

# \$4.9M federal grant will help train nurses in Arizona

Phoenix Business Journal by Matt Haldane, Editorial Intern

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Five community organizations are sharing a \$4.9 million grant to enhance Arizona's health care workforce, providing career training for nurses and nurse assistants.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Education and Training Agency awarded the grant to the Arizona Diversity Business Development Center, which brought the organizations together to start Project MADE. The aim of the project is to address Arizona's shortage of acute care employees by recruiting and training nearly 700 workers for Banner Health.

When putting the proposal together, the business development center decided to focus on nursing because health care providers have had to increasingly rely on foreign workers in the U.S. on an H-1B visa, according to [Eduardo Castillo](#), president of the center.

"From a strategic point of view, we realized this was an arena that was worthy of pursuit," Castillo said.

The center assembled a team of organizations it thought would best be able to accomplish the goals of the proposal for the grant before it was ultimately narrowed down to five organizations.

Banner will identify the people within its organization it thinks will make good candidates for a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. Those participants will be educated at the Arizona State University College of Nursing.

To "fill the void" left behind by the Banner staff moving up, Castillo said Chicanos por la Causa and Maricopa Workforce Connection will work to identify new candidates looking to start careers in health care.

“The grant required that we help specifically the long term unemployed (and) returning vets and their spouses,” said [Amanda Bernal-Ransom](#), director of workforce development services at Chicanos por la Causa.

Chicanos por la Causa approached Banner Health and got the hospital on board, according to [Ed Oxford](#), senior vice president and chief talent officer at Banner Health.

“That excited me,” he said. “It was really exactly what we needed to do to fill in the needs we have.”

Oxford said Banner Health has previously worked with ASU to help shape the curriculum in a way that meets the needs of Arizona health care. “There’s a lot to learn before we can put a nurse out on the floor, taking care of our patients,” he said.

Besides just technical training, other goals of the program include retention and leadership seminars.

Banner is receiving nearly \$3 million of the grant money, Castillo said. The rest will be divided up among three of the organizations. Maricopa Workforce Connection will not be receiving any money from the grant, using its own funds to contribute to the effort.