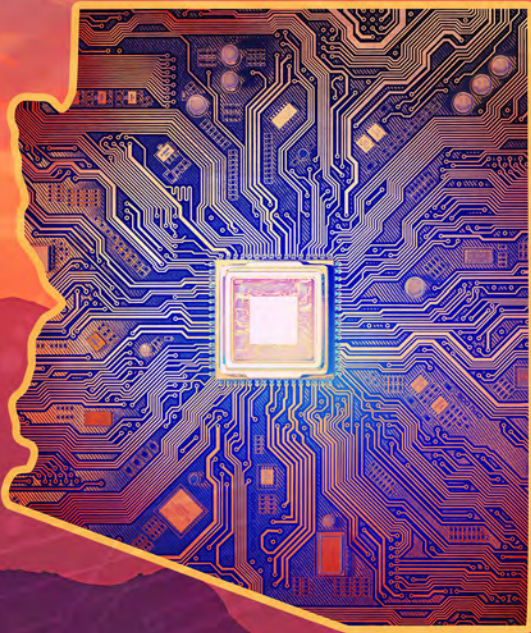




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# ELEVATEAZ

ANNUAL REPORT V.2024 // TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP IN A NEW ERA



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# LETTER FROM PRESIDENT + CEO

It would be hard to argue against the conclusion that technology has been a catalyst to advance our lives. For example, the ubiquitous smartphone has become the gateway to making communications a critical component of our lives. And artificial intelligence is helping us use data for decision-making unimagined not too long ago.

These are just two examples of why the Arizona Technology Council chose the theme Elevate AZ for its 2024 Annual Report. We are helping establish our state as the place where the world can come to reach that next level.

In fact, Arizona has become the destination where business comes to make headlines. Add to that, many of our own members are making their own news.

The catalyst for the 2024 wave of activity here no doubt has to be the big powerhouse in the tiny package. I'm referring to the semiconductor and

the affiliated manufacturing that are poised to drive Arizona's economy for years to come.

It seems hard to find anyone who doesn't recognize the name Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, or TSMC for short. At last count, TSMC Arizona announced plans for a third state-of-the-art fabrication facility in northwest Phoenix, bringing the total investment here to more than \$65 billion and more than 6,000 jobs. (In early 2025, TSMC expressed confidence in its Arizona manufacturing plans by committing to an additional \$100 billion investment.)

Another well-known name in the sector is Intel, a major global player with its campus in Chandler. Nearly \$8 billion in funds through the CHIPS and Science Act was earmarked for manufacturing projects in Arizona and other U.S. Intel locations. Separately, the company is investing \$32 billion to add two factories at its Ocotillo campus.

Adding to the excitement is ASM, a Netherlands-based semiconductor equipment company. It has expanded its North American headquarters in Scottsdale, with an investment of \$300 million and the addition of 500 jobs.

With semiconductors at the heart of data centers, Google grabbed plenty of attention with news of its \$600 million data center construction underway in Mesa. The new center will allow the company to assist operations related to its services including Google Search, Gmail and Google Cloud.

This is just a small sampling of the action. The Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) reported that in fiscal 2024, companies committed to investing more than \$50 billion in local communities, bringing 24,251 new jobs with an average wage of \$75,701 — all new records.

Worth noting is that over the years, ACA has been key to attracting TSMC and other technology companies to our state, as well as being an ongoing partner of the Council. It's for these reasons and others that the Council celebrates Gov. Katie Hobbs signing 2024 legislation to reauthorize ACA through 2029.

To get ready for technology demands to come, the Maricopa County Community College District announced it is collaborating with ACA, Fresh Start Women's Foundation and Intel to launch Arizona's first AI certificate and degree programs.

At Arizona State University (ASU), the university revealed its partnership with OpenAI to expand artificial intelligence (AI) education, as well as launch initiatives to ensure Arizona stays competitive in clean energy development. With such advancements, it's no surprise ASU has approached \$1 billion in annual



research funding, taking its place among top-tier universities responsible for leading innovation.

With so many members upping their game, we at the Council were motivated to elevate our own. That included channeling our energy into our Arizona Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem Committee that quickly gained traction.

The committee is comprised of industry leaders involved with AI across the state's technology ecosystem. Committee Chair Minky Kernacs, CEO of Mercurio Analytics, has been using AI and the offshoot Generative AI at her own business while helping the technology ecosystem learn their applications.

We also looked to another segment of membership as inspiration for our new Aerospace, Aviation, Space and Defense Committee. With Council members including Paragon Space Development Corporation, Phantom Space Corporation, Honeywell Aerospace, FreeFall Aerospace, The Boeing Company, ViaSat and Raytheon Technologies, it was fitting to have lift-off for such a committee.

Add to that my own affinity for the stars and beyond. With more than two decades' experience working in the aerospace industry as an engineer and executive, I was appointed to the board of directors of the Arizona Space Commission by Arizona House Speaker Ben Toma.

The Council also gave a peek at what we believe will have people talking in the years to come. We gave everyone a look behind the curtain when we announced the winners at our 2024 Governor's Celebration of Innovation. Winners included:

- + Innovator of the Year – Start-Up Company: iCRx, Inc. – The Tucson company has developed

a device to instantly determine visual correction parameters for eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions.

- + Innovator of the Year – Small Company: Air<sub>2</sub>O – The Phoenix firm creates advanced thermal-management environments for data centers, indoor agriculture/cultivation and large industrial facilities.
- + Innovator of the Year – Large Company: Liveops – The Scottsdale company delivers flexible contact center and customer service outsourcing solutions, combining human expertise and advanced technology.

What I offer in this space is just a glimpse of the successes that the Council and its members counted in 2024. For more details, I encourage you to spend some time reading the pages that follow. (If you get ideas for what could work in your own operations, feel free to borrow.)

It's not often that a state can turn to one pillar of its economy as holding the promise for today and tomorrow. Arizona is fortunate that this can be said of our technology ecosystem since it impacts a cross-section of sectors.

We collectively play a role in these successes. Whether an innovator, customer or resident, reaching the next level elevates all of Arizona.



**Steven G. Zylstra, Sc.D. (Hon.)**

President + CEO  
Arizona Technology Council  
+ SciTech Insitute



# INTRODUCTION + OVERVIEW

As Arizona's premier networking and trade association for science and technology companies, the Arizona Technology Council is the driving force behind making the Grand Canyon State the fastest-growing technology hub in the nation, connecting and empowering Arizona's community of innovation.

More than 750 of Arizona's most cutting-edge technology companies are members of the Council, ranging in size from early-stage startups to larger corporations that are household names. To support their growth, the Council hosts approximately 100 virtual and in-person events, educational forums and conferences annually that convene industry movers and shakers. Beyond that, member companies have access to a variety of member perks like an association health care plan, a multiple-employer 401(k) plan, discounted tuition for degree programs at certain in-state educational institutions and much more.

Finally, the Council works towards eliminating impediments that technology companies face and furthering the advancement of technology in Arizona through leadership, education, advocacy and social action. A primary priority is advocating for a technology-based, pro-growth and business-focused agenda at the federal, state and local levels. In the year to come, the Council will be supporting legislative action that promotes creating an equitable statewide STEM ecosystem, advancing clean energy initiatives, funding education and a variety of other pressing issues that are critical for Arizona's economic growth and development.

With the support of our members, sponsors and partners, the Council is a trusted resource in strengthening Arizona's technology industry and accelerating the innovation mindset already present in our rapidly evolving innovation ecosystem.

## MISSION

To empower innovators who drive impact that positively transforms the world.

## VISION

Advance Arizona as a preferred technology ecosystem for purpose-driven innovators globally.

## PURPOSE

Catalyzing technology innovators to accelerate Arizona's global impact.

## VALUES

- + Elevate your mind
- + Embrace diverse perspectives
- + Shape the future
- + Form authentic relationships
- + Expand your mission
- + Create positive change



## HISTORY

The Council was created in 2002 after the Arizona High Technology Industry Cluster merged with the Arizona Software and Internet Association. In 2008, the Council added an office in Tucson after consolidating the Aerospace, Manufacturing and Information Technology (AMIT) clusters of Southern Arizona into the Council. In 2016, the Arizona Optics Industry Association merged with the Council to become the Optics Valley Committee.

## LEADERSHIP

The Council is governed by a board of directors. Alex Iuorio, senior vice president of Avnet, serves as the Council's board chair. Steven G. Zylstra serves as president + CEO of the Council and is responsible for its day-to-day operations and management.

## OBJECTIVE

The Council supports technology companies at all stages of growth and development—from startups to rapidly growing mid-sized companies to large global enterprises. It strives to improve Arizona's competitiveness and visibility by advancing the development of the state's technology community.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## BUILDING A FUTURE-READY TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM

As Arizona's technology sector continues to evolve, the Arizona Technology Council remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering innovation, driving economic growth and advocating policies that strengthen the state's position as a global technology leader. To ensure continued success, the Council embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process throughout the summer, culminating in an intensive staff and board leadership workshop in October.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The FY25-28 strategic plan is the result of a months-long, collaborative effort by Council staff and board members. Throughout the summer, five working groups conducted in-depth analyses to inform the Council's future direction. The highlights include:

### External and Internal Analysis

- + Team 1: PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) analysis and top three trends impacting the Council
- + Team 2: Marketplace intelligence – Pittsburgh Technology Council ([pghtech.org](http://pghtech.org))
- + Team 3: Marketplace intelligence – NC Tech Association ([nctech.org](http://nctech.org))
- + Team 4: Marketplace intelligence – Northern Virginia Technology Council ([nvtc.org](http://nvtc.org))
- + Team 5: SWOT, competitors and influencers – identifying key competitors, influencers and Arizona Technology Council's influence strategy

Additionally, the Council conducted a membership survey and a member listening session to gain direct insights into what members want, need, value and seek to improve within the Council. These efforts provided a data-driven foundation for the October workshop, where findings were presented, discussed and used to define strategic planning goals.



# STRATEGIC PILLARS AND PRIORITIES

Based on the summer research, member insights and leadership team discussions, the FY25-28 strategic plan is built around four key, overarching goal pillars:

## Programs, Products + Member Services

Deliverables:

- + Establish a junior board
- + Broaden Council programming
- + Leverage ongoing member input for program excellence

## Financial Health

Deliverables:

- + Review pricing of events and memberships
- + Evaluate M&A opportunities
- + Explore and pursue additional grant opportunities

## Operational Effectiveness

Deliverables:

- + Implement a new CRM system

- + Develop an HR, staffing, recruitment, benefits and development plan with a focus on succession planning
- + Board of directors recruitment, orientation and training

## External Outreach – Advocacy, Communications, Marketing, Branding and Partnerships

Deliverables:

- + Launch a new website with accessibility and Spanish language features
- + Develop an updated comprehensive marketing + communications plan with a focus on signature events marketing and social media storytelling
- + Develop annual advocacy plans and key policy messaging to increase visibility of the Council's PAC and advocacy efforts

# BUILDING A FUTURE-READY TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM

The FY25-28 strategic plan positions the Council for long-term impact by ensuring agility and resilience in an ever-changing global environment. With a strong foundation in data-driven decision-making, collaborative leadership and forward-thinking strategies, the Council will continue to lead Arizona's technology community toward a future of sustained growth and innovation.

This plan reinforces the Council's vision to advance Arizona as a preferred technology ecosystem for purpose-driven innovators worldwide and its mission to empower innovators who drive impact and transform the world.

Progress will be monitored by the Council's president + CEO and staff on a monthly basis, and by the board on a quarterly basis. New fiscal year operating goals will be developed annually during the fourth quarter. For more information on strategic initiatives, updates on progress and how to get involved, visit [aztechcouncil.org](https://aztechcouncil.org).

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- + Develop a phased-in option for students to enroll in a computer science course offered at their schools or an online course approved by Arizona Department of Education. For high school ages, the course should be a standalone computer science course, and for younger grades, computer science principles should be incorporated into a general education course. Support funding for the courses and accompanying teacher development to support this program.
- + Seek measure the progress of opportunities to positively impact the diversity, equity and inclusion of the workforce and its leadership, and grant equitable access to essential services (e.g., broadband, transportation, employment, education opportunities).
- + Work collaboratively with both Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) and Arizona Legislature to advance energy policy that encourages demand-side adoption of energy efficiency, prioritizes clean and renewable energy use, invests in electric vehicle infrastructure development, and supports innovation in the industry. Protect against attempts to undercut the authority of ACC to promulgate and implement clean energy policies.
- + Look for opportunities to expand Arizona's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, including computer sciences and coding opportunities for students. Focus on long term, shared, sustainable and flexible STEM missions that bridge, integrate and strengthen the learning opportunities offered by organizations across sectors instead of isolated, independent entities. STEM education helps prepare our students for the jobs of not only today but also the future and will build a strong, diverse talent pipeline to meet the state's continued growth.

## ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY

The top priority for the Council this year was the continuation of Arizona Commerce Authority, as it was set to sunset. The issue became one of the most contentious continuations of an agency of the session, with some legislators trying to move forward with a repeal, others a very short continuation and other supporters trying to get the normal eight-year continuation. Additionally, legislators wanted to see some additional safety guards put on the agency through extra reporting to ensure monies were being utilized in the manner for which they were intended.

Ultimately, on the final day of the session, ACA was continued for five years in HB2210, which also removed the agency's continuation being tied to an election year in future years. The measure also prohibited ACA from using public monies for CEO forums at entertainment events with the purpose of attracting business to the state in the future. The bill also continued a few other state agencies such as the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Committee, Governor's Office on Tribal Relations, Arizona Historical Society, Arizona State Personnel Board and Arizona Department of Administration.

The Council and P3 actively supported this bill that passed:

- + **HB2210 State agencies; continuations; duties (Rep. David Livingston - R):** Signed by Gov. Katie Hobbs on June 18, HB2210 extends the operation of several state agencies, including the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) for five years. The bill strengthens ACA oversight by capping state-funded staff, mandating transparency in board meetings, and restricting the use of state funds for executive perks. It also requires quarterly legislative reporting on economic agreements and the collection of municipal data to track economic development efforts.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

Another priority of the Council's this session was working to advance computer science in schools. However, with the state being in a fiscal deficit, the Council chose not to run legislation but work on an educational campaign to build awareness and support for the idea of phasing in a requirement for schools to offer computer science to their students.

The Council worked with Rep. Justin Wilmeth, House Commerce Committee chair, and held an informational hearing in his committee to help raise awareness of the issue. With the close ties between education, workforce development and commerce in the state, the intent was to broaden support beyond just members interested in education. Additionally, the Council met with various education stakeholders to help raise awareness that Arizona is lagging behind other states in offering computer science and how we can all work together to address that so all students gain access to computer science prior to graduation.

