

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

March 4, 2025

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the boardroom at 120 North Center Street, on March 4, 2025, at 7:32 a.m.

**BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT**

Richard Blake  
Mark Drayna  
Kurt D. Ferstl  
Michelle Genereux  
Charles Gregory  
Amanda Kay  
Frank Sanders  
Laura Snow

**BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF PRESENT**

Jaye O'Donnell  
Maribeth Smith  
Rob Stirling  
Jack Vincent

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sally Harrison  
Sonny Cave  
Jennifer Zonneveld\*

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mayor Freeman (Excused)  
Chris Brady (Excused)  
Ed Carr (Excused)  
Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh (Excused)

**GUESTS**

Terry Madeksza  
Kelley Keffer  
Chris Molnar

(\*Participated in the meeting via video conference equipment)

**1. Call meeting to order.**

Vice Chair Michelle Genereux called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Vice Chair Genereux excused Board member Ferstl from the beginning of the meeting; he arrived at 7:34 a.m.

**2. Items from Citizens Present.**

There were no items from citizens present.

**3. Approval of minutes from February 4, 2025, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting.**

It was moved by Board member Amanda Kay, seconded by Board member Mark Drayna, that the February 4, 2025, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting minutes be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Blake-Drayna-Genereux-Gregory-Kay-Sanders-Snow

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Ferstl

Chairperson Zonneveld declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

4. Election of Chair & Vice-Chair through FY25-26.

Board member Laura Snow nominated Michelle Genereux as Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board through FY25-26. Board member Amanda Kay seconded the nomination.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Blake-Drayna-Ferstl-Genereux-Gregory-Kay-Sanders-Snow

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Vice Chair Genereux declared the motion carried unanimously.

Board member Laura Snow nominated Kurt Ferstl as Vice Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board through FY25-26. Board member Rick Blake seconded the nomination.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Blake-Drayna-Ferstl-Genereux-Gregory-Kay-Sanders-Snow

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Vice Chair Genereux declared the motion carried unanimously.

5. Hear a presentation on the Downtown Mesa Association, followed by a discussion.

Terry Madeksza, President and Executive Director, of the Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) displayed a presentation for the non-profit organization, which is a separate entity from the city. Their mission and vision were discussed, emphasizing a focus on creating an engaging and memorable visitor experience, which supports the economic vitality of Downtown Mesa. DMA is funded by a taxing district voted on by property owners to manage increased activity inside a defined geographic boundary – Country Club Dr to the west, Mesa Drive to the east, University Drive to the north, and Broadway Road to the south. They fund programs and services above and beyond general municipal services, including cleaning, litter removal, and event promotion. DMA works with approximately 400 ground-floor businesses and 200 property owners to ensure a clean, attractive, and vibrant downtown. Governance of DMA includes an executive committee and a property owner board, where decisions are reviewed monthly. (See pages 1 - 4 in Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Board member Laura Snow, Ms. Madeksza replied that DMA does not have a membership program but collaborates with partner organizations. She also provided details on how property assessments are structured by zones, with Zone 1 and 2 receiving the majority of services due to higher density and more significant impact.

Key signature events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Haunting on Main Street, BBQ Classic, Sunset Markets, Merry Main Street, Menorah Lighting, Noon Years Eve, and the Baseball Block Party were highlighted as critical to attracting families and encouraging spending in downtown businesses. Ms. Madeksza emphasized the uniqueness of these events, specifically Noon Years Eve, and their potential to become signature events for Mesa. (See pages 5 - 12 in Attachment 1)

Ms. Madeksza reviewed DMA's priorities for 2024/2025 which included marketing and business development, operational improvements, and advocacy. She also encouraged board members to engage with DMA via their newsletter and social media. (See pages 13-15 in Attachment 1)

