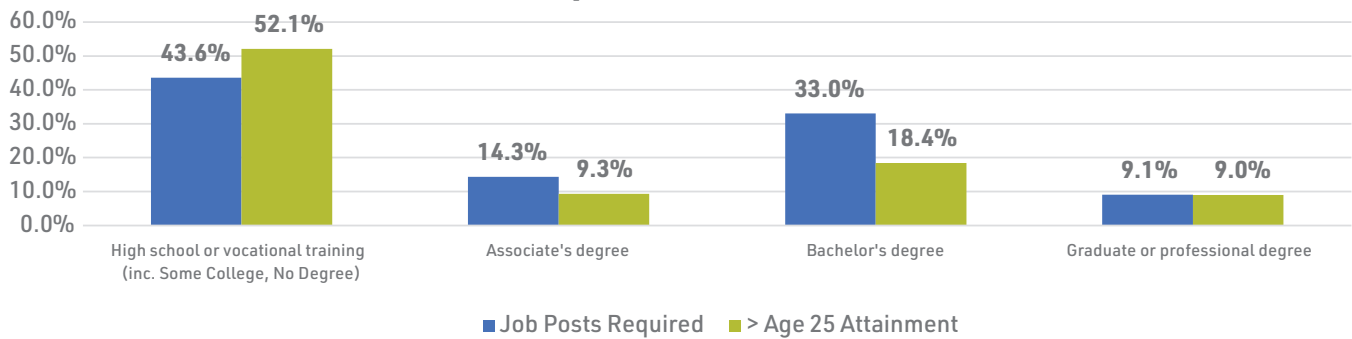
Adaptive strategies look toward building a resilient community through a strong workforce.

Sharing Market Intelligence and Talent Attraction

MARKET INTELLIGENCE – By collecting and disseminating timely market intelligence, through hiring data and convening employers to improve decision-making, OED can help strengthen relationships and improve coordination between educators and industry about what skills are necessary for quality careers in high growth sectors.

TALENT ATTRACTION – Until educational attainment rates improve, Mesa will need to import talent to meet the demands of today’s companies. Exploring methods to promote Mesa as a destination for out-of-market, degreed talent to relocate to will expand our labor pool.

2021 Mesa Job Postings Required Educational Attainment vs Mesa Population’s Educational Attainment



Improving Access To Education and Employment

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES – In partnership with other education agencies and districts, develop performance metrics to track and monitor goals for enrollment, attainment, and provide and expand equitable access to work, learning and job opportunities throughout Mesa’s educational spectrum. Apply these data-driven insights to identify and implement appropriate strategies for the City to support the continued improvement and removal of barriers to education and professional certifications/licenses in order to build a skilled and talented workforce in Mesa.

These efforts are in alignment with the City’s strategic goal of achieving a post-secondary educational attainment rate of 60% from the 36.7% today. This goal benefits the City as well as Mesa’s businesses, workers and residents.

According to Rounds Consulting Group’s Spring 2022 report to the Arizona Board of Regents [Advancing Arizona’s Economy – Investment in Workforce Development](#), “Simply by reaching the U.S. average for educational attainment, Arizona would benefit by nearly \$5 billion in additional state and local tax revenues over ten years. Furthermore, fully resolving the bachelor’s degree shortage would result in a 10-year cumulative state and local fiscal impact of \$8 billion.” Mesa’s share of this fiscal benefit will allow the City to continue to improve the quality of services and public investment provided to our citizens and raise the overall standard of living.



POINT OF COLLABORATION

Closing the Education Gap

The chart demonstrates the oversupply of qualified workers in jobs requiring high school diplomas and an undersupply at associate’s and bachelor’s degree attainment levels in Mesa.

At the source of this education gap is a substantial disparity in educational attainment, particularly post-secondary, between different racial and ethnic groups in Mesa. Increasing educational attainment in these populations will not only improve the standard of living through gainful employment, it enhances the ability for employers to attract and retain talent within the community.

In partnership with a Mesa Education and Workforce Roundtable Project Team, OED will convene Mesa employers and education partners to develop and promote career paths in high growth industries. The long-term result will be closing this gap – moving those with “some college” to earning a relevant degree or certificate in their chosen field.