Because the deficit is expected to continue into the 2025 session, the Council will determine whether there is funding to go along with this priority next session. The Council does not want to advocate something that doesn't have the funding



- associated with it, making it another unfunded mandate that schools must overcome.
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## THE BUDGET

With the FY2024I deficit of \$1.3 billion, the budget included several cuts to all agencies, including ACA and others that are of concern. Below is an outline of the budget provisions of interest to the Council and its members:

### Arizona Commerce Authority

- + Reduce economic development marketing from \$1 million a year to \$500,000 a year
- + Eliminate \$24 million in federal broadband matching funds and repeal the Rural Broadband Accelerated Match Fund
- + \$500,000 for Small Business Center grants
- + Transfer \$56 million from the Arizona Competes Fund to the general fund
- + Transfer \$1 million from the Office of Economic Opportunity operations fund to the state general fund
- + Reduce the ACA allocation from the lottery from \$3.5 million to \$1.75 million from FY2025 to FY2027

### Education

- + K-12 aggregate expenditure override for FY2025
- + 2% inflation adjustment for K-12 public schools
- + Eliminate kindergarten entry assessment funding
- + Make continuing high school workforce training and community college adult education workforce development funding from ongoing funding to one-time
- + Eliminate adult workforce diploma program and administration costs
- + Make the poverty weight funding for K-12 one-time instead of ongoing with intent to restore language in FY 2028
- + Make the changes to additional assistance funding a one-time adjustment instead of ongoing
- + A cap on corporate Student Tuition Organization tax credits at \$135 million a year
- + \$54 million cut from the community college system
- + Eliminate Dual Enrollment Development Fund teacher incentive bonuses
- + Reduce dual enrollment \$50 per credit hour student incentive

- + \$22 million in cuts to state universities (ASU: \$11 million, UA: \$6.5 million, NAU: \$4 million)
- + Elimination of \$15 million from Nurse Education Investment Program
- + Transfer \$3 million from Adult Workforce Diploma program to state general fund
- + Transfer \$8.9 million from Community College Adult Education Workforce Development Program fund to general fund
- + Transfer \$5 million from Computer Science Professional Development Program fund to general fund
- + Continue to suspend operating state aid funding for community colleges in Maricopa and Pima counties
- + Suspend inflation adjustments for FY2025 for STEM and workforce programs at all community colleges
- + Reduce Arizona Business One Stop funding by \$7 million

### Water & Energy

- + Eliminate \$333 million deposit into the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona
- + Eliminate \$11 million FY2024 brackish groundwater recovery pilot program funding
- + Eliminate \$5 million electric vehicle charging funding for state facilities/ public use

## OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

Additionally, the Council did a substantial amount of work in the renewable energy space. There were several pieces of legislation that would have been detrimental to continued deployment of renewable energy resources in the state. The Council collaborated with other clean energy advocates and were able to keep those bills from advancing. This will continue to be an area of interest and focus for the Council. The measures included:

- + **HB2002 Power Plants; Transmission Lines; Definition (Rep. Gail Griffin - R):** For the purpose of requiring approval from the Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee, "transmission line" does not include a substation or switchyard to which the line connects. Hobbs vetoed the bill on April 23. Several energy partners were opposed to this bill. However, this is a bill the Council monitored.

- + **HB2004 Utilities; Electronic Filings; Corporation Commission (Rep. Gail Griffin - R):** Utilities are authorized to submit an application for a certificate of environmental compatibility to Arizona Corporation Commission in an electronic format. Hobbs signed the bill on March 29. The Council supported this bill.
- + **HB2107 Department Of Homeland Security; Continuation (Rep. Kevin Payne - R):** The statutory life of Arizona Department of Homeland Security is extended four years to July 1, 2028. Retroactive to July 1, 2024. Hobbs signed the bill on March 29. The Council supported this bill. This was important to the technology industry for many reasons, especially cybersecurity.
- + **HB2477 - State Planet; Pluto (Rep. Justin Wilmeth - R):** Establishes Pluto as the official state planet. Hobbs signed the bill on March 29. The Council supported this bill due to the discovery of Pluto happening in Arizona and the fact it will help bring awareness to the space industry here. While technically no longer a planet, the awareness of the space industry garnered support. This was a feel good bill of the session.
- + **SB1010 Vehicle Mileage; Tracking; Tax; Prohibitions (Sen. Jake Hoffman - R):** Prohibits a city, town, county or political subdivision from considering or establishing vehicles miles travel reduction goals for use with state projects; or track or maintain a record of personal vehicle miles of travel records (via odometer readings, cameras, or any other means of recording) of any person; or impose any mileage fee or tax on miles traveled by an individual in a motor vehicle. Failed on Senate third read. The Council was the lead in working to oppose this measure and was able to secure the votes to kill it. The measure was being run by the Free Enterprise Club. The group was unwilling to address the issues that put Arizona's State Implementation Plan at risk, along with the Emission Reduction Credit programs, which allow manufacturers to offset their emissions. The Council worked closely with Intel and Maricopa County on this issue.
- + **SB1053 Arizona-Ireland Trade Commission (Sen. Frank Carroll - R):** Establishes the Arizona-Ireland Trade Commission and defines membership to the commission, terms, the purpose of the commission, reporting requirements, compensation, funding and permissible gifts, and expenditures of monies collected. Hobbs signed the bill on April 23. The Council supported this bill.



## ELECTION YEAR

Because 2024 was an election year, the Council's Public Policy Committee went through the candidate endorsement process. The committee sent a survey to all state legislative candidates running in the June time frame and interviewed nearly 50 candidates before selecting those to support. The committee then published its [Vote TechSmart Guide](#) and utilized some of the funds in the Council's PAC to support selected candidates who were endorsed. The Committee also worked to update and publish the 2025 Public Policy Guide for members and elected officials and released the guide in fall 2024..

# ARIZONA TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IMPACT REPORT





# QUARTERLY INSIGHTS ON AZ'S TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Released quarterly, the Arizona Technology Council's Technology Industry Impact Report keeps its constituents informed on the progress of Arizona's technology community and puts a face to the industry's success stories.

On the Council's behalf, the quarterly report is compiled by **Lightcast**, an organization that creates web-based, data-reporting solutions designed to help cities, industries and planners drive effective policy, create new growth and engage stakeholders. The report is based on Lightcast's analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), The Brookings Institution, CompTIA, Angellist, National Science Board and others.

## Significant data points for 2024 include:

- + Technology industry earnings in Arizona topped \$31.4 billion by Q4 2024.
- + Technology jobs are projected to increase by 9% in the next five years. This is behind Texas, Utah and Nevada.
- + A noteworthy highlight from Q1 is that Arizona had the lowest number of unemployed individuals in the tech industry—just 24,000—among the compared states.
- + Arizona is significantly more concentrated in aerospace jobs than peer states, with a concentration of 1.31.
- + Guided missile and space vehicle manufacturing has a concentration of 9.51. That is nine times more than the national average.
- + The aerospace industry cluster provides a gross regional product of \$2.7 billion in Arizona.
- + Computer hardware occupations are increasing faster than most tech occupations. Computer hardware engineer jobs were up more than 100% in the past 5 years, making them the leading tech occupations in growth.

The aerospace industry cluster provides a gross regional product of **\$2.7 BILLION** in Arizona

In 2024, the report's dashboard was supplemented again by stories of the people behind the numbers. They were curated by Leslie Marquez, the Council's director of marketing + communications, and featured the people— employers and employees, innovators and investors—who make the technology industry in Arizona flourish.

View or download the complete report on the Arizona Technology Council's website: <https://aztc.eimpactv3.com/dashboards/6/techimpact/aztc>

It is important to note that the technology sector jobs data in this dashboard are sourced from Emsi, representing estimates of the trailing four quarters for the given reporting period. Emsi's model uses the most recent four quarters of BLS data to produce these estimations, allowing the Council to publish data approximately six months in advance of official BLS releases.

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# TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYMENT

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, the Arizona Technology Council remained committed to helping bridge the skilled talent gap that challenges its members across industries and disciplines. The Council continued its active support of initiatives aimed at developing and supporting a robust, aligned education and workforce development system. It also maintained its ongoing commitment to increasing the diversity, equity and inclusiveness of those systems, as well as the talent developed and supported. In addition, the Council proactively advocated science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education at all levels. Such a system of support provides the foundation for a healthy Arizona technology community and an innovation economy by:

- + Supporting talent development through formal education from pre-K through college, informal workplace and work-like experiences, and on-the-job training.
- + Enabling the attraction and retention of the talent—in-state or imported—needed for Arizona to thrive as a technology hub.
- + Ensuring access to and full participation of talent reflecting Arizona's diverse population.
- + Aligning with the needs of companies for STEM workers now and in the future.

## POLICY + ADVOCACY

The Council continued to advocate advancing the agenda of education for a skilled workforce through its public policy and legislative action during the 2024 legislative session. Key areas of focus included:

- + Looking for opportunities to cultivate a diverse, equitable and statewide STEM ecosystem.
- + Consistently, equitably and sustainably funding the state's P-20 education system—including pre-K, K-12, career and technical education districts (CTED), and postsecondary programs—and access to advanced, rigorous coursework.
- + Supporting efforts in seeking opportunities to positively impact the diversity, equity and inclusion of the workforce and its leadership, and granting equitable access to essential services.
- + Eliminating the digital divide by guaranteeing foundational digital skills training and increasing access to broadband and needed devices to ensure equitable opportunities for education, training and job opportunities for all Arizonans.
- + Working to advance access to computer science in schools prior to graduation, including an educational campaign to build awareness of the importance of offering computer science to all students. An informational House of Representatives Commerce Committee hearing helped draw attention to Arizona's lagging behind other states in offering computer science and opportunities to address the impact on education, workforce development and commerce in the state.

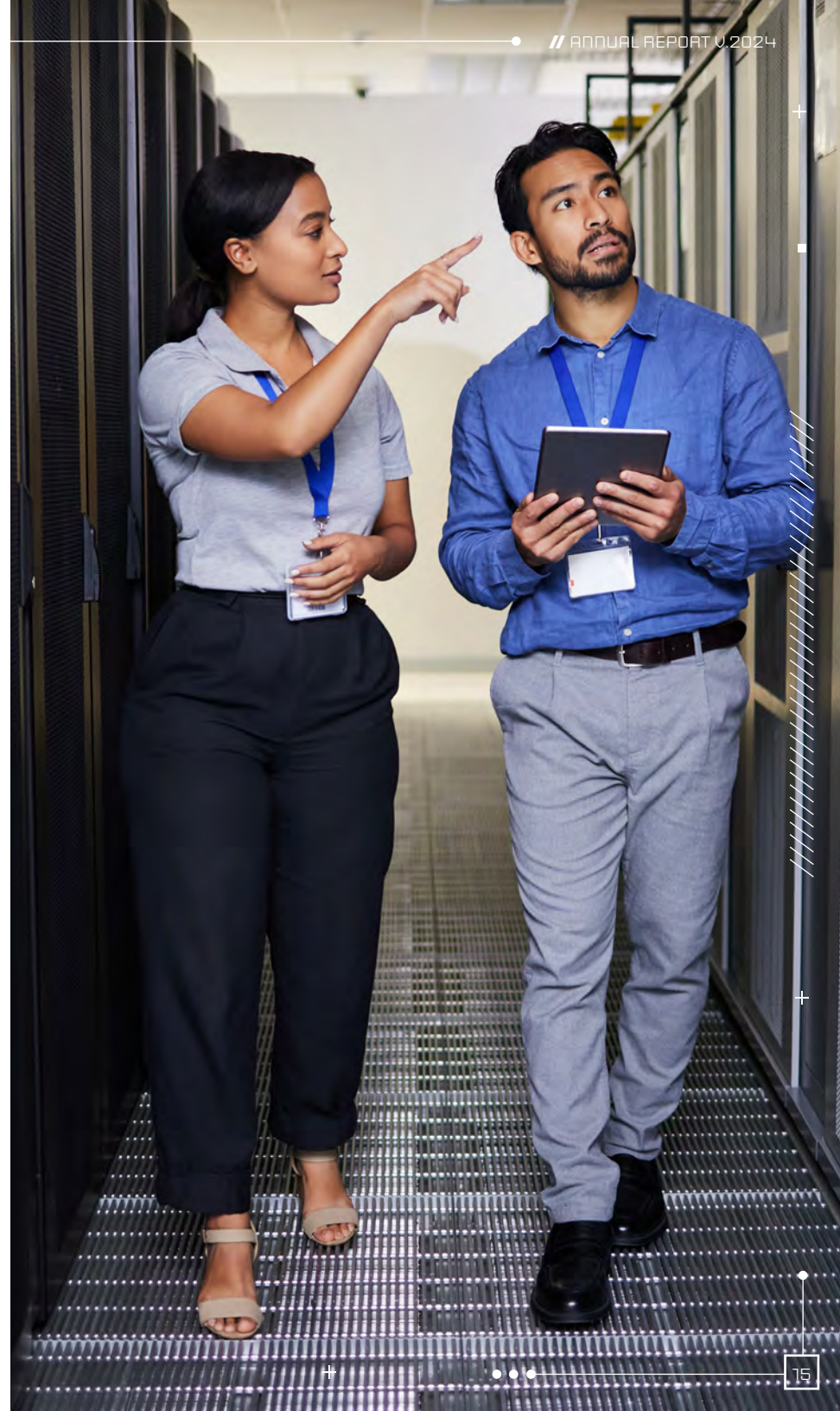
From a workforce development perspective, additional focus areas included:

- + Reducing barriers to participation by all Arizonans in an inclusive, equitable economy.
- + Developing cross-institutional partnerships from education, community, government and business that enhance Arizona's STEM ecosystem to increase public awareness of the importance of STEM in education to prepare Arizona's future workforce.
- + Increasing high school graduation rates, as well as credentials, certificates and degrees to prepare for high-wage, high-demand STEM jobs.
- + Improving participation by companies to provide work experiences, including internships and apprenticeships, for students from K-12 through higher education to develop STEM workers now and in the future.
- + Aligning research, design and implementation of artificial intelligence that positions the needs of students at the forefront and is led by educators, students, families, systems leaders and policy makers.
- + Increasing availability and affordability of 24-hour childcare to ensure full participation of women and low-income workers in Arizona's economy.

## TALENT ATTRACTION, RETENTION + DEVELOPMENT

The Council provided extensive leadership and support both in Arizona and nationally in the implementation, planning and development of the Arizona State University (ASU) five-year ALRISE grant totaling \$10 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the ASU AZNext project.

The NSF grant-funded ALRISE project continued to enhance research experiences for students at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Work-based experience partners of five technology councils continue to be co-led by Arizona Technology Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra. With the guidance from the co-leads, the TECNA Partners planned and hosted the first ALRISE Industry Forum on Zoom in September. Created to support both the partner HSIs and industry members, 86 participants, including the CEO of Parker Dewey, resulted in connections requested between HSI and organization partners. (Micro-internships introduced by Parker Dewey are now available to Arizona Technology Council members through the ALRISE Alliance at [info.parkerdewey.com/alrise/companies](https://info.parkerdewey.com/alrise/companies).)







Helping to develop IT, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing and data analytics talent for Arizona's growing economy, the Council supported ASU AZNext on its way to achieving its U.S. Department of Labor grant goals of 1,400 IT apprentices and an additional 2000 experiential learning participants. More than 3,300 participants are enrolled in programs with a job placement success rate exceeding 40%. Serving 44% women and 56% men, more than 14 apprenticeship programs have begun and 35 other workforce programs have been launched. Enrollment increased by one-third in 2024 and credentials awarded grew 71% year-to-year.

Through active participation by Zylstra and the Workforce Development and Education committee, the Council continues to support meaningful workforce solutions in collaboration with Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation (GPCF), its IT & Cybersecurity Workforce Collaborative, the ElevateEdAZ high school initiative and the NIST RAMPS grant. The grant supports the development of future cybersecurity talent needed by all Council member companies and organizations through professional training for cybersecurity career and technical education teachers, career exploration and education in cybersecurity for students, and increased industry engagement with teachers and high school students from across Arizona in the growing cybersecurity ecosystem.

Through GPCF's ElevateEdAZ initiative, more than 500 high school students participated in work-based learning opportunities, many of which involved

technology-related companies or careers. Students engaged in 1,480 job shadows and 380 internships.

In the project-based training program Employer Provided Innovation Challenge (EPIC), 10 high school students participated in training focused on cybersecurity-related tasks, including pen testing and building a disaster recovery network for small businesses. EPIC is a partnership of Riipen and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and administered by GPCF with support from the IT & Cybersecurity Workforce Collaborative.

The Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA), a Council partner, continues to address the need for work-based learning by bringing innovation to career-connected pathways through the implementation of virtual internships for high school students. This year CFA expanded the 50- and 100-hour experiences to include 20-hour cybersecurity and computer-aided design experiences. Industry mentors provide support for students as they complete "real-world" projects and gain important workplace skills. Additionally, CFA has developed a partnership with the Arizona Department of Homeland Security, including supporting Girls in Cyber events that brought high school students together from across the state, and development and launch of a Regional Security Operations Center at Pima Community College.