6. Hear a presentation on Mesa Business Builder, followed by a discussion.

Project Manager Kelley Keffer, with the City of Mesa Office of Economic Development, displayed a presentation on Mesa Business Builder (MBB), a strategic initiative to enhance small business competitiveness and growth in Mesa. MBB's work has expanded since its inception in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping businesses with rent and utilities relief, training programs, and more. The current initiative offers programs and services in three key areas: information and communications, education and training, and specialty spaces. The Mesa Business Builder website provides easy access to services and programs, the Mesa Business Resource Guide connects businesses to various programs and services, The Business Advocate newsletter reaches 9,000 subscribers with a 47% open rate, and the Mesa Business Builder podcast offers advice for navigating small business and entrepreneurship. The education and training umbrella includes the Mesa Business Builder Small Business Assistance Program, Mesa HUUB, and Mesa Business Builder Educates U, which partners with Mesa Community College to offer certificate programs. The Mesa HUUB digital support platform provides free access to 950 businesses, featuring a learning library, grant opportunities, events calendar, and community board. The specialty spaces include LaunchPoint, a small business incubator, and Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios, which provides resources, tools, and equipment for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Ms. Keffer emphasized that MBB collaborates with local organizations such as Local First, the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, and the East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to provide programming and services. (See pages 1 - 9 in Attachment 2)

Project Manager Chris Molnar, with the City of Mesa Office of Economic Development, highlighted the various amenities and opportunities available for small business owners and entrepreneurs at LaunchPoint. The facility includes open collaborative areas, office spaces, classrooms, meeting spaces as well as wet and dry labs. LaunchPoint has been home to successful businesses such as Canyon GBS, Data Biologics, bmseed, and Urbix Resources. Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios, a 17,000-square-foot facility, opened in May 2024 and provides a state-of-the-art space for small businesses, including a podcast studio, AR/VR studio, and digital development zones. The Studios' impact fiscal year-to-date includes 39 MBB workshops, 206 events, and 120 tours. Upcoming initiatives include a marketing social media campaign, a video production training series, tech literacy sessions, an AR/VR and AI 6-month series and digital bootcamp development, and a one-year anniversary celebration featuring networking events, workshops, and guest speakers. (See pages 10 - 17 in Attachment 2)

Ms. Keffer shared MBB upcoming programming and encouraged board members to share information with their networks about these programs and services, attend events to meet local entrepreneurs, and to consider assisting with sponsorships for the Mesa Pitch competition. (See pages 18 - 20 in Attachment 2)

7. Economic Development Director's current events summary including conferences attended.

Economic Development Director Jaye O'Donnell shared that the Mesa City Council appointed Scott Butler as the new City Manager effective June 1, 2025. The recruitment of two deputy economic development director positions is ongoing. Ms. O'Donnell highlighted her recent attendance at the International

Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Leadership Summit in Washington, DC, as well as staff attendance at the upcoming Site Selectors Guild Annual Conference in Orlando, FL.

8. Board discussion to assess how recent federal policy changes may affect Mesa's business community and suggest potential economic development response strategies.

Board member Snow proposed creating a framework/template to assess the effects of recent federal policy changes, such as tariffs, funding freezes, and immigration reform, on key Mesa industries. Her background is in healthcare and tariffs on imports could increase the cost of medical supplies, ultimately decreasing hospital margins and driving up the cost of care. Ms. Snow felt it was incumbent of the board to understand what impact these changes may have on the business community's job and revenue growth.

Board member Cave expressed the importance of scenario planning, but acknowledged uncertainty would make it difficult. Board member Gregory commented on educational institutions' dependence upon Pell Grants and medical research funding through the National Institutes of Health.

Economic Development Director O'Donnell appreciated the opportunity to begin a conversation around the potential impacts on Mesa's business community and noted this would be a longer-term discussion.

Board member Snow will develop a high-level framework/template for analyzing impacts across different industry sectors for discussion at the next Board meeting.

9. Introduction of new business to be discussed at a future meeting.

No new business was introduced.

10. Schedule of meetings.

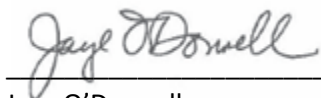
The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2025.

11. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Submitted by:



Jaye O'Donnell  
Economic Development Director

# DOWNTOWN MESA ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Presented to:

Economic Development Advisory Board

March 4, 2025



# roduction

## What is the DMA?

A non-profit organization formed in 1985 to deliver enhanced services, increase economic growth and champion downtown as a place to live, invest, spend time and enjoy.

