

# West Valley Regional Workforce Development Strategic Plan

West Valley Pipeline 2.0

2024 - 2028



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Partners,

WESTMARC is a coalition of public, private, education and non-profit leaders committed to the West Valley of Metro Phoenix's economic vitality and enhanced quality of life. It is a place for stakeholders to connect, collaborate and take-action to ensure our region is economically thriving and evolving with current trends. Therefore, we are proud to lead the West Valley's collective goal of building a strong and talented pipeline to meet the demands of one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. A key long-term goal is ensuring the region has a strong workforce pipeline in targeted industries and emerging technologies. The WESTMARC Board of Directors, stakeholders and partners are all in alignment with strategies to achieve this goal.

The region is comprised of 15 communities encompassing 3,000 square miles west of Interstate 17 in Arizona's Maricopa County and home to 1.8 million residents ranging from established corporate executives to an up-and-coming millennial workforce. The median age is 34.6 years old with 64% of residents being workforce age. The West Valley is also one of the most culturally diverse regions in Arizona and well known for our minority-majority population. Over the past two decades, this region has attracted young families, an experienced workforce, luxury housing communities, major sporting events and world-class entertainment, all adding to a high quality of life for residents and tourist destination for visitors. Employment is also on the rise as diverse industries such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company in north Phoenix, Nikola Hydrogen Fuel Plant and KORE Power in Buckeye, Ball Corp, Red Bull, Mark Anthony Brewing, Nestle USA, and Rauch in Glendale, and the expansion of City of Hope Cancer Care (formerly Cancer Treatment Centers of America) in Goodyear, Phoenix Children's Hospital in Avondale and Glendale, and many others make significant investments to join our community. These new and expanding businesses also require employees with diverse, in demand skillsets challenging WESTMARC to remain in the forefront of identifying industry needs and matching with educational opportunities.

We are fortunate to have actively engaged partners who support one another, their community and local businesses in an authentic manner. This tone has been set by local elected leaders who genuinely and respectfully work together to advance the region's economy.

As President and CEO, my team and I are grateful for the partnerships and support received over the years as we continue to prioritize workforce development as foundational pillar of WESTMARC's work on behalf of the West Valley. As we begin working together on West Valley Pipeline 2.0 workforce strategy, we know that together with our partners, this region will continue on its strong trajectory of quality employment growth.

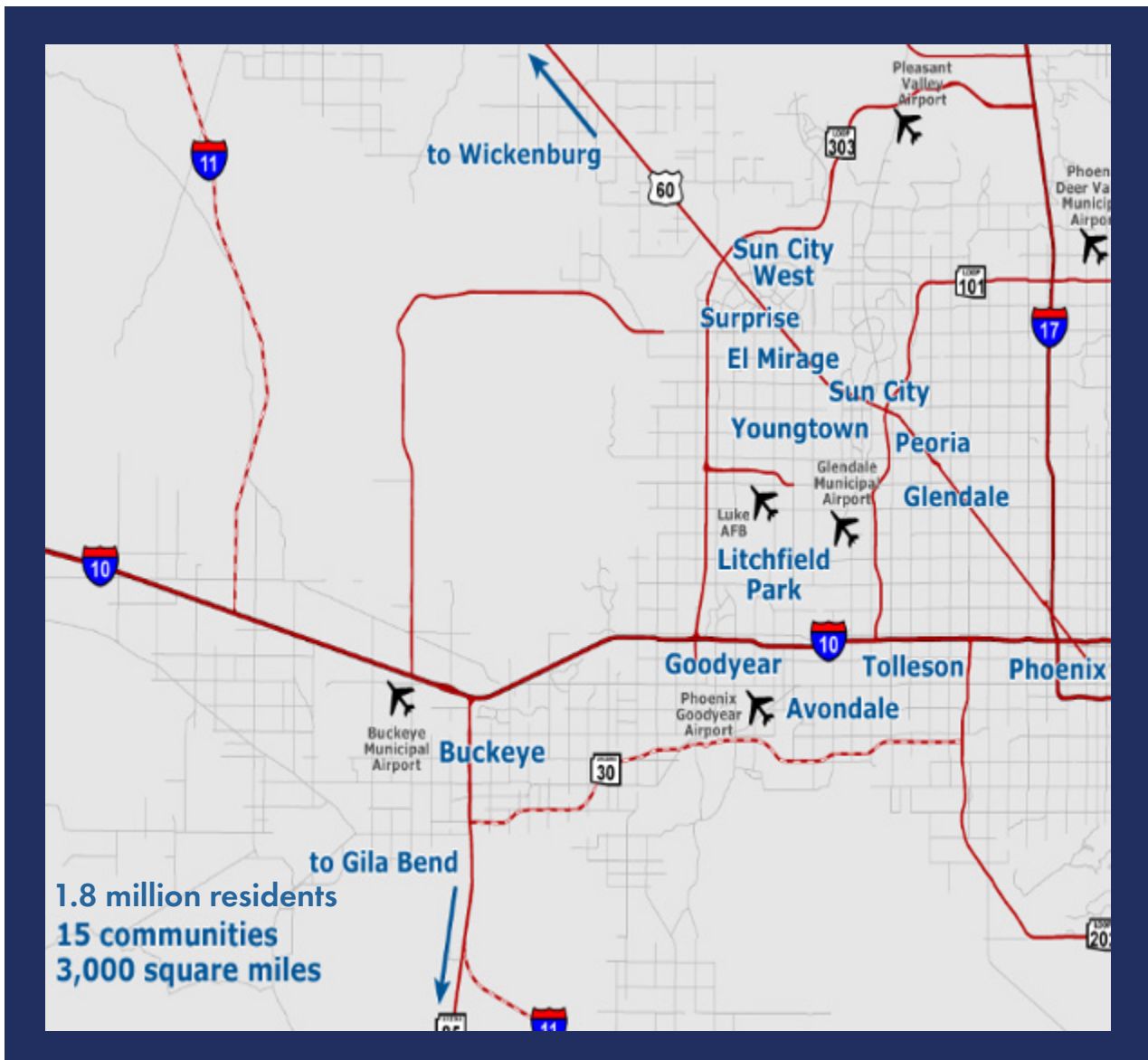
Sincerely,

*Sintra Hoffman*  
Sintra Hoffman  
President and CEO

## West Valley Pipeline - Why A Regional Plan is Needed

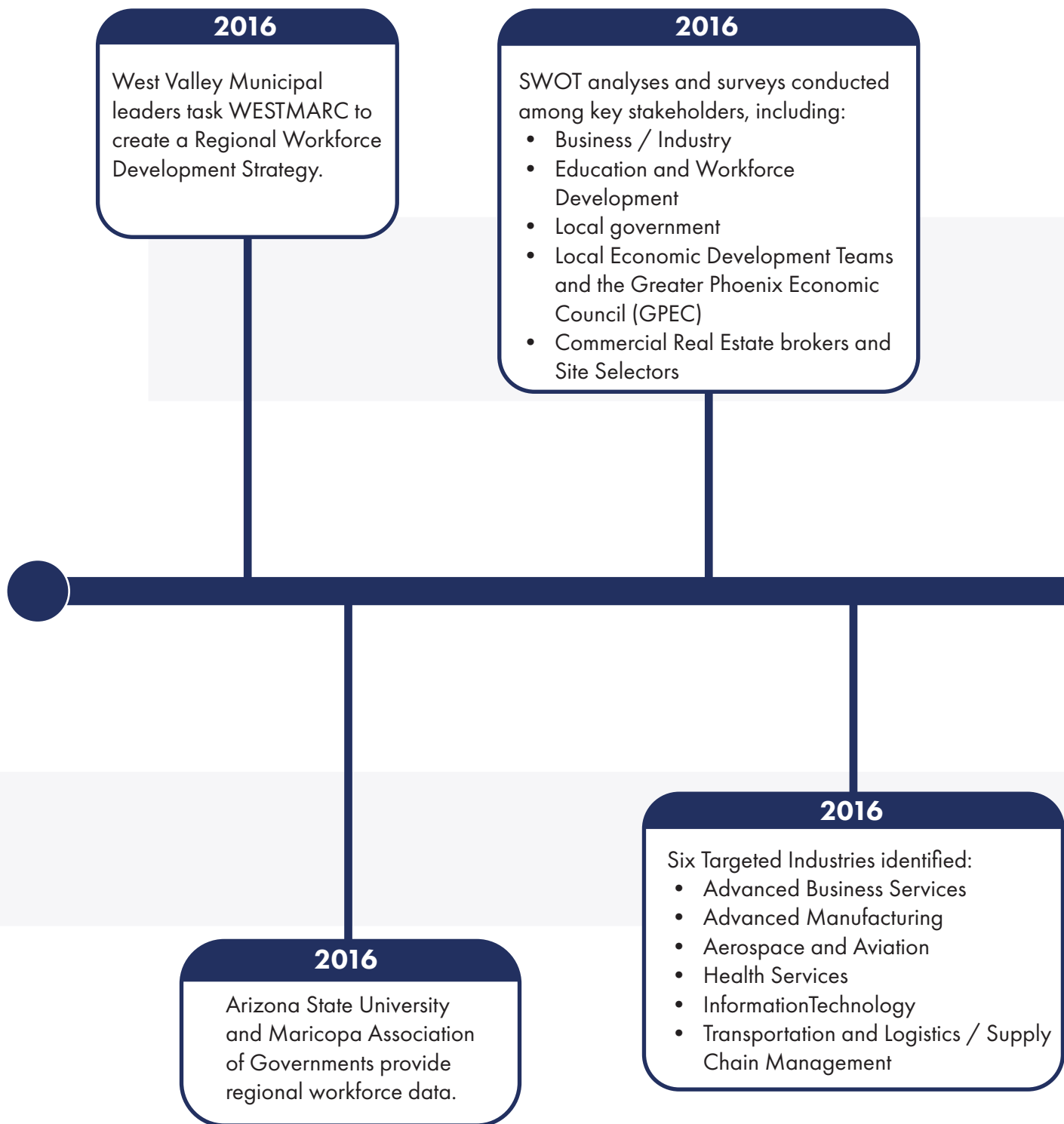
The goal of the West Valley Regional Workforce Development Strategy in 2018 was to qualify and quantify our current workforce, and work with industry to ensure the ongoing development of our workforce pipeline to attract more high quality, high paying career opportunities for regional residents.