The Council, with support from its Workforce Development and Education Committee and the SciTech Foundation, expanded its partnership to include Arizona Institute for Education Excellence (AIEE), a non-partisan organization dedicated to transforming education from PK-12 through higher education and into the workforce by identifying and removing barriers, fostering innovative solutions and shaping the future of education in Arizona. The year 2024 brought the formation and convenings of the statewide H5 Coalition (High School, Higher Ed, High Wage, High Skill, High Demand Workforce) to reimagine high school and higher education access for the benefit of students, families and the workforce in Arizona. AIEE also published AI Guidance for K-12 schools to promote responsible, ethical, and effective use of Gen AI for students, staff and systems leaders, and convened reviews of current education laws, policies, rules and regulations to identify possible future policy levers.

The Council in September hosted the Pima County State Workforce Event, providing a platform for local business and technology leaders to discuss workforce trends, challenges and opportunities. In addition, the 12th Annual Southern Arizona Tech + Business Expo held in the fall at Tucson Convention Center showcased the region's technological advancements and fostered networking among more than 400 industry professionals. The keynote fireside chat titled "Arizona's Mineral Wealth: Navigating the Future of Mining and Innovation" highlighted the intersection of technology and workforce development in the mining sector.

A podcast produced by the Council in March 2024 focused on workforce development and featured discussions with experts from organizations such as PMI Phoenix Chapter, Proctorio Inc., Digitanity and Pipeline Connect. The conversations explored strategies to connect K-12 students with career pathways and addressed the evolving landscape of international hiring and local talent cultivation, providing valuable insights for Southern Arizona stakeholders.

## CONNECTING THE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM

Key Council partner Pipeline Connect, Arizona's leading nonprofit for career readiness and workforce development, continued to drive impact through My Future AZ, Pipeline AZ and Bridge—ensuring students, educators and job seekers have the tools to succeed in Arizona's economy and Arizona employers have the talent to grow commerce and economic development. With year-over-year

growth of 70%, Pipeline Connect has reached more than 245,000 Arizonans, expanding career awareness and access to education pathways. A total of 524 schools use My Future AZ, integrating career exploration and postsecondary planning statewide and creating three Industry Hubs to connect education, employers and job seekers in key sectors.

## INDUSTRY + EDUCATION ALIGNMENT

The Council in 2024 maintained its engagement with the Maricopa County Community College District IT/Cyber Industry Sector Collaborative, which consists of faculty members from colleges across the district. The Council also continued its membership in the Pima Community College IT/Cyber Advisory group, providing support and guidance as the college successfully expanded its cybersecurity program, and support for high school cybersecurity programs in the greater Tucson area.

In addition, Council president + CEO Steven G. Zylstra serves on numerous boards and advisory councils to advocate for a robust, aligned education and workforce development system. These include ALRISE; the Arizona Business + Education Coalition; Arizona District Export Council's Trade Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee; the Arizona Science and Engineering Fair, Arizona Science Center, AZNext, Center for the Future of Arizona, Greater Phoenix Chamber Cyber Workforce Collaborative, Greater Phoenix Chamber IT Workforce Collaborative and several others.

Also, Karla Morales, vice president of the Council's Southern Arizona Regional Office, serves on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) board in Tucson.

# RECENT INITIATIVES + PARTNERSHIPS

## ALRISE

As part of its focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, the Arizona Technology Council continued its extensive leadership with support in Arizona and nationally of the implementation, planning and development of the Arizona State University (ASU) five-year grant totaling \$10 million from the National Science Foundation. ASU's vision for the Accelerate Latinx Representation in STEM Education (ALRISE) Alliance is to drastically improve Latinx student retention and completion in STEM at two- and four-year Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and emerging HSIs (eHSIs) through culturally sensitive capacity building with education and industry partners in experiential learning. In addition to supporting the grant's proposed work in Arizona, the Council facilitated connections to other technology associations across the U.S. for participation in this grant and plays an ongoing leadership role on the grant project. The grant work is slated to be completed by July 31, 2026.

Learn more about this initiative and its key objectives  
at <https://bit.ly/AZTC-ALRISE-grant>

## AZNEXT

One of the Council's other key areas of focus in workforce development in 2024 was continuing to support ASU's AZNext initiative, a combination of its first U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) \$2 million grant focused on developing 1,600 apprentices to fill information technology (IT), cyber and data roles over five years and its second \$8 million DOL grant to establish the Arizona Workforce Training Accelerator Partnership for Next Generation Jobs (AZNext). The workforce development partnership will enhance regional competitiveness, helping to address workforce shortages and train workers for high-paying, high-demand jobs in advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and IT.

Led by ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business, Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, and community partners including Pipeline AZ, Arizona Commerce Authority and Arizona@Work, the second grant program is designed to train at least 2,000 participants, with a goal of achieving industry-recognized credentials and permanent job placement over four years. The Council continued to provide leadership support through President and CEO Steven G. Zylstra and the Workforce Development and Education Committee, and by soliciting participation of Council members for advisory roles and as implementation partners in the talent development and acquisition programs that are part of AZNext.

[Read more about the initiative here](#)



## IT/CYBER CAREER NETWORK

In 2024, the Council continued its leadership supporting the implementation and utilization of the IT/Cyber Career Network in collaboration with the Partnership for Economic Innovation, a nonprofit of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council; Pipeline AZ; and Futures, Inc. based on a platform originally developed for aiding military personnel transition into the workforce.

With the Council's leadership, this first industry hub for Pipeline AZ continues to become the primary statewide source for IT and cybersecurity talent development that integrates career awareness, labor market information, education and training pathways, resources and job opportunities for current and future job seekers, educators, counselors and training providers, as well as business, workforce and economic development professionals. The Council's ongoing efforts include leveraging, amplifying and promoting the work accomplished by local initiatives, identifying any gaps to be addressed and adding value for jobseekers.

To learn more about the Arizona IT/Cyber Career Network platform, please visit [aztechcouncil.org/it-cyber-career-network](https://aztechcouncil.org/it-cyber-career-network)

## POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) UPDATES

The Council continued an online presence for its Political Action Committee, allowing contributors to more easily support pro-technology candidates and policies that promote a thriving technology ecosystem in Arizona and improve the business climate for technology-based companies.

Learn more about the PAC and the Council's legislative priorities at [aztechcouncil.org/aztc-pac](https://aztechcouncil.org/aztc-pac)





## SOLARIZE AT WORK

In 2022, the Council partnered with SmartPower, a national non-profit organization, to launch a new program called Solarize at Work and continued this partnership in 2024. The program is a company-wide and company-branded, 20-week online and in-house residential solar campaign designed to educate and motivate Arizona technology company employees to be sustainable and go solar.

Solarize at Work is a powerful way for technology companies to enhance their relationships with their employees, help with employee recruitment, show their commitment to sustainability, and advance their environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. Most importantly, this program offers another great employee benefit that helps to simplify the often-confusing process of going solar while enabling employees to save money on their energy costs as they lower their personal carbon footprint.

Learn more about this new program offering at [aztechcouncil.org/solarize-at-work](https://aztechcouncil.org/solarize-at-work)

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA GLOBAL CAMPUS

The Council continued its partnership with The University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC), an accredited online university, to offer Council member companies and their immediate family members 30% tuition savings on UAGC's programs. In addition to the tuition savings, UAGC offers Council members free required course materials for all mandatory courses and waives technology, prior learning assessment and graduation fees.

To make this offering extra flexible for professionals looking to upskill, students can take as few as one class at a time and still be considered full time. They can also transfer up to 90 approved credits from an accredited college or university toward a bachelor's degree. There is no need to take an SAT, GMAT, GRE or ACT to enroll.

To learn more about this offering, visit [aztechcouncil.org/discounted-tuition-uagc](https://aztechcouncil.org/discounted-tuition-uagc)

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA ONLINE

In 2022, the Council launched a partnership with The University of Arizona Online to offer members and their spouses, domestic partners and dependents 10% tuition savings on all online bachelor programs and online graduate programs, including the Eller College of Management's Online MBA, the Professional MBA, Executive MBA and Evening MBA.

This partnership and offering continued in 2024. The tuition benefit also includes a UAArizona admissions application fee waiver and a dedicated Arizona Technology Council partnership enrollment team. This partnership gives participants the ability to pursue more affordable and flexible educational opportunities that can help them upskill or elevate their career trajectories. Programs include Applied Computing, Cyber Operations, Electrical + Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, Information Science, Law, Data Science and many more.

To learn more about this offering, visit [aztechcouncil.org/discounted-tuition-uarizona-online](https://aztechcouncil.org/discounted-tuition-uarizona-online)

# PREMIUM HEALTH CARE

## ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLAN WITH BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF ARIZONA

The Arizona Technology Council understands the challenges that many startups and small businesses face. That is exactly why the Council created its own association health plan (AHP) in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.

Since the official launch in January 2020, the Council's Employee Benefit Trust has helped nearly 70 technology industry employers with almost 1,550 employees and dependents across the state find lower cost and richer benefits for their companies.

The growth of the Council's association health plan in 2024 has enabled many member organizations, small businesses, and startups to provide more generous compensation packages to their employees, a critical factor in helping technology companies attract and retain top talent.

See the facts:

- + The Council's AHP achieved 19% growth in employers in 2024.
- + The health plan's current annualized premium is \$9,228,978.
- + The average group size of an employer participant is 13 employees.



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association



## ADVANTAGES OF THE PROGRAM

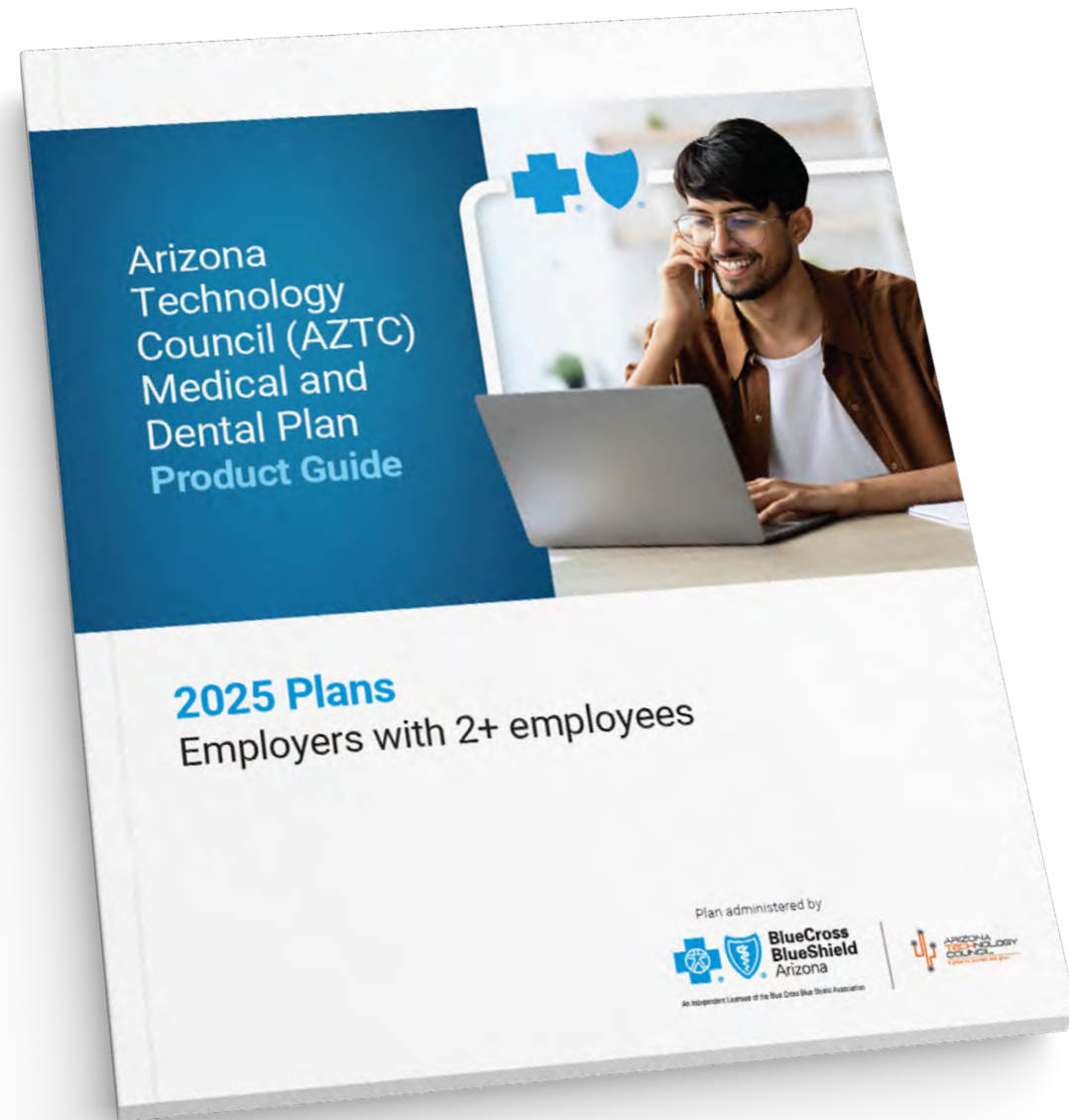
Technology industry employers with as few as two employees now have access to a comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental and vision coverage; life insurance and AD&D; employee assistance; and health savings account (HSA)/flexible spending account (FSA) administration. It provides members with relief from COBRA administration, bill paying, compliance filings, and managing participant eligibility and benefits enrollment.

- + Access: Participating companies have access to statewide networks, including Mayo Clinic, with exclusive network options in Maricopa and Pima counties.
- + Choice: Participating companies can choose from 22 different medical plans options. They include PPO and HSA choices as well as best-in-class ancillary products such as seven dental plans, five vision plans, life/AD&D and short and long-term disability.
- + Service: Local customer service provides care and claims support.
- + Flexibility: Coverage is available for businesses with as few as two employees.
- + Telehealth: Employees can visit a doctor, counselor or psychiatrist any day, anytime, anywhere—from a smartphone, computer or tablet.
- + Tools and resources: A range of resources are available to help members make educated health care decisions. Participating companies' employees can shop and compare costs for more than 1,600 procedures, find a doctor, speak to a nurse on call 24/7, access health plan information via the mobile app and much more.

For more information on the Council's association health plan, visit [aztechcouncil.org/AHP](https://aztechcouncil.org/AHP) or contact:

### Jonathan Gatherers

Consultant  
DiMartino Associates  
(206) 291-4969  
[jonathan@dimarinc.com](mailto:jonathan@dimarinc.com)



# 401(K) OFFERINGS

## 401(K) MULTIPLE EMPLOYER PLAN

The Arizona Technology Council partners with Empower Retirement (formerly MassMutual) to provide member companies a unique way to leverage the buying power of the Council by participating in a 401(k) multiple employer plan (MEP). A multiple employer plan significantly lowers the costs of a 401(k) plan, eliminates much of the administrative burden for a company and provides the most comprehensive fiduciary protection allowed by the U.S. Department of Labor. Investment committee meetings, 5500s and audits are eliminated for each adopting company, and member companies are still able to customize their plan design and the retirement benefits they offer their employees. This 401(k) MEP is appropriate for most size plans and Secure Act 2.0 tax credits are available for new plans.

