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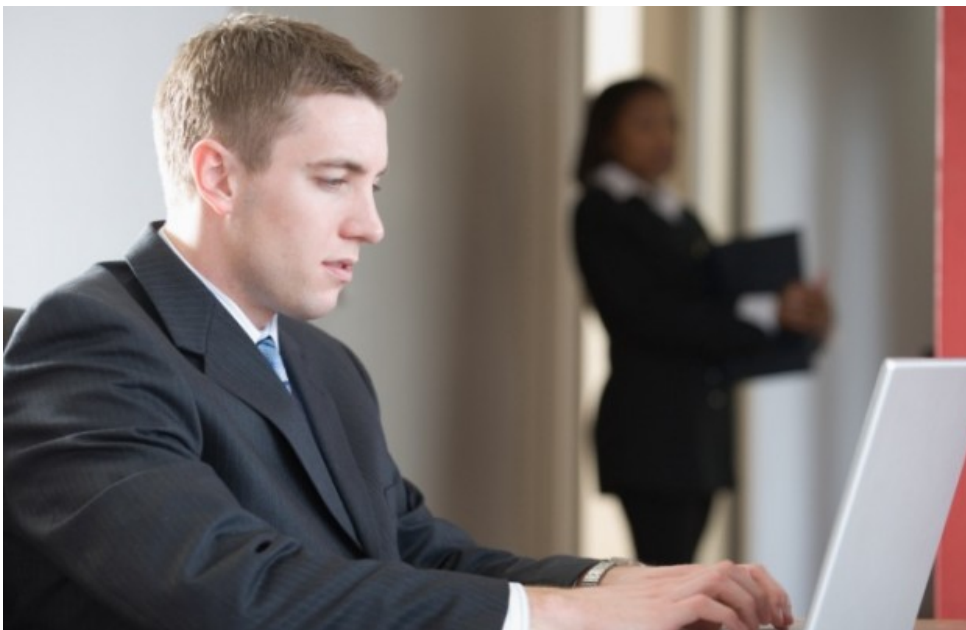


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## ARIZONA@WORK earns \$3 million for youth programs

Posted October 13, 2016 by [Keri Orcutt](#)

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[ARIZONA@WORK](#) received more than \$3 million for its youth programs thanks to a near-perfect performance rating.

ARIZONA@WORK is a network that develops the state's workforce and matches employers with job seekers to strengthen Arizona's economy.

"In the final metrics for Phoenix Youth 2015, we exceeded all youth performance measures except for one, which was attainment of degree or certification but we met it," Kerri Barnes, workforce development

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supervisor for the Community and Economic Development department, said at a development board meeting. "A 'met' means that we met at least 85 percent of the goal or the goal itself."

The Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board requires youth providers to exceed the performance measures in order to receive funds. Youth providers are held accountable for common measures and regulatory youth-related measures.

The youth common measures are placement in employment or education, attainment of degree or certification, and literacy and numeracy gains. The youth-related measures are skill attainment, retention, entered employment, wage and earning increase, and credentials.

"At Mesa Community College, we have students that start their studies but end up dropping out," said Sheila Paul Shedd, associate director at the workforce division with the Maricopa Community Colleges. "We are working with the county counterpart for workforce, ARIZONA@WORK, on a project to engage the students using the youth services resources.

In July 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was enacted to reform the public workforce system. WIOA superseded the Workforce Investment Act and is designed to help job seekers access services to succeed in the labor market. All provisions started to take effect in July 2016.

Funding is dependent on performance, and this year Phoenix received \$11.6 million in funding from WIOA. More than \$3 million of it was allocated to developing youth programs in order to prepare participants for a career, post-secondary education or apprenticeship.

According to the youth program transition section of the WIOA, they are shifting the primary program focus of Title I youth formula programs to support the educational and career success of out-of-school (OSY) youth.

"New legislation is focused on out-of-school youth," said Melissa Magallanez, contract coordinator at the Phoenix Workforce Connection. "This includes youth who dropped out of school or never went, whether that be because of teen pregnancy, homelessness or runaways. Now, 75 percent of money in the youth pod from the government must be allocated to out-of-school youth services."

The Corps Network defines "opportunity youth" as people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor working. Out of the 38.9 million Americans who fall into the 16 – 24 age range, about 6.7 million can be described as opportunity youth.

There are eight contracted youth sites through ARIZONA@WORK, the closest one to downtown Phoenix is Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources, Inc. at 649 N. 6th Ave, Phoenix, AZ, 85003.

"There is a focus on connecting with opportunity youth. They are typically the ones not in school or at career. There's a big push to reach out to them," Shedd said.

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