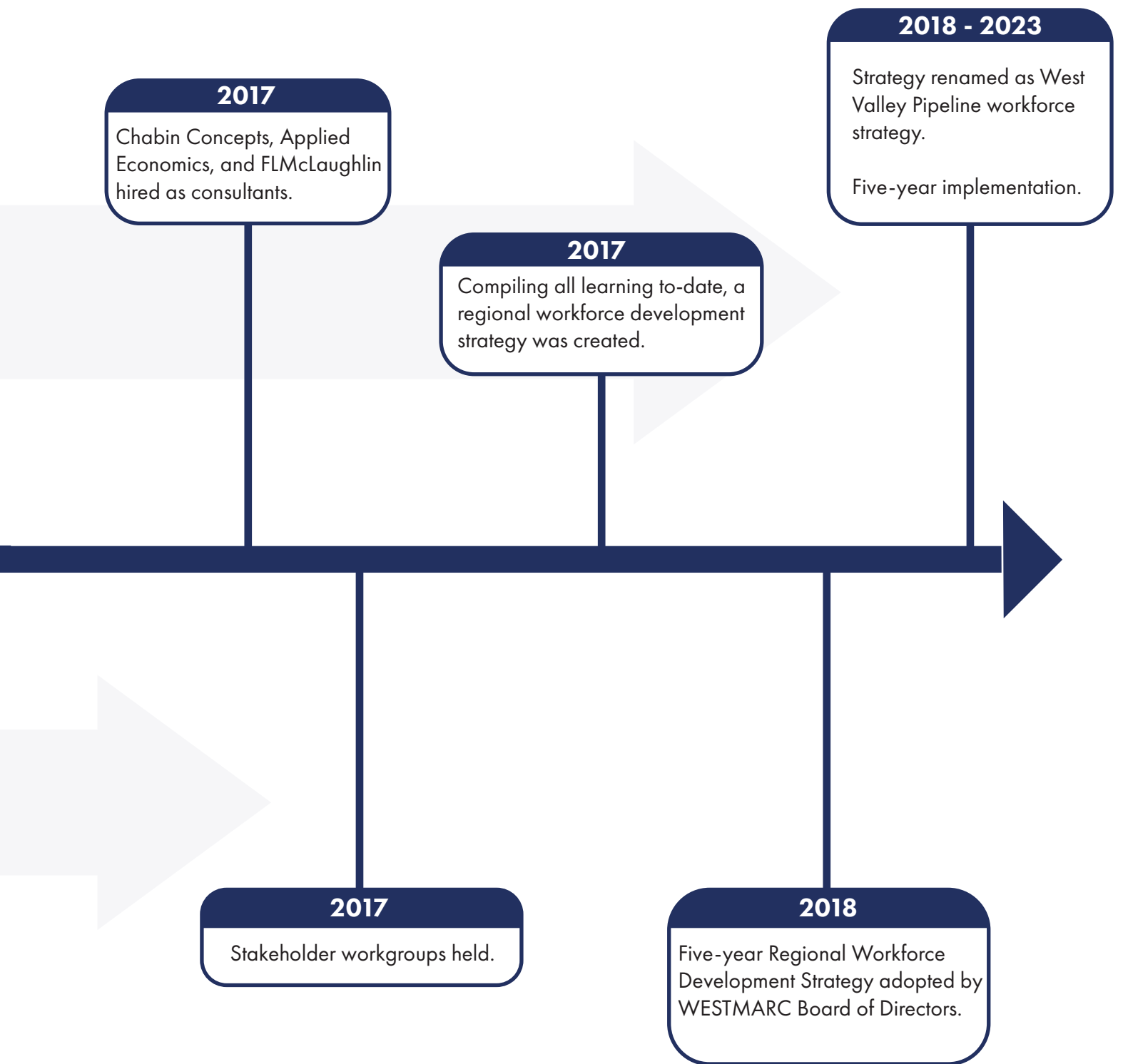
The economic conditions have changed by 2023 as more high quality, high paying career opportunities have located into the region. Now, a key goal is to ensure that local regional businesses have access to quality talent pipelines that will allow for profitability and expansion.





# West Valley Pipeline - Timeframe of Implementation





## West Valley Pipeline - Unforeseen Impacts 2018 - 2023

Several global and societal factors are combining that have had an unforeseen impact on West Valley Pipeline, including:








- Generation Z, those born in the late 1990s and early 2000s, are beginning to enter the workforce with life experiences, work-life balance expectations, and values that differ from generations before them and therefore cause stress.
- Birth rates are declining, and population growth is slowing:
  - The United States population rose 19% from 2000 to 2020 but is expected to grow only 9% from 2020 to 2040.
- The global Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022 caused major disruptions, including:
  - The Arizona Unemployment Rate rose from 4.8% in February 2020 to 13.8% in April 2020, and the number of workers laid off or furloughed over those weeks was three times higher than the highest rate during the worst months of the 2008-2009 Great Recession.
  - All the gains that Arizona had seen in increasing the Labor Force Participation Rate were wiped out, though Arizona has largely recovered by late 2023.
  - Nationally, two million women left the workforce during the pandemic, many to care for children and other family members, and most have yet to return to paid employment.
  - The “Great Reshuffling” -- as the Covid-19 economic recovery kicked in late 2021 and early 2022, Arizona and the United States recorded record-numbers of workers voluntarily quitting their jobs for new opportunities.
  - Except for manufacturing and other “essential workers,” many workers were forced to telework; with the economic recovery, many workers continue to demand telework options and resist returning to the office.
- Supply chain disruptions:
  - The global Covid-19 pandemic, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the 2022 Suez Canal blockage all contributed to significant delays in goods and products reaching their destinations. Construction leaders and manufacturers delayed or turned away projects when they could have been expanding due to demand.



- In 2016, Governor Ducey, the Arizona Board of Regents, and other education and business leaders launched Arizona Achieve60, which set the goal that by 2030, 60% of Arizonans between the ages of 25 and 54 would have a post-secondary degree or certification, essential to meet the talent needs of Arizona businesses. In 2016, the Educational Achievement rate was 43%. With the pandemic, however, schools were forced to convert to Distance Learning which has been shown to have a detrimental effect on educational attainment, and as of 2021, the Attainment rate scores at 47.9%, still far short of the 60% goal.
  - As of September 2023, Education Forward projects that Arizona needs to award an additional 500,000 degrees / certificates to reach the 60% goal.
  - Third grade reading and Eighth grade math scores were severely negatively impacted by distance learning models.
- Advancing technology has resulted in an increase of “gig” work which allows workers to set their own hours and work when they wish. Many workers use “gig” work to supplement incomes, but a growing proportion of workers use “gig” work as their primary source of income, taking themselves out of the traditional workforce.



# West Valley Pipeline - Original Targeted Industries

-  **Advanced Business Services**
-  **Advanced Manufacturing**
-  **Aerospace and Aviation**
-  **Construction (added 2020)**
-  **Healthcare**
-  **Information Technology /  
Cybersecurity**
-  **Transportation and  
Warehousing / Supply  
Chain Management**

## West Valley Pipeline - Industry Alignment with Regional Partners

As a sub-region WESTMARC is in alignment with workforce and economic development partners such as the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), the Workforce Advisory Council for the State of Arizona, and the ARIZONA@WORK Local Workforce Development Areas of City of Phoenix and Maricopa County. As regional economic development organizations target the same industry sectors as in West Valley Pipeline, greater partnership opportunities can be leveraged to meet mutual goals.

Industry	West Valley Pipeline	GPEC	ACA	State of Arizona	City of Phoenix	Maricopa Workforce Area
Aerospace & Aviation / Aerospace & Defense	X	X	X			
Business Services / Business & Financial Services	X	X	X		X	
Finance & Insurance		X		X		X
Professional and Technical Services				X		
Construction	X			X	X	X
Education	X					
Health Care and Social Assistance / Health Care and Biomedical / Bioscience	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wearables		X				
Manufacturing / Advanced Manufacturing	X		X	X	X	X
Autonomous & Electric Vehicles		X				
Semiconductors		X				
Retail, Hospitality, Tourism	X					
Technology	X	X		X	X	X
Technology & Innovation			X			
Blockchain		X				
Cybersecurity		X				
Film & Digital Media			X			
Transportation & Warehousing	X			X		X

## **West Valley Pipeline - Original Intended Outcomes**

The West Valley Pipeline intended outcomes:

