



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 15, 2025

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Additional Information for Board of Supervisors August 18, 2025, Addendum Item #6
- Proposed Plan for Foreign Direct Investment from Mexican-based Companies**

On April 15, 2025, at the request of Supervisor Heinz, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to create a plan to strengthen foreign direct investment (FDI) from Mexican-based companies and to leverage partnerships to help facilitate relocation of Mexican companies to Pima County to address workforce shortages in healthcare, engineering and other sectors. This request is consistent with recommendation #13 in Pillar 2 of the Pima County 2023-2026 Economic Development Strategy Plan, to *"Ensure a focus on foreign direct investment with an emphasis on partnerships with Mexico and Canada, and other opportunities with Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA)."*

The attached memorandum from Economic Development Director Heath Vescovi-Chiordi summarizes activities by our Economic Development Department (Department) over the past 18 months focused on promoting foreign direct investment from Mexico. Included are engagements in Mexico and hosting of Mexican delegations here in Pima County. Continuing with these efforts, the Department is planning to bring two delegations from Mexico to Pima County in October 2025. The visiting groups will include private companies, academia, government and others to explore opportunities for conducting business in Pima County.

Additionally, the attached memorandum outlines a menu of options that could be implemented to further strengthen Pima County's efforts to attract foreign direct investment from Mexican-based companies. Options range from contracted services to additional permanent staffing, programmatic support to businesses, travel, training, marketing and physical office space in Mexico. Considering the variety of possible approaches, it is my belief that an initial modest expansion of resources devoted to Mexican-based foreign direct investment will provide the solid foundation necessary for future expansion.

Based on the concept of a scalable model, and considering that funding for expanded efforts would come from the General Fund Contingency, the following is my recommended plan for expanded promotion and attraction related to Mexican foreign direct investment:

Contract Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate connections with private companies, government and other entities for FDI opportunitiesAssist in developing Mexico focused economic development sub-strategy	\$40,000
Programming Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Planning and hosting FDI delegation visitsEducation on conducting business across US-Mexican border	\$30,000
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Travel to key Mexico markets for FDI attraction and attendance at delegation events <i>(in addition to \$50,000 already programmed in EDC FY 2025/26 budget)</i>	\$15,000
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marketing in key Mexico markets using various platformsEstablish physical and electronic mailing addresses in the States of Aguascalientes, Mexico and Baja California, Mexico	\$15,000
Total		\$100,000

The proposed initial expansion strategy would focus efforts on the Aguascalientes and Baja areas for Mexican-based foreign direct investment related to the healthcare, advanced manufacturing and optics/photonics sectors. Broader marketing and outreach activities, along with strategic travel, training and targeted industry connections, would occur across a broader set of key markets throughout Mexico including Mexico City.

Efforts would also seek to leverage partnerships with other entities working on FDI attraction including the Arizona Commerce Authority; Visit Tucson; the State of Baja California, Mexico; Consejo Coordinador Empresarial; Southern Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Mexican Consulate in Tucson; American Chamber – Mexico (AMCHAM); and others.

The above activities are proposed to be advanced, and progress evaluated, over the next six (6) months to determine effectiveness of these initial activities. Consideration of expanded efforts, including the potential establishment of physical office space, particularly in Aguascalientes and Baja will occur during preparation of the FY 2026/27 budget cycle.

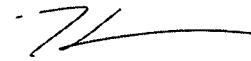
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Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Art Cuaron, Director, Finance and Risk Management Department
Heath Vescovi-Chiordi, Director, Economic Development Department

To: Ms. Jan Leshner, Pima County Administrator

From: Heath S. Vescovi-Chiordi, Director, Pima County Economic Development



Re: Board of Supervisors Office District 2 Request for More Information on the Creation of a Plan to Strengthen Partnerships and Opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Mexican-Based Companies into Pima County

Date: 8-12-2025

Ms. Leshner,

On April 10, 2025, Supervisor Heinz from the Board of Supervisors District 2 Office requested more information regarding the creation of a plan to facilitate FDI from Mexico into Pima County (**Attachment 1**). In this memo, I will provide a brief snapshot of our efforts across the border into Mexico to date as well as future anticipated efforts. You will also find a brief description of additional opportunities which would help Pima County Economic Development increase our efficiency and effectiveness in marketing Pima County as an attractive location for expansion of companies from Mexico, as well as to continue subnational diplomatic efforts with our Mexican counterparts.

As of 8-6-2025, Pima County Economic Development (ECD) has performed the following activities in order to attract FDI from Mexico into Pima County:

- March 2024: Attended Select USA Mexico Conference;
- July 2024: Attended Semicon West (w/ expanded focus on interaction w/ Mexico-based companies in semiconductor and adjacent industries including packaging, R&D, etc.);
- February 2025: Attended Select USA Mexico Conference;
- March 2025: Coordinated and attended an FDI delegation to Aguascalientes, MX;
- May 2025: Sponsored and attended S. AZ Hispanic Chamber of Commerce AZ-Sonora Mexico Forum;
- May 2025: Attended Select USA Conference (w/ expanded focus on interaction w/ Mexico-based companies in our key industry focus areas);
- June 2025: Attended Arizona Commerce Authority USMCA Forum in Phx, AZ;
- June 2025: Attended Arizona Commerce Authority AZ-MX Semiconductor Forum for Advancing Subnational Priorities and Strengthening Bilateral Collaboration;
- June 2025: Attended AZ Mexico Commission 66th Annual Summit;
- July 2025: Helped coordinate and attend a FDI delegation to Tijuana, MX in conjunction with regional industry cluster representation and regional government representation;
- July 2025: Coordinated and hosted AMCHAM Noroeste alongside the City of Tucson, including industry focus areas in Clean and Renewable Energy, AgTech, Manufacturing, and Advanced and Emerging Technology.

