

## ADOT hosts successful 2025 DBE and Small Business Transportation Expo focused on workforce development

**MESA, AZ** — The recent Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Small Business Transportation Expo, themed “Paving the Way for DBEs and Small Businesses to Win in 2025,” drew over 450 attendees eager to connect with industry leaders and explore pathways to well-paying, sustainable jobs. The event showcased vital resources, programs and collaborative efforts aimed at strengthening Arizona’s construction workforce and supporting industry growth.

A key highlight was the Workforce Connections panel moderated by Patti Olds, President and CEO of Kuniklo, featuring prominent leaders in workforce development:

- Joann Bueno, State Apprenticeship Program Director, [Arizona Department of Economic Security](#) (AZ DES)
- Tom Cole, Director, [Arizona Registrar of Contractors](#) (AZ ROC)
- Carlos Contreras, Director, [Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity](#) (AZ OEO)
- Tina Samartinean, Administrator, [Employee & Business Development](#) (ADOT)

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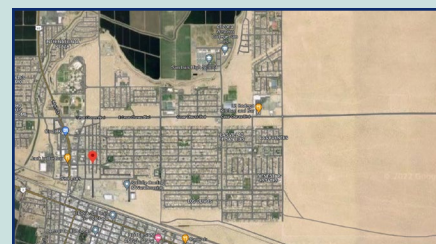


## NEWLY CERTIFIED DBE FIRMS

- [About Awnings LLC](#)
- [Accountable Learning, LLC](#)
- [Arizona BIM & Fabrication, LLC](#)
- [Atlas Strategic Communications](#)
- [COVER ME CLEAN LLC](#)
- [Dallas Aerial Surveys, Inc. DBA: DAS Geospatial](#)
- [H.K. ELECTRICAL, INC.](#)
- [Livingston Rail LLC](#)
- [Liz Transport LLC](#)
- [Nap Bar Inc.](#)
- [Neddy LLC DBA: FORTRESS ASPHALT](#)
- [Oxeon, LLC](#)
- [SAPCORP LLC](#)
- [Serene Faith Logistics, Inc.](#)



Worth every penny



Federal funds coming for San Luis street project



Scottsdale establishes Transportation and Infrastructure Department



Surprise launches Transportation Master Plan process

- ▶ **EVENTS**
- ▶ **OPPORTUNITIES**
- ▶ **AZOE FLYER**

## ADOT hosts successful 2025 DBE and Small Business Transportation Expo focused on workforce development (Cont'd)

During the panel, Contreras emphasized the critical need for skilled workers, citing recent projections indicating Arizona's construction industry requires 20,000 new workers by 2030. He highlighted the [BuildItAZ](#) initiative, which aims to double apprenticeships by 2026 through registered programs supported by over \$2.5 million in grants to nine entities, with a third round of \$3 million funding anticipated in June.

"Workforce development is essential as we build a sustainable future for Arizona's construction industry," Contreras stated.

Samartinean explained ADOT's dual approach to meet workforce challenges: providing entry-level exposure through a [virtual construction academy](#) and supporting new workers with tools, equipment, and incentives. Adding that ADOT fosters collaboration among public entities, contractors, educational institutions and industry partners to create a network of opportunities for emerging workers.

Bueno discussed how the [Arizona Apprenticeship Program](#) bridges the gap between entry-level and advanced workforce development.

"Our mission is to help businesses develop and register apprenticeship programs." She said that "Registered apprenticeships provide valuable training and upskilling opportunities for all, not just union workers. Only 15% are union-created—our programs are accessible to everyone."

She urged businesses to proactively establish apprenticeship programs now to better prepare for future workforce needs.

Cole highlighted the [Arizona Registrar of Contractors](#) role in designing construction-related programs and promoting workforce growth.

"Workforce development is the most critical issue facing our industry," he noted.

Cole said the AZ ROC has participated in more than 85 events this year, engaging directly with young people and industry stakeholders to strengthen connections and promote careers in construction. He emphasized the importance of open communication and collaboration among industry partners.

