



## SEDE Steering Committee Meeting Summary

6.30.2026

### Steering Committee Attendees

Sandra Watson, President and CEO, Arizona Commerce Authority (Chair)

Clint O'Neal, Executive Director, Arkansas Economic Development Commission (Vice-Chair)

Hope Knight, President and CEO, Empire State Development

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

Quentin Messer Jr., CEO, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

### Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC) Staff

Bob Isaacson, SVP

Leif Olson, Sr. Research Analyst

### Summary

The steering committee meeting reviewed logistics for the fall meeting in Denver, discussed inquiries from external organizations, reinforced the Network's attendance policy, and heard an update on member investments. Bob Isaacson led the discussion on behalf of CREC staff.

- **Fall SEDE Meeting – Denver Tour and Agenda Format**

- Discussion focused on logistics for the day-two site visit at the Denver meeting. Three tour options will be included on the registration form; the Lockheed Martin tour was removed given its distance and length. Members agreed the CREC will gauge interest through registration and proceed with a tour only if there is sufficient demand. Members discussed timing constraints, noting that most attendees will want to travel home Friday, which limits the feasibility of a longer tour. CREC noted that Thursday tours are generally not offered given the priority of the in-person discussion.
- Members also discussed whether to include outside presenters or breakout sessions on the agenda. The discussion favored discussions among SEDE members but presenters could be discussed once the agenda topics are finalized.
- Consensus favored keeping the group together for large-group discussion rather than splitting into smaller breakouts, with members noting that shared conversation across the full group is part of what attendees value most. The group agreed to revisit the breakout question once registration numbers are known, noting that past meetings have typically drawn 20–30 attendees.
- The Steering Committee will meet prior to the Denver meeting to finalize the agenda including the meeting discussion topics.

- **External Partner Request**

- Bob raised an inquiry from the Strada Education Foundation, a nonprofit focused on connecting education to jobs, about presenting to the Network at the Denver meeting.



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Members discussed whether the topic should be added to the Denver agenda or handled separately, given limited meeting time and some uncertainty about how central the career-pathways topic is to Strada's broader scope. Members noted a preference to handle the Strada request as a webinar rather than using in-person meeting time.

- **Meeting Attendance Policy**

- Members discussed tightening the Network's attendance policy. The SEDE meetings are intended for secretaries/commissioners and their deputies with the attendees generally representing those roles. Bob noted that CREC communicates this expectation in meeting announcements but acknowledged that occasionally a state new to SEDE sometimes send directors to SEDE's SelectUSA meeting as they already in the region and can gauge the group for their respective secretary. The group agreed to reinforce the secretary/deputy level for the Denver meeting and maybe revisit the policy for SelectUSA-style events in 2027.
- A member raised concerns about continuity through leadership transitions, noting the importance of incoming officials understanding the value of the Network early in their tenure. Bob noted that CREC provides a welcome packet, arranges an outreach call by a peer state, and completes an introductory call for new Secretaries. The committee agreed to continue refining this onboarding process (including having outgoing Secretaries highlight SEDE to their successors) as many transitions are expected to occur in 2027.

- **RMI and B20 Updates**

- Bob updated the group on the Rocky Mountain Institute's (RMI) energy/economic development meeting in Basalt, CO in late July. Economic development and energy officials from 10 states have confirmed attendance; these 10 states along with additional states will be participating in meetings following the July event. CREC will attend as an observer and facilitator and will forward insights to SEDE.
- Bob also noted that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is hosting a B20 event to complement the G20 event scheduled to be held in the U.S. in late 2026. The Chamber sees the B20 event as an opportunity for states to engage with global C-suite executives in an event similar (but smaller) to SelectUSA. Members again expressed a preference for a webinar format over direct meeting involvement; Bob will follow up with the U.S. Chamber's B20 organizers on that option.

- **SEDE Finances**

Bob reported that 7 of the targeted 30 investing states have contributed to date, with investments totaling \$39,000. Members encouraged continued outreach to states that have not yet invested and offered committee member outreach assistance if needed.



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### Action Items

#### CREC will:

- Incorporate the three Denver site-visit tour options (excluding the Lockheed Martin tour) on the meeting registration form.
- Hold the Denver meeting to secretary/deputy-level attendance and potentially revisit the policy for the SelectUSA meeting in 2027.
- Refine orientation and onboarding materials and outreach for new Secretaries recognizing the possibility of the outgoing Secretary sharing SEDE information.
- Follow up with the Strada Education Foundation regarding their interest in offering a webinar for the SEDE Network.
- Attend the RMI economic development/energy meeting in Basalt, CO in July and forward thoughts on event and follow-up meetings to SEDE.
- Follow up with B20/U.S. Chamber of Commerce organizers regarding a webinar to introduce the B20 event to the SEDE executives.
- Continue outreach to non-investing states to advance progress toward the 30-state investment goal.