## Mission

We inspire those around us to celebrate local businesses, advance downtown Mesa as a destination and create moments of joy.

## Vision

Downtown Mesa is where connection sparks, community thrives and unique experiences are made.



- Taxing district voted on by property owners to manage increased activity inside a legally defined geographic boundary

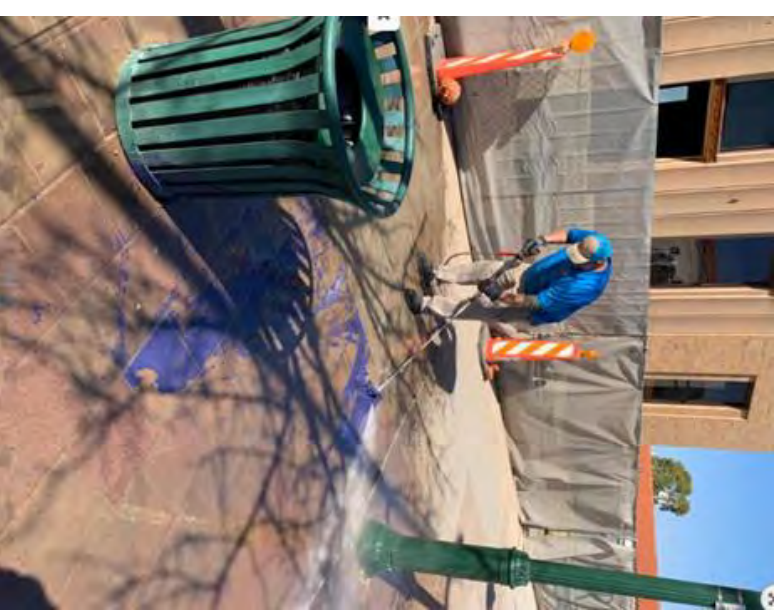
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# Introduction

- Types of Enhanced Services

- Clean Team Ambassadors – remove litter and graffiti, sweep sidewalks, empty trash cans
- Marketing & communications
- Events and promotions
- Support downtown businesses and business development
- Advocate for catalytic projects and policy action as appropriate
- Advance walkability, experience, placemaking
- Parking management and enforcement





# Signature Events

## Easter

- 3,500+ visitors throughout the event
- 16,000+ Easter eggs hidden in the Yard and at Main Street businesses
- 15+ businesses participated in the egg hunt
- Free activities, arts and crafts, Easter Bunny photos, and interactive entertainment along Main Street



# Signature Events

## Haunting on Main Street

- 5,000+ visitors throughout the day
- 30 merchant & museum trick-or-treat stations
- Distributed over 10,000 pieces of candy to participants
- Continued Window Décor Contest, added participating businesses





# Signature Events

## BBQ Classic

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual barbeque competition
- 3,500+ attendees
- Award-winning pitmasters from around the region
- All-ages, food trucks, barbeque, live music



# Signature Events

## Sunset Markets

- Monthly evening market with artisans, food and live music
- Attracts residents and downtown employees
- 30+ vendors





# Signature Events

## Merry Main Street

- Holiday night market on Main & Macdonald
- 40+ vendors
- 10,000+ attended first weekend
- Princess parties
- Cookies & Cocoa



# Signature Events

## Menorah Lighting

- Part of Merry Main Street
- Beloved tradition bringing hundreds into downtown
- Led by Rabbi Blotner





# Signature Events

## Noon Years Eve

- Inaugural event
- Free, family friendly with crafts, live music, food trucks
- Countdown to 12 noon includes Mesa's own Diving Lady and a colorful fireworks show
- Sparkling apple cider toast for a memorable new year

