

2017 Annual Conference  
Monday, Sept. 18 – 1:45 – 3:15 p.m.  
Workforce Round Robin  
Read Ahead

### **STEM Skills Gap Solutions: A Nevada Case Study**

**Speaker:** [Barbra Coffee, CEcD, EDFP](#), Director, Economic Development & Tourism, City of Henderson, Henderson, NV

A ready workforce is the key to successfully recruiting new business. For a state like NV, diversification is critical to the health of the economy, and it starts with addressing the skills gaps that exist statewide. Communities across the country and around the world can learn best practices from this case study, helping them solve skills gaps issues of their own. This session will highlight the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation & Technology STEM Workforce Challenge Grant program which encouraged cities like Henderson to create local strategies for raising up talent necessary to attract higher wage industries and put people back to work. These speakers will share how the City of Henderson (in the Las Vegas metro) partnered with a non-traditional education and training provider to create change. Where most workforce development is done in the community college or university setting, the City chose to partner with a San Francisco based workforce accelerator that could bring training into the heart of its downtown redevelopment area and deploy an employer driven training model to actively assist trainees learn new skills to obtain local jobs.

### **Understanding and Solving the Skills Gap**

**Speaker:** [Debra Lyons](#), Principal Strategist, Workforce Engagement, ACT, Iowa City, IA and [Mike Wiggins](#), Retired Executive Vice President, Southwire Company, Carrollton, GA

Business leaders in the United States and around the world consistently report that they struggle to find skilled, qualified workers to support their customers' needs and keep their companies competitive. However, best practices solutions have been local making it hard for companies to systemically adopt and drive the change necessary to close the skills gap. Learn how business leaders and educators that comprise the National Workforce Solutions Advisory Board propose scalable change to close the skills gap and what you as economic developers can do to be a part of that change.

Read the ACT report of "[Understanding and Solving the Skills Gap](#)" prior to the conference.



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### **Who's Missing From Your Workforce? A Solo Work Program Case Study**

**Speaker:** [Savannah Jermance, CEcD](#), Economic Development & Business Relations Manager, City of Rio Rancho, Rio Rancho

As the world's technological revolution continues, employees are less and less geographically tethered for many available jobs. In addition, large segments of the population face disadvantages that often cause them not to participate in a community's workforce. Furthermore, communities likely have pools of talent producing freelance or other independent, nontraditional and unmeasured work that would make them prime candidates to start their own businesses and become solopreneurs—were they provided the right resources. These factors should leave economic development practitioners, particularly those in rural communities, asking how they can engage these segments to grow the size and skillset of their overall workforce as a way to grow their overall economy.

Learn how a consortium of service providers in Grants, New Mexico (2010 U.S. Census population: 9,182) implemented a SoloWork Center aimed at addressing the above issues through three service modules: Remote work training and placement, solopreneurship recruiting/converting and startup, and upskilling disadvantaged populations.

### **Skills in the Driver Seat: Winning Deals through Workforce**

**Speaker:** [Joel Simon](#), Vice President, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Chicago, IL

Increasingly, business attraction, retention and expansion decisions rest on a community's ability to demonstrate that they have a ready pool of capable workers, as well as a dynamic talent development system that can continue to provide workers who meet the skill needs of ever-evolving industries. Skilled workers, however, can't be created out of nothing. Economic developers who successfully compete on skills and skill development are those who understand and can leverage their human capital assets and who can align schools and training resources with industry needs. Learn techniques to ensure that your skills development partners and programs are a key element of your economic development strategy and deal tool kit.