The 2025 ADOT DBE and Small Business Transportation Expo successfully provided a platform for networking, education and partnership-building. It featured more than 45 exhibit tables, an Owners Panel, matchmaking appointments and three newly added educational sessions, in addition to the Workforce Connections Panel.

For more information about Arizona's workforce development programs, tools and resources, visit the [Workforce Connections Webpage](#). To learn more about ADOT's DBE program, visit <https://azdot.gov/dbe>.





## Worth every penny

### *How to stand behind your pricing without flinching*

When clients push back on your pricing, it can rattle even seasoned business owners. In ADOT's small business world where every proposal counts and margins matter, the pressure to underprice yourself is real. Yet pricing is more than numbers: your value, experience and risk management are on the line.

Here are six strategies, based on real-world scenarios in transportation design and construction, to help you defend your pricing confidently. We even include a script to boost your confidence in a difficult conversation.

#### 1. Lead with value, not price

**Problem:** A city says your firm's traffic engineering fee is higher than others.

**Solution:** You explain "Our firm reduced signal delay by 15% on a similar corridor last year and we met all ADOT submittal deadlines."

**Outcome:** They see that your pricing reflects results, not just hours.

##### **Apply it!**

"We specialize in getting systems online faster and operating smoother, which means fewer complaints and greater public satisfaction."

#### 2. Show the process behind the price

**Problem:** A client questions your price for pavement condition assessments.

**Solution:** You outline the deliverables—full Graphic Information System mapping, Pavement Conditions Index scoring, prioritization recommendations and post-study briefings.

**Outcome:** They realize the scope is comprehensive, not just surface inspection.

##### **Apply it!**

"Our pricing includes every step from field data to actionable recommendations, so you can move right into funding or

programming."

#### 3. Share your expertise—subtly

**Problem:** A general contractor asks why your DBE firm's construction inspection services cost more.

**Solution:** You explain, "Our inspectors have worked on ADOT freeway interchanges and know what to look for before it becomes a punchlist item."

**Outcome:** They understand your rate includes specialized insight.

##### **Apply it!**

"We do not just inspect work, we prevent rework. That helps your team stay ahead of schedule."

#### 4. Use a menu or tiered pricing model

**Problem:** A transit agency has a limited budget for a drainage study.

**Solution:** You offer three levels: basic desktop analysis, intermediate field survey and full hydrologic modeling.

**Outcome:** They select the basic package but see the value in upsizing later.

##### **Apply it!**

"We want to match the scope to your current needs and build trust for the next project."

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## Worth every penny

### *How to stand behind your pricing without flinching (Cont'd)*

#### 5. Compare wisely

**Problem:** A client says another firm quoted less for a bridge design review.

**Solution:** You ask “Are they including constructability comments and traffic control phasing?”

**Outcome:** They realize the cheaper option excludes key risk-mitigating steps.

#### **Apply it!**

“We include what others leave out because your team deserves a complete picture, not surprises in the field.”

#### 6. Stand firm confidently

**Problem:** A recurring client says “We love working with you, but we need a discount.”

**Solution:** You reply “We keep our rates consistent to maintain quality and remain compliant with ADOT audit standards.”

**Outcome:** They respect your position and continue the relationship.

#### **Apply it!**

“Our pricing reflects the standards we uphold and the consistency our clients count on.”

When small business owners in the transportation space lead with value, clarify their process and speak confidently, they shift the conversation from price to impact. Your firm’s work helps move people safely and efficiently. That is a value worth standing behind.



## Federal funds coming for San Luis street project

The City of San Luis has received notice \$25 million in federal funding will be available for the planned Cesar Chavez Boulevard Expansion.

The city has received a \$25 million grant for rural transportation from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Riedel said the funds will not be enough to complete the \$62 million project, but will allow work to begin. The city is working with Arizona's U.S. senators for another \$10 million in federal funds for the project.

City officials say available funds include the \$25 million federal grant, \$33 million in Arizona legislative funds and \$4 million from the city. San Luis has already invested approximately \$10 million in prep work.