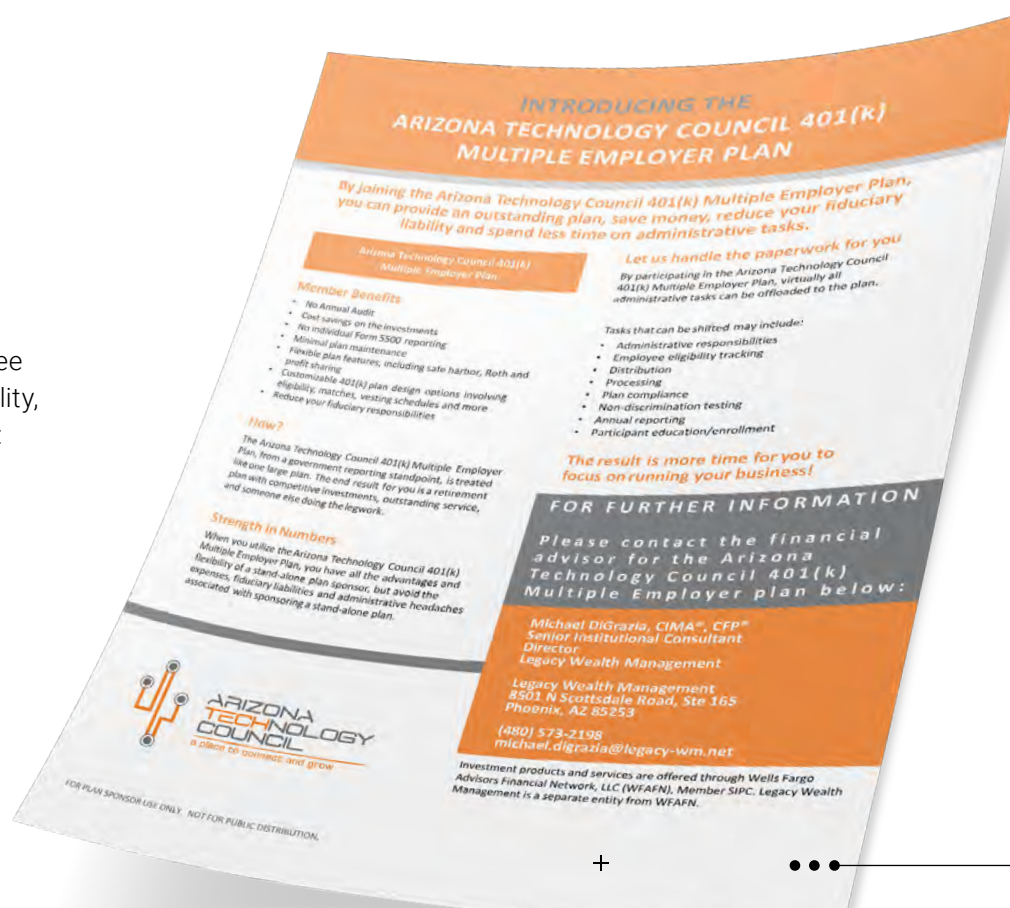
### See the facts:

- + MEP started in 2014
- + 11 participating employers
- + \$6.8 million in plan assets
- + \$260,000 in quarterly deferrals
- + 126 eligible plan participants
- + 96 active plan participants

To learn more about how this plan can help improve your employee benefits program and reduce costs, time and fiduciary responsibility, visit [aztechcouncil.org/401k-multiple-employer-plan](https://aztechcouncil.org/401k-multiple-employer-plan) or contact:

### Michael J. DiGrazia, CFP®, CIMA®

Senior Institutional Consultant  
Legacy Wealth Management  
(480) 573-2198  
[michael.digrazia@legacy-wm.net](mailto:michael.digrazia@legacy-wm.net)



# ONGOING SIGNATURE EVENTS



## AFTER5 TECH MIXERS

The after5 Tech Mixer is one of the Arizona Technology Council's monthly networking events. Designed to bring together technologists, entrepreneurs, service providers and prospective members in a relaxed, after-work setting, each event in the series is hosted by a Council member company and is free for members. Light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments are provided by the host company. The events are typically held at technology companies, giving guests an opportunity to attend a tour or product demonstration. In 2024, the Council hosted 15 after5 Tech Mixers, many of which sold out, in partnership with organizations and companies like Immedia, Tucson Embedded Systems, Urban Farming Education, University of Advancing Technology, C-Path Institute, 10 to 1 Public Relations, Arizona Lithographers, LeeShanok Network Solutions, Paychex, Southwest Mission Acceleration Center, Pima Community College Center of Excellence in IT & Cybersecurity, and The University of Arizona Tech Parks Arizona.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of in-person Phoenix events: 7
- + Number of in-person Tucson events: 8
- + Total in-person attendance: 1,286



## VIRTUAL TECH SPEAKER SERIES

The Council's Virtual Tech Sector Speaker Series brings together technology leaders, outstanding CIOs and CTOs, advocates, innovators and industry champions of existing and emerging sectors who are reshaping Arizona's technology ecosystem. This expert panel forum advances Arizona's technology evolution and growing designation as a technology hub. Topics covered in 2024 included Exploring the Future of Arizona's Aerospace Industry, Update on AI Developments, Unlocking Global Markets by Leveraging Federal Resources, Empowering Women in Cybersecurity: Championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Exploring the Arizona Technology Council's 401(k) MEP Program, Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Innovation, and the Future of Responsibility

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of events: 8
- + Total attendance in: 452





## TECH INCLUSION FORUM

The Tech Inclusion Forum quarterly series focuses on highlighting the inclusion, diversity, equity and awareness (IDEA) challenges facing women and other underrepresented identities in STEM fields today and showcasing the many extraordinary and accomplished women in Arizona's technology ecosystem. Led by Chair Tracy Powers, senior director, enterprise data, Meritage Homes, and Council liaison Deborah Zack, vice president of membership services. The committee facilitated two major events in 2024: Breaking Barriers: Disability Inclusion in Technology and Unlocking the Power of Hybrid Work: Defining Value for Employee Satisfaction and Retention.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of events: 2
- + Total attendance: 88



## VIP NETWORKING EVENTS

Held in conjunction with the Council's quarterly board of directors meeting, the VIP Networking Events include attendees from the board, current members and prospective members. In 2024, the Council held four in-person VIP Networking events in January, April, July and October.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of in-person events: 4
- + Total in-person attendance: 449

## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

A women-focused event series in Southern Arizona, the Women in the Workforce Committee facilitates quarterly learning and mentoring opportunities, provides career and leadership development and positions women to pursue careers in technology more effectively. In 2024, the Southern Arizona Women in the Workforce committee organized a series of impactful events aimed at empowering women and fostering professional growth within the technology sector. The events were:

### Vineyard Ventures: Uncorking Success for Women in Business (February)

Held at Flying Leap Vineyards in Elgin, this event featured speakers from the Arizona Commerce Authority, Delta Development Team, and BlackBar Engineering who discussed SBIR opportunities and shared both success stories and lessons from failure. Attendees had the chance to explore the advanced technology behind vinification (wine making) and tour the region's vineyards.

### Financial Planning 101 (September)

This event provided insights into budgeting and saving, investing basics, achieving financial independence and more. Attendees got to meet with 5 different female financiers from Merrill Lynch to Principal Financial in a speed mentoring setting, learning and asking questions about all things finance related.

Throughout the year, Jamie Neilson, director of operations + events for the Southern Arizona regional office, played a crucial role as the staff liaison for the committee, ensuring the success of these empowering initiatives.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of events: 2
- + Total attendance: 100

+

+



## AZ TECHCAST PODCAST

AZ TechCast is dedicated to covering innovation and technology in Arizona and beyond. January through July, AZ TechCast was co-hosted by Phoenix Business RadioX President and Owner Karen Nowicki and Council President and CEO Steven G. Zylstra. In September, AZ TechCast introduced a new sponsor, PADT, Inc. and a new co-host, PADT's Eric Miller. AZ TechCast guests share success stories, news and analysis about the region's leading startups, companies and emerging technologies, as well as the latest industry trends and critical issues propelling Arizona's growing technology ecosystem. Broadcast monthly, AZ TechCast features tech leaders having real conversations about what's happening across the state. Topics included Cybersecurity and AI, Tech and Government, The Impact of BEAD Funding, Leadership Lessons and many more. AZ TechCast episodes are available on PodBean, Apple Podcast, Spotify and other major streaming services.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of podcasts: 10
- + Featured guests: 31



## TECHFOCUS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT PODCAST

The Council is deeply thankful to Tucson-based firm Michael Beach Consulting for their long-lasting sponsorship of TechFocus. March 2024 was the final episode produced and sponsored by Michael Beach. TechFocus relaunched in February 2025 with new sponsor PADT, Inc. and new host Eric Miller. TechFocus Member Spotlight Podcast highlights Arizona's growing prominence as a world-class technology hub. Each podcast episode features innovative entrepreneurs, transformative leaders and technology titans who are reshaping the state's evolving technology ecosystem in existing and emerging sectors. TechFocus was moderated by Linda Drake, a seasoned leadership coach and business consultant with Michael Beach Consulting. The featured company in 2024 was Susan Dumon, senior vice president of strategy for Sun Corridor.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of podcasts: 1
- + Number of featured guests: 1



# ANNUAL SIGNATURE EVENTS



## MEDTECH CONFERENCE

The Arizona Technology Council's annual MedTech Conference brings together health care innovators, influential policymakers and other health care service professionals committed to promoting and supporting the industry in an environment designed to showcase Arizona's innovative medical technology. The conference advances industry discussion from key perspectives through expert panel sessions, keynote speakers and product exhibits to provide opportunities in education, business development, capital formation and networking. The 2024 theme was "Bridging Patients and Technology for Healthier Futures." The event featured speakers from the University of Arizona Athletics Department, BIO5 Institute, Roche Diagnostics, Delta Development Team, The Force for Health, among others.

### 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 130



## CYBERSECURITY SUMMIT

The Council, Arizona Commerce Authority and Arizona Cyber Threat Response Alliance (ACTRA) presented the 11th Annual Cybersecurity Summit, held on Tuesday, May 14 at Grand Canyon University (GCU). Attendees spanning government and business sectors learned about the threats, vulnerabilities and consequences related to data security and privacy matters. Panel and keynote topics included: Proven Practical Solutions for Responding to the Emerging Cyber Threat Landscape, Changing Roles of Security Leadership, Utilizing Artificial Intelligence for Physical Security of Cyber Systems, Under the Dome: A D.C. Cyber Update, Humanizing cybersecurity and how to be future-ready and Bridging the Talent Gap by Putting Learners to Work on Real-World Challenges. This year's panels and keynotes included representatives from Shamrock Foods, Freeport McMoRan, and CopperPoint Insurance. A highlight of the event was the Spotlight Interview with Harley Geiger, Counsel at Venable, LLP in Washington DC.

### 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 238





## CYBERSECURITY BREAKFAST FORUM

The Council and ACTRA presented the ninth annual Cybersecurity Breakfast Forum in 2024 at Grand Canyon University. This forum presented an opportunity for government and business leaders to learn about the threats, vulnerabilities and consequences related to data security and privacy matters. The purpose was to provide actionable solutions from real-world practitioners to help protect attendees' intellectual property and customer data. The forum featured speakers from ACTRA, Shamrock Foods Company, Home Depot, Nikola Corporation, Hidden Layer, PacketWatch, Quarles and more.

### 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 138



## AEROSPACE, AVIATION, DEFENSE & MANUFACTURING CONFERENCE

The Council collaborated with Pima Community College Workforce Development and Innovation in 2024 to stage an engaging and informative Aerospace, Aviation, Defense and Manufacturing Conference focusing on latest industry trends, challenges and forecasts. Presentations included a keynote from Danette Bewley, president & CEO of Tucson Airport Authority, and three panel discussions on cutting-edge collaborations of aerospace innovation, government and defense, exploration of untapped opportunities in the aerospace ecosystem and entrepreneurs and disrupters in the manufacturing industry. Panelists included leaders from FreeFall Aerospace, Honeywell, SW Mission Acceleration Center, Bent River Machine, Edmund Optics, ACA, AZ Spaceport Alliance, Phantom Space and Raytheon among many others. The conference also boasted 23 exhibitors from across industry to showcase their technology.

### 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 257



## ARIZONA PHOTONICS DAYS

This annual three-day conference presented by the Council's Optics Valley Committee gathered Arizona optics companies, academia, industry scientists, the astronomy community, engineers in optics and photonics, and partners from the Global Photonics Alliance for a one-of-a-kind event that provided engaging keynote speakers, technical presentations, interactive discussions, business-to-business meetings and networking. The 2024 event featured speakers from The University of Arizona, Hart Scientific, Fringe Metrology, 4D Technology, Ansys, Quartus, Optilab, Zygo, Leonardo Electronics, Edmund Optics and many more. Optics Valley extends its appreciation to 2024 Gold Sponsors Arizona Commerce Authority, UA Tech Parks Arizona, Strategy1, and Global Photonics Alliance as well as 31 Silver and Bronze sponsors for helping make the event a success. To learn more about Optics Valley, visit [www.opticsvalleyaz.org](http://www.opticsvalleyaz.org).

### 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 209



## CEO RETREAT

The two-day CEO Retreat in Sedona gathered technology industry visionaries, business owners, company leaders, presidents and CEOs for interactive workshops, engaging speakers, thought-provoking keynotes, panel discussions and exclusive networking. Day One involved informational sessions with speakers including keynote speaker Genein Letford of CAFFE InterCreative, Margo Boster of ImpaQ Solutions, Carol A. Poore of Poore & Associates Strategic Planning, Joan Hibdon of jdhInsights, LLC, Steven Weaver of 3-Pillars Performance Group, and José A. Oliver of Awakening Minds, LLC. The evening ended with a dessert welcome reception.

Day Two included the option of participating in a golf tournament at Sedona Golf Resort or a walking tour sponsored by PADT, Inc. Attendees stayed at the beautiful Poco Diablo Resort.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Total attendance: 43



## SMART CITY + IOT CONFERENCE

The Council and the Arizona Commerce Authority presented the seventh annual Smart City Summit + IoT Conference at Skysong in 2024. This informative and thought-provoking summit explored the landscape of smart city strategies, emerging best practices and challenges to implementation and the specific strategies needed to make a smart city vision a reality. Keynotes, panels and spotlight chats included topics such as Arizona Broadband & Digital Equity Initiates, AI Accelerating Smart City Deployment & Data Sharing, and Advanced Technology & IoT. Speakers included representatives from Arizona State University, The University of Arizona, City of Phoenix, Intel, N50 Project, City of Mesa, and the Digital Equity Institute and many more.

### 2024 RESULTS:

Total attendance: 153

# GOLF

## 2024 GOLF TOURNAMENTS

The Council hosts annual golf tournaments in Phoenix and Tucson. In March, 46 golfers registered for the 14th annual Phoenix golf tournament at The Legacy Golf Club. In April, 77 golfers participated in the 14th annual Tucson golf tournament at the beautiful Sewailo Golf Club at Casino Del Sol. Each event included friendly competition, lunch, raffle prize drawings and an awards ceremony.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Number of events: 2
- + Total attendance: 123

+





## SOUTHERN ARIZONA TECH + BUSINESS EXPO

The Council celebrated the 12th annual Southern Arizona Tech + Business Expo in 2024 with 68 exhibitors. This in-person event featured a keynote panel of experts from Pima County, AZ Corporation Commission, South32 Hermosa Project and the Office of Economic Opportunity to discuss Arizona's mineral wealth and the future of mining and innovation in Arizona. This event also featured innovator presentations from top leading Arizona companies including Southwest Mission Acceleration Center and Cole Technologies and a brief awards ceremony celebrating innovation across Southern Arizona in manufacturing, entrepreneurship, sustainability and community involvement.

