



APPROVED Minutes
Increased Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities
Council Subcommittee
Mar. 28, 2025

Minutes of the Increased Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities Council Subcommittee meeting held on Mar. 28, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Hybrid Meeting - Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th St., and virtually through Microsoft Teams.

Members Present:

Councilmember Berdetta Hodge – Chair
Mayor Corey Woods – Subcommittee Member

City Staff Present:

Greg Ruiz, Chief Deputy City Manager
Shawn Wagner, Deputy Community Services Director
Mary Mezey, Deputy Human Services Director
Eric Anderson, City Attorney
Craig Hayton, Community Services Director
Erin Kirkpatrick, Community Services Manager
Tanya Chavez, Chief of Staff
Mariana Peña, Mayor's Assistant
Vanessa Lopez, Council Assistant

Stakeholders:

Amanda Steele
Brenda Walsh
Genevieve Vega
Jenniffer Jarvis
Amy Pedotto
Jody Hernandez

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

No public appearances.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of the Jan. 24, 2025 & Feb. 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Hodge motioned for approval of the Jan. 24, 2025 and Feb. 21, 2025, subcommittee meeting minutes, seconded by Mayor Woods. Unanimous vote to approve.

Agenda Item 3 – Presentation from the Arizona Association of People Supporting Employment First (AZAPSE)

Jules Hyde (President) and Sedona Levy (Vice President) of the Arizona Chapter of the Association of People Supporting Employment First (AZAPSE) presented on their organization's mission to expand opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities, guided by an Employment First philosophy.

Agenda Item 4 – Review of subcommittee meeting decorum and mission

Councilmember Hodge reviewed the subcommittee's purpose, which is to explore strategies for enhancing the City of Tempe's advocacy efforts and support systems for youth with disabilities. She emphasized that the focus is on fostering meaningful partnerships, identifying opportunities for improvement, and ensuring all youth in the community have access to the necessary resources and support to succeed. The initiative is designed to improve outcomes and expand opportunities for Tempe's youth with disabilities through collaboration and shared solutions. Councilmember Hodge also clarified that the effort is not intended to assign blame or create divisions between the city and school districts, but rather to promote a spirit of partnership aimed at better serving the community's youth.

Clarification of Subcommittee Scope

This subcommittee is not:

- A forum for placing blame or criticizing specific organizations or entities.
- A replacement for school district services, nor an attempt to assume their responsibilities or highlight deficiencies in school systems.
- A platform for addressing personal grievances; instead, it is a space to pursue broader, community-focused solutions.

Meeting Decorum and Expectations

To ensure that meetings are respectful, efficient, and productive, all participants are expected to:

- Raise their hand and wait to be recognized before speaking to maintain orderly and inclusive dialogue.
- Remain focused on the subcommittee's mission and adopt a solutions-oriented mindset.
- Engage in respectful, inclusive conversations that value diverse perspectives.
- Avoid negative or divisive language that could hinder progress and collaboration.
- Strive for consensus and seek common ground whenever possible.

Agenda Item 5 – Revisit Goal-Setting Priorities

The subcommittee reviewed the list established in the first subcommittee meeting and will bring back suggestions to a future meeting.

A few notable updates:

1. **Family Advocate:** Councilmember Hodge provided an update following her attendance at the NLC Congressional Conference in March 2025, held in Washington, D.C. During the trip, she met with state representatives and the City of Tempe's federal lobbyist firm, Ballard Spahr. Based on those discussions, it was confirmed that there are currently no available state or federal funds to support the hiring of a Family Advocate.
2. **Community Training:** To date, the subcommittee has received presentations from the following City departments and divisions regarding existing employee training related to communication and programming with youth with disabilities and their families: Park

Rangers, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Parks & Recreation, Tempe Police Department, Tempe Fire & Medical Rescue, Wellbeing & Empowerment, Social Services, Community Partnerships, and Housing Services. These presentations also highlighted areas where current training efforts could be enhanced or expanded.

Agenda Item 6 – Review Resource Guide

A draft of the resource guide, *Tempe-based Services for those with Disabilities*, was reviewed. Stakeholders will return with feedback and suggestions at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items (Councilmembers Only)

During the open discussion, stakeholders requested the following future agenda items: a revisit of the resource guide and invitations for representatives from the Department of Education and the Tempe Chamber of Commerce to attend.

For the May/June meetings, suggested agenda items include meetings with school districts and charter schools, Jonathan Shuffield (City of Tempe Government Relations Director), legislators, and Denise Resnick (First Place).

Meeting adjourned at 2:01 p.m.