The city approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Arizona Department of Transportation in December to carry out the project, which will expand the roadway from two lanes to four.

Riedel expects bidding to be announced in September or October. ([Source](#))



## Scottsdale establishes Transportation and Infrastructure Department

Scottsdale has created a new Transportation and Infrastructure Department—a modernized structure combining capital project management and transportation services into one coordinated team. This reorganization follows the dissolution of the department previously known as Public Works.

This alignment brings together the city's engineers with its transportation team, creating a unified team to plan, design and deliver Scottsdale's critical infrastructure and mobility projects. Previously, these responsibilities were divided between two separate divisions: Capital Project Management and Transportation and Streets.

Alison Tymkiw, city engineer and senior director of the new department, now reports directly to City Manager Greg Caton, reducing two layers of previous management oversight and further accelerating response times and project delivery. The shift reflects a growing trend among public agencies across the country that are adopting integrated models to address today's complex infrastructure and transportation challenges.

The Department will continue to support Scottsdale's long-standing commitment to excellence in transportation planning, construction and capital improvement projects, ensuring the city's infrastructure needs are met now and in the future. ([Source](#))





## Surprise launches Transportation Master Plan process

The City of Surprise has kicked off the process of developing its first Transportation Master Plan to proactively approach planning and designing the city's transportation system by establishing a roadmap for infrastructure improvements in the near term and long term.

The intent of the plan, which is expected to be finalized in summer 2026, is to develop a transportation network that seamlessly connects all parts of the city through a complete, safe and balanced multimodal network.

Public input opportunities are coming soon.

Development of the plan is being led by the city's Transportation Department in partnership with the consultant team of Michael Baker International. The process will include ongoing engagement with a variety of groups including a stakeholder focus group, traffic operations focus group, regional agency partner focus group, the Surprise city council and the community.

View video of the May 20 city council master plan presentation on Surprise TV's [YouTube channel](#). ([Source](#))



## SURPRISE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

# City of Surprise Transportation Master Plan

**\*\*ATTENTION TO ALL FIRMS\*\***

Need help preparing DBE affidavits?  
Please see our tutorial video below:

[Preparing DBE Affidavits](#)



## JUNE

**19**

**ACE: Protect Your Rights Under Arizona's Prompt Pay Acts**

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: Small Giants Learning Lab

5555 E. Van Buren St., Phoenix

**20**

**AZ Water Association: Developing and Applying Emotional Intelligence**

11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Location: RMCI

2602 S. 47th St., Phoenix

**20**

**Valley Partnership: June Friday Morning Breakfast**

7:30 - 9 a.m.

Location: Phoenix Country Club

2901 N. Seventh St., Phoenix

**25**

**AAED: Gold Academy Course - Arizona Taxation, Finance and Incentives**

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Location: Tower at Rio

2323 W. 14th St., Room 515, Tempe

## JULY

**8**

**ACE: Reading Mechanical and Plumbing Plans**

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: Small Giants Learning Lab

5555 E. Van Buren St., Phoenix



## Featured Federal-Aid Projects

### CURRENT OPEN SOLICITATIONS

Due Date	Project Valuation	DBE Goal	Solicitation / Project Number	Type	Project Owner and Description	Contact
6/20/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$41 million	8.72%	040-D-(247)T; F057901C	<a href="#">IFB</a>	ADOT - <b>System Preservation, Flagstaff to Holbrook Highway (I-40) from Two Guns to Dennison.</b> The work consists of removing existing asphaltic concrete by milling and installing new asphaltic concrete/stone matrix asphaltic concrete, bridge deck repairs, sealing bridge deck with methacrylate, pavement marking, signing, replacing guardrail and other related work.	Brandon Campbell, Engineering Specialist, at <a href="mailto:bcampbell2@azdot.gov">bcampbell2@azdot.gov</a> .
7/11/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$17.5 million	3.31%	289-A-(200)T; F057601C	<a href="#">IFB</a>	ADOT - <b>Pavement Rehabilitation, Nogales to Ruby Highway (SR 289) from I-19 to Pena Blanca Lake.</b> The work consists of removing the existing asphaltic concrete surface course and replacing it with new asphaltic concrete followed by hot applied chip seal coat overlay, replacing guardrails and guardrail end terminals, constructing pipe flared end sections, constructing ford wall, replacing pavement markings and other related work.	Ata Zarghami, Engineering Specialist, at <a href="mailto:azarghami2@azdot.gov">azarghami2@azdot.gov</a> .
8/15/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$230 million	7.14%	010-C-(227)T; F033601C; 010-C-(228)T; F033701C	<a href="#">IFB</a>	ADOT - <b>Capacity Additions and Major Widening, Gas Line Road to Dirk Lay Road, Gila River Indian Community.</b> The work consists of adding a third general purpose lane in each direction of the I-10 and constructing a new traffic interchange underpass at Seed Farm Road and other related work.	Ata Zarghami, Engineering Specialist, at <a href="mailto:azarghami2@azdot.gov">azarghami2@azdot.gov</a> .