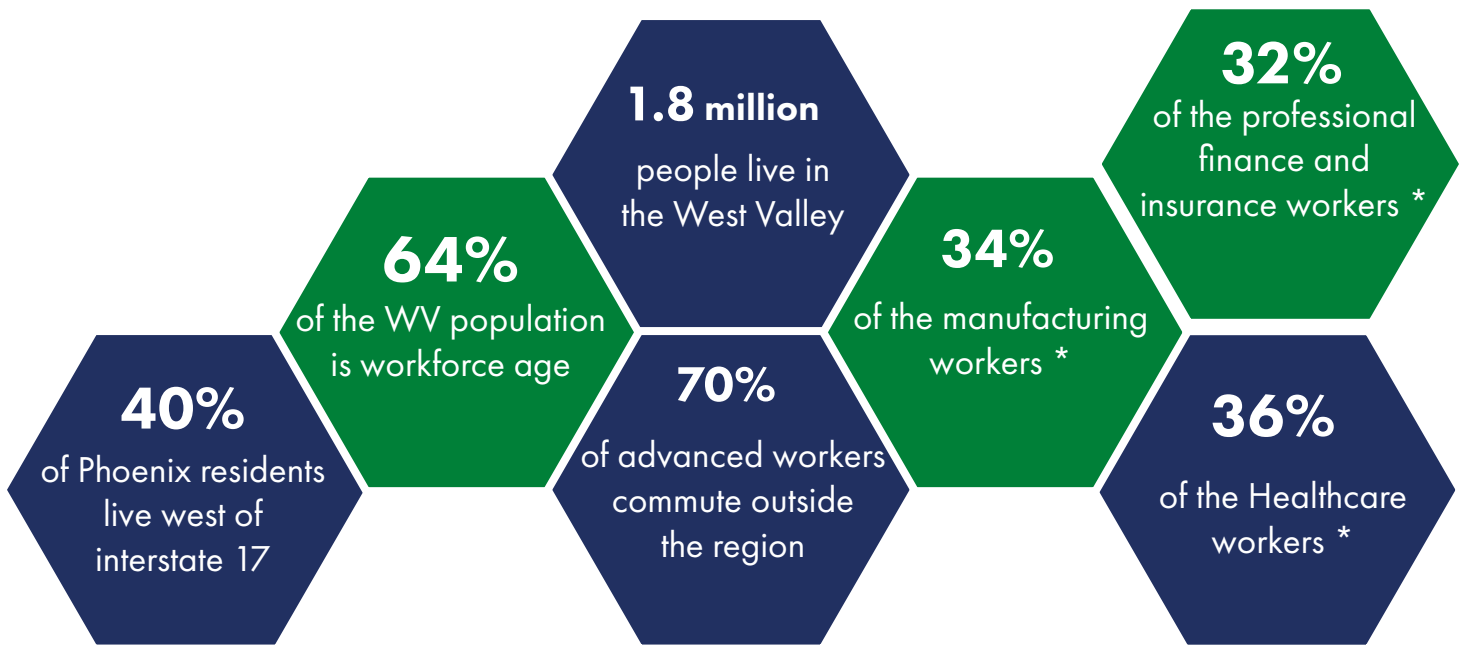
- A. Increase high wage employment in the West Valley.
- B. Support current and future industry workforce needs.
- C. Promote West Valley's skilled, educated workforce.
- D. Improve the quality of life for West Valley residents.
- E. Reduce resident commute times for employment.

## **West Valley Pipeline - Sample of Key Wins 2018 - 2023**

- Arizona State University West Campus "West Valley Forward" expansion that adds three new schools in forensics, business, and engineering, and will grow enrollment from 5,000 to 15,000 students, and rebranding as Arizona State University West Valley Campus.
- Estrella Mountain Community College expansion to keep up with increasing enrollment.
- Scholarship programs between City of Avondale / City of Surprise and Estrella Mountain Community College for qualified city residents.
- Alignment of West Valley K-12 school districts (including West-MEC), community colleges, and colleges / universities programs and curricula with the goals of West Valley Pipeline, as evidenced by 40+ page annual WVP Progress Reports.
- "Quick Start" short-term training programs in the Maricopa County Community College District that meet the needs of growing aerospace and semiconductor manufacturing industries.
- Center for the Future of Arizona Pathways to Prosperity creating a Project Manager position to focus on West Valley.
- WESTMARC procurement of two licensed labor market data tools:
  - Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass)
  - JobsEQ

- Creation of a new position within WESTMARC, the Director of Regional Workforce Development, to focus on implementing the goals of West Valley Pipeline:
  - Creation of a West Valley Workforce Workgroup to serve as an advisory board to help prioritize WVP goal implementation, and to connect workforce development service providers together to provide a more unified approach to local area businesses.
  - Develop partnerships with regional demographic and labor data providers, including Maricopa Association of Governments, Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, and Center for the Future of Arizona.
  - Redevelopment of the WESTMARC West Valley Workforce webpage (<https://www.westmarc.org/westvalley-workforce/>) to provide an all-in-one-location source of regional workforce development activities.
  - Implementation of Industry Employer Collaborative discussions with businesses in key industries, to understand their workforce challenges and what their desired solutions might be.
  - Launch of Workforce Success Series panel discussion webinars, showcasing businesses that have had successes in talent attraction and/or talent retention as models for other businesses.
  - Posting of monthly Economic Indicators data reports.
  - Creation of a Business Resource Guide.
  - Launch of a weekly Workforce Wednesday newsletter to highlight WESTMARC and partner West Valley Pipeline achievements.
  - West Valley Occupation and Industry counts and projections to report through an updated Quality of Life Progress Meter.

Employed (2017)	Employed (2022)	Change (2017 - 2022)	% Change (2017 - 2022)
<b>691,502</b>	<b>818,579</b>	<b>127,076</b>	<b>18%</b>

