

# ASU, state of Arizona launch initiative to power up the public workforce

**State employees can now access dozens of ASU courses and certificates**

By Samantha Becker, ASU News  
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Arizona's public employees keep the state moving — maintaining infrastructure, supporting families and serving communities.

Through a new initiative from Arizona State University and the state of Arizona, these employees have the opportunity to strengthen key skills and apply them in service to their communities.

This statewide initiative brings together a broad portfolio of professional learning offerings developed by ASU's schools and colleges — spanning business, data analytics and visualization, collaboration, leadership and more — to meet the evolving needs of Arizona's workforce.

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## **Participating ASU schools and colleges**

[College of Integrative Sciences and Arts](#)

[New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences](#)

[Rob Walton College of Global Futures](#)

The collaboration was created in response to employee engagement survey feedback that professional learning and development ranked among employees' top priorities. Data also showed that employer-paid certifications are among the most valued workplace benefits, evidence that continued learning builds both satisfaction and performance in the workplace.

[Thunderbird School of Global Management](#)

[Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions](#)

[W. P. Carey School of Business](#)

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Due to its strong alignment with the needs of Arizona state employees, the program reached capacity just two weeks after launch. More than 1,000 employees expressed interest, and 600 have already enrolled. Additional enrollment will be offered as more space or funding becomes available.

In collaboration with their supervisors, employees were able to choose what fits their goals, such as a short course to sharpen computer application skills or a longer certificate that builds leadership, data and technology expertise. Every option is flexible, practical and available to eligible employees at no cost.

"Arizona's state employees are the heart of public service. This partnership invests in them — helping our workforce strengthen its skills, stay adaptable and continue delivering the best possible service to the people of Arizona," Gov. Katie Hobbs said. "The incredible demand for the program shows how much state employees value high-quality professional development and the opportunity to earn a credential, which will generate a strong return on investment for the state."

## **Preparing Arizona's workforce for the future**

Across industries, work is being reshaped by new technologies, automation and artificial intelligence.

According to the World Economic Forum's 2025 "[Future of Jobs Report](#)," nearly 40% of job skills will change within the next five years, while more than 170 million new roles will emerge globally as others evolve or disappear.

Arizona's public agencies are navigating that same transformation. The ASU-Arizona partnership provides a structured, accessible way for employees to build digital fluency, strengthen leadership and enhance problem-solving skills relevant to their roles in government.

ASU, ranked No. 1 in the nation for innovation by U.S. News & World Report for 11 consecutive years, already has supported more than 1 million learners worldwide through its continuing and professional learning programs.

A leader in workforce development, the [newest Global Employability University Ranking and Survey](#), or GEURS, [again ranked ASU second among public U.S. universities](#) for employable graduates — ahead of UCLA, the University of Michigan and Purdue. That same expertise now supports Arizona's public workforce, offering learning experiences that help employees meet today's challenges while preparing for those ahead.

“As a lifelong Arizonan, I’ve seen firsthand the impact public employees have in every community across our state,” said [Nancy Gonzales](#), executive vice president and university provost. “Arizona will continue to thrive thanks to programs like this one, which ensures that our public employees have opportunities to learn and grow throughout their careers. This partnership reflects ASU’s commitment to transforming the university experience into a lifelong relationship that empowers people at every stage of life.”

## Practical learning with measurable value

Eligible employees were able to participate in one of two program types designed to meet different professional goals:

**Skills-based courses**, focused primarily on digital and project management skills — including areas such as data analytics, agile project management and technology-enabled collaboration — many of which can be completed in eight hours or less.

**Career certificate programs**, providing deeper study in leadership, strategic thinking and data-driven decision-making.

Each offering provides practical, job-relevant tools that employees can apply immediately in their work. Upon completion, participants earn a digital credential from ASU, which can be shared in professional portfolios or annual performance evaluations.

The partnership also includes up to eight keynote sessions throughout the year, led by ASU experts, on leadership, innovation and managing change — giving employees a chance to learn together and share ideas across agencies.

By connecting the state’s workforce goals with ASU’s learning resources, the collaboration strengthens leadership and innovation across public service and supports Arizona’s capacity to adapt, grow and shape what’s next.

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## Learn more

While the program is at capacity, eligible employees can visit [hr.az.gov/asu-careercatalyst-program](https://hr.az.gov/asu-careercatalyst-program) to explore available offerings and join an interest list.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



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