Prepared by: Vanessa Lopez, Council Assistant, (480) 350-8597

Reviewed by: Tanya Chavez, Mayor and Council Chief of Staff, (480) 858-2215

Arizona APSE – Advancing Employment First



Employment First
Employment for All

Empowering Inclusive Employment Opportunities

About APSE & Arizona APSE

The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) is the only national membership organization advocating for **full workplace inclusion**



Arizona APSE was founded in 2017 to drive inclusive workforce initiatives across the state



Goal: Increase employment opportunities for **youths and adults with disabilities**



What is employment first philosophy

- **Presumption of Employability**
- **Integrated Employment**
- **Competitive Wages**
- **Person-Centered Approach**
- **Self-Determination**
- **System Change**
- **Community Integration**



Key Barriers to Employment

- **Limited access** to early job experiences & internships
- **Lack of employer awareness** about inclusive hiring practices
- **Insufficient transition services** from school to work
- **Need for workplace quality supports** to ensure success

How APSE Can Support This Initiative

Direct connections to supervisors in both DDD and VR

Members experience- APSE members shared passion for the mission

Provide recourses and best practices on disability-inclusive hiring practices

Provide resources & best practices for workforce development programs

Offer CESP™ certification for employment professionals

Advocate for Employment First policies

Connect to an extensive network of state offices, providers, employers & self advocates

**Call to
Action – Get
Involved!**

Please visit us
at
AZAPSE.ORG

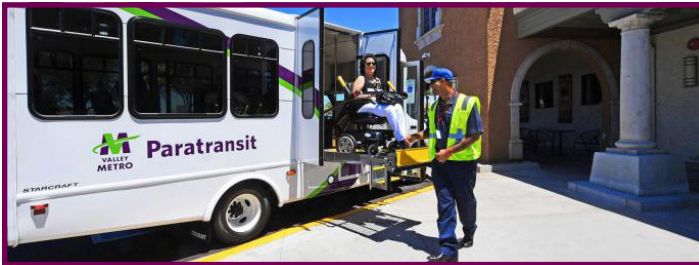
Thank you



Tempe-based Services for those with Disabilities

The City of Tempe, nonprofits and community groups offer a range of resources for all residents. Check this guide for a list of available programs and services.

City of Tempe



Transit and Paratransit Services

Tempe is committed to providing community members with safe, convenient and comfortable transit service that is accessible to and usable by all. Every transit vehicle and rail station in Tempe complies with the requirements of the ADA and are designed to be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. And for kids ages 6 to 18, the Youth Transit Pass Program allows them to ride all bus and rail for free.

In addition, the City of Tempe is part of Valley Metro's Paratransit network, providing door-to-door and curb-to-curb service for riders who, because of a disability, are unable to use the bus and rail service for some or all of their trips. This ADA Paratransit Ride Guide describes the Valley Metro programs and services that are available to riders with disabilities.

City of Tempe Adaptive Recreation

Tempe's Adaptive Recreation program offers inclusive ways to recreate for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Offerings include the LEAP After School Program, Special Olympics, Buddy Bowling Unified Bowling League, Adaptive Skateboarding and yoga classes, summer and school break camps, and monthly social activities like dances, bingo and community-based outings. Learn more at tempe.gov/adaptive.

CARE 7 Youth Specialists

City of Tempe Youth Specialists are available at no cost to students and their families on all Tempe Union High School District campuses and several Tempe Elementary School District campuses. These specialists provide social and emotional support to all students who may be struggling with stress, anger, depression, anxiety, conflict resolution and life skills. Youth Specialists are part of CARE 7, the city's crisis response program, and have direct access to resource coordination, long-term follow-up and basic need items. CARE 7 is a program of Tempe's Community Health and Human Services Department. Find Youth Specialists at tempe.gov/CARE7.

College Connect

Few things are more important - or more overwhelming - than navigating the process of college and post-secondary education opportunities. Tempe's College Connect program makes it easy, with free resources that provide everything students, families and caregivers need to build an achievable plan. Get answers about school options, career paths, financial aid and more through virtual workshops and programming. College Connect is a program of Tempe's Community Health and Human Services Department. Learn more at tempe.gov/CollegeConnect.

Arizona@Work

ARIZONA@WORK and the City of Tempe partner to serve job seekers of all backgrounds, all skill levels and all ages. Young adults can access workforce services that include resume assistance, access to job leads, career exploration, assistance with resources and more. Workforce development services are offered through Tempe's Community Health and Human Services Department. Learn more at tempe.gov/employment.

Tempe schools

Kyrene School District

The Exceptional Student Services department commits to improving outcomes for students with and without disabilities by providing systems of support, ensuring inclusive classroom environments, and promoting student independence. The district offers a continuum of services to students, along with a variety of service delivery options. Teams begin discussions with the belief and expectation that students receive services in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible.



Tempe Elementary School District

Tempe Elementary District Special Education supports the overall function of special education and related services through the Tempe Elementary District. Tempe Elementary Early Child Find supports children age 3-5 suspected of having a disability. Families can sign up for a developmental screening. Scan the QR code to learn more.



Tempe Union High School District

The Student Services Department/Special Education supports students with disabilities who are eligible under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Student Services Department provides an array of individualized and collective supports, services, and

resources to students, families, and school personnel to help all students achieve readiness in career, college, and life. Find special education parent resources by scanning the QR code.



Scan for social and emotional wellness resources.

Nonprofit community

TCC Threadz Teen Clothes Closet

Free resource for middle and high school students who live in or attend school in Tempe. All three locations offer clothing, personal hygiene products, and school supplies free of charge. Learn more at tempecommunitycouncil.org/threadz

Tempe Community Council

Tempe Community Council (TCC) administers a grants program for nonprofits each year with City of Tempe funding. The program has supported many local nonprofits serving youth with disabilities and their families. See a list below of helpful nonprofit resources and learn more about TCC at tempecommunitycouncil.org.