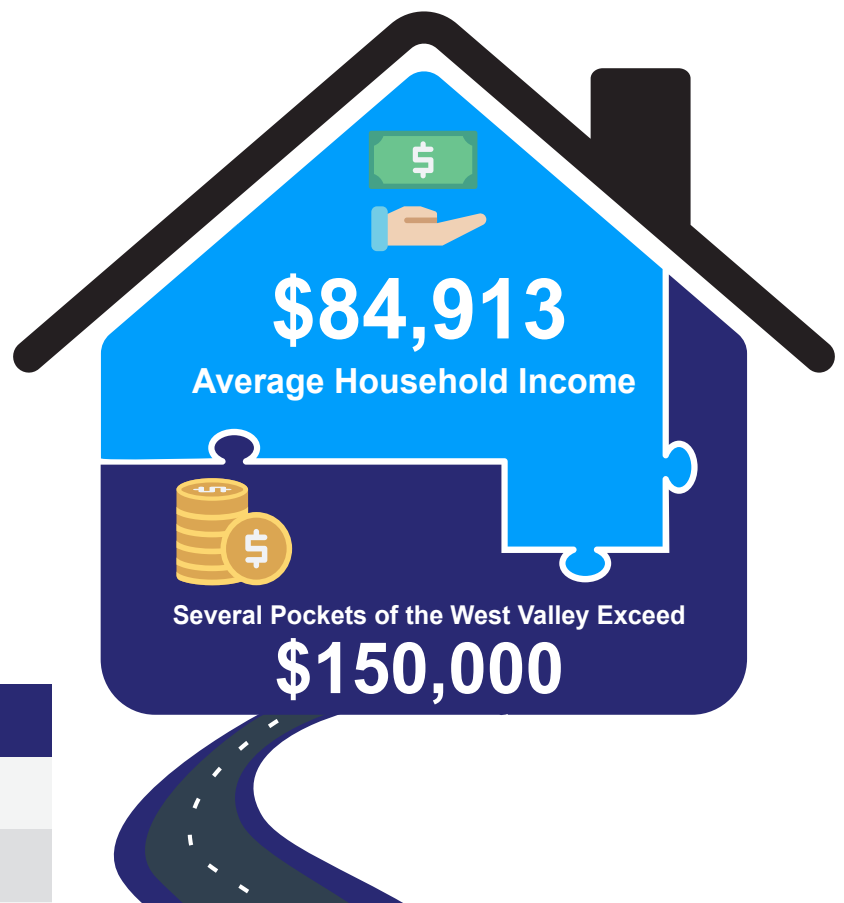


\* % of Maricopa County Workforce live in the West Valley



Projected Population Growth

Year	Population
2020	1,740,200
2025	1,917,700
2035	2,374,400

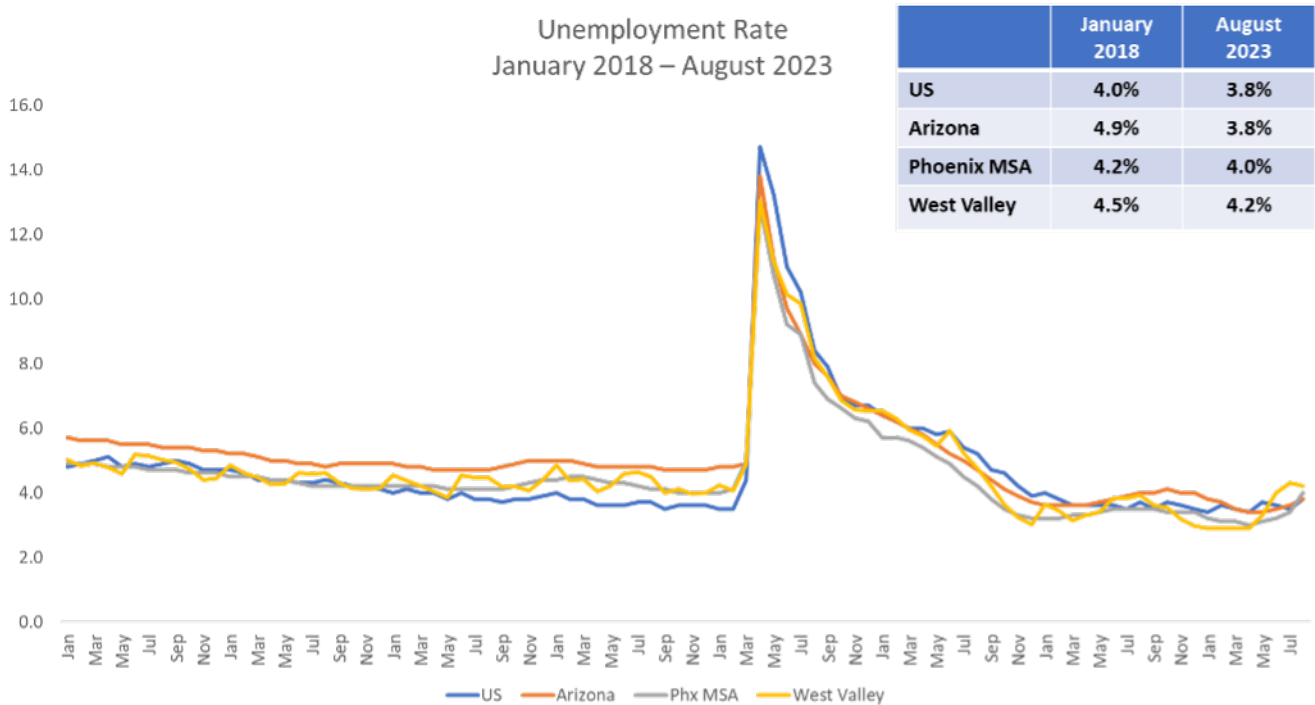


Source: 2021 American Community Survey/ Maricopa Association of Governments

# Change in Economic Indicators - 2018 to 2023

## Unemployment Rate

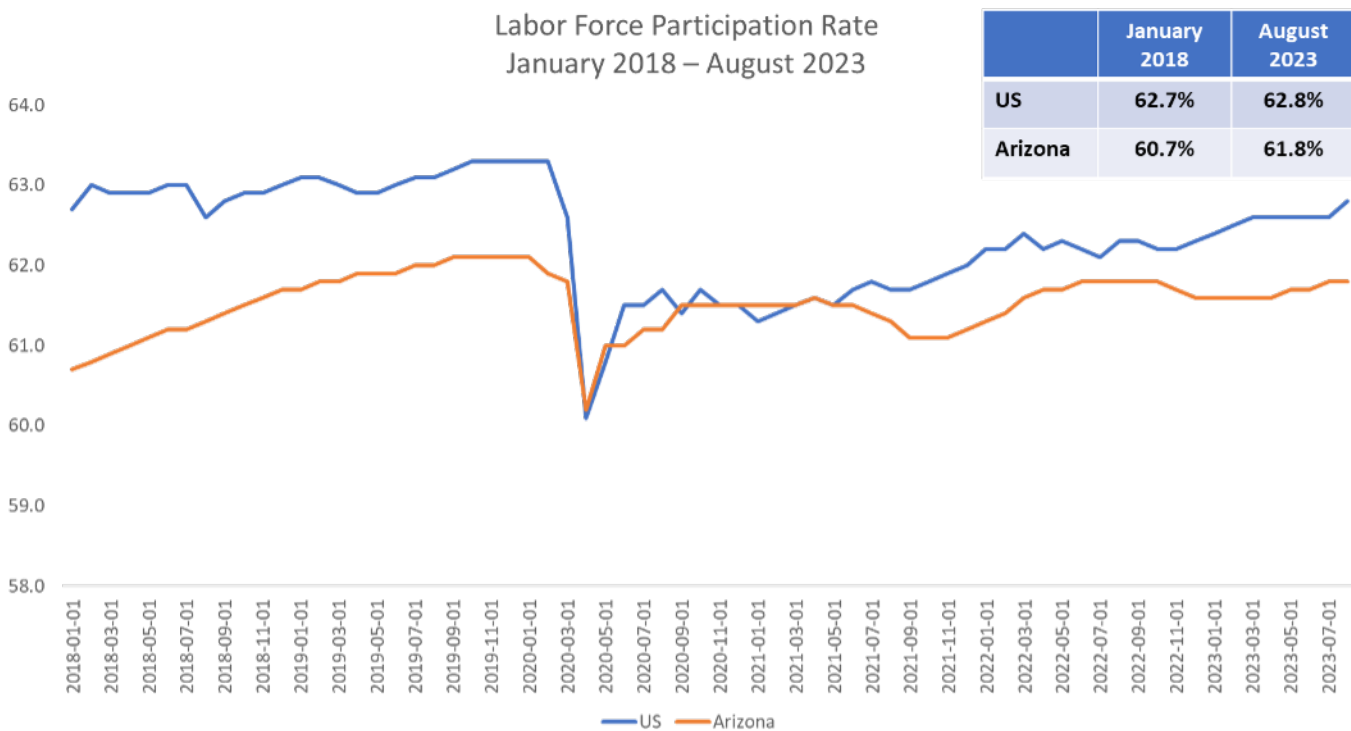
- The shutdowns caused by the global Pandemic resulted in record high Unemployment Rates in March and April 2020.
- However, post-Pandemic recovery has been remarkable.
- The West Valley Unemployment Rate in August 2023 is three-tenths lower than in January 2018.



Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity / US Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Labor Force Participation Rate

- The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) measures the percentage of persons age 16 to 64 who are working, relative to the number who could be working (i.e., not in school, not in prison, not in the military).
- The global Pandemic caused Arizona to lose all its recent gains in March and April 2020.
- The Arizona LFPR has rebounded, and the August 2023 rate is 1.1 points higher than in January 2018, though Arizona still lags the US rate by a full percentage point.
- This indicates that there is still slack in the labor market, and strategies could be deployed to encourage those who are not currently working to re-enter the labor force.

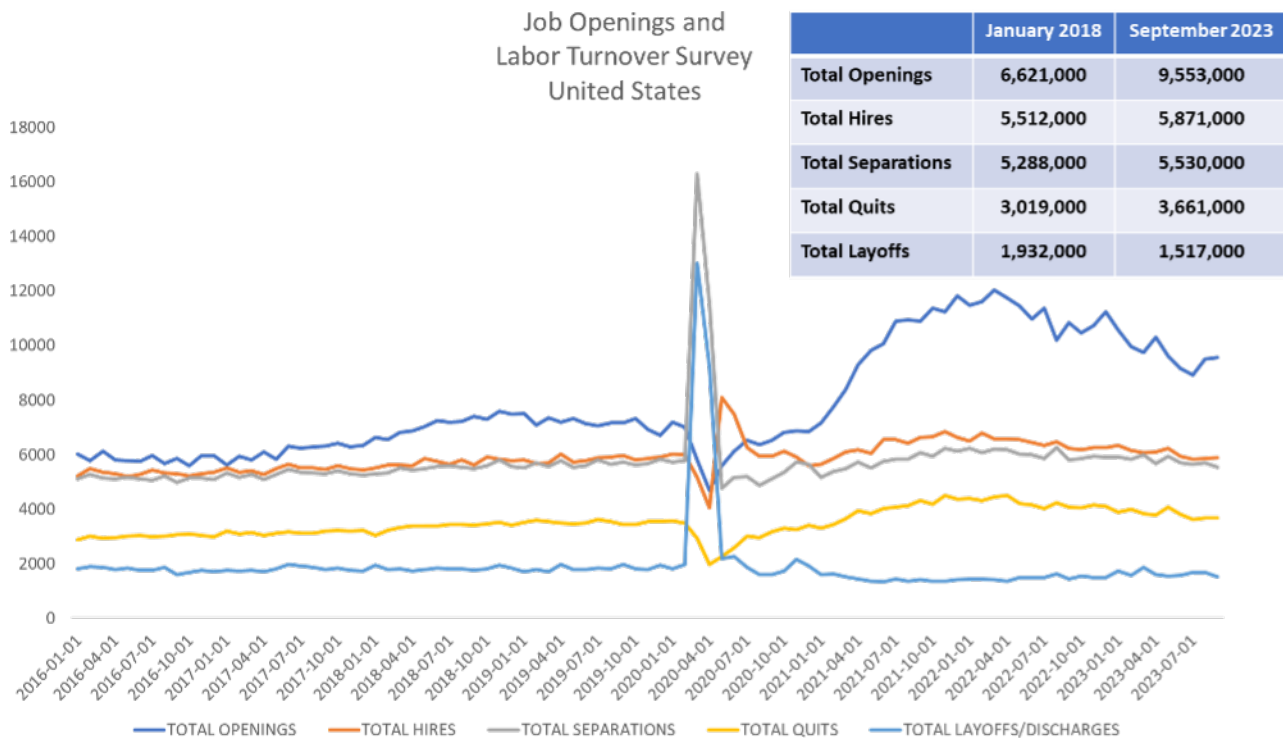


Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis



## Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey

- The Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) measures Openings, Hires, and Turnover activity for a given month.
- In the US, labor demand exceeds supply: there were 2.9million more Job Openings in September 2023 than in January 2018, but only 360,000 more hires.
- There were 450,000 more Total Separations in September 2023 than in January 2018, driven by workers who voluntarily Quit (over 640,000 more in September 2023 than in January 2018).
- While there has been some recent high-profile layoff activity in Arizona and in the US, the overall Layoffs rate is low (420,000 fewer in September 2023 than in January 2018), and relatively flat since the initial shock caused by the global Pandemic.
- This suggests that workforce strategies must be highly focused on ensuring that every worker and candidate has the skills required by businesses in targeted industries, and that skills evolve as new technologies are deployed by businesses to meet workforce shortages.



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

## West Valley Pipeline - Original Strategies

### PILLAR

# 1

#### Industry and Education Partnerships

- a. Address skills gaps through partnerships
- b. Create career pathways for in-demand occupations
- c. Integrate soft skills in K-12
- d. Support STEM education
- e. Re-brand vocational education and Career & Technical Education (CTE)