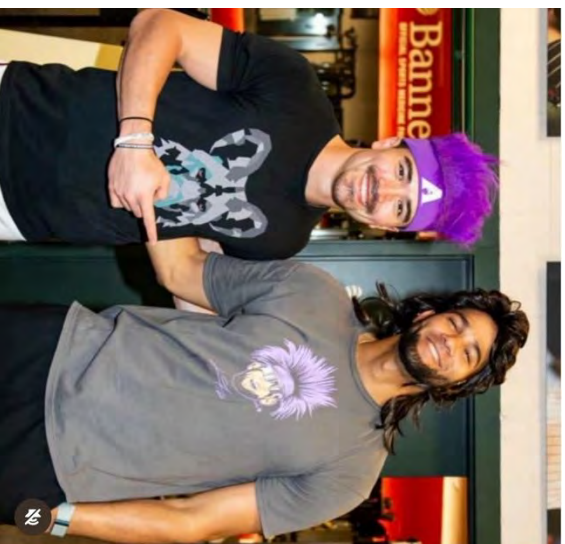




# Signature Events

## Baseball Block Party

- 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event, free
- Celebration of spring training and baseball
- Inflatables, crafts, live music, giveaways, look alike contest
- VIPs including Mayor, Councilmember Duff, Baxter, Sparky



# PRIORITIES – 2024 / 2025

## Marketing & Business Engagement

- Broker Tour in partnership with City in Spring 2025
- Collect information on each business downtown (restaurant/bar, service providers, residential buildings)
- Create Welcome Packets for new businesses and new residents
- Support retail recruitment efforts and business-to-business collaboration
- Offer a robust year-round event schedule
- Lead a collaborative marketing / PR effort to tell the story of downtown as a premier destination and a place to live, work, learn, play and invest.

## Operations

- Create new deployment, and expectations – enhance service delivery
- Enhance beautification throughout downtown – trees / shade, public art, seating, etc.
- Add parking enforcement capabilities & identify potential for additional parking

## Advocacy

- Participate with retail, micromobility and convention center studies
- Identify opportunities to improve connectivity, wayfinding, parking signage
- Replace damaged and/or missing Main Street trees and kiosks

# How To Be Engaged

Follow Us!



@downtownmesa

## Calendar of Events / Newsletter

FEBRUARY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Follow us!</b> @downtownmesa www.downtownmesa.com						
2 Festa de la Musica Paseo de la Musica 9-5pm	3 Youth Board Meeting Monday 7-8pm	4 Board Meeting Monday 7-8pm	5 Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	6 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	7 Dance Club Monday 7-8pm	8 Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm
9 Try a Squishe Monday 7-8pm	10 Try a Squishe Monday 7-8pm	11 SBB & Squishe Monday 7-8pm	12 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	13 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	14 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	15 Festa de la Musica Paseo de la Musica 9-5pm
16 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	17 Youth Board Meeting Monday 7-8pm	18 SBB & Squishe Monday 7-8pm	19 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	20 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	21 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	22 Festa de la Musica Paseo de la Musica 9-5pm
23 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	24 Youth Board Meeting Monday 7-8pm	25 SBB & Squishe Monday 7-8pm	26 Let's go to the Cafeteria & Meeting Monday 7-8pm	27 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	28 Vandalia's Day Monday 7-8pm	29 Festa de la Musica Paseo de la Musica 9-5pm

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN  
DOWNTOWN MESA



www.downtownmesa.com



www.downtownmesa.com

# Thank you!

## Questions?

Terry Madeksza

President & Executive Director

[terry@downtownmesa.com](mailto:terry@downtownmesa.com)

[Downtownmesa.com](http://Downtownmesa.com)

[@downtownmesa](https://www.instagram.com/downtownmesa)





# Economic Development Advisory Board

March 4, 2025

Kelley Keffer, Economic Development Project Manager

Chris Molnar, Economic Development Project Manager (SA)

# Our Vision

## CITY OF MESA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mesa, Arizona will be regarded as a premier location for companies and investors seeking an innovative, dynamic city to enhance their competitiveness, including:

- A diverse and sustainable economy
- A leadership team who supports a regional, national, and global approach to economic development
- A partnership between industry and government