City of Mesa Workforce Strategy



This strategy was developed by the City of Mesa Office of Economic Development (OED) to respond to changes in the labor market during and immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic that affected businesses negatively. This disruption left widespread vacancies and difficulties filling positions in industries and operation types across the country. Though collaboration on workforce development efforts across varying geographic scales took place at OED prior to these events, these challenges required immediate assistance be provided to businesses in our community. This change in circumstances also presents an opportunity to reassess our intentions for developing the workforce of the future in our city.

Several analyses were carried out to assess the needs of the City of Mesa's workforce development ecosystem for development of this strategy. These analyses inventory the quantitative evidence of the state of the city's employment supply and demand compared to relevant geographies, along with quality of workforce assets. How key stakeholders perceive the reality of our workforce ecosystem was analyzed in group interviews to identify opportunities for improved communication and information sharing. Please reach out to EconomicDevelopmentInfo@MesaAZ.gov for full analyses and data sources.

Mesa has an opportunity now and in the near future to help overcome these challenges and create solutions to gain competitive ground on our economic peer cities and regions. Efforts will be aligned with achieving the following goals and discovering collaborative program and policy opportunities to reach these goals more efficiently:

Providing equitable access to resources and support for Mesa jobseekers and employers.



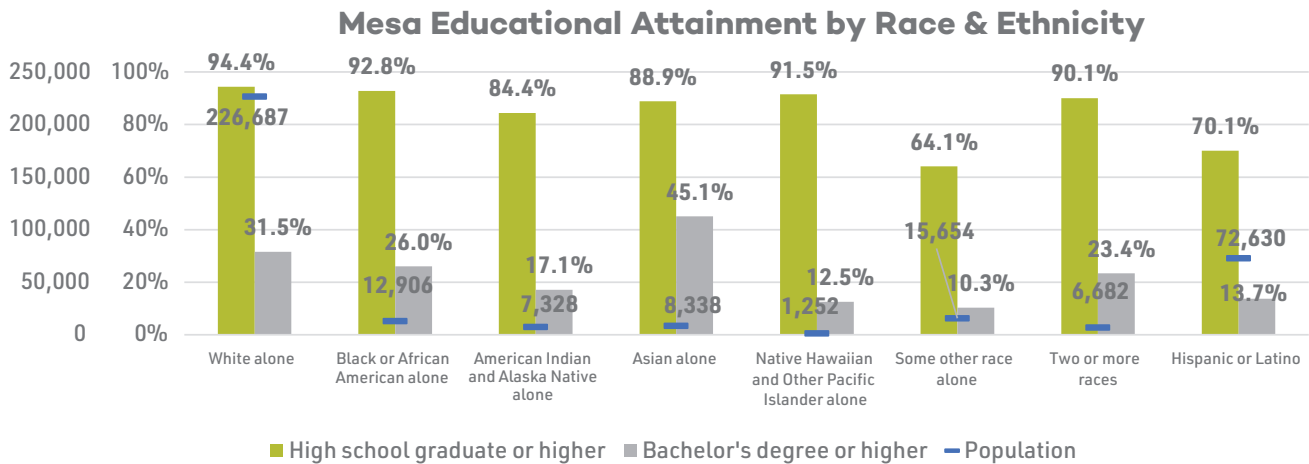
OED will assist companies in identifying sources of talent that they haven't yet been able to utilize effectively. Accessing under-utilized resources and segments of Mesa's existing workforce increases the return on city and company investments in education, social and human services. A central resource directory and concierge service will facilitate connection between employers of all sizes and sectors and workforce services from educators, non-profit organizations and government.

43% of businesses responding to our talent recruitment survey stated that they need assistance knowing what resources are available to help them and connecting to workforce development service providers. All nine stakeholder groups convened agreed that the large number of workforce service providers in our community results in a complicated and difficult to navigate environment to access and refer employers to workforce resources and/or supportive services for incumbent workers.

Increased educational attainment in diverse populations will improve Mesa's supply of skilled workers. For example, a 20% increase in educational attainment among Mesa's Hispanic or Latino population would add 14,500 skilled workers to the labor pool.