PILLAR

2

Communication Strategies

- f. Convey consistent message to employers
- g. Build key message platform

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3

Community Outreach

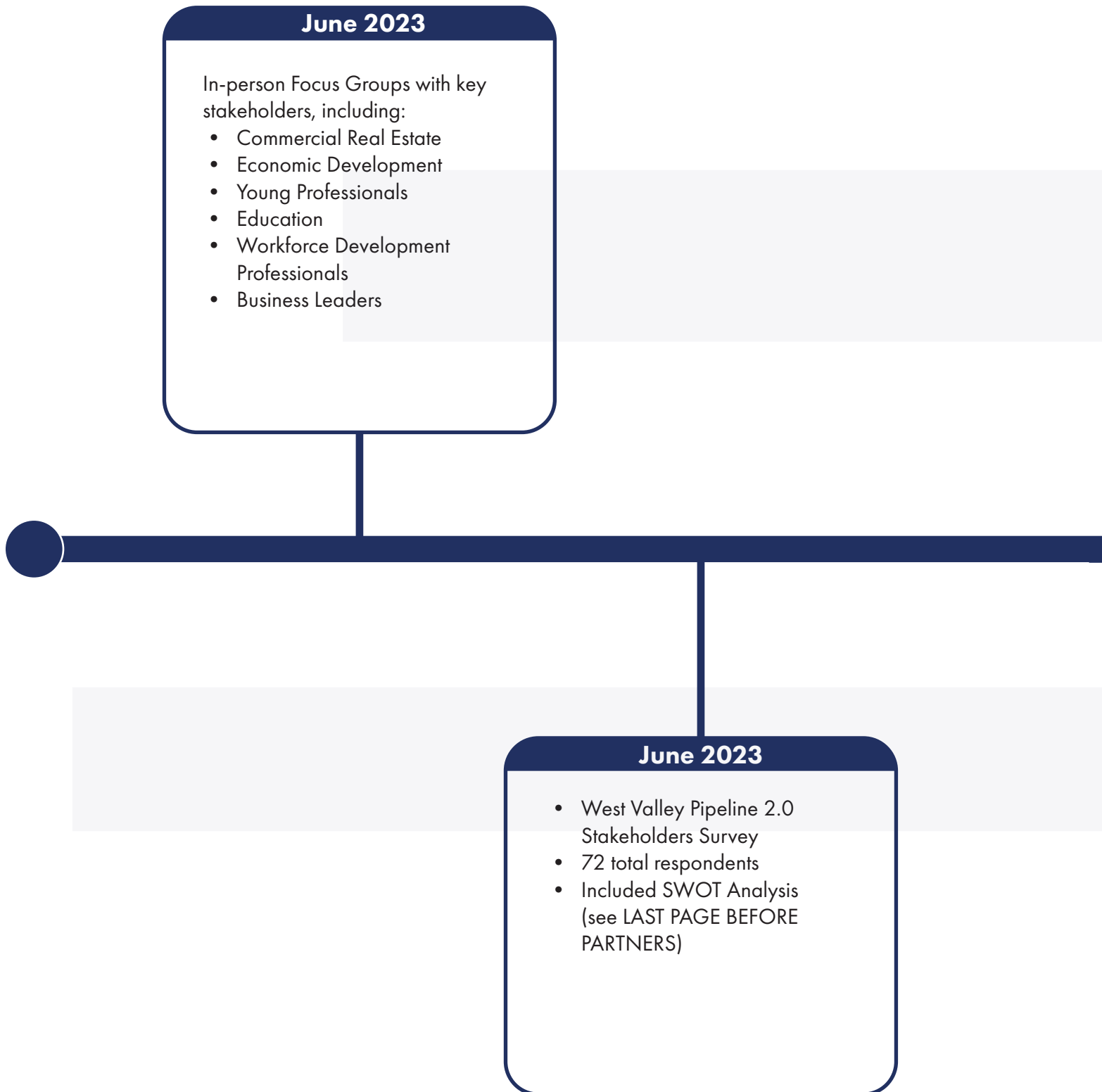
- h. Operate regional collaborative business outreach program
- i. Conduct resident and commuter survey

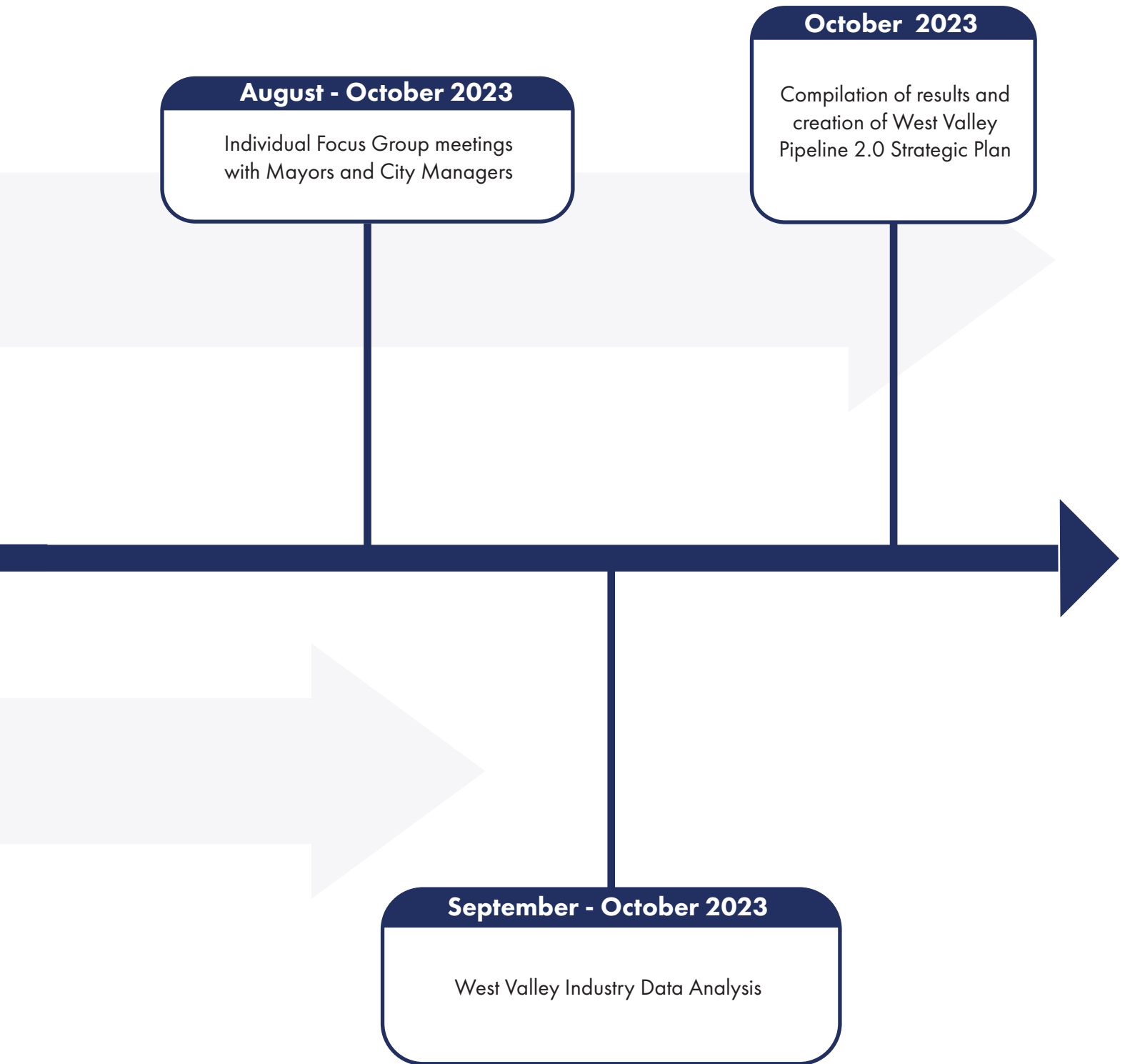


# West Valley Pipeline 2.0

As economic conditions have changed since 2018, a new regional workforce development strategy is needed to account for current and future market and labor realities.

## West Valley Pipeline Strategy 2.0 Timeline





## West Valley Pipeline 2.0 - Targeted Industries

West Valley Pipeline 2.0 adds two industry sectors – Education and Retail/Hospitality/Tourism - that are critical to the growth of West Valley.



### **Aerospace and Aviation**

#### **Includes**

- Aircraft Manufacturing
- Airport Operations

### **Business Services**

#### **Includes**

- Finance
- Insurance
- Professional Services
- Real Estate

### **Construction**

#### **Includes**

- Residential Building Construction
- Non-Residential Building Construction
- Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
- Utility System Construction

### **Education**

#### **Includes**

- Elementary and Secondary Schools
- Junior Colleges
- Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
- Trade and Technical Schools

### **Healthcare and Social Assistance**

#### **Includes**

- Ambulatory Health Care Services
- Hospitals
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- Social Assistance

### **Manufacturing**

#### **Includes**

- Aerospace and Aviation Manufacturing
- Battery Manufacturing
- Medical Device Manufacturing
- Semiconductor Manufacturing

### **Retail, Hospitality, Tourism**

#### **Includes**

- Accommodation
- Arts and Recreation
- Food Service
- Retail

### **Technology**

#### **Includes**

- Network and Computer Systems
- Information Security
- Motion Picture and Video Production

### **Transportation and Warehousing**

#### **Includes**

- Automation and Robotics
- Freight Transportation
- Supply Chain Management
- Warehousing and Storage

See Appendix for West Valley Pipeline 2.0 Industry Definitions.

## West Valley Pipeline 2.0 - Industry Alignment with Regional Partners

Seven of the nine West Valley Pipeline 2.0 Targeted Industries align with targets of regional partners, suggesting opportunities for collaboration. Two WVP 2.0 Targeted Industries (Education and Retail, Hospitality, Tourism) are targets unique to the West Valley, indicating the region's rapid population growth.