Ability360

This program offers persons with all types of disabilities (physical, cognitive, and sensory) opportunities to meet new people, reduce depression and isolation, and enhance community involvement. Each person is assisted in developing healthy relationships and interpersonal skills, gaining self-confidence, reducing stress, improving social and communication skills. ability360.org

Advocacy31nine

Educational Support for Foster Youth with Disabilities. Advocate for children in foster care through training caregivers, educational advocacy, and system change. advocacy31nine.org

Best Buddies International

Provides opportunities for friendship and leadership development for students with and without intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD). bestbuddies.org



Civitan Foundation

To provide our communities an accessible, safe, and affordable environment while delivering superior life experiences to enhance the quality of life of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Providing media, the arts, technology, culinary & catering, and sports/health education and activities. civitanfoundationaz.com

Higher Octave

Provide music therapy classes to empower caregivers to understand their child's developmental stages and promote social and literacy development. Provide music therapy classes to empower caregivers to understand their child's developmental stages and promote social and literacy



development. higheroctave.com

Raising Special Kids

Offer Family Support Specialists to families of children with disabilities to support them in navigating the complex education and health care systems to secure the resources they need. raisingspecialkids.org

TCH

People with developmental disabilities are provided the opportunity to learn employment skills and earn a paycheck. We have also funded the Music Therapy day program that is designed to meet everyone's unique needs while promoting independence, socialization, and participation in group work. tch-az.com



The ARC of Tempe

Participants will have the opportunity to learn in-person or adapt to the virtual world of learning and socializing through this program which includes social skills, cooking classes, modified Zumba, healthy mental health classes and virtual dance parties. thearcoftempe.org

Other resources:

Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities

Families can apply for services and support outside of school through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. des.az.gov/ddd.

Arizona Early Intervention Program

Arizona's statewide interagency system of support for families of infants and toddlers, birth-2 years of age with developmental disabilities. des.az.gov/azeip

Increased Advocacy for Tempe Youth with Disabilities Council Subcommittee

Meeting Recaps

Meeting Dates:	Meeting Recap:
Meeting #1 November 8, 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed Open Meeting Law. 2. Reviewed the Subcommittee Mission. 3. Discussed general ideas for goal-setting initiatives. 4. Stakeholders identified specific areas within the city from which they wanted feedback on training offerings.
Meeting #2 December 13, 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Park Ranger Training Update: Park Ranger Supervisor Spykes provided an overview of the current city training programs for Park Rangers, highlighting the use of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training in the curriculum. 2. ADA Initiatives and Training: Dr. Humes and Monique Perry from the City of Tempe’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department shared updates on the ADA Action Plan, ongoing ADA training development, and upcoming plans for a community survey focused on disability inclusion. 3. Parks & Recreation Training and Programs: The Parks & Recreation department reported on employee training efforts, including IBCCES certification programs and updates on the LEAP After-School Program.
Meeting #3 January 24, 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tempe Police Department Training Overview: School Resource Officer (SRO) Amy Pfeifer provided an update on the current training programs for the Tempe Police Department and outlined plans for future curriculum development. 2. Tempe Fire Medical Rescue Training Update: Chief Bailey presented an overview of the training programs for Tempe Fire Medical Rescue.
Meeting #4 February 21, 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Received an update on training and resources for youth with disabilities and their families from the City’s Wellbeing & Empowerment, Social Services, Community Partnerships, and Housing Services departments. 2. Reviewed the initial draft of the resource guide.
Meeting #5 March 28, 2025	

Goals from Meeting #1

- 1. Family Advocate**
- 2. Transition Services**
- 3. Community Training**
 - a. Training aimed at increasing understanding of neurodivergent children and those with disabilities.
 - b. Target audiences for the training include the city, school districts, after-school programs, parents, and the community at large.
 - c. Tailored training for businesses interested in employing youth with disabilities.
 - d. Exploring existing training for general education teachers on students with disabilities.
 - e. Day Treatment for Adults (DTA) programs focused on independent living, skills, training, and socialization.
 - f. Exploring ways to encourage staff participation in training.
 - g. The city could explore funding for “Best Practices” training.
- 4. Clarifying “Resources” in the Mission Statement**
 - a. Identifying key resources to partner with for developing training, such as Raising Special Kids (RSK), Southwest Human Development, and City of Tempe Community Services (Kid Zone).
 - b. Discussing how to make navigating available resources more transparent.
 - c. Considering whether the city can administer a survey to assess the number of youths requiring specialized services.
 - d. Councilmember Hodge noted the importance of collaborating with the City’s Commission on Disability Concerns and staying aligned with their work.
 - e. Councilmember Hodge expressed interest in connecting with charter and private schools regarding services for youth with disabilities and how to reach underserved populations.
 - f. Discussing the possibility of schools sharing data to help assess the community’s need for a family advocate and determining how many advocates would be necessary to make a meaningful impact.
- 5. Policy Evaluation**