### 2024 Tech + Business Expo winners:

- + Southern Arizona Member Organization of the Year – Marcus Engineering
- + Innovation Leader of the Year – Applied Energetics
- + Manufacturer of the Year – Industrial Tool Die & Engineering
- + StartUp of the Year – Pioneer Neurotech
- + Sustainable Excellence Award – Beacon Group

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Total attendance in 2024: 404



## E-MOBILITY AND CLEAN ENERGY SUMMIT

The Council held its second annual E-Mobility and Clean Energy Summit at SkySong. This timely summit addressed the future of Arizona's clean energy ecosystem and how the state is positioned to become a tech leader in this fast-developing sector. Keynotes from City of Mesa Mayor John Giles and Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs, panels and spotlight chats included topics such as Zero Emission Infrastructure in Arizona, Keeping Pace with Emerging Technology in Fire and Emergency Services – Lithium-Ion Batteries, Innovating CleanTech in Arizona, and Battery Materials in Arizona: From Raw to Recycled and more.

### 2024 RESULTS:

- + Total attendance in 2024: 178

# GOVERNOR'S CELEBRATION OF INNOVATION

An annual showcase of the state's incredible leadership in science and technology, the prestigious Governor's Celebration of Innovation (GCOI) is the Arizona Technology Council's annual awards gala hosted in partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority to honor top pacesetters in business, innovation, technology and government. The 21st annual GCOI event took on an elevated flair in the form of a gala-style seated dinner. Following a networking cocktail hour, guests enjoyed a gourmet dinner and a lively awards program hosted by Emmy Award winning news personality, Carey Peña. Adding to this year's event was the presence of Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs.

In her continuing commitment to fostering innovation throughout the state, supporting entrepreneurs, and working with private sector partners, Hobbs announced key actions to advance Arizona's leadership in technology. In a speech outlining her framework for emerging technology in Arizona and key focus areas, she announced the creation of an AI Steering Committee to help inform and drive the future deployment of artificial intelligence in the state. In addition, she announced the Institute of Automated Mobility based at Arizona Commerce Authority is becoming the Institute for Advanced Mobility to incorporate air applications, including vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) air taxis, and other aeronautical technology close to commercialization and adoption.

Awards were presented to technology companies, community leaders and students from across the state to celebrate their contributions. The 2024 awards gala was held at Chateau Luxe in Phoenix.

## 2024 RESULTS:

+ Total attendance: 450





# 2024 GCOI AWARD WINNERS

## COMPANY AWARD WINNERS

### INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR – START-UP COMPANY

[iCRx, Inc.](#) – Tucson

### INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR – SMALL COMPANY

[Air<sub>2</sub>O](#) – Phoenix

### INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR – LARGE COMPANY

[Liveops](#) – Scottsdale

### INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR – ACADEMIA

[Valley Fever Center for Excellence](#) – Tucson

### JUDGES AWARD

[Arizona STEM Acceleration Project](#) – Tempe

## INDIVIDUAL AWARD WINNERS

### PEOPLE'S CHOICE ACCOUNTABILITY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

[Kathleen "KJ" Jolivette](#), vice president/general manager, Boeing Vertical Lift – Mesa

[Jim Cantrell](#), CEO and co-founder, Phantom Space – Tucson

### ED DENISON BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR WINNER

[Tech Parks Arizona](#), The University of Arizona – Tucson

### TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

[Edwards](#) – Chandler

### OUTSTANDING TECHNOLOGY SENATOR OF THE YEAR:

[Sen. David Gowan](#), District 19

### OUTSTANDING TECHNOLOGY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR:

[Rep. David Livingston](#), District 28





## TECH 10 LEGISLATORS

### Senators:

- + Ken Bennett, District 1
- + Priya Sundareshan, District 18
- + Brian Fernandez, District 23
- + Flavio Bravo, District 26
- + Frank Carroll, District 28

### Representatives:

- + Justin Wilmeth, District 2
- + David Marshall Sr., District 7
- + Seth Blattman, District 9
- + Alma Hernandez, District 20
- + Michael Carbone, District 25

## FUTURE INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

- + Rishabh Sreepathy, Grade 10, [Desert Mountain High School](#) – Scottsdale
- + Aditya Lakshminarasimhan, Grade 11, [BASIS Scottsdale](#)
- + Brad Wu, Grade 10, [Arizona College Prep High School](#) – Chandler
- + Vinesh Kothari, Grade 12, [BASIS Mesa](#)

## FUTURE INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR HONORABLE MENTIONS

- + Iraj Shroff, Grade 9, [BASIS Chandler](#)
- + Sohini Mallick, Grade 12, [University High School](#) – Tucson

## TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

Michelle Landreville, [CREST-Paradise Valley High School](#) – Phoenix

## TEACHER HONORABLE MENTION:

Pradip Misra, [Bagdad High School](#)

## SELECTION COMMITTEE

The individual/company award winners and finalists were evaluated and chosen by the following selection committee of experts independent of the Arizona Technology Council:

- + Keith Latchaw, MSS Business Transformation Advisory
- + Doug Hockstad, Tech Launch Arizona, The University of Arizona
- + Eric Miller, PADT, Inc.
- + Jeff Koenig, Desert Angels

In addition, the Council would like to recognize and thank the [Arizona Council of Engineering and Scientific Associations \(ACESA\)](#) for their participation in selecting the Future Innovators and Teacher of the Year Award winners and honorable mentions.



# MARKETING + COMMUNICATIONS

## MULTICHANNEL PROMOTION OF ARIZONA'S TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY + COUNCIL MEMBERS

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Arizona Technology Council partners with Phoenix-based PR, content marketing and communications strategy firm Brodeur Partners. This collaboration strengthens the Council's brand in the media and positions the Council as the go-to source for information on Arizona's technology industry. Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra writes regular columns in the *Phoenix Business Journal*, *AZ Business Magazine*, *In Business Magazine* and *TechConnect* on topics like clean and renewable energy, IoT and smart cities, broadband and 5G, STEM, public policy efforts and artificial intelligence.

- + In 2024, the Council issued 14 press releases about the election of new board members, new staff members, quarterly technology industry impact data, Governor's Celebration of Innovation and much more. More than 50 stories appeared in the media as a result. Additionally, Zylstra and the Council contributed information on hot topics in technology to multiple media outlets, including *Phoenix Business Journal* and its *AZ Inno*, *Arizona Capitol Times*, *AZ Big Media*, *Arizona Business Magazine*, *In Business Magazine*, *Biz Tucson* and *ABC15 Phoenix*.

#### 2024 RESULTS

- + Number of press releases: 14
- + Number of published articles/media mentions: 53



## WEBSITE

The year 2024 marked the first full year operating with the updated website that debuted in mid-2023. As noted below, site metrics continued to grow and yield positive results. The Council continued to work with Motion Tactic on website maintenance and ongoing enhancements to improve the user experience. Website highlights from 2024 include:

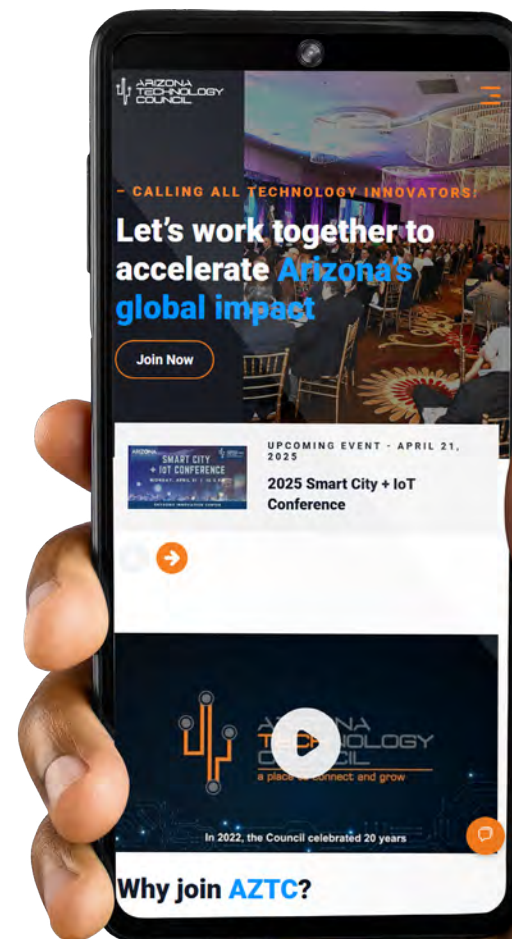
- ✦ Introduced a homepage pop-up banner to highlight signature Council events and drive increased engagement and registrations.
- ✦ Automated the monthly Member News and Clean Energy News blog posts to ensure each relevant post automatically populated its respective round-up category at the end of each month.
- ✦ Developed the new Member Marketplace to replace the Preferred Partner Program. Launching in 2025, this feature will offer Council members expanded benefits and exclusive offerings from annual sponsors and fellow members.
- ✦ Worked with Platinum annual sponsor Slalom to perform email marketing data cleanup and maintenance that included an automated integration between the Council's website newsletter sign-up for and the Council's email marketing platform Keap.

Year-over-year views\* increased 30.8% from 2023 to 2024. In 2023, the site received 319,444 views followed by a jump to 417,953 in 2024. The number of new users grew 41.39%, reaching 196,916 new users in 2024. Organic traffic was also up from 2023 with a 30.75% increase in engaged sessions, reaching a total of 74,316 sessions. Engaged sessions cover the number of sessions (site visits) that lasted longer than 10 seconds, had a conversion event, or had two or more screen or page views. Strategies targeting content optimization and search engine optimization from valued member and Platinum sponsor Intero Digital have continued to improve the Council's keyword rankings in a number of categories, including professional networking groups, information technology conferences and B2B networking events.

### 2024 RESULTS

- ✦ Average monthly new users: 16,409
- ✦ Total views: 417,953

\*With the introduction of Google Analytics 4 in 2023, "unique page views" is no longer a metric that is tracked. Due to that change in data availability, "views" is the metric tracked in this report. "Views" refers to how many pages and/or app screens a user sees on the website. It does count repeated views.



## INTRODUCING ADA

### Meet Ada: The Council's 24/7 Council Concierge

In a world that never sleeps, the Council introduced Ada, an AI-powered chatbot designed to provide instant answers to Council-related questions anytime, anywhere. Ada was formally introduced during the November 2024 Governor's Celebration of Innovation. Guests were able to chat with Ada live during the event. From membership inquiries to event details and public policy updates, Ada helps streamline communication and enhance member service. Developed in partnership with SkillBuilder.io and named in honor of computing pioneer Ada Lovelace, this digital assistant has been trained with over 400 Council-related FAQs. To chat with Ada, click the orange chat icon on the Council's website.

## TECHCONNECT MAGAZINE

TechConnect is the only magazine that has covered Arizona's science and technology community for almost two decades. Launched by the Arizona Technology Council in 2005, TechConnect is dedicated to covering innovation and technology in Arizona and beyond. Produced in partnership with Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), the digital e-magazine is produced quarterly and hosted on Issuu, and provides news about the state's leading companies, emerging companies and their technologies, and the latest industry trends and critical issues that drive Arizona's technology ecosystem. The themes covered in 2024 included aerospace, aviation and defense; IT and software; and E-Mobility. Council Editor Don Rodriguez serves as editor of TechConnect and Yeager Marketing directs the design and layout of each issue.

In 2024, TechConnect faced a major change. Due to state budget cuts, ACA could no longer support the publication, resulting in the summer 2024 issue being its last under ACA sponsorship. In response, the Council immediately began seeking new sponsorship to relaunch the magazine as soon as possible. Visit [www.aztechcouncil.org/techconnect](http://www.aztechcouncil.org/techconnect) to read the latest issues.

### 2024 RESULTS

- + Number of issues: 3
- + Annual Impressions on Issuu: 13,023

## TECHTALK ENEWSLETTER

The Council's monthly TechTalk e-newsletter is published at the end of every month. The newsletter provides featured segments on member news, the Council's latest news and press, local technology ecosystem events, clean energy news and more. Past issues of TechTalk can be found on the Council's News + Press page.

### 2024 RESULTS

- + Number of newsletters sent: 12
- + Monthly circulation: 21,886

## AZ INNO/MYVIEW

In 2024, the Council continued to contribute a monthly technology blog published by the Phoenix Business Journal (PBJ). Featuring Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra, the blog provides insight into Arizona's growing science and technology industry. The blog is read by 25,000 monthly unique visitors and PBJ has more than 58,000 daily e-news subscribers. Once published, each month's AZ Inno/My View blog is included in the PBJ's daily e-news.

### 2024 RESULTS

- + Number of columns: 12
- + Monthly circulation: 25,000

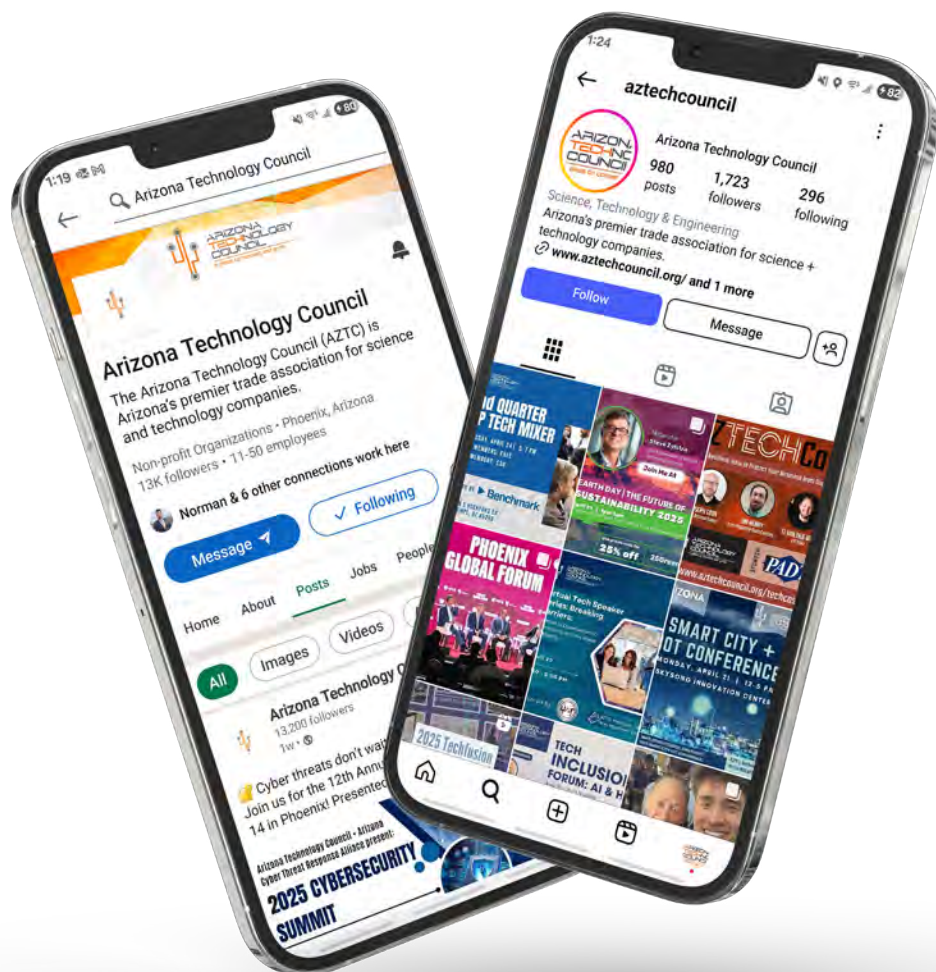


## IN BUSINESS MAGAZINE

The Council maintains a special relationship with InMedia Company to publish a six-page editorial section annually in InBusiness Magazine. Reported and written by Council Editor Don Rodriguez, with contributions from staff and Council members, the content focuses on the Council's role and impact on the statewide technology community, public policy developments and event updates. Read the 2024 Arizona Technology Council feature here.

### 2024 RESULTS

- + Readers per issue: 1.8 million website visits per month and more than 90,000 unique readers with each issue



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Council loves to engage with its innovative members, collaborative partners and friends on social media platforms. In 2024, the Council published updates on Facebook, LinkedIn, X, YouTube and Instagram. These channels are used to communicate Council news, member updates, new members, industry trends, event promotions and the accomplishments made by the Council and its valued members.

