



State Economic Development Executives (SEDE) Network

Helping State Economic Development Leaders Thrive

SEDE Steering Committee Meeting Notes

9.4.2025

Attendees

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

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

Kevin McKinnon, Deputy Commissioner of Economic Development, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Michelle Hataway, Director, Missouri Department of Economic Development

Andrew Deye, Vice President, JobsOhio

Adriana Cruz, Executive Director, Texas Economic Development & Tourism – Office of the Governor

Bob Isaacson, SVP, CREC

Leif Olson, Sr. Research Analyst, CREC

Executive Summary

The steering committee agreed to recognize outgoing Vice Chair Mike Graney with a letter of thanks and to begin the process of selecting a new vice chair, with nominations due to Bob by next week and a decision targeted for October. Members affirmed that the vice chair role is a succession position leading to chair, with limited time commitments focused on agenda-setting and guiding discussions. On membership, the group approved moving forward with adding Ashely Teasdel, Tom Burns, and Bill Cork from Republican-led states, as well as Quentin Messer from Michigan on the Democratic side, with alternates identified if needed, which would bring the committee to full capacity. For the upcoming New York meeting, members prioritized three main discussion topics: navigating federal policy changes, energy transition challenges, and workforce development, while noting the potential for inviting a federal speaker if feasible (but this is more likely an item for the SelectUSA meeting). Bob will circulate follow-up notes, membership outreach, and the New York meeting attendee list, while logistical planning and possible future subcommittees (such as finance) will be taken up in the next quarterly meeting.

Mike Graney's Departure (previous Vice Chair)

- Bob: Mike Graney was a long-time member of SEDE and rolled into Vice Chair position in 2025 after Joan Goldstein. Talked to Mike recently, he might be going back to the private sector.



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- Sandra: I want to mention, we will be sending a letter recognizing his efforts from this group, thanking him for all the great work he's done for the organization.
- Bob: Because Mike was Vice Chair, we need a new one. We try for a party balance. We look for a Vice Chair with a current Republican administration. The Chair should come from the state EDO. Sandra, you had mentioned rolling off as Chair in 2026, is that still the plan?
 - Sandra: Yes, that is still possible. It would be the latter part of 2026, if at all. Not definitive yet. We would encourage anyone on this call or on the committee to nominate themselves. We want a good balance. We know governors and parties change from state to state. Please make sure, if you have someone you want to nominate, you provide that information to Bob. Or please nominate yourselves, too.
- Bob: Any questions from anyone? Whether Sandra remains as Chair, the succession plan is that the Vice Chair would move to the Chair position. So, there is an expectation of succession.
- Clint: What are the responsibilities of the Vice Chair?
 - Bob: in the charter there is a description of basic responsibilities. Implementing and executing the objectives of the steering committee. There is no extensive time commitment, just providing leadership.
 - Sandra: It really is just setting the agenda, covering topical areas- we have two in person meetings to coordinate a year. One during SelectUSA and then another one in the fall (this time in NYC). All those decisions are made by the steering committee and the Chair and Vice Chair just guide those discussions.
 - Bob: I will send a note by the end of the day today or tomorrow and want responses by the middle of next week. We want to have solid decisions by October.

Additional Steering Committee Members

- Bob: We've had a few folks depart. We are at 10 members right now. 4 from Republican and 6 from Democrat-led states. We have the opportunity for more members. We can have up to 14. Any thoughts on folks who could join? Otherwise, I can include a reminder in the email and you can send me your thoughts.
 - Sandra: Bob didn't you start a list of potential candidates?



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- Bob: Yes, from Republican-led states we have three possible options – Tom Burns (NV), Ashely Teasdel (SC), and Chase Hagaman (NH). They are active in the network and are from states with Republican governors.
 - Sandra: We have seven out of ten here today?
 - Bob: We have five people.
 - Sandra: We could just give you the go ahead to get things rolling. If you are all comfortable with that list we can go ahead. What are our thoughts?
 - Clint: You want us to greenlight all three or one or two?
 - Sandra: I think we can add four members, but we want to create balance. I think we would like to move ahead with three Republican states right now. The last one could be either a Democrat or Republican [governor] that point. But if there are concerns, we could hold off. I think we should, at the very least, gauge their interest.
 - Clint: I have no reservations. We could gauge interest on all three.
 - Adriana: Bill Cork, Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority, could be a possibility. Is he active Bob?
 - Bob: He wants to be. Being part of the steering committee can increase activity. We could reach out to him. Up until recently, he has not been able to make it work with his schedule.
 - Kevin: I think it would be great to reach out to all four.
 - Sandra: Sounds like everyone is in agreement. Let's reach out and if they are interested that would put us at 14.
 - Michelle: Do we want a backup Democrat in case someone is unable to join?
 - Bob: Sure, Quentin Messer from Michigan, Rick Seeger from PA, and Missy Hughes from WI. Any preference on those three?
 - Sandra: I'm not familiar with two of them, but Quentin is very active. Do we want to try for three Republican states and then pick one of those three for the Democratic side?
 - Michelle: That is a good idea I think.



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- Sandra: So, let's move forward with Bill – so what about the other three?
- Bob: Tom actually hosted a meeting and Ashely is very active. Chase has been less active. I would recommend Ashely, Bill, and Tom for the Republican side.
- *General agreement*
- Bob: From the democratic side, Quentin Messer would be a good pick. But Missy from WI has been very active, so if Quentin is unable, WI would be a good backup choice.