# Our Mission

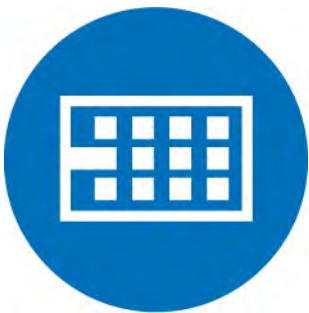
## CITY OF MESA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mesa's Office of Economic Development (OED) works to enhance Mesa's economy by:

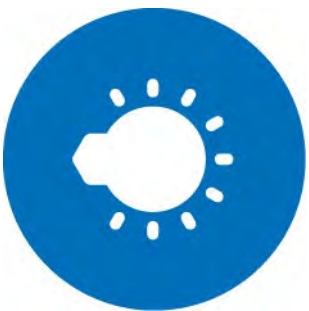
- promoting a culture of quality
- supporting the creation of higher wage jobs
- promoting direct investment
- increasing prosperity of our residents



# Our Lines of Service



Business Attraction,  
Retention and  
Expansion



Entrepreneurship  
& Small Business  
Development

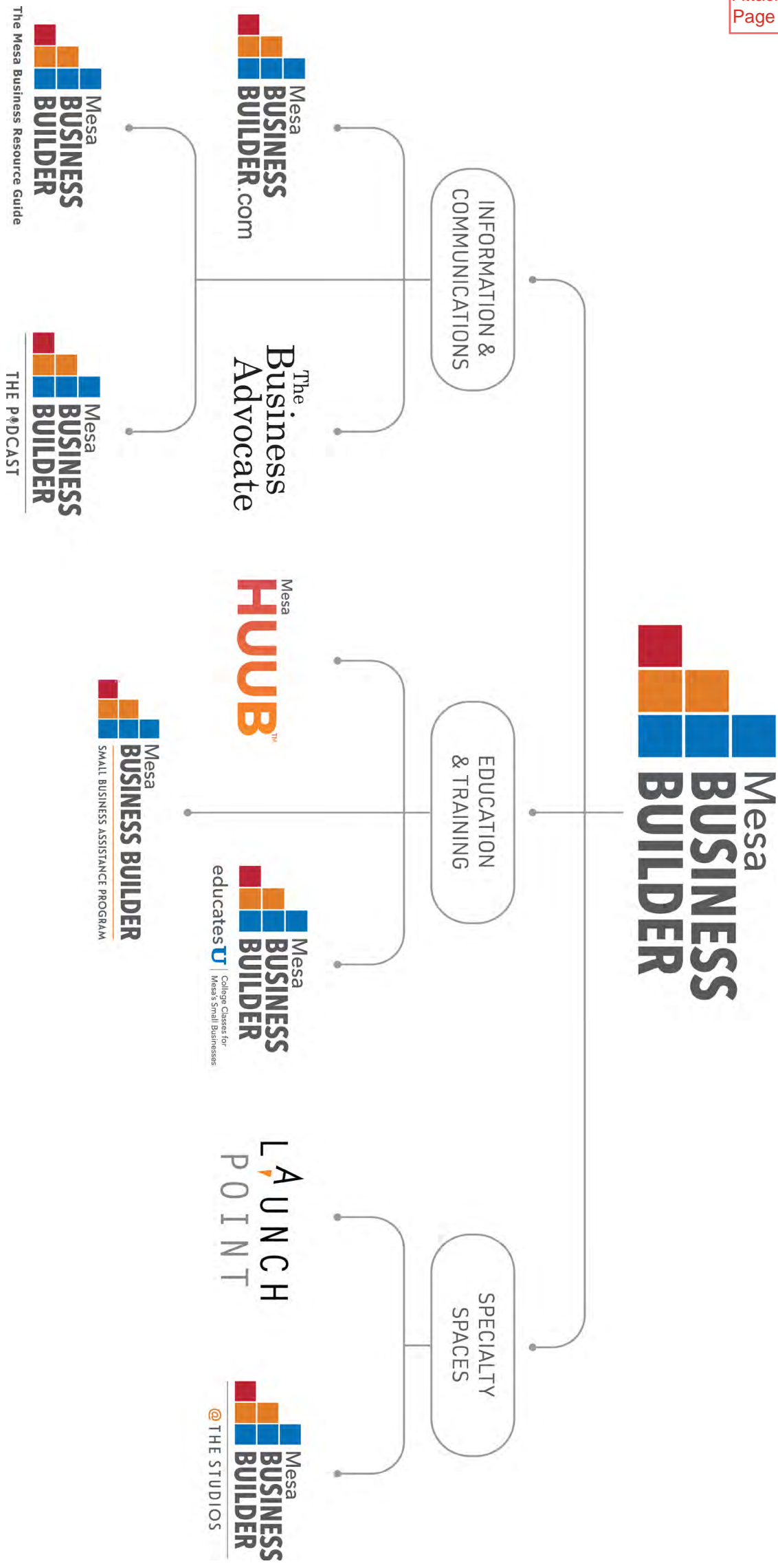


Redevelopment  
& Revitalization



Workforce  
Development &  
Talent Attraction

# Programs & Services



# Small Business Assistance Program



## TOPICS / CATEGORIES

- Digital Media / Social Media
- Marketing / Marketing Strategy
- Business Operations
- Restaurant / Retail Operations
- Financial Literacy
- Business Planning / Strategy
- Photography / Videography
- Website Development

# Project Results

## MESA BUSINESS BUILDER (MBB) SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### One-on-One Assistance:

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25*	Total
Businesses Served	77	99	165	126	467
Total Services Delivered	\$92,000	\$232,000	\$270,000	\$187,000	\$781,000

\*YTD



educates **U** | College Classes for  
Mesa's Small Businesses



## MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

- 14 College Certificate (CCL) Programs
- 2 students per business, 2 classes per term, per person
- Program covers tuition and course fees