### 2024 RESULTS

#### LinkedIn

- + Company page followers at the end of 2024: 12,545
- + Company page followers at the end of 2023: 10,836
- + 15.7% increase in followers

#### Facebook

- + Number of followers at the end of 2024: 4,456
- + Number of followers at end of 2023: 4,433
- + 0.5% increase in followers

#### X

- + Number of followers at the end of 2024: 8,223
- + Number of followers at the end of 2023: 8,311
- + 1.05% decrease in followers

#### Instagram

- + Number of followers at the end of 2024: 1,676
- + Number of followers at the end of 2023: 1,585
- + 5.7% increase in followers

#### YouTube

- + Number of channel views in 2024: 13,587
- + Number of channel views in 2023: 3,314
- + 310% increase in channel views\*

\*In Q4 of 2024, the Council ran a series of video ads on YouTube to promote clean energy storytelling and advocacy. These ads contributed to the significant increase in YouTube channel views in 2024.



# COMMITTEES

## STANDING COMMITTEES

### AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE (PHOENIX)

The Phoenix Ambassador Committee is one of the longest-functioning committees of the Arizona Technology Council with participants from companies of all sizes and many sectors of the technology industry. The committee's goal is to identify prospective members, welcome new members and ensure existing members' needs are being satisfied. The committee also helps to promote upcoming events and opportunities and volunteers at Council events.. The committee chairs were Jen Granner, director of business development – technology at Headfarmer, Lyndee Villegas, senior engagement strategist at Ivelah, and Jonathan Roll, special project coordinator at Arizona State University. The staff liaison in 2024 was Darryle Emerson, director of programs + events.

### AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE (TUCSON)

The Tucson Ambassador Committee consists of members committed to advancing technology and representing the Council in the local community. Leadership was provided by Chris Morrison, technical sales manager at In-Position Technologies, and staff liaison was Karla Morales, vice president of the Council's Southern Arizona Regional Office. The committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday for discussions on current climate, workforce development, collaboration and to offer suggestions for programming, speakers, and event support.

### ARIZONA ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ECOSYSTEM (AAIE) COMMITTEE

The AAIE Committee is committed to building a strong and dynamic artificial intelligence (AI) community in Arizona. Its mission is to foster collaboration, encourage knowledge-sharing, and explore the development, application, and societal impact of AI technologies.

With a focus on inclusivity and innovation, the committee brings together industry leaders, educators, and professionals to exchange insights and best practices through Council events. Leadership was previously provided by Alex Dely (Raytheon), Mary Darling (Darling Geomatics), and Habib Matar (Chandler-Gilbert Community College).

Now under the leadership of Minky Kernacs, co-founder & CEO of Mercurio Analytics, the committee has expanded its impact by introducing specialized subcommittees in education, mining, workforce development, legal, and more ensuring a broad and strategic approach to AI's evolving role in society.

Karla Morales, vice president of the Arizona Technology, the Council's Southern Arizona Regional Office, served as the staff liaison, supporting the committee's initiatives and engagement efforts.

Together, the AAIE Committee continues to drive meaningful conversations and shape the future of AI in Arizona!

## ARIZONA E-MOBILITY + ENERGY ECOSYSTEM (AEEE) COMMITTEE

The AEEE Committee works to ensure the uniform integration and standards between all four sectors encompassing electrification, which includes battery manufacturing and life cycle, charging and refueling, zero-emission vehicles, and energy infrastructure. Members helped facilitate the second annual eMobility and Clean Energy Summit. The committee co-chairs were Victor Atlasman, director of engineering and product development at WattEV, and Brett Dooley, business development manager at Bosch USA. This committee was staffed by Deborah Zack, the Council's vice president of membership services. The committee helped facilitate the second annual eMobility and Clean Energy Summit in 2024.

## CYBERSECURITY COMMITTEE

The Cybersecurity Committee enables members to learn about cyber threats, trends, and the means of providing insight into serving as a platform to share best practices. The committee was co-chaired by Frank J. Grimmelmann, president and CEO of Arizona Cyber Threat Response Alliance, Inc. (ACTRA), and Jonathan Cortez, CITO of Immedia, with staff support from Council Executive Emeritus Ron Schott and Deborah Zack, the Council's vice president of membership services. The committee planned and executed the 11th annual Cybersecurity Summit. This event highlighted speakers from Shamrock Foods, Freeport McMoRan, Avnet, CopperPoint Insurance, Cisco, Claro, Veneble, Dispel, Palo Alto Networks, Seven Layers, Copper Hill Strategies, and Grand Canyon University. Later in December 2024, the 8th annual Cybersecurity Breakfast Forum was held at Grand Canyon University. This featured speakers and participants from Copper Hill Strategies, National Security Institute at the Antonin Scalia Law School, George Mason University, Shamrock, Nikola, The Home Depot, State of Arizona, ThreatConnect, Arizona Commerce Authority, Hidden Layer, Claro, Quarles, and PacketWatch. The committee also spent time discussing building cybersecurity talent in Arizona through various partnerships in the Council.

## IOT + SMART CITIES COMMITTEE

The mission of the Internet of Things (IoT) + Smart Cities Committee is to provide a platform for people to learn, collaborate, advocate and disseminate information about how IoT and smart-cities strategies can help organizations create real-time business solutions in a sensor-enabled, analytics-driven world. The group facilitated the Council's eighth annual Smart Cities + IoT Summit. Keynotes, panels and spotlight chats including topics such as Roadmap to AI Accelerating Smart City Deployment & Data Sharing, Advanced Technology and IoT, and Arizona Broadband & Digital Equity Initiatives. The committee was chaired by Chris Lucero, former director of emerging technologies at Intel until he became the owner and founder, Luminos Innovation LLC in October 2024. Jill Howard Allen, director, industry engagement at The University of Arizona, was the co-chair. Deborah Zack, the Council's vice president of membership services, was staff liaison.

## LAW + TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The Law + Technology Committee provides relevant information regarding the legal developments that affect member companies. The committee focuses on leading issues arising from the intersection of technology and the law, and provides a forum for practical and informative discussions designed to be of interest to technology, business and legal professionals. In October, the committee hosted a virtual legal update event titled "Protecting Your Online Content: The Basics of Copyright Law and CDMA Take Down Requests for Businesses." The committee was chaired by Jason Shull, a shareholder at Banner & Witcoff, and supported by Council Executive Emeritus Ron Schott.



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- + Support the reauthorization of the Arizona Commerce Authority.
- + Support economic development programs that have proven to work for Arizona. Maintain and fund programs that support manufacturing; encourage research and development; support high-quality, high-paying jobs; and incentivize innovation. Ensure no restrictions are applied to hamper the economic growth and success Arizona has experienced. During the past several years, the Council has been successful in helping extend and expand these programs. Some economic development tools may need to be modernized to ensure the most effective utilization of tools that continue to spur economic growth.
- + Develop a phased-in option for students to enroll in a computer science course offered by their school or an online course approved by the Arizona Department of Education. For high school ages, the course should be a standalone computer science course, and for younger grades, computer



science principles should be incorporated into a general education course. Support funding for the computer science courses and accompanying teacher development to support this program.

- + Seek opportunities and measure their progress to positively impact the diversity, equity and inclusion of the workforce and its leadership, and grant equitable access to essential services (e.g., broadband, transportation, employment, education opportunities).
- + Work collaboratively with both the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) and the Legislature to advance energy policy that encourages demand-side adoption of energy efficiency, prioritizes clean and renewable energy use, invests in electric vehicle infrastructure development, and supports innovation in the industry. Protect against attempts to undercut the authority of the ACC to promulgate and implement clean energy policies.
- + Look for opportunities to expand Arizona's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, including computer sciences and coding opportunities for students. Focus on long term, shared, sustainable and flexible STEM missions that bridge, integrate and strengthen the learning opportunities offered by organizations across sectors instead of isolated, independent entities. STEM education helps prepare our students for the jobs of not only today but of the future and will build a strong, diverse talent pipeline to meet the state's continued growth.

## TECH INCLUSION FORUM (PHOENIX)

The Tech Inclusion Forum quarterly series focuses on highlighting the inclusion, diversity, equity and awareness (IDEA) challenges facing women and other underrepresented identities in STEM fields today and showcasing the many extraordinary and accomplished women in Arizona's technology ecosystem. Led by Chair Tracy Powers, senior director, enterprise data, Meritage Homes, and Council liaison Deborah Zack, vice president of membership services. The committee facilitated two major events in 2024: Breaking Barriers: Disability Inclusion in Technology and Unlocking the Power of Hybrid Work: Defining Value for Employee Satisfaction and Retention.

## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE (TUCSON)

A women-focused event series in Southern Arizona, the Women in the Workforce Committee facilitates quarterly learning and mentoring opportunities, provides career and leadership development and positions women to pursue careers in technology more effectively. In 2024, they held two events. The February event, "Vineyard Ventures: Uncorking Success for Women in Business" featured speakers who discussed SBIR opportunities and shared both success stories and lessons from failure. Attendees had the chance to explore the advanced technology behind vinification (wine making) and tour the region's vineyards. The September event, "Financial Planning 101", featured a speed mentoring format with five financiers who provided insights into budgeting and saving, investing basics, achieving financial independence and more. Council liaison, Jamie Neilson, director of operations + events for the Southern Arizona regional office, played a crucial role as the staff liaison for the committee, ensuring the success of these empowering initiatives.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT + EDUCATION

The Council remains committed to helping develop and support a robust and aligned education and workforce development ecosystem in Arizona. The committee was led by Cathleen Barton, founder of Cathleen Barton Consulting, and supported by Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra. In 2024, the Council provided extensive leadership and support both in Arizona and nationally in the implementation, planning and development of the Arizona State University (ASU) five-year ALRISE grant totaling \$10 million from the National Science Foundation. In addition, the Council continued to support ASU's AZNext initiative, a combination of its first U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) \$2 million grant focused on developing 1,600 apprentices to fill information technology, cyber and data roles over the next five years and its second \$8 million DOL grant to establish the Arizona Workforce Training Accelerator Partnership for Next Generation Jobs (AZNext).

# FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Arizona Technology Council's Finance Committee monitors the financial activities of the Council and lends guidance when necessary. In addition to Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra, members during 2024 included:

- + Board Chair Alex Iuorio, senior vice president of supplier development, Avnet
- + Treasurer Eric Lewis, partner, Ernst & Young
- + Eric Miller, principal and co-owner, PADT, Inc.
- + Todd Russell, vice president Commercial Banking, Alliance Bank of Arizona
- + Jeff Unruh, founding principal, Alerion Capital Group

The Committee met monthly to lend its expertise to the economic health of the Council.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Convening the week before scheduled quarterly board meetings, the Council's Executive Committee helped to shape the content of the board meetings, serve as advisors and act on behalf of the board between board meetings. In addition to Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra, the members of the Committee were:

- + Board Chair, Alex Iuorio, senior vice president of supplier development, Avnet
- + Board Secretary Jonathan Talcott, attorney, Ballard Spahr, LLP
- + Treasurer Eric Lewis, partner, Ernst & Young
- + Christine Boles, vice president, Industrial Solutions Division, Intel
- + Anne Dougherty, co-founder and co-owner, Illume Advising

Emeritus executive committee members included Mark Goldstein, president, International Research Center and Eric Miller, principal and co-owner, PADT, Inc. Overall, the Executive Committee had strong attendance at every meeting. This team has both diversity of expertise and a strong dedication to seeing the Council move in a positive direction. They work together monitoring the Council's adherence to its mission.

## INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

The Council's Investment Committee monitors the investments made available to the Council's Multiple Employer Plan (MEP) 401(k) program participants. In addition to Council President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra, the members of the committee were:

- + Jack Trierweiler, controller (chairman), MSS Business Transformation Advisory
- + Jennifer Rojas, CEO, NextJen Consulting
- + Sheila Kloefkorn, CEO and president, KEO Marketing, Inc.
- + David Wilson, principal owner, DB Wilson LLC

Additional advice and information regarding the investments came from Michael DiGrazia and Thomas Tenney of Legacy Wealth Management. In 2024, the Council worked with Empower Retirement and the Legacy Wealth Management Team to fulfill the fiduciary and administrative responsibilities for the plan. There were 11 participating employers in the MEP 401(k) program at the end of 2024 with \$6.8 million in plan assets.

## NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The Council's Nomination Committee helped to identify new board members and move them through the board's formal nomination process. The members of this committee were Amy Walters, vice president, product operations, City of Hope, and David Bolman, provost, University of Advancing Technology. Rick Crutchley of Iron Mountain Data Centers was also on the committee until he stepped down from the board. Matt Blair, president of Immedia, replaced him on the Nomination Committee.

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## TUCSON AEROSPACE & DEFENSE CEO NETWORK

For the 17th year, the Arizona Technology Council's 2024 Tucson CEO Network continued to bring senior business leaders together in a comfortable and confidential atmosphere to discuss business issues specific to member companies, their industries and the local economy. These executives represented an array of technology-based industry sectors to share valuable experience, insights and advice with other members of the group. Meetings were held on a rotating basis at member companies, where tours were conducted and best practices were highlighted. In addition, speakers from government, industry, academia and other industries made presentations to the group at monthly meetings.

### 2024 Members:

- + Jose Oliver, Awakening Minds
- + Shubhayu Chakraborty, CIS Global
- + Paul DeHerrera, Innovative Avionics, LLC
- + Robert Fitch, Delta Development
- + Callie Groth, BlackBar Engineering
- + Dennis Kenman, Tucson Embedded Systems
- + Patrick Marcus, Marcus Engineering
- + Alex Rodriguez, Freefall
- + Howard Stewart, AGM Container Corp
- + Austin Yamada, University Applied Research Corporation

### Ex Officio Member

- + Stephen Fleming, Quantum Networks

# SCITECH INSTITUTE

## DIVERSE STEM COLLABORATIONS AROUND ARIZONA

The Arizona Technology Council Foundation, operating as SciTech Institute, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to advancing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and workforce development throughout Arizona. Under the leadership of Executive Director Dr. Jeremy Babendure, SciTech Institute fosters STEM awareness, engagement, and learning through statewide collaborations with nonprofit, civic, business, industry and academic organizations.

SciTech Institute plays a pivotal role in the Arizona STEM learning ecosystem, connecting organizations and communities to promote STEM education and workforce pathways. Key initiatives include the Arizona SciTech Festival, Chief Science Officers (CSO) program, and numerous workforce and education collaborations. With support from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and various sponsors, these programs extend beyond Arizona to impact national and international STEM education efforts.

The Arizona STEM Ecosystem, managed by SciTech Institute, has grown to include five regional hubs, supporting collaboration among over 900 organizations statewide. These hubs focus on community-based STEM initiatives, workforce development, and educational opportunities. In 2024, efforts such as the STEM Ecosystem Charter, Rural STEM Learning Summit, and the Educator Workforce Academy expanded impact across Arizona.

SciTech Institute's workforce development efforts address Arizona's STEM talent pipeline needs. Initiatives like the Statewide Skills Initiative and the Department

of Labor-sponsored Workforce Pathways for Youth Project align education with industry skills. Additionally, the Neuro-Inclusive Learning Network focuses on creating inclusive STEM learning environments for individuals with autism. As a key partner in the Southwest Sustainability Innovation Engine (SWSIE), SciTech Institute also supports sustainability-focused workforce development via educational programs and training.

Through partnerships, innovation, and community-driven initiatives, SciTech Institute team members continue to connect, engage, and inspire individuals of all ages to explore and pursue STEM opportunities in Arizona and beyond.

To learn more, visit [scitechinstitute.org](https://scitechinstitute.org)

### Mission

Engage a connected community to transform lives with access to the world of STEM

### Vision

Establish a prosperous and equitable world where STEM is within reach of every human.