### External Links:

- [ADOT Current Advertisements](#)
- [ADOT Engineering Advertisements](#)
- [ADOT Public-Private Partnership Initiatives](#)
- [ADOT Advertised Alternative Delivery Projects](#)
- [Bidding Opportunities Around the State](#)

### DBE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

1801 W. Jefferson St., Ste. 101, Phoenix AZ  
602.712.7761  
[DBESupportiveServices@azdot.gov](mailto:DBESupportiveServices@azdot.gov)



## Arizona Microbusiness Loan Program

# Helping Arizona's smallest businesses succeed



### Overview

Small businesses, particularly those with less than five employees known as “microbusinesses,” are the heartbeat of Arizona’s economy. Microbusinesses drive economic development and investment as well as create jobs for thousands across the state. Making funding available to help these microbusinesses grow their businesses will impact individuals, families, and communities across the state.

### Coverage Across Arizona



Find your  
local lending  
partner

Lenders are available to help you today. Microbusiness owners who are interested in applying for a microbusiness loan can directly visit their regional lending partner application page by scanning or clicking the QR code.

### Applicant requirements



Five or fewer employees



Owned and operated  
in Arizona

### Loan funds may be used for:



Operation of the microbusiness,  
including job creation and retention



Working capital



Acquisition or improvement  
of real property



Acquisition of machinery  
and equipment



Refinancing of debt obligations.

## How it works

The State of Arizona has designated \$5 million to be available to Arizona's microbusinesses in the form of loans administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity in partnership with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and non-profit community lending partners across the state.

- Microbusiness loans can range from \$2,000 - \$50,000 per qualified business. Our current regional lending partners include Growth Partners Arizona, Native Community Capital, Community Investment Corporation, Groundswell, Border Financial Resources, and Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization
- CDFI lenders and community non-profit partners will provide loan recipients the financial education and support needed to improve the outcome of each loan.
- Partners like Startup Tucson, Local First Arizona, Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Capital Investment, Navajo Nation State Small Business Credit Initiative, Northern Technology and Business Incubator and others will supplement awarded microbusiness loans by offering financial education and training, business planning and forecasting, accounting, credit counseling and other areas to accompany funding to ensure successful growth and development of microbusinesses loan recipients and deliver positive outcomes for borrowers.
- Visionary state leadership from Arizona's Executive and Legislative branches support and champion public investment designed to facilitate economic growth and development and foster job creation in every corner of the state.

## By the Numbers

### The impact of microbusinesses in Arizona local communities



**Arizona has 85,491 microbusinesses** employing 155,449 people (average 2.1 employees per business).



**Microbusinesses make up 40%** of all businesses in Arizona and employ approximately 5% of the total Arizona workforce.



**The top three counties** with the largest percentage of total employment working at microbusiness establishments are Yavapai (9%), Santa Cruz (8%) and Gila (7%).

### The top three industries with the largest percentage of total employment working at microbusiness establishments



**Professional, scientific and technical services**  
17.3%



**Real estate and rental leasing**  
17.0%



**Other services**  
13.8%

*\*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Q2 2023*