- Total to date:
  - 35 students, 57 classes
  - 249 credit hours
- Valued at: \$24,153




# Mesa HUUB

- Learning Library with 170+ webinars
- Grant opportunities
- Events calendar
- 1:1 support
- Community Board
- Member directory
- NEW: GrowthHUUB



**mesa·az**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT




Español

Welcome, Kelley K


Recommended for You

Featured Finance




**Free**  
Four Corners CleanTech Accelerator  
For Small Businesses

Featured Event




**February 26**  
Pitch In- Elevating entrepreneurs across The Valley

Featured Course




**February Top Pick**  
Crafting a Compelling Grant Application  
Finance


Newly added Finances




**Finanoss**  
Four Corners CleanTech Accelerator  
The Four Corners CleanTech Accelerator is part of the SBA's...  
Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC), network, an initiative that...



**Finanoss**  
Start.Pivot.Grow. Micro Grant  
Our \$2,500 quarterly micro grants provide non-dilutive funding,...



**Finanoss**  
The Pop Up Grocer Fund  
Every store pays it forward. We contribute a portion of total...  
The Pop Up Grocer Fund gives 5% of in-store sales from each pop-...



**Finis**  
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qua

# Specialty Spaces

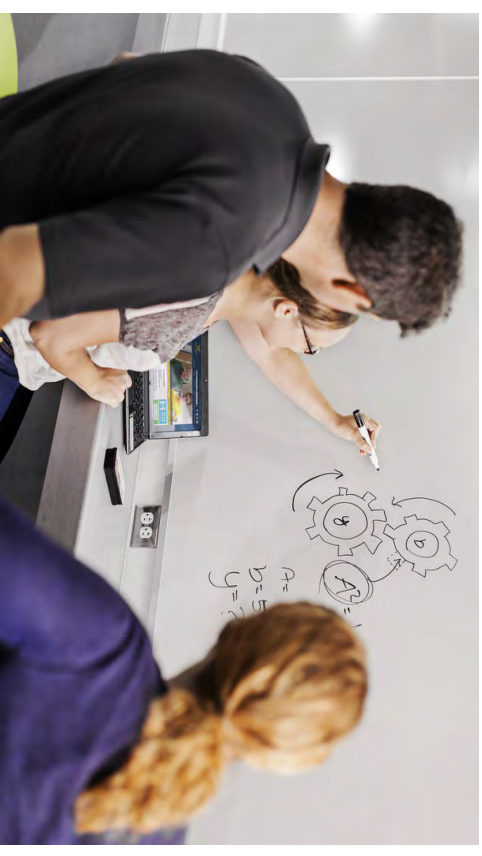


# A UNCH POINT

mesa • az

## Features:

- Private office space
- Collaborative areas
- Wet and dry labs
- Conference rooms / classrooms
- Business development assistance
- Networking and training