Industry	West Valley Pipeline	GPEC	ACA	State of Arizona	City of Phoenix	Maricopa Workforce Area
<b>Aerospace &amp; Aviation / Aerospace &amp; Defense</b>	X	X	X			
<b>Business Services / Business &amp; Financial Services</b>	X	X	X		X	
Finance & Insurance		X		X		X
Professional and Technical Services				X		
<b>Construction</b>	X			X	X	X
<b>Education</b>	X					
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance / Health Care and Biomedical / Bioscience</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wearables		X				
<b>Manufacturing / Advanced Manufacturing</b>	X		X	X	X	X
Autonomous & Electric Vehicles		X				
Semiconductors		X				
<b>Retail, Hospitality, Tourism</b>	X					
<b>Technology / Software &amp; IT / Information Technology</b>	X	X		X	X	X
Technology & Innovation			X			
Blockchain		X				
Cybersecurity		X				
Film & Digital Media			X			
<b>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</b>	X			X		X





# West Valley Industry Growth Projection - 2022 to 2030

Industry Sector	Employed in Industry (2022)	Employed in Industry (2030)	Change (2022 - 2030)	% Change (2022 - 2030)
Aerospace and Aviation	4,587	4,804	217	5%
Business Services	129,874	151,378	21,504	17%
Construction	64,096	74,487	10,391	16%
Education	48,333	53,511	5,178	11%
Health Services	71,494	85,483	13,989	20%
Manufacturing	67,586	72,600	5,015	7%
Retail, Hospitality, Tourism	166,811	186,761	19,949	12%
Technology	16,595	18,686	2,091	13%
Transportation and Warehousing	84,982	108,183	23,200	27%

Source: Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set based to West Valley ZIP Codes

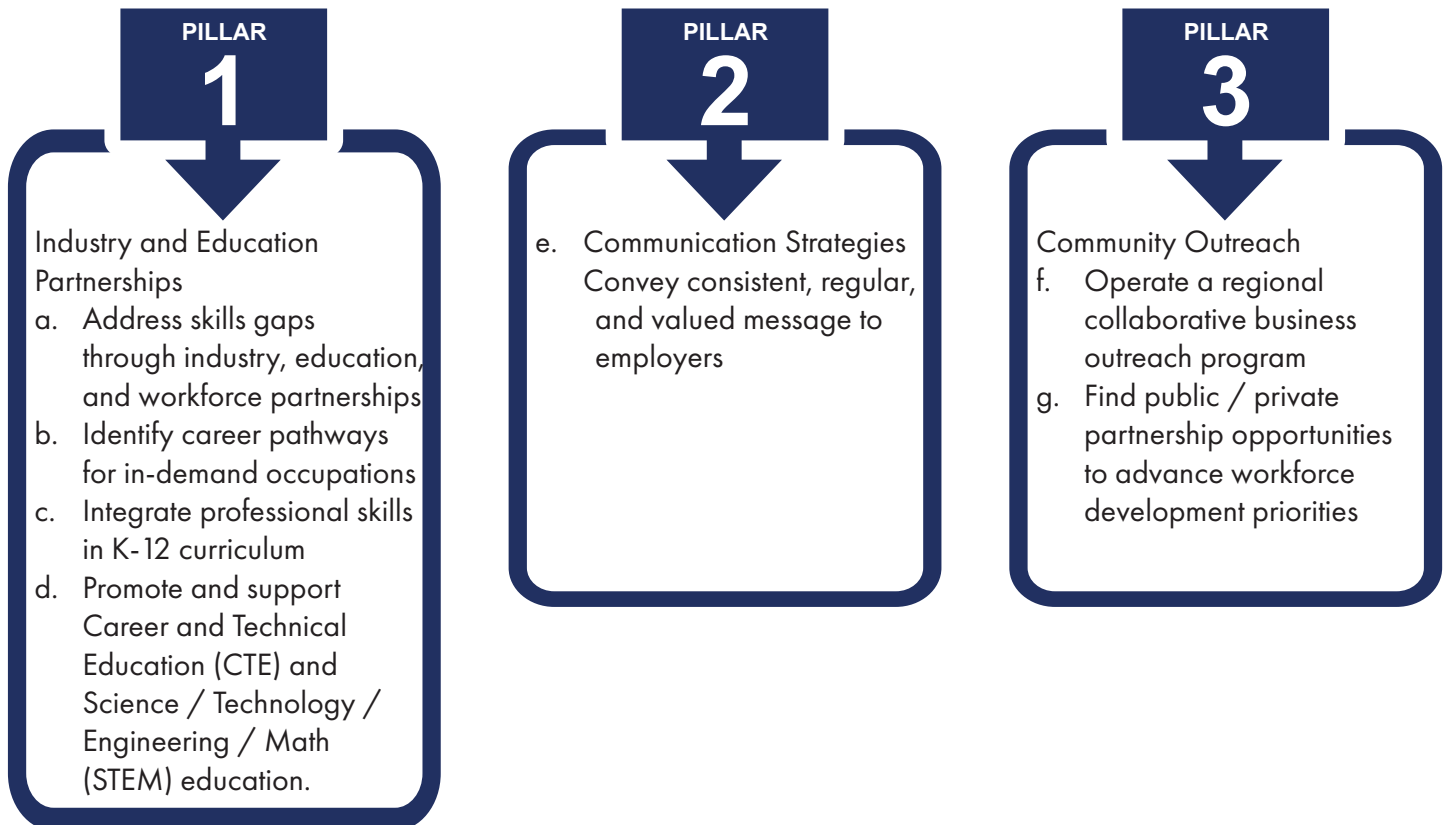


## West Valley Pipeline 2.0 - Intended Outcomes

West Valley Pipeline 2.0 adds three Intended Outcomes, as follows:

- A. Increase high wage employment in the West Valley.
- B. Support current and future industry workforce needs.
- C. Promote West Valley's skilled, educated workforce.
- D. Improve the quality of life for West Valley residents.
- E. Reduce resident commute times for employment.
- F. Reduce workforce barriers specifically around access to adequate transportation modes, availability of childcare options for working families, and affordability of housing options across a range of income levels.
- G. Create pathways for businesses to engage with talent development at the grade-school, middle-school, high-school, and post-secondary levels.
- H. Ensure that viable talent pipelines exist for business expansion in high wage / high growth industries.

## West Valley Pipeline 2.0 Strategies



## 1.A: Address Workforce Gaps Through Industry, Education, and Workforce Partnerships

Why is this important:

- » Businesses must be involved in creating the training and workforce development solutions that work best for them, otherwise the solutions will not be adopted.
- » As businesses adopt new technologies and new methods of operation, this changes the skill-needs of workforce, requiring education and workforce development to adjust to continue to meet business demands.
- » In a workforce market where there are fewer candidates per open position (or even, more open positions than candidates), it is imperative for regional success that candidates and students make informed decisions about career pathways that align to their interests and aptitudes.

Goals:

- Business and industry inform education and workforce partners of their skill needs.
- Education and workforce development partners align service offerings to meet business needs that lead to fewer open positions, and positions filled within shorter time frames.
- Candidates and students have appropriate opportunities for training and guidance that lead to increased wages and increased retention.
- Highly focused and collaborative education and workforce partners to share knowledge of business needs, and to share workforce resource system benefiting both employers and workers.

Expected Outcomes / Metrics:

- Increase the number of businesses across all industries that are engaged in a talent development discussion with at least one Education or Workforce Development partner.
- Increase the percentage of West Valley workforce trained and skilled in industry-relevant occupations.
- Improved Labor Force Participation Rate.

## Action Plan

- Create collaborative industry employer sector partnerships for each targeted industry sector.
- Convene industry employer discussion groups on a regular basis to discuss workforce challenges, and industry-preferred solutions. Challenges may include talent attraction, onboarding, skills gaps, retention, or other issues identified by industry.
- Create a skills-needs survey and encourage West Valley businesses to complete. Ensure confidentiality of participating businesses.
- Share discussion groups and survey data findings with education and workforce partners.
- No less than annually, draft a West Valley Targeted Industry Skills Needs white paper using discussion group findings, survey data, and outside research to post on the WESTMARC Workforce webpage.
- Map existing talent development programs and outcomes from education and workforce development partners, and review with business partners in targeted industries to ensure that these programs continue to meet industry needs.
- Develop Industry, Education, and Workforce Development workgroups to identify solutions to address talent shortages in critical occupations, such as:
  - Elementary and Secondary Teachers (SOC 25-2000)
  - School Counselors and School Career Coaches (SOC 21-1012)
  - Mechanical Maintenance (SOC 49-0000)
  - Construction Trades (SOC 47-0000)
  - Caregivers / Childcare / Senior Care (31-1100, 39-9010)
  - Nurses (29-1140, 29-2060)
- Coordinate with marketing partners to create messages and communications to businesses in targeted industries about talent development programs and services.
- Identify for each targeted industry sector, the entry-level, mid-level, and advanced-level career opportunities with the required skills, education, license/certifications, and experience requirements, as well as entry/mid/advanced wage for each. Validate this information with business partners. Update and refine as needed.
- Develop strategies to fill skills gaps identified by employers and eliminate redundancies and expand capacity among education and workforce development partners where needed.
- Increase the number of strong partnerships between Career and Technical Education (CTE) and local target industry sector businesses.

- Engage these businesses in working with CTE providers and local CTE Advisory Councils on curriculum development relevant to industry demands.
- Recognizing that many traditional workforce management practices that might have been effective in the pre-pandemic environment no longer apply to the current workforce, provide employers with workshops, resource guides, and other training devices to help them understand current best-practices for talent attraction, onboarding, and retention in the post-pandemic environment. Assist West Valley businesses in understanding the emerging priorities of the current workforce:
  - Remote work / workplace flexibility
  - Volunteerism and community engagement opportunities
  - Access to mental health services
- Highlight businesses workforce successes through regularly scheduled Workforce Success panel discussions, encourage West Valley businesses to attend / view the discussions.



## 1.B: Identify Career Pathways for In Demand Occupations

### Why this is important:

- » Career Pathways are series of structured and connected education, training, and support services that enable students and workers to advance over time to better and often higher paying jobs.
- » Career Pathways identify jobs within a career cluster that use similar skills.
- » Increases occupation and industry interest, engagement, and retention.

### Goal:

- An education, training, and workforce network with clearly defined and industry-informed career pathways.
- A more robust pipeline filled with better-trained workers.
- The ability to quickly respond to hiring needs of existing, prospective, and expanding industries with trained workers within a pre-determined timeline.