Additionally, our department is currently in the planning stages of bringing two delegations from Mexico to Pima County in October. These delegations will be comprised of individuals from private industry, academia, government, regional industry cluster groups, and more. Through these efforts, we have strengthened our relationships and recognition of

Pima County as a place to do business with our colleagues across the border and generated multiple connections and leads for business attraction.

To continue to facilitate our work in FDI and increase our throughput and efficiency in creating and maintaining opportunities in attracting and expanding FDI and receiving related benefits to Pima County, there are several components or options to consider. Below you will find a list of potential options for consideration. These options and corresponding dollar amounts were identified through contact with regional business connections in key markets in Mexico, as well as internal research and information received from the Arizona Commerce Authority:

1. Contract Services: \$30,000.00 - \$40,000.00 (one year)

- a. Potential contract with a 3rd party consultant specializing in FDI and relationship development in an identified key market area to provide services including assistance in facilitating connections, FDI delegation/visitation coordination, and access to local, private industry, government and academia contacts to create economic, workforce, academic and business development opportunities. A final scope of work would need to be developed to determine final cost. In conjunction with additional staffing, this could function in place of an FTE based on location in Mexico, as well as act as a placeholder in setting up an official office in Mexico.

2. Additional Staffing: \$100,000.00 - \$200,000.00 (per year)

- a. Hiring of additional staff in the Economic Development Dept. would allow us to proceed with our current operations and increase our ability to establish follow up with individuals, groups, businesses, etc. and facilitate the additional connections and guidance on a long term basis to assist in relocation to Pima County, as well as other ways in which we can add value to our supply and manufacturing chains. Each staff member would require approximately \$100,000.00 in budget capacity to account for a competitive base salary, as well as ancillary benefits including healthcare, etc. These staff could potentially include, as an example: "Foreign Direct Investment Manager" and/or "Economic Development Program Manager". Employees would likely be based here in Pima County. Full job descriptions and salary ranges would be developed in conjunction with ECD and Human Resources. Additional due diligence on total budget need may be required depending on method of employment.

3. Programming: \$30,000.00 (per year)

- a. An additional infusion of dollars geared toward programming would allow ECD and new staff to create and implement small and medium size business support services in the form of trainings geared toward assisting and supporting existing businesses in our region that currently are doing business in Mexico, or are exploring new market penetration into Mexico, and Mexican companies looking to expand into the U.S., specifically Pima County.

4. Travel and Training: \$15,000.00 (per year)

- a. Based on travel expense projections for the current fiscal year as well as looking back at relevant travel expenses for the two most recent fiscal years, additional dollars designated for travel expenses to key markets in Mexico as part of FDI delegations or conferences would allow expanded reach and access into Mexico for the purposes of FDI attraction.

5. Marketing and Planning: \$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00

- a. Additional dollars for marketing Pima County in Mexico in the amount of \$10,000 - \$15,000/year would allow development of FDI-specific marketing materials, digital marketing campaigns, physical collateral development, and more. It would also assist in defraying costs associated with developing an FDI-specific sub strategy for the Pima County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

6. Office Space: \$8,000.00 - \$50,000.00 (one year)

- a. Pricing varies across different areas in Mexico. Our primary geographic focus areas include Baja CA, MX Aguascalientes, MX and Mexico City, MX. In Aguascalientes and Baja CA, appropriate accommodations per month per person can be between \$250-\$300, yielding ~\$3,000-~\$3,600/yr per person (if including space for two, ~\$6,000 to ~\$7,200 per year. In some cases, it can reach approximately \$10,000/person/year). In Mexico City, costs tend to be higher and of a broader range, ranging anywhere from \$300/month per person to approximately \$2,000/month per person (If including space for two, that can nearly exceed \$50,000/year). These numbers were produced based on research of coworking space in the area, as well as information provided by the AZ Commerce Authority. At minimum, it would be recommended to have a mailing address in any or all of these geographic areas.

Any combination of additional funding for these purposes would increase our effectiveness in attracting FDI and would also create the opportunity to appropriately staff our Economic Development Office and/or establish a full-time office presence in a/multiple strategic location(s) in Mexico, should the Board of Supervisors provide direction to do so.

Economic Development Staff are available at any time to answer questions or provide clarification on any item.

Thank you,

Professionally,

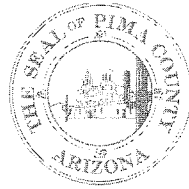
Heath S. Vescovi-Chiordi
Director, Pima County Economic Development

CC:

Attachment(s)

Carmine DeBonis, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Frank Dillon, Deputy Director of Economic Development

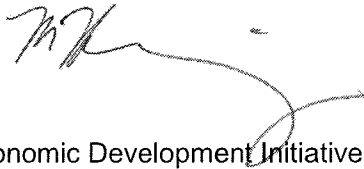
DR. MATT HEINZ
Supervisor
District 2



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district2@pima.gov

Pima County Board of Supervisors

To: Melissa Manriquez, Clerk of the Board
From: Matt Heinz, Supervisor, District 2
Date: April 10, 2025
RE: BOS Addendum Agenda 4/15/25: Economic Development Initiatives



Please add this item to the 4/15/25 Addendum:

Discussion/Direction/Action: Directing the Administrator to create a plan to (a) strengthen partnerships and opportunities for direct foreign investment from Mexican-based companies in Pima County, and (b) leverage partnerships with Southern Arizona business accelerators and other partners to help facilitate relocation to Pima County of Mexican companies and professionals to address critical workforce shortages in healthcare, engineering, and other critical sectors.

cc: Jan Leshner, County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Heath Vescovi-Chiordi, Director, Office of Economic Development