# A UNCH POINT

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Canyon GBS

DataBiologics

bmseed  
biomedical  
survival basic biopharmaceuticals

Some Notable Graduates  
Urbix Resources, GT Medical  
Technologies, Prenda, Nasus Medical



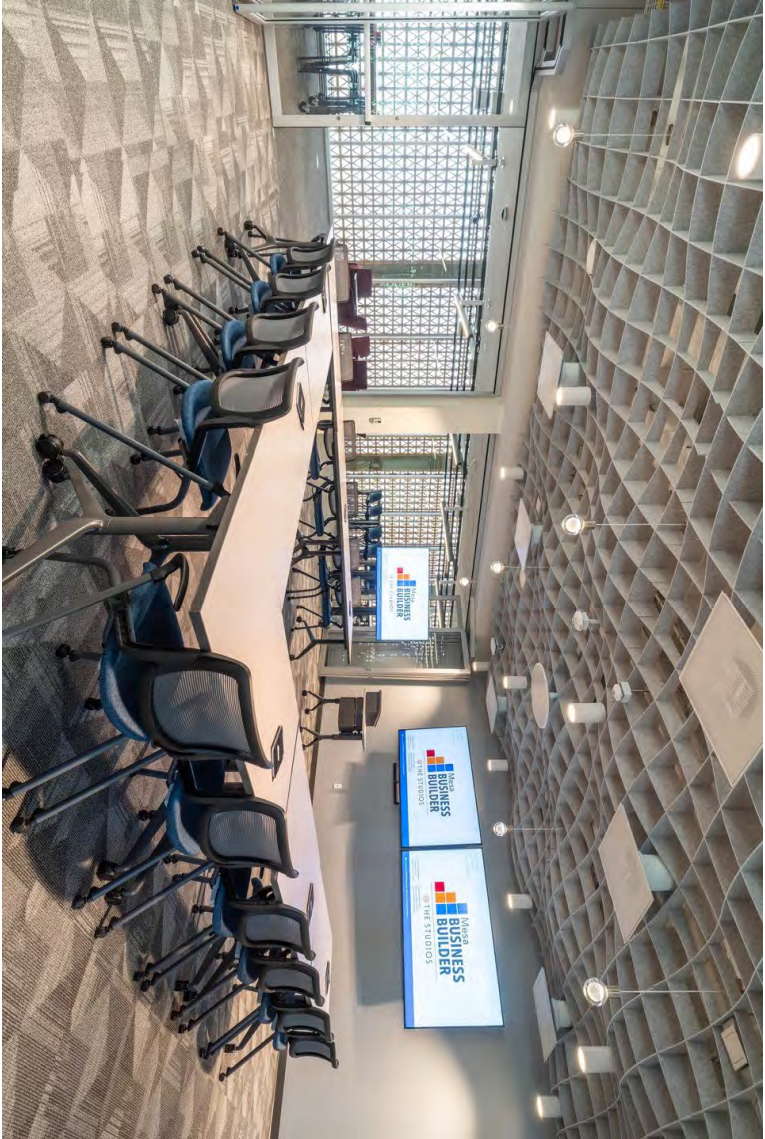




@ THE STUDIOS

- State-of-the-art resource center
- Tools & technology for small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Podcast studio
- AR/VR studio
- Digital development zone
- Software and training
- Collaboration and meeting spaces