### Niche

Making STEM connections in Arizona and beyond



## SCITECH INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

- + Arizona STEM Ecosystem
  - + STEM Ecosystem Hubs
  - + Working Groups
  - + Arizona SciTech Festival
  - + Statewide Ecosystem Connections
    - STEM & Innovation Summit
    - National Rural STEM Learning Summit
  - + STEM Little Free Libraries
- + Science For All, LLC
- + Chief Science Officers
- + Collaborations with SciTech Institute
  - + STEM Workforce
  - + Southwest Innovation & Sustainability Engine (SWISE)
  - + Neuro-Inclusive Learning Network: STEM Learning Opportunities for People with ASD
  - + State Farm Earth Day
  - + Rural Activation and Innovation Network (RAIN)
  - + Science Bowl
  - + Sail with Argo

## ARIZONA STEM ECOSYSTEM

The Arizona STEM Ecosystem is a collaborative, grassroots network of more than 900 business, education, community and government organizations across the state. Serving as the ecosystem's backbone organization, SciTech Institute promotes STEM awareness and enthusiasm, builds local and diverse STEM leadership, and supports Arizonans' entering higher-ed and STEM career pathways. To date, the ecosystem has established five regional hubs to nurture partnerships and synergies across geographic and economic boundaries.



## STEM Ecosystem Hubs

The SciTech team is working to engage STEM organizations and community members across the state in five regional hubs. Hubs allow ecosystem members to focus on their local needs and assets, connect local resources, and dive deeper into community-based opportunities and goals. They encourage creative cross-collaboration between sectors and highlight non-traditional STEM spaces and opportunities.

### Key 2024 achievements:

- + In 2024, the STEM Ecosystem Hub coordinators made major strides in building STEM connections in their communities. Throughout the season, each region hosted quarterly mixers that featured local STEM resources and facilitated connections between K-12, postsecondary education, out of school (OST), industry and more.
- + In 2024, the Arizona STEM Ecosystem also began development of a statewide Ecosystem Charter that aims to simplify collaboration and shared funding opportunities between leading STEM organizations across the state.
- + In collaboration with Arizona Science Center and SARSEF, the Ecosystem also hosted the 2024 Rural STEM Learning Summit in June in Tucson. This event welcomed more than 130 leaders in rural education from around the country to share resources and best practices, as well as to foster a strong community of collaboration and support.
- + The Ecosystem's workforce efforts also have grown significantly over the course of the year. Through collaboration with West AlabamaWorks, SciTech introduced the Educator Workforce Academy to Arizona educators, connecting them with the workforce landscape in our state so they can support their students as they explore opportunities for their futures.
- + In April, Tom Wilson, Pima County Ecosystem Hub coordinator, hosted community educator mixers at Mission Garden and Tucson Village. The event included a wide range of community educators, including some from Cochise County, and the relaxed atmosphere was highly effective in fostering conversations and connections.
- + The West Valley Hub steering committee met regularly and hosted its first in-person meetup in January. The Hub continues to be co-chaired by Kevin Dumcum from WESTMARC.
- + Coconino and Yavapai counties held quarterly in-person meetups this year.
- + The East Valley STEM Alliance, which subsumed the East Valley STEM Hub, is now co-chaired by Will Novak from GFiber.

## Working Groups

Statewide STEM Ecosystem Working Groups foster conversation and collaboration across regional boundaries around specific topics. Working Group members meet either quarterly or monthly regarding opportunities such as professional development, resource sharing, and grant and sponsorship proposals. The Arizona STEM Ecosystem currently supports Working Groups on the topics of:

- + Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in STEM
- + Sustainability Education & Outreach
- + STEM Workforce
- + STEM in Libraries
- + Pre-College STEM Programs

With over 400 members among them, these groups have grown substantially and fostered countless connections across the state. In 2024, the groups have transitioned to virtual platforms via Facebook Groups to allow for continued asynchronous collaboration and growth.

## Arizona SciTech Festival

The Arizona SciTech Festival, SciTech Institute's cornerstone initiative, is a state-wide celebration of STEM that aims to educate, engage and inspire all Arizonans. Supported by the Arizona Commerce Authority, Arizona Technology Council, Arizona Science Center, Arizona State University, The University of Arizona, and Arizona Board of Regents, the festival fosters awareness of and interest in the state's STEM economy. It offers people from all walks of life hands-on learning opportunities, expos, workshops, exhibitions, unique activities and experiences, tours and more. Most importantly, it inspires Arizonans of all ages to pursue STEM-related fields of study and careers.

The 2024 Arizona SciTech Festival continued the trend of hosting both in-person and online options, with 25 Signature Events and 30 Adventure Events. The season kicked off at STEM FEST held at Barrett-Jackson Auto Collection Scottsdale Auction in January, followed by 12 weeks of community events. During the 13th season, more than 125,000 participants were reached and encouraged to celebrate science and innovation through hundreds of opportunities across the state.

## ■ **Statewide Ecosystem Connections**

### + **STEM & Innovation Summit**

This annual statewide conference brings together Arizona's key stakeholders in business, industry, education, government and community to share best practices from the field, experience the latest innovation in Arizona, build unique STEM networks; and discuss opportunities to improve public STEM awareness and workforce readiness. The summit kicks off the annual Arizona SciTech Festival season. The 2024 STEM & Innovation Summit in October engaged hundreds of participants with keynote speakers from key STEM business leadership sectors, exhibitors, flash talks, session presentations and hands-on learning development.

The event held at Arizona Science Center featured five keynotes, 36 sessions and 23 exhibitors. The summit was a strong indicator of continued interest in STEM innovation and collaboration opportunities.

### **National Rural STEM Learning Summit**

The second National Rural STEM Learning Summit held in Tucson in June brought together 140 STEM educators, community leaders, administrators and STEM industry professionals from across the country for the purpose of strengthening and elevating the quality of STEM education in rural communities through practice and dialogue.

During the three-day conference that included an optional pre-conference, participants engaged with rural STEM experts on current methodologies and best teaching practices, hands-on workshops and networking. Topics included exploring the Rural STEM Ecosystem, the Workforce Academy, nuclear waste challenges, collaborative professional development, NASA and more.

This event helped explore the unique challenges and opportunities of STEM education in rural communities and provided practical resources and solutions.

### **STEM Little Free Libraries**

Little Free Libraries (LFLs) are petite, community-driven book exchange hubs that promote the "take a book, return a book" ethos. Through a collaboration with SciTech Institute, Avnet and Cox, LFLs across Arizona received STEM makeovers, with free monthly take-home STEM kits that were distributed to 19 LFLs across various counties, including Mohave, Navajo, Graham, Yavapai, Maricopa and Coconino.

Twenty-five kits were delivered to five schools in Apache, Coconino and Navajo counties throughout the school year. More than 4,000 kits were distributed and about 370 kits continue to be distributed across the state every month.

## **SCIENCE FOR ALL, LLC**

Science for All, LLC is a 501(c)(3) Arizona-certified, qualifying charitable organization. Donations directly support all SciTech Institute programs, particularly providing low-income and underserved youth with access to STEM resources and opportunities. Science for All enables these youth to gain critical employability skills and the experience necessary to become STEM professionals. It supports skill development through hands-on experiences, job training programs, mentorships and other activities.

This next generation of STEM professionals, science educators, and leaders will drive innovation, solve problems and create the next wave of technological progress. Fostering STEM pathways will help attract employers to Arizona and improve the state's standing as a world-class STEM and technology hub. Science for All raised more than \$42,422 for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, helping offset costs for Title I CSOs in Arizona.

## **CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICERS**

The Chief Science Officers (CSO) program aims to place youth squarely in the center of STEM promotion, experience and community action, ultimately strengthening the future STEM workforce. CSOs are sixth through 12th grade youth who champion the interest, engagement and communication of STEM and innovation on and off campus. The season follows an academic school year and kicks off with the Leadership Training Institute where students learn program basics and begin to develop their action plans, which meaningfully engage their peers and communities in STEM. During the year, CSOs are supported through cabinet meetings, advisors and the CSO team. CSOs may also continue their development through various advisement opportunities.

They also streamline connections to local scientists, STEM professionals and organizations, working with these entities to build STEM awareness and workforce skills. CSOs function as unified regional cabinets, engaging in local, regional, and national STEM conversations to create a positive perception of STEM (or

STEAM when the arts are included), transform school and community culture, and broaden participation.

### Arizona CSO 2023-2024 Cohort

Among the 314 Arizona CSOs, there were:

- + 232 middle school and 82 high schoolers
- + 50% female, 48% male and 2% non-binary/transgender/self-described
- + 33% Hispanic, 26% Caucasian, 4% Asian, 28% mixed race, 4% Black and 5% other
- + 27% first-generation college-bound youth (parents have a high school degree or less)
- + 51% eligible for free/reduced lunch programs

Most if not all Arizona CSOs worked with a STEM professional in some capacity during the school year. Interactions included participating in Arizona STEM Ecosystem and SciTech Festival events, Digital Career Days, and engaging STEM professionals in their activities.

90% of CSOs implemented their action plan. These included:

- + CSO Madeleine (Tucson) created a website highlighting STEM regional resources and events.
- + CSO Chiara (East Valley) led many STEMonstrations for elementary students throughout the school year.
- + CSO Nikhil (Central Valley) ran a STEM club at his school that impacted his community and environment.
- + CSO Mia (West Valley) planned a Starry Night STEM event at her school for families.
- + CSO Mariana (Mesa) created a STEM podcast to share with others.
- + CSO Mica (Verde Valley) made and delivered STEM kits to students and hosted a STEM Kids Night Out.

### Beyond Arizona

Among the 814 U.S. CSOs, there were:

- + 345 high school students or recent graduates and 483 middle school students
- + 58% females, 4% nonbinary and 54% minorities or mixed race
- + 31% first-generation college-bound youth (those with parents holding a high school diploma or less), and

- + 40% qualified for free/reduced lunch programs

### Notable Accomplishments

- + As the world grapples with the growing challenges of climate change, CSOs are emerging as youthful beacons of hope by leading initiatives that inspire change. CSO Daylia (Georgia) teamed with CSO Aldo (Mexico), CSO Valentina (Mexico), CSO Saanvi (India), CSO Gloria (Michigan), CSO Jasmin (Georgia), CSO Kianna (California) and CSO Sophia (California) to create a CSO Climate Action Focus committee and develop a research poster highlighting CSO Climate Action Plans. The group presented their findings in a virtual poster session in January.
- + Alabama CSOs from four regions across the state participated in Alabama's inaugural STEM Day at the Capitol. They spoke with legislators about the CSO program, their action plans and the importance of STEM learning experiences.
- + Pennsylvania CSOs planned and facilitated an alumni STEM panel for their school's 10th-12th graders. They coordinated both in-person and virtual panelists. One student served as the emcee, another managed the technology (microphones, auditorium sound, Zoom, etc.), and two asked questions and prompted the audience to ask questions.

## COLLABORATIONS WITH SCITECH INSTITUTE

### STEM Workforce

Workforce development is a key element of the STEM Ecosystem that develops insights and skills critical for Arizona's growing STEM workforce that will be implemented by all stakeholders in education-based programs statewide.

- + **Statewide Skills Initiative** - SciTech Institute has been actively engaging stakeholders across the STEM Ecosystem to promote the Work Skills Rubric. These skills were identified to address the ecosystem's need to align various skill sets, such as the Portrait of a Graduate in K-12, OST skills, and Human Resources' skill requirements. The objective is to create a cohesive document that aligns state resources to bridge the skills gap from K-12 to the workforce. The Institute is working with school districts across the Phoenix metropolitan area to learn more about what they are currently doing to explicitly teach these skills in their given curriculum.



- **+ Department of Labor Grant** - SciTech Institute, Pipeline AZ and Center for the Future of Arizona are spearheading the U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored Workforce Pathways For Youth Project. This three-year project's goal is to increase access to education and career pathways exploration and skills through OST partnerships in Arizona communities for rural students ages 14-21.

### **Southwest Innovation & Sustainability Engine (SWISE) (NSF Award #2315479)**

SciTech Institute is a key partner in the Southwest Sustainability Innovation Engine (SWSIE), a National Science Foundation (NSF) initiative led by Arizona State University. SWSIE aims to transform water security, renewable energy and net carbon emissions across Arizona, Nevada and Utah by fostering technological innovation, expanding infrastructure and preparing a highly skilled workforce. <https://swsie.asu.edu/>

SciTech Institute contributes to SWSIE's mission by engaging K-12 students in sustainability innovation in education and STEM workforce pathways. Through professional development for educators and fostering connections between industry and academic collaborators, SciTech plays a vital role in cultivating an ecosystem that advances transformative technologies, creating economic opportunities, strengthening U.S. competitiveness, and addressing regional challenges in energy, water, and air systems.

### **Neuro-Inclusive Learning Network: STEM Learning Opportunities for People with ASD (NSF Award #2005901)**

- **+ Recognizing the potential of museums as informal learning environments for learners of all abilities and interests, SciTech Institute has partnered with the Institute for Learning Innovation and Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center on an NSF grant-funded project focused on enhancing inclusion for people on the autism spectrum and their families.**

The project entered phase 2 in 2024, which builds on the successful development of a community of practice comprised of four museums in Phoenix, through onsite training and observations, virtual sessions with core museum personnel, and the creation of an inclusive final project beneficial to people on the autism spectrum. The project's current goals are to apply research findings from phase 1 on internal museum culture change and community attitudes to

generate a hybrid training curriculum that establishes a sustainable model for multiple communities of practice with museums in three cities across the nation.

The project aims to support all museums dedicated to enhancing accessibility through inclusive practices by connecting professionals to relevant resources, a network of peers, and training modules customized to suit their specific roles and responsibilities.

- **+ Autism-only nights, negative interactions with staff, poor signage, and negative impressions from other patrons do not promote inclusion and can alienate neurodiverse patrons.**
- **+ Negative staff experiences were most often related to the lack of interaction or failure to accommodate the participant.**
- **+ Supporting individuals with differing abilities in public places creates a positive model for their peers and promotes tolerance and acceptance.**

### **State Farm Earth Day**

Students and adults of all ages gathered at the courtyard of the State Farm Marina Heights campus offices in April to celebrate Earth Month. In coordination with State Farm and Argo, SciTech helped host several activities. After learning about the RSV Argo, attendees were allowed to "fish" for seashells, starfish, SciTech Festival swag and other prizes. Attendees then "signed on" as a Argonaut crew member and made their own metal lifeboat to test in Botany Bay's Sink or Floatest tub, where each "survivor" tried to earn additional prizes. Also offered was the opportunity to submit a design to potentially be painted onto the sails of the RSV Argo.

### **Rural Activation and Innovation Network (RAIN) (NSF Award #1612555)**

The Rural Activation and Innovation Network (RAIN) seeks to help STEM gain traction in Arizona's rural communities through informal learning and engagement. Supported by SciTech Institute, Arizona State University, the Arizona Science Center, and COSI's Lifelong Learning Group, RAIN bridges local STEM organizations and leaders with Navajo/Apache, Cochise County, Verde Valley, and Graham/Greenlee rural communities to strengthen their education and workforce pipelines. Program goals include increasing opportunities for children and families to interact with STEM professionals and learn about STEM-based careers both within and outside of their community. Regional innovation councils

build capacity and engage community partners in informal STEM awareness and knowledge-building collaboration.

During the five-year program, each region has developed local informal STEM Education projects and experiences plus STEM professional development for community leaders to stimulate dialogue, interest and engagement of children, families, and organizations in the STEM disciplines. It also focused on their real-world applications, associated career opportunities and impact on local economies.

### Arizona Science Bowls

The Arizona Middle and High School Science Bowls are regional Jeopardy-style competitions focused on STEM topics. Arizona Science Bowl events reach thousands of students, successfully promote excellence in STEM education and further the development of a world-class workforce. The SciTech Festival signature events are open to all Arizona and Nevada middle and high school teams. They are sponsored by the Arizona Technology Council Workforce Development Committee and presented by SciTech Institute and Solugenix Corporation. In-person events are held at Arizona State University's West Valley campus in partnership with ASU's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, and the School of Mathematical and Natural Science. The competitions draw more than 30 teams of four to five students, reaching more than 320 youths yearly. The U.S. Department of Energy nationally facilitates the Science Bowl, with regional winners competing at the national event in Washington, D.C.