New York SEDE Meeting

- Bob: From the registration and surveys, we have found that folks are interested in networking opportunities. Attendees mentioned that they want more opportunities to talk with one another.
 - Sandra: Do you have a list of who is attending?
 - Bob: No, but I'll send that out.
 - Adriana: I will be unable to make it. I have a conflict at the same time.
 - Clint: Same here.
 - Michelle: I will be there.
 - Sandra: So, Bob do you expect 20 states to be represented?
 - Bob: Yes, that is usually what we would expect. I will send the agenda out with some of the things that New York has in store for us.
- Andrew: We will be represented at the New York meeting. We appreciate the work that has gone into hosting this.
- Bob: *Reviews the NYC SEDE agenda*
- Bob: Interested in what topics you would like to cover at the meeting. Trade and tariffs were most important according to our survey. Second important topic is navigating shifts in federal policy. Others mentioned energy transition, workforce development, and state legislature/budget relations.
 - Sandra: All of those topics are current for all of us right now. The trade and tariffs topic is interesting. Are we just having a conversation or are we bringing in a speaker that can provide details? I just want an open discussion around this. Tariffs are a tough conversation. Are we looking for answers? Federal policy is tough to get our arms around on the tariff side. Is that a conversation we should be having with each other, for example about obstacles and challenges? Or do we want to have that conversation with federal agencies and



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ask them about how to navigate some of these challenges? Will our goal be to share this information with federal partners to be able to work more closely with them? These are open questions.

- Andrew: One of the best sessions I recall was when SEDE brought in a speaker to unpack the USMCA. That was great. Some states are already reacting to the tariffs. Colorado's governor is putting out information about the negative effects. Of course, it is important to think about the outcomes of that discussion as they could fall across political lines.
- Sandra: Sharing information would be great. But do we want to have the conversation with so much uncertainty? Is there any outcome we want to achieve, or would this just be informational?
- Bob: Maybe we could pivot the discussion to reshoring?
- Sandra: I am trying to figure out what the outcome should be. What are the action items that we want to take collectively? We represent governors and they have opinions as well. We don't want to get ahead of them. SEDE is meant for sharing best practices developing better and stronger relationships at the federal level, as a group. I am not sure we will be able to get anyone to come to NY to speak to us. It would be easier to get a federal partner at SelectUSA. Maybe on some of these topics we wait until things are clearer and we have access to more of our federal partners...
- Bob: Generally, SEDE conversations are for information and best practices. Sometimes we have federal speakers to add to the conversation. We can go any direction that the steering committee wants to go.
- Sandra: What are you all thinking? Especially about the tariffs conversation.
 - Adriana: Trade is important to all of us. One thing that I was thinking, from a Foreign Trade Zone perspectives, how are folks using FTZs to mitigate tariff impacts?
 - Sandra: We were told by the administration that FTZs *would be* impacted by tariffs. We could reach out to someone and see if things have changed.
- Sandra: Maybe we could open this up beyond tariffs and talk about navigating federal policy overall. For example, the Secretary of Commerce recently announced that NATCAST would be dissolved. We could talk about other shifts at the Department of Commerce.
 - Bob: We can pursue some folks to talk to us from Commerce if they are available.



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- Sandra: I think that sounds good. If we could get a good speaker that would be wonderful.
- Kevin: I was just thinking about combining all of these topics. Shifts in manufacturing policies and what that looks like and what our collective thoughts are. To the outcome question, we have done these things before. I do think that rather than just tariffs and trade, the conversation could be much broader. In response to the earlier question about attendance, either myself or the Commissioner will be attending in New York.
 - Sandra: To the point about manufacturing, MEP might be at risk. We should have a conversation about that since one of the priorities of this administration is to bring manufacturing back to the US.
- Bob: Okay, it looks like we have a semblance of topics we can pursue.
 - Sandra: Another important topic: energy transition. Good conversation to see what other states are doing and how they are dealing with it.
 - Clint: I agree. It seems like the issue used to be workforce, but now the number one challenge is energy. In AR we made it easier for utility companies to undertake major projects and recover costs.
 - Sandra: I love that and hearing best practices from states is great. We are having that conversation in AZ, about AI and data centers. Localities are making it challenging for data centers to build. People are asking, “how many centers are too many?” I don’t know if you are all having that conversation, but that goes along with the energy conversation, I think.
 - Kevin: I think that is a great topic.
 - Andrew: Agreed.
 - Kevin: Energy is major across projects, regardless of if they are data centers or manufacturing- they require a lot of energy. Our state now has a policy on water usage and power usage for data centers. Managing the public perception of data centers is becoming increasingly difficult.
- Bob: Could workforce be a third topic to pursue?
 - Sandra: I think so. Power is number one, but workforce is still an area of focus, especially for manufacturing (technicians and operators in particular).
- Bob: Okay, it looks like we have some topics: Federal changes, energy transition, and workforce.
- Sandra: Anything else we need for this New York meeting?
- Bob: No, we are just finalizing some logistics.



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SEDE Subcommittees

- Bob: Last item – sub committees. Creating a finance subcommittee for example? No decision needed, just want to think about that and talk a bit about that the next time we meet next quarter.

End of Meeting