

# Arizona Commerce Authority

## Overview

The partnership based in the Greater Phoenix region, led by the Arizona Commerce Authority, will focus on engaging and creating initiatives between business, education, and government to develop and retain its workforce in information technology, an emerging driver of regional economic development.

**Industry/Sector focus:** Information technology (IT)

## Rationale/Need

Driven by emerging and high-demand industries such as big data, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and mobile and wearable technology, information technology (IT) is expected yield more than 1.3 million job openings nationwide by 2022. Despite a positive growth outlook for IT jobs, there is a growing concern that the Greater Phoenix region lacks qualified workers to support the future growth of IT and that qualified talent is leaving the area for better professional opportunities elsewhere.

Employers have reported difficulty in finding qualified talent with skills specific for their businesses. Such skills include: software development, particularly consumer software, as opposed to enterprise software; basic business and finance knowledge; hands-on experience relevant to industry; and soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, time management, problem solving, critical thinking, customer service, and the ability to adopt new and emerging industry standards. To retain and grow a vibrant IT workforce, existing companies will need to better understand what their current and future IT professionals are looking for in professional, career development.

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Additionally, major IT companies are realizing that they need a higher level of diversity in their organizations, especially identifying a need for more women and Latinos. The partnership has worked with regional organizations such as Goodwill and Chicanos por la Causa, and it hopes to broaden its reach to populations not yet engaged in the IT profession, communicating the value of IT opportunities and ensuring that these populations will benefit.

# CTWP Learning Objectives

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- Are there more accurate, more relevant methods for understanding the specific skills requirements of companies that consume IT talent?
- Are there more effective ways of understanding and quantifying the talent that exists in the region?
- What is the best way to evaluate opportunities to improve the connections between employers and existing talent?
- Are workforce development or educational institutions elsewhere critically evaluating competency-based hiring models and their pre- and post- hire implications?
- What characteristics would define a workforce that is well-prepared for the anticipated growth in demand for IT jobs?
- What are the most effective working structures that enable stakeholders from business, education, and government to effectively work on implementation?
- How can partnerships engage key political leaders to support the best policies locally?
- How can partnerships fund an industry-approach to workforce development so it has both volunteer leaders and the needed staff and tactical support?

**What characteristics define a workforce that is well-prepared for the anticipated growth in demand for IT jobs?**

## Lead Agency and Partner Organizations

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Arizona Commerce Authority

- Arizona Technology Council
- Cox Communications
- Western Alliance Bank

## Target Region

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The Greater Phoenix MSA Region consists of 25 incorporated cities in Maricopa County. Those cities include: Phoenix, Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Scottsdale, Tempe, Peoria, Surprise, Avondale, Goodyear, and 14 others. The cities vary in population from two thousand to 1.5 million each.