### Expected Outcomes / Metrics:

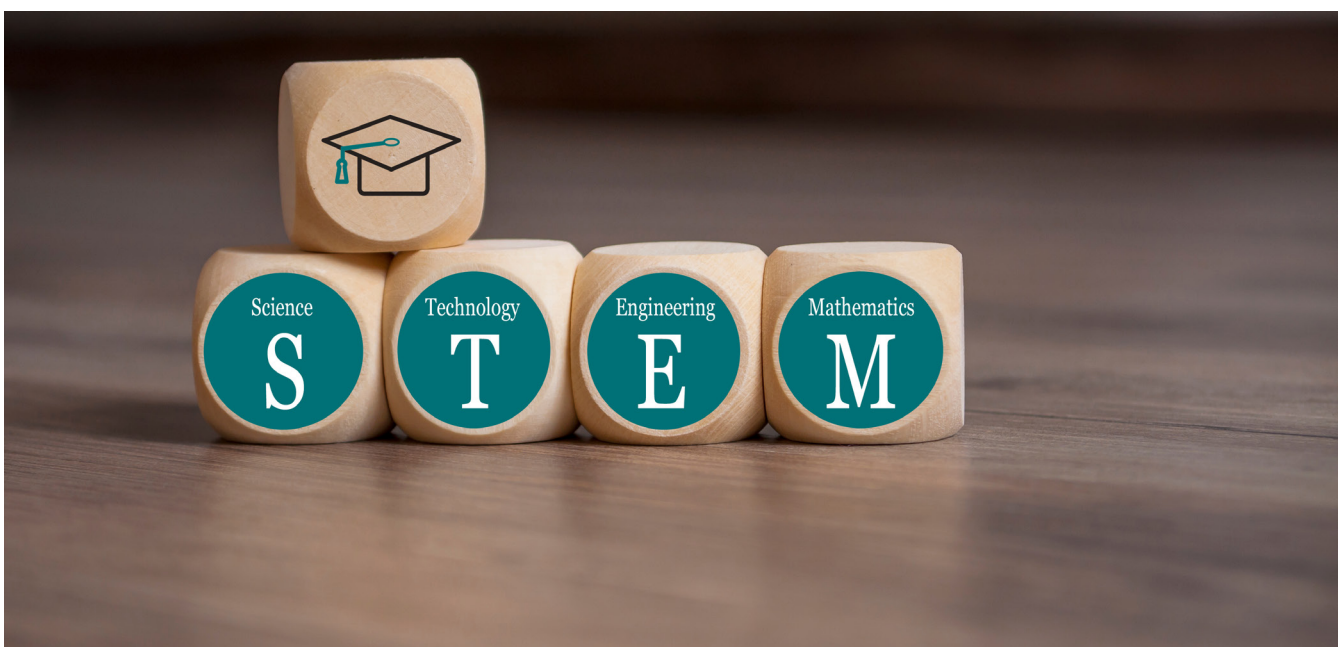
- A student and workforce population with easy-to-understand education and training requirements to receive industry-identified certifications and degrees.
- Industry certified, competency-based career pathways for all target occupations in all industry sectors.
- Clear articulation of pathway entry, exit points, certifications, and supporting resources linked to the local job market and hiring companies.



## Action Plan

- Coordinate with schools, training providers, workforce development agencies, and others to integrate messaging and communications to job and career seekers about local opportunities for career ladders, pipelines, advancement, and wages in each industry sector.
- Leverage new and emerging technologies, including virtual reality and immersive experiences, to share industry-identified career pathways to students and job candidates.
- Identify for each targeted industry sector, the entry-level, mid-level, and advanced-level career opportunities with the required skills, education, license/certifications, and experience requirements, as well as entry/mid/advanced wage for each. Validate this information with business partners. Update and refine as needed.
- Map the possible career progression connections within and across occupations and where occupations fit across multiple industries based on skills learned and experience levels.
- Create easy-to-understand one-page Career Pathway graphics or maps for each targeted occupation in targeted industries. For each occupation show:
  - Schools and training providers, e.g., high school CTE, two- and four-year institutions.
  - Pathways and advancement opportunities by institution (entry level, certificate, degree).
  - Number of annual graduates by certificate/degree.
  - West Valley businesses that hire, average wage, and career advancement opportunities.
- Publish the pathways or maps on the WESTMARC Workforce website.
- Promote the pathways to:
  - Career candidates, students, and parents to help make career and education decisions.
  - Education and training providers to recruit students into the pipeline.
  - Industry to recruit graduates for open positions or internships.
  - Economic development professionals to recruit targeted industries.
- Increase the number of strong partnerships between Career and Technical Education (CTE) and local target industry sector businesses.
- Engage these businesses in working with CTE providers and local CTE Advisory Councils on curriculum development relevant to industry demands.

- Conduct a business survey to understand:
  - What technologies are currently used to enhance workforce,
  - What are the barriers to adopting new technology to enhance workforce, and
  - What are the skills needed to use new technology for workforce enhancement.
- Support STEM education.
- Integrate employer-led Career Exploration activities for grades K-8. These activities include in-person presentations by employers, “day-in-the-life-of-the-industry” videos, immersive virtual reality tours, site visits of businesses, and others.
- Encourage employers to provide paid internships and pay for up-to-date training and technology.
- Engage students through internships, field trips, and job shadowing at employer sites.
- Host teachers, parents, and career counselors at employer sites.
- Promote Pre-Apprenticeship and student Internships in grades 9-12 for targeted industries.
- Create Apprenticeship opportunities for targeted industries, particularly in non-traditional settings (e.g., manufacturing, finance and insurance, health care, technology).
- When appropriate, and with employer guidance, identify Quick Start training programs that result in micro-credentials as qualifications for employment.
- Develop strategies to fill skills gaps, eliminate redundancies, and expand capacity where needed.





## 1.C: Integrate Professional Skills in K-12 Curriculum

### Why this is important:

- » Employers often identify that Professional Skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication, are more important than the technical skills for a given position.

### Goal:

- Professional skills integrated into K-12 education, including Career and Technical Education, in an intentional and measurable manner.
- Students and job candidates are equipped with life, workplace, and leadership skills in-demand by employers.

### Expected Outcomes / Metrics:

- Students, as they complete coursework, can articulate and demonstrate specific critical professional skills.
- Increased career advancement opportunities and retention of workers within businesses.



## Action Plan

- Integrate professional (soft) skills, to include Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Communication, Initiative, Digital Literacy, and Professionalism into K-12 curriculum and through case management of workforce development partners. (See Appendix, "Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidate's Resume.")
- Convene educators and administrators to adopt the philosophy and determine the approach to integrating professional "soft" skills into every part of students' educational path / career candidates' job search.
- Map the different approaches to professional skills assessment/development and identify and share regional best-practices.
- Conduct a funding campaign for corporate sponsorships and community investment to fund acquisition of programs, course materials, professional training, and other resources.
- Through business outreach visits and different messaging platforms, ensure employers are aware of and contributing to the efforts to improve the West Valley's workforce professional skills.
- Encourage employers to refer job candidates, especially those not selected for employment, to a workforce development partner for professional skills assessment and development, and to improve employability skills (resume writing, interview skills, etc.).
- Identify resources to provide Leadership training for West Valley businesses to support upskilling and internal career advancement opportunities.



## **1.D: Promote and Support Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science / Technology / Engineering / Math (STEM) Education**

### **Why this is important:**

- » Robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs lead to higher levels of educational attainment.
- » Students who complete Career and Technical Education can earn industry certifications upon graduation.
- » Students who complete Career and Technical Education can complete some college credits through dual-enrollment programs, thus reducing time and costs for college degrees.
- » Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and is the foundation for the next generation of entrepreneurs and technology advancement.

### **Goal:**

- Increase the number of students enrolled in CTE coursework.
- Greater awareness among students, parents, and community members on the benefits of CTE.
- STEM education programs that prepare students for today's and tomorrow's jobs.

### **Expected Outcomes / Metrics:**

- Increased number of CTE enrollments, particularly in West Valley targeted occupations.
- Higher number of certificates, licenses, and degreed graduates in high demand occupations.
- Increased secondary and post-secondary educational attainment.

## Action Plan

- Engage with the Marketing/Communications Committee to actively promote and educate the value of career and technical education (CTE) via multiple media outlets, e.g., billboards, newsletters, websites, social media, public speaking, and bylined articles. The audiences for this messaging are the public, education professionals, parents, students, and business leaders.
- Track and promote CTE successes, e.g., increased percentage who pursue postsecondary education; how many employed within one year of program completion; documented school attendance; and percentage who graduate on time vs. those outside of CTE.
- Create case studies of career success that include testimonials from students and employers about the benefits of CTE training and jobs. Use the case studies in marketing and on the talent development website page.
- Establish the practice of including presentations by CTE faculty and administrators during freshman orientation and similar events to encourage students and parents to consider a career and technical education.
- Increase the number of strong partnerships between CTE and West Valley target industry sector businesses.
- Engage these businesses in working with CTE providers and local CTE Advisory Councils on curriculum development relevant to industry demands.
- Engage with the SciTech West Valley STEM Hub Coalition to advocate for current and expanding STEM education opportunities and teacher training.
- Support bond measures, grant applications, and other funding resources by helping to create factual rationale for the need for STEM and CTE.
- Document and promote STEM programs to students, parents, employers, and prospective employers in the West Valley region.
- Actively promote Adult Education / Vocational programs to meet target industries' needs.
- Promote education successes through press releases and inclusion in the weekly Workforce Wednesday newsletter.

## 2.E: Convey Consistent, Regular, and Valued Messages to Employers

### Why this is important:

- » Employers often are not aware of regional workforce training or other services.
- » Employers perceive that workforce services are limited to job postings for entry-level positions.
- » An effective communication plan should share not only what services are available, but how the services can benefit employers.

### Goal:

- The West Valley effectively conveys a message of unparalleled customized employer services, including training, employee recruitment, screening, assessments, and placement.
- Enhanced alignment of workforce training and education services with industry needs.
- More effective messaging resulting in more participation from employers.
- A more robust pipeline of skilled workers.

### Expected Outcomes / Metrics:

- Increased use of workforce development services by employers, particularly in targeted industry sectors.

## Action Plan

- Continually update the WESTMARC West Valley Workforce webpage, in particular, the Business Resource Guide.
- Leverage the WESTMARC Workforce Wednesday weekly newsletter to share WESTMARC and partner workforce offerings, including how businesses can access, and key successes.
- Include a Call to Action with contact information and offers of assistance in all messaging.
- Conduct a collaborative review of workforce development services, including agency websites, to identify areas of improvement and enhancement on the WESTMARC Business Resource Guide.
- Enhance target employer messaging by key workforce development resource providers (websites, social media, print).
- Workforce partners to actively promote each other's programs and services.

