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Arizona Joins National Network to Reskill Workers

Arizona Is One Of 20 States To Join The Reskilling And Recovery Network, A Collaborative Effort Focused On Helping Reskill & Retrain Americans Who Have Lost Their Jobs Due To COVID-19

PHOENIX, AZ—Arizona is joining a coalition of 20 states, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and the American Association of Community Colleges – with support from Lumina Foundation and the Siemens Foundation – to launch the Reskilling and Recovery Network. The Network will equip Arizonans with the skills they need to get back to work and help communities disproportionately affected by economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With many workers facing uncertainty due to the pandemic, we need a new approach to ensure all Arizonans have the skills and opportunity needed to thrive,” said Governor Ducey. “The Reskilling and Recovery Network will help Arizonans strengthen their professional skills and learn new ones, and it will connect employers with talent across the state. I’m grateful to all our partners working to help Arizonans excel in their professions and return stronger from COVID-19.”

In Arizona, partners in this effort include the Office of Arizona Governor Doug Ducey, Achieve60AZ, Arizona Commerce Authority’s Office of Economic Opportunity, Arizona Community College Coordinating Council, Greater Yuma EDC, Pinal County Economic and Workforce Development Department, The Boeing Company, and Arizona community colleges: Arizona Western College, Maricopa County Community College District, Pima Community College, and Yavapai College.

Experts from the participating organizations will strategize, share tools with each other, and collaborate on technical assistance for virtual activities. Strategies include engaging employers to partner with community colleges to train and hire new employees.

“We have to help people acquire new skills and get the training necessary to adapt to the rapidly changing nature of the workplace,” said Pima Community College Chancellor Lee Lambert. “This is also imperative to help us reach Arizona’s Achieve60AZ goal: that 60 percent of Arizona adults have a postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2030. We only have ten years, and for the sake of Arizona’s citizens and the future of our state, we need to reach that target.”

In June, 10.3 percent of Arizonans were reported to be unemployed, many due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Federal Reserve, almost 40 percent of people in households making less than \$40,000 per year lost a job in March. Lower income workers whose jobs did not lend themselves to telework, women, and communities of color were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic’s economic downturn. The Reskilling and Recovery Network coalition will focus

primarily on helping those groups, and will work to find solutions to close the equity gaps that have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

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About Achieve60AZ: More than 150 organizations in Arizona form Achieve60AZ that is fueled by a community-based effort to ensure Arizona remains competitive through the power of education. Their collective goal is to generate greater awareness of the importance of increasing Arizona's level of educational attainment while building support to improve college entry and completion; boost adult education and training; and fuel a pipeline of competitive talent for Arizona's employers. Achieve60AZ promotes support for the long-term steps needed in college entry and completion, adult education and training, and identifying and closing skills gaps to better prepare our workforce and our state for the future when the majority of jobs in Arizona will require some type of higher education.

For more information, visit: www.achieve60az.com.