Workforce Development

GOALS & VISION - CONTINUED



Identifying and mitigating the skills gap in hiring.



OED will improve our stakeholders' ability to understand hiring supply and demand for occupations and skills by employers in our city. Labor market knowledge improves efficiency in hiring, education, and job-seeking. When employers have challenges hiring for certain occupations or skillsets, we will identify how we can help through expanding education and training pipelines or other initiatives such as talent attraction marketing.

84% of businesses responding to our talent recruitment survey stated that they need help filling talent pipelines, finding, hiring and onboarding new talent by utilizing marketing, interviewing and/or training best practices for the post-pandemic labor market. Seven of nine stakeholder groups convened agreed that resources are needed by employers to improve market intelligence on recruitment best practices and accessing the current labor pool.

Expanding job opportunities for workers and retention of employees for businesses.



OED will continue to improve the quality of jobs in the city. Retaining employees decreases future expenditures on recruitment and training. Protecting employers' investment in talent by improving the communication and understanding of job growth opportunities to current workers and new entrants to the workforce, and workers' desired working conditions to employers.

Nine of nine stakeholder groups agreed on funding or providing technical assistance for employers on best practices in recruitment and job post marketing.

Eight of nine stakeholder groups agreed on funding or providing technical assistance for employers on best practices in employee engagement and retention – including alternative business development models for increased employee stock ownership such as project labor agreements, cooperatives, etc.

Six of nine stakeholder groups convened agreed on funding or providing technical assistance for employers creating and/or marketing career paths for entry-level positions within a company and/or industry.

Workforce Development

STAKEHOLDERS AND CURRENT EFFORTS

Workforce Development is inherently a collaborative effort across a variety of stakeholders within a given community. From employers and employees to government agencies, educators, social services/ non-profit organizations and staffing agencies, training services or other for-profit consultants, there are many who assist in delivering strategic, impactful outcomes. Navigating and collaborating with these stakeholders effectively and efficiently, developing consensus, is a complex and time-consuming process that will always be a cost of doing business. To clarify the focus areas of departments within the City of Mesa, the following graphic has been developed in collaboration with City of Mesa’s Education and Workforce Office (EWO). This spectrum delineates responsibility and scope of services to the community (prospective employees) and services to businesses (prospective employers) while noting the need to collaborate on aligning the supply and demand sides of the labor economy under the organizing efforts of Mesa’s Education and Workforce Roundtable:

Education and Workforce Development Roundtable

A City-Wide Effort: Building a thriving workforce	Responsive	Supportive	Adaptive
Services to Business - Office of Economic Development	Hiring & Placement	Technical Assistance	Conveying Employers & Market Intelligence
Services to Community - Education & Workforce Office	Stabilizing & Upskilling	Mesa K-Ready & College-Ready, Career Navigation	Improving Access to Education and Employment

Local, regional and statewide stakeholders outside the City of Mesa work with OED & EWO to support these efforts. The most notable of these along with their services provided are written on the following page.