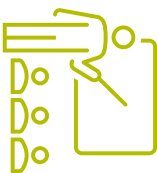


# MBB @ The Studios At-A-Glance



120

Tours FYTD



39

MBB Workshops FYTD



206

Events FYTD



≈4,000

Total Visitors FYTD

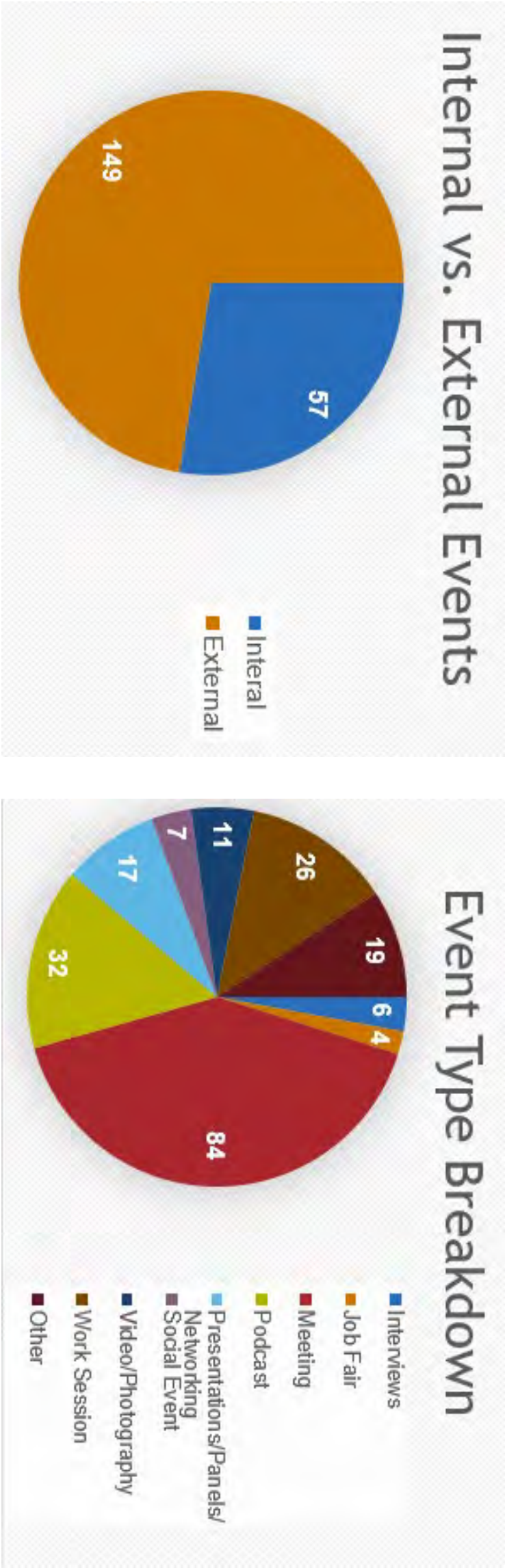


≈330

Total Bookings FYTD



# MBB @ The Studios At-A-Glance



# What's Next @ The Studios?



- Multi-month MBB marketing social media campaign
- Video Production training series
- Tech literacy roadmap to success
- Digital development zone intro
- AR/VR and AI 6-month series and digital bootcamp development
- May - one-year anniversary!



# Mesa Business Builder: What's Next?



- March 7 - New content bi-weekly on the "Know Before You Grow" Podcast
- April 29 - Generations in the Workforce
- One-Year Celebration of Mesa Business Builder @ The Studios
- May 8 - Small Business Networking Event
- May 14 - Mesa Entrepreneurs Real Stories, Successes and Lessons

# How Can You Help?



- Share information about our programs and services
- Join us at our events, meet our businesses
- Sponsor, help with sponsorships for the Mesa Pitch
- Tour MBB @ The Studios if you haven't already



# Connect with us!

MesaBusinessBuilder.com

E: [MesaBusinessBuilder@mesaaz.gov](mailto:MesaBusinessBuilder@mesaaz.gov)

MBBTheStudios.com

E: [MBBTheStudios@mesaaz.gov](mailto:MBBTheStudios@mesaaz.gov)



@ Mesa Business Builder



@ Better Life Mesa



@ City of Mesa Office of Economic Development

Kelley Keffer, Project Manager

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Chris Molnar, Project Manager (SA)

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