### 3.F: Operate a Collaborative Business Outreach Program

#### Why this is important:

- » Employers have expressed that there are too many workforce agencies who do not coordinate with each other offering services and support.
- » With so many workforce agencies, employers often do not know whom to contact for specific services or support.
- » An efficient and effective use of resources minimized the time employers need to invest in learning about and taking advantage of these services and support.

#### Goal:

- Workforce development agencies, economic development, and education partners jointly visit local businesses and communicate a coordinated message.
- Workforce development agencies, economic development, and education partners share information learned from local businesses to identify which partners have the resources businesses need.
- Where there are service gaps, workforce development agencies, economic development, and education partners work together to create new service offerings.
- Expanded and more productive outreach that brings value to employers.
- Coordinated messaging and follow-up.
- More efficient and seamless delivery of resources and services to employers.

#### Expected Outcomes / Metrics:

- Increased use of services by employers across the talent development ecosystem.
- Increased outreach to small and mid-sized businesses in West Valley targeted industries.

## Action Plan

- Form a West Valley Workforce Coalition of business outreach representatives.
- Establish a method and protocols for:
  - Conducting visits, making referrals, and sharing information
  - Resources available and delivery systems
  - Messaging and communication strategies
- Identify key employers that may require a joint visit, or a follow-up visit with multiple representatives for a more extensive discussion of specific services or needs.
- Create a services inventory of workforce development providers.
- Publish a simple and concise West Valley Resource Directory that includes all local, regional, state and federal resources related to workforce development. Publish the directory on each partners' website or establish links. Update the names and contact information regularly.
- Create and leverage a West Valley Workforce Workgroup of partners to share their service offerings, what they have learned from employer discussions, and identify and fill service gaps.



### **3.G: Find Public/Private Partnership Opportunities to Advance Workforce Development Priorities**

#### **Why this is important:**

- » In this tight labor market, there are many issues beyond company mission and salary that candidates consider when choosing to apply with, or stay with, a given business. To be successful in this competitive environment, businesses need to identify these challenges and assist in finding solutions.

#### **Goal:**

- Identify and quantify workforce barriers.
- Investigate best-practice solutions from other markets that have addressed workforce barriers.

#### **Expected Outcomes / Metrics:**

- Development of public/private workgroups to address key issues.
- Improved Labor Force Participation Rate, particularly among traditionally underserved demographic groups.

### **Action Plan**

- Create workgroups of business, education partners, workforce development, and government to identify and remove workforce barriers such as:
  - Computers for home use among low-income households
  - Consistent and reliable Wi-Fi connectivity regardless of location
  - Affordable housing across a range of income levels
  - Multiple transportation modes
  - Availability and affordability of childcare services across multiple work schedules
- When appropriate, add specific action points to the WESTMARC Legislative Agenda and lobby the Arizona Legislature for support.
- Ensure that West Valley businesses are aware of and have access to tools such as:
  - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (<https://des.az.gov/services/employment/employer-resources/work-opportunity-program-wotc>)
  - The Federal Bonding Program (<https://des.az.gov/services/employment/employers/federal-bonding-program>)
  - The Employee Retention Credit (<https://www.azcommerce.com/covid-19/financial-resources/employee-retention-credit>)



- Continually monitor sources such as the Arizona Commerce Authority, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the United States Department of Labor, and the United States Department of Education, among others, for additional tax credit and grant opportunities to support West Valley businesses, including small businesses, in targeted industries.
- Assist West Valley businesses in accessing resources created in Federal and State legislation such as the Infrastructure Act, the CHIPS Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, the Build It AZ program, and the Education Economic Commission through the Arizona Department of Education.
- Support West Valley businesses in talent sourcing, onboarding, and retention of international workers.
- Assist West Valley businesses, as necessary, in integrating cross-generational and cultural differences within current workplace environments.
- Assist West Valley businesses, as needed, with Diversity / Equity / Inclusion / Accessibility recruiting and retention strategies. Identify and highlight “best practice” models.



## West Valley Pipeline 2.0 – Next Steps

Workforce Development is constantly evolving. Workforce Development successes creates new opportunities that must be addressed, and as we saw in the five-year implementation of West Valley Pipeline 1.0, local economies are influenced by global factors (e.g., pandemics, wars, population shifts) that are outside of anyone’s control.

For West Valley Pipeline 2.0 to be successful and impactful, we will:

- Continuously evaluate employment, labor, and economic data.
- Continuously track progress towards Action Steps and Strategies.
- Create progress reports on an ongoing basis to share with regional stakeholders.

We need you! Whether you are a West Valley business, an education/training partner across all levels, or a workforce development public or private agency, please join us in supporting our West Valley businesses and West Valley residents. Contact Kevin Dumcum, WESTMARC Director of Regional Workforce Development, at [kdumcum@westmarc.org](mailto:kdumcum@westmarc.org) to discuss how you can plug in to West Valley Pipeline 2.0.



## Partnerships

West Valley Pipeline enjoys the partnership of many West Valley regional stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- **Business / Industry**
  - Aviage Systems
  - Abrazo West
  - AMP
  - AMR
  - APS
  - AZ Industries for the Blind
  - Banner Health
  - Bowman Consulting
  - Charles Schwab
  - Discover
  - Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone
  - Newbridge Business Solutions
  - SRP
  - USAA
  - West Valley Innovation Alliance
  - Western Electrical Contractors Association
  - White Tank Mountains Conservancy
- **Commercial Real Estate and Site Selectors**
  - CBRE
  - CRESA Real Estate
  - Cushman & Wakefield
  - JLL - Jones Lang LaSalle
  - Novo Development
  - Phoenix West Commercial
  - Plaza Companies
  - The Opus Group
- **Local and Regional Economic Development**
  - Arizona Commerce Authority
  - Greater Phoenix Economic Council
  - Maricopa Association of Governments
- City of Avondale
- City of Buckeye
- City of El Mirage
- City of Glendale
- City of Goodyear
- City of Litchfield
- City of Peoria
- City of Phoenix
- City of Surprise
- City of Tolleson
- Town of Gila Bend
- Town of Wickenburg
- Town of Youngtown
- **Post-secondary Education**
  - Arizona State University – West Campus
  - Estrella Mountain Community College
  - Glendale Community College
  - Maricopa Corporate College
  - Grand Canyon University
  - Midwestern University
  - Northern Arizona University
  - Ottawa University
  - University of Arizona Global Campus
- **K-12 Education**
  - Agua Fria Union High SD
  - Buckeye Union High SD
  - Dysart Unified SD
  - Gila Bend Unified SD
  - Glendale Union High SD
  - Littleton Elementary SD
  - Peoria Unified SD
  - Tolleson Union High SD
  - West-MEC
  - Wickenburg Unified SD
- **Workforce Development Partners**
  - Arizona Career Pathways
  - Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity
  - Arizona Registered Apprenticeship Office
  - Arizona State University Leverage AZ
  - Arizona Technology Council
  - ARIZONA@WORK City of Phoenix
  - ARIZONA@WORK Maricopa County
  - AZ Business & Education Coalition
  - AZ Coalition for Military Families
  - Career Connectors
  - Center for the Future of Arizona
  - Chicanos por la Causa
  - Education Forward
  - First Things First
  - Goodwill of Central and Northern Arizona
  - Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation
  - Junior Achievement Inspire
  - Luke Air Force Base
  - Peak to Profit
  - Pipeline AZ
  - SciTech Institute
  - Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
  - US Vets
  - Valley of the Sun United Way
  - West Valley Defense Alliance

# West Valley SWOT Analysis

Survey respondents were asked to list up to three each their opinions about Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats to the West Valley. Top responses were:

STRENGTHS		%
Quality of Life comments		67%
	Collaborative communities	
	Entertainment districts and outdoor recreation	
	Friendly and community-oriented	
Growth comments		66%
	Growth and potential for growth	
	Land availability	
Demographics comments		33%
	Diverse populations	
	Population growth	
Business comments		25%
	Diversity of business and industry	
	Technology focus, including TSMC	

WEAKNESSES		%
Education / Workforce / Workforce Development comments		51%
	Low educational attainment	
	Lack of quality K-12 education	
	Inadequate supply of skilled, trained workers	
	Lack of awareness of employment opportunities	
	Need more business support	
Transportation / Transit comments		47%
	I-10 traffic	
	Lack of public transportation / mass transit	
	Commute times	
Amenities / Quality of Life comments		46%
	Lack of upscale restaurant, retail options	
	Safety / crime rates in certain neighborhoods	
	"Not enough cool places" / lack of amenities for workforce	
Reputation / Perceptions comments		31%
	Water availability	
	Distribution hubs	
	Old / outdated perceptions	

OPPORTUNITIES		%
Amenities / Quality of Life comments		45%
	Entertainment districts / entertainment hubs	
	Tourism, arts, culture	
	Outdoor space / recreation	
Education / Workforce Development comments		42%
	Apprenticeship, internship, mentorship, job training	
	Career pathways integrated between business and education, including CTE	
	Post-secondary education options	
Growth comments		38%
	Business growth	
	Land availability	
	Population growth	
Economic Development comments		36%
	Strategic industry growth / expansion	
	Large companies / corporate campuses / company headquarters moving to the region	
	Foreign Trade Zone	
Jobs comments		24%
	Diverse employment opportunities	
	Career opportunities close to home	
	Small business network	

THREATS		%
Water comments		24%
	Lack of water	
	Water availability	
	National headlines about water	
Transportation/Transit comments		22%
	Lack of mass transit / public transportation	
	Freeway congestion	
	Lack of highway access between points of interest	
Quality of Life comments		20%
	Lack of creativity / sameness across all West Valley cities	
	Lack of cultural distinction	
	Climate change / urban heat island	

# Notes

# Notes

# Notes



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