For the 2024 Arizona Science Bowl competitions, BASIS Chandler won the Regional Middle and High School competitions. In the National competition, the team came in second during the Middle School round-robin competition and made it through Round 2 of double eliminations. The team was eliminated in the High School round robin.

### Sail with Argo

Argo, Arizona's first self-contained education and research sailing vessel, provides a unique and innovative educational resource for students across Arizona and beyond. Satellite communication allows researchers and crew members known as "Argonauts" to livestream exciting oceanic and coastal research to engage students anywhere in the world. Exploration and regular live sessions with Argo are held throughout the school year. Students can participate in research and conservation projects or interact with the Argonauts for school projects. For

example, students can operate underwater ROVs online to explore reefs and participate in data collection missions.

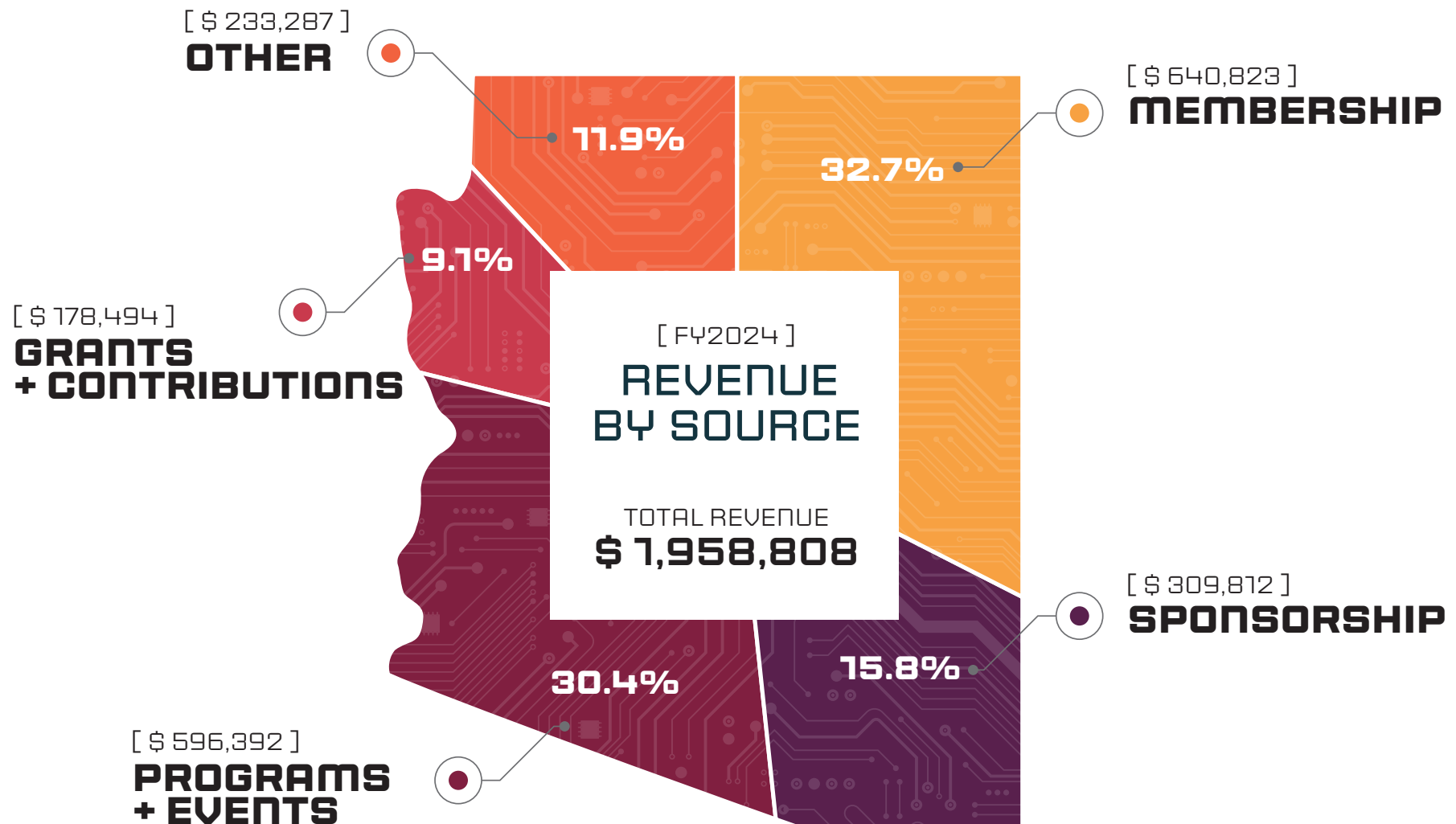
In June, five Arizona CSOs traveled to California to learn about the RSV Argo and how it is being retrofitted with kite engines that will take the place of its sails. Kites are able to harness winds at heights that sails cannot. These winds are typically much stronger than those at sea level. In addition, the kites' design allows them to catch more wind than a sail and provide stronger propulsion for the vessel. Seeing an emerging technology in action was a unique experience for the CSOs.

Because the experience is online, students can share their excitement with friends and family. Argo has more than 5 million views on social and mass media platforms, demonstrating genuine interest by Arizona students and the public at large.

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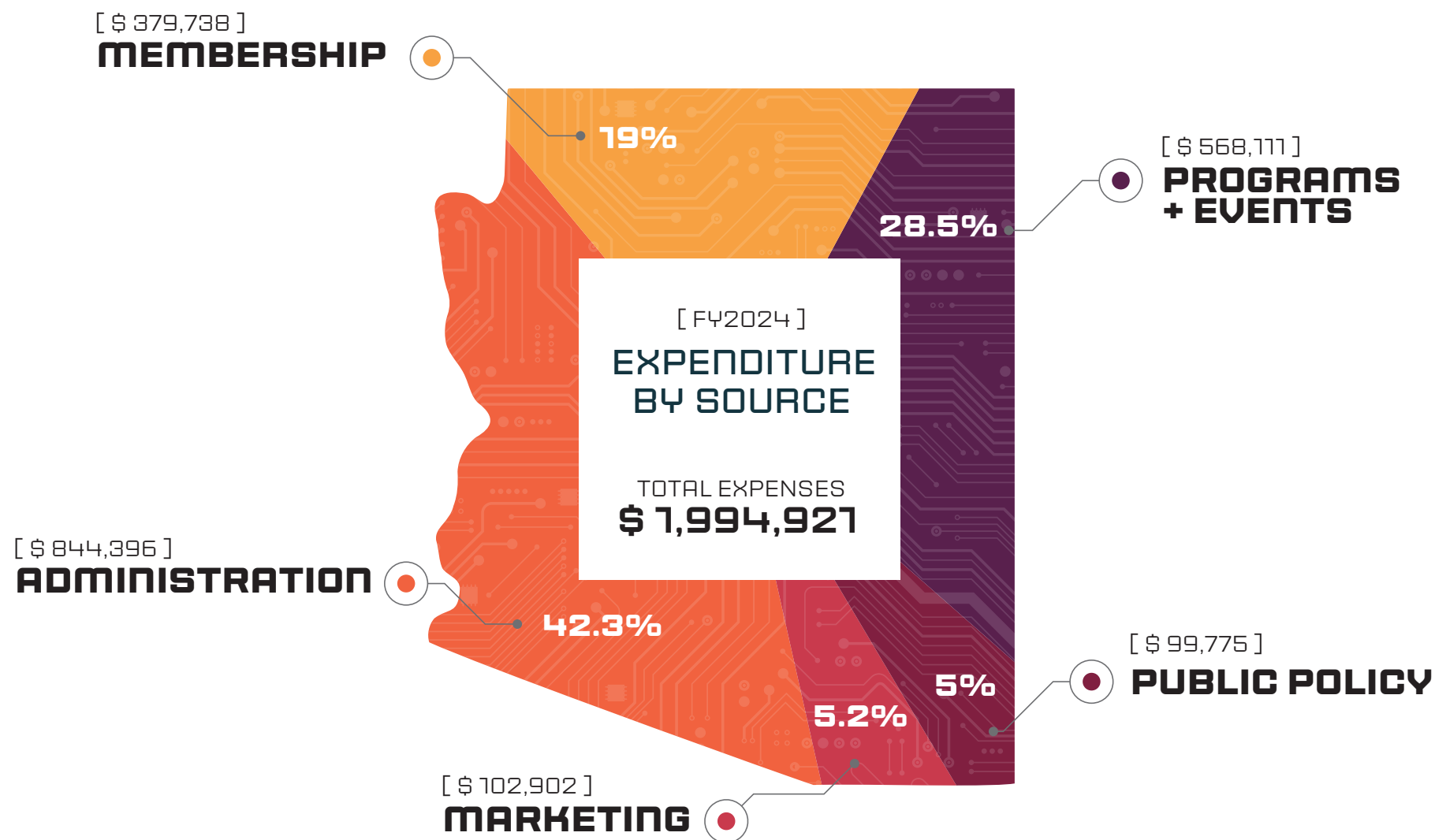
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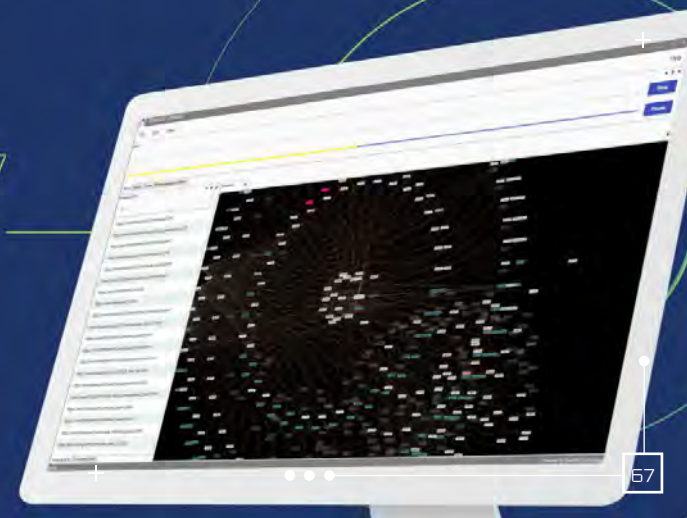
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■	MARS Suite, Inc.	Milestone Formula DBA Banner Edge media	Netcomm Consulting Services	ONE Community
+	Maskine LLC	Milligan Lawless, P.C.	Netscout	OneAZ Credit Union
	Mastek	Mintropy	Neubloc	OnPoint Impact
	Matellio Inc.	MJS Designs	Neurodiversity Education Research Center	OpenClassrooms
	Matrix Resources LLC	MKS Imaging Technology LLC	Nikola Corporation	OppsSpot, LLC
	Maven Project Management, LLC	mLogica	Nikon Research Corporation of America	Optica (formerly The Optical Society - OSA)
	max( automate )	Moatable (formerly Renren)	Nonlinear Control Strategies Inc.	Optical Perspectives Group
	Mayo Clinic	Modular MX	Northern Arizona Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology (aka Moonshot)	Optical Support, Inc.
	McMardon Investment LLC. (AKA MAC6)	Mollitiam Solutions	Northern Arizona University College of Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Science	Optilab LLC
	MCXXM, Inc.	Moser Consulting Inc.	NP Photonics, Inc.	Optimal Manufacturing
	Mechnano	Moss Adams	NucleusTeq Inc	OZO
	mentumm	Motion Tactic	NXP Semiconductors	Pacific Advisors LLC
	Merck EMD Electronics	Motion Technologies Inc.	Nxu Technologies, LLC	Pacific Integrated Handling
	Mercurio Analytics Inc	Move Cars	Nymbus Media	Pacific Scientific
	Mercury System Inc	MSS Business Transformation	Obodo Energy Partners	PacketWatch
	Meritage Homes	Mundt & Associates	ÓXITS, LLC	PADT, Inc.
+	Meta (Mesa Data Center)	Mural Technologies	OLIN Automation Services, LLC	Page Per Page
	Metro Education Commission	My SteppingStone, Inc.	Olsson	Paira
	Metz & Associates PLLC	Naked Optics Corp	Olympus Controls Corp.	PAL Consulting Management, LLC
	Michael Beach Coaching & Consulting, LLC	Nano Materials International Corp	On Top of I.T.	Pano
	MicroAge	Navaera	OnboardIT	PARA Consulting
	Micro-Hybrid Electronics Inc.	NBOUND		Paradigm Manufacturing
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				Paragon Space Development Corp



Paramium Technologies  
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 Perkins Coie LLC  
 Phantom Space Corporation  
 Phocos Americas

Phoenix Business Journal  
 Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations  
 Phoenix Community Alliance  
 Phoenix Section - AIAA  
 Phoenix Technology Audio Visual LLC  
 Photonics Automation Specialties, LLC  
 Pima Community College  
 Pima County Economic Development  
 Pima County ITD  
 Pima County JTED

Pima County One-Stop/Arizona@Work  
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 Planatome, LLC  
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 Polymer Chemistry Innovations  
 Postindustria  
 PowerPhotonic Inc  
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+	Prototron Circuits	Renew Arizona		Slake Consulting LLC
	Providence First Trust Company	Renew Energy Partners	Savant Software, Inc.	Slalom Phoenix
	Public Policy Partners	Replicant	ScholarshipsA-Z	SMART Embedded Computing dba Penguin Solutions
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	Pure Wafer, Inc.	Resilient Software Security	SCHOTT MINIFAB	Solaris Photography
	Pureflow, Inc.	RevampIT Audio Video LLC	SciTech Institute	Solid Design and Detail
	Purity ReSource Inc	RGROUP Professional Services	Scorpion Technologies LLC	Solugenix Corporation
	QTS Data Centers	Ridgetop Group Inc.	Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce	Sonic Aerospace Inc.
	Quantum Innovative Solutions (QiS) (Qi Solutions)	Rimini Street	Scynce LED LLC	Sonoita Equity Partners
	Quantum5	Rincon Research Corporation	Sears Gerbo Architecture	Sonora Nearshore
	Quarles	RingPlan	Second City, LLC	Sonoran Schools
	Qwaltec	Rixon Technology	Securaplane Technologies	South32
	R3EWaste	Robert Bosch North America	SEMI	Southwest Alliance for Excellence [SWAE]
	Radiant Dev	Roselion	ServerLift Corporation	Southwest Mission Acceleration Center
	Radiant Product Development	Royale International Couriers LTD.	Seven Layers, LLC	Spencer Fane LLP
+	Radius AI	Ruda Optical	Sharp Business Systems	SPIE
	Ratchet & Pawl LLC	Rytek Technical Service	Shin-Etsu MicroSi	SRP (Salt River Project)
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	Realty 1031-21 LLC	Safari Micro Inc	Sincera Talent Partners	Startup Tucson
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	RedEye Network Solutions	Salty Limao Consulting	Skin Appeal	STChealth
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Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce Arizona	TGen (Translational Genomics Research Inst)
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the revenue game, llc	Town of Sahuarita	University of Advancing Technology	Waymo
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The Sensor Group LLC	Trade in Motion LLC	Urban Farming Education	Westmarc
The Talent Store	Traversant Group	US Air Tech DBA USAT	Wexford Science + Technology
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The University of Arizona Applied Research Corporation	Triad Wireless, LLC	Vail Unified School District	Winsor Consulting Group, LLC.
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The University of Arizona College of Engineering	Trico Electric Cooperative	VAST Consulting Solutions	World Wide Technology
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+ The University of Arizona Tech Launch Arizona	TSMC Arizona Corporation	VentureAide Capital	Xmetryx, Inc.
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