Workforce Development

STAKEHOLDERS AND CURRENT EFFORTS



STAKEHOLDER GROUP	STAKEHOLDER NAME	SERVICES & PROGRAMS
EDUCATORS	Mesa School Districts: Mesa Public Schools, Gilbert Public Schools, Queen Creek Unified & Higley Unified	K-12 Education and Career Action Plans for Students, Work Based Learning Partnerships
	East Valley Institute of Technology	Career & Technical Education Programs, Student Recruitment and Internships
	Maricopa County Community College District	Student Recruitment via Career Services and Maricopa Pipeline/Pipeline AZ, Custom Training and Employee Tuition Assistance via Maricopa Corporate College and Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute Bootcamps
	Arizona State University	AZNext Workforce Training Accelerator, ASU for You, Handshake Employer Engagement Platform, Faculty and Student Engagement through Capstone Project and Research Opportunities, Custom Training Programs for Employers via ASU Online
	Benedictine University	Internship and recruitment via online job board, on-campus recruiting events, facilities available for employer/student interviewing
PUBLIC WORKFORCE ENTITIES	ARIZONA@WORK (State and Local Workforce Development Boards)	Arizona Career Readiness Credential, Online Job Posting, Applicant Screening, Facilities for Interviewing/Recruiting, Apprenticeships, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Programs
	Arizona Commerce Authority & Subsidiary Organizations (Office of Economic Opportunity, Department of Economic Security, Manufacturing Extension Partnership)	Arizona Apprenticeship Office, Employment & Rehabilitation Services, Community Services (Adult and Developmental Disabilities,) Labor Analytics, Technical Assistance Programming for Small Businesses/ Start-Ups & Manufacturers
	Pipeline AZ	Career Exploration, Job Search & Education Program Connection
	Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation	Convenes workforce collaboratives, various recruitment and training programs available for industry collaboratives
	Mesa Chamber of Commerce	Convenes Mesa Employers for general market intelligence. Current Workforce focus is connection of employers to educational partners for internships and keeping Mesa students working in the City.
NON-PROFIT REFERRAL NETWORK	A New Leaf @ Mesa Workforce Center	Job Search/Application Assistance; Wellness, Housing, Family & Education Support
	COPA Health	Employment Services & Wellness Programs
	St. Joseph the Worker	Job Search/Application Assistance, Professional Clothing & Social Services Referral
	Salvation Army Mesa Corps Community Center	Emergency Financial, Food & Shelter Assistance
	Save the Family	Job Search/Application Assistance, Mental Wellness & Life Skills Support
	House of Refuge	Job Search/Application Assistance, Temporary Housing & Social Services Referral
	Mesa Veterans Resource Center, a program of Mesa United Way	Job Search/Application Assistance; VA Benefits Navigation; Emergency Financial, Food & Shelter Assistance
	Paz de Cristo	Job Search/Application Assistance, Food & Clothing/Haircut Assistance
	Mesa LDS Employment Resource Center	Job Search/Application & Education Assistance
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS	Staffing Agencies	For-Profit, Expert Recruitment Services Across Various Industries and Operation Types
	Training Services	For-Profit, Expert Training Services Across Various Occupation and Regulatory Needs

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT	TACTIC TIMESCALE	TACTIC	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S)
PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR MESA JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.	RESPONSIVE (NOV. 2022)	Strengthen relationships and improve coordination with workforce development partners	Office of Economic Development	Referrals to Partner Organizations
	RESPONSIVE (NOV. 2022)	Deploy and market City of Mesa Workforce Resources Directory	Office of Economic Development	Impressions, Click-Through Rate, Referrals to Partner Organizations
	RESPONSIVE (DEC. 2022)	Open Mesa Workforce Center - with partners A New Leaf and ARIZONA@WORK	Education & Workforce Office	Individuals Served, Referred to Social Services & Placed in Employment or Training
	SUPPORTIVE (JAN. 2023)	Continue the Workforce Speaker Series to aid employer ability to attract, develop and retain talent	Office of Economic Development	Attendees, Registrations, Click-Through Rate & Impressions
	ADAPTIVE	Improve post-secondary attainment	Education & Workforce Office	Enrollments via Mesa College Promise, Longitudinal Data on Degree Attainment
IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE THE SKILLS GAP IN HIRING.	SUPPORTIVE (JAN. 2023)	Conduct employer outreach for career pathways development	Office of Economic Development	Events held, companies engaged, viable high-impact career paths identified
	ADAPTIVE	Market Mesa as a destination for out-of-market talent to live, work and play	Office of Economic Development	Impressions, Click-Through Rate, Longitudinal Data on Migrations from Campaign's Target Markets
EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKERS AND RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES FOR BUSINESSES.	SUPPORTIVE	Explore technical assistance opportunities for management and recruiting best practices	Office of Economic Development	Referrals made to network, enrolled consultants, amount of financial assistance to participating businesses.
	ADAPTIVE	Market career paths and skill needs to students	Education & Workforce Roundtable project team	Career Action Plans Completed for Target Career Paths, Enrollments in Post-secondary programs relevant to target career paths



Empowered to Help Build Your Business

The City of Mesa Office of Economic Development works closely with clients throughout all phases of the development process and looks forward to helping you build and grow your company in Mesa.

STAY CONNECTED WITH US:

-  Mesa-Economic-Development
-  MesaEconDev
-  Mesa Business Builder
-  CityofMesa



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