



SEDE Steering Committee Meeting Summary

11.13.2025

Steering Committee Attendees

Sandra Watson, SEDE Chair, President & CEO, Arizona Commerce Authority

Clint O'Neal, Executive Director, Arkansas Economic Development Commission

Kurt Foreman, President and CEO, Delaware Prosperity Partnership

Quentin Messer, President and CEO, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Michelle Hataway, Director, Missouri Department of Economic Development

Christopher Chung, CEO, The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

Ashely Teasdel, Deputy Secretary, South Carolina Department of Commerce

CREC Staff

Ken Poole, CEO, Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC)

Bob Isaacson, SVP, CREC

Leif Olson, Sr. Research Analyst, CREC

Summary

The steering committee meeting opened with Sandra Watson welcoming SEDE's new vice chair Clint O'Neal (AR) and new Steering Committee members Ashley Teasdel (SC), Quentin Messer (MI), and Tom Burns (NV). Sandra and Bob Isaacson also recognized departing members Mike Graney and Joan Goldstein for their long-standing contributions. Sandra highlighted Joan's foundational role in SEDE noting that she attended the initial SEDE meeting in 2015. Both received letters thanking them for the contributions with Joan also receiving a plaque recognizing her role in creating SEDE.

The group reflected on the success of the recent New York SEDE meeting. Members noted that more than 20 state leaders attended the meeting with leaders from 10 other states unable to attend due to scheduling challenges. The committee highlighted the meeting's strong engagement, organic conversations, and meaningful networking activities including a network dinner, Brooklyn Navy Yard tour, and Broadway outing. Priority topics for follow-up include:

- Workforce challenges
- Opportunity Zones
- Artificial intelligence
- University and education partnerships
- Childcare, rural development, and housing models.



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Members also agreed with the creation of working groups to discuss three key areas:

- *Incentives.* This discussion focused on modernizing incentive tools, improving effectiveness, sharing best practices, and supporting entrepreneur/start-up activity. Members also noted an interest in comparing compliance provisions (large vs. small awards), avoiding unnecessary incentive competition driven by site selectors, and how to improve legislative awareness of incentives.
- *Labor Statistics.* The committee discussed possible loss of confidence in job numbers posted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Ken Poole noted that data revisions are not unusual, but data collection is becoming more difficult due to the shifts in economic activity, survey responses, and the long-term underfunding of data collection. Members noted how non-BLS sources like private sources and Universities may provide complementary data.
- *University Connections.* Bob mentioned that there is an ongoing interest in having SEDE better connected to University networks.

The committee noted several items related to subsequent SEDE meetings:

- *May SEDE Meeting.* The next SEDE meeting will be on the afternoon of May 4, 2026, at the AC Hotel during the SelectUSA event. During the last two years, SEDE has used this hotel, which is nearby the SelectUSA convention center activities.
- *Federal Speakers.* Members noted an interest in high-level presenters from the administration for the May meeting and offered recruiting assistance if needed. Bob noted that speakers from the NGA may be offered an opportunity to visit with SEDE.
- *Fall/Winter SEDE Meeting.* Bob noted that he will begin soliciting states to host a fall 2026/winter 2027 meeting. The Steering Committee will make a final location decision in early 2026.

Other items discussed included:

- *Statement of Work.* Bob indicated that CREC's 2025 Statement of Work (SOW) was previously shared as an e-mail attachment. He will be developing a 2026 SOW based on SEDE meeting conversation and Steering Committee discussion. Sandra and Clint will be provide final approval on the SOW.



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- *Subcommittees.* The Steering Committee will be creating a Finance Subcommittee and a Programming/Resource Subcommittee. Bob will be soliciting the Steering Committee members for their interest in serving as chair of one of the subcommittees.
- *SEDE Investment.* SEDE has received about \$120K in state investments with another \$25K expected in the coming weeks. This \$145K would be similar as state investments received during the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 period and comparable to previous years when The Pew Charitable Trusts, EDA and CREC provided grant and in-kind funding.
- *Sponsorships.* Bob noted some SEDE members have noted in the past an interest in sponsors for some SEDE activities. He shared that members are generally not interested in having sponsors attend meetings but may be interested in having sponsor partners involved in receptions, dinners, or webinars. Steering Committee members noted that some states expressed a preference for higher state investment levels in lieu of having sponsors involved in SEDE activities. Bob indicated that any sponsorship decisions will be done carefully and cautiously with SEDE potentially deciding not to move ahead with sponsors.
- *SEDE Organization Information.* Bob shared that he will be sending individual state organization and salary information to the respective state for review. He noted that CREC derived the data from publicly available information, but the aggregated dataset will be available only to states investing in SEDE.
- *SEDE Website and Bulletin.* Bob noted that the SEDE website has been refreshed and the SEDE Bulletin will integrate further changes soon.

Action Items

CREC will:

- Solicit states interesting in hosting the 2026 Fall/2027 Winter meeting.
- Begin planning for the May 2026 SEDE meeting including recruiting high-level federal (and NGA) speakers in early 2026 for the May 2026 SEDE meeting.
- Email Steering Committee members to identify chairs for the Finance and Programming/Resources Subcommittees. CREC will meet with Chairs to identify subcommittee scope.
- Finalize 2026 Statement of Work for review by Sandra and Clint.
- Develop working groups to discuss incentives, state job numbers, and university connections.
- Create content through white papers, and webinars on key SEDE topics including workforce development, Opportunity Zones, AI, childcare, rural development, and housing.
- Continue distributing organizational/salary data to states for review.
- Complete website and Bulletin updates.