

# Rio@Work

RIO SALADO COLLEGE



## Partnering for Workforce Success!



Rio Salado College has been partnering with corporations and government agencies in Educational Service Partnerships since 1990. Through a partnership with Rio Salado, your organization can access quality education and customized training to develop a more highly educated workforce.

Rio Salado's programs empower adults to earn certificates and degrees in a variety of fields, usually right at their places of employment.

### Benefits include:

- Customized industry-specific training
- Employees obtain new skills and knowledge
- Employees receive college credit for employer-based training
- Positive impact on employee recruitment and retention
- Credits can be applied toward certificate and degree programs

*To learn more about what an educational service partnership with Rio Salado College can do for your organization, contact Susan Lawrence, Director of Corporate and Government Programs, at 480-517-8512 or [susan.lawrence@riosalado.edu](mailto:susan.lawrence@riosalado.edu).*

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# Freedom Financial Network Partnership



In 2018 Rio partnered with Freedom Financial Network, a leader in online financial services providing millions of consumers with successful solutions for debt settlement, mortgage shopping and personal loans.

Freedom has more than 2,000 employees and anticipates hiring 1,000 more. They recently moved into two new buildings in Tempe to support this projected growth.

The company chose to partner with Rio Salado College because they thought Rio's Educational Service Partnership aligned with their core values of Care, Act with Integrity, Get Better, and Collaborate.

"Rio Salado has 40 years of success as the community college that puts their students first," said **Henri Dawes**, Director of Learning and Development for Freedom Financial Network.

"With classes that start every Monday, onsite learning and amazing partnerships with the private enterprise, working with Rio was a natural choice as another competitive edge for joining Freedom Financial Network."

Currently, Freedom Financial employees can earn college credit in two areas of internal company training: **Client Services** (10 credits) and **FDR Sales** (5 credits). Credits can be applied toward an associate degree and combined with other previously earned college credits.

"One of our core values is care, and we want each member of our team to have the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally," Dawes said. "The partnership with Rio Salado affords our new hire employees to earn college credits upon completion of specific training."

Dawes said that Freedom Financial values the opportunity for employee growth and education.

"We hope that employees will use their earned credits as a springboard into continuing their education," Dawes said. "We are firm believers of promoting talent from within, and the partnership between Rio and Freedom gives our employees another avenue for development."

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# Discover Financial Services Partnership



Rio Salado College has partnered with Discover Financial Services since 2000. Employees receive college credit for successfully completing extensive in-person workplace training programs that have been evaluated under the partnership.

Discover Financial Services loan officer **Kanyata Williams** completed her training in personal loans and earned 11 college credits and a **Certificate of Completion in Personal Loans: Customer Service**. Her instructor, Joseph Scidurlo convinced her to continue her education with Rio and complete an associate degree.

"Rio Salado has been a great college for me," said Williams, who has worked in the banking industry for 15 years. "There have been so many doors opened in the year I have been enrolled, including being inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society for two-year college students."

"I have had such a great experience at Rio Salado," she said. The instructors and the administration are phenomenal. They cheer you on and really want you to succeed."

Williams plans to transfer to Arizona State University for a bachelor's degree and pursue a career in law.

# Phoenix Regional Police Academy Partnership



Rio Salado College has partnered with the Phoenix Regional Police Academy for almost 30 years, playing an important role in the academic development of their recruits. Through the Educational Service Partnership, thousands of recruits have graduated from the Academy to become police officers.

Since 1999, Rio Salado has awarded 5,790 certificates of completion and 381 associate degrees to Phoenix Regional Police Academy graduates. Recently, Academy Class #506 completed 700+ hours of training to become certified officers for the State of Arizona.

By completing this training, these officers will begin their law enforcement career with 39 college credits and a Certificate of Completion in Law Enforcement Technology from Rio Salado College. Many officers take the extra step to attain an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Law Enforcement Technology.

"When I came on to the Phoenix Police Department, I was prior military and didn't have much college experience," said Jennifer LaRoque, commander with the Phoenix Regional Police Academy. "I never thought personally that I would obtain a college degree."

LaRoque learned about the academy's partnership with Rio Salado and decided to pursue her education and take advantage of the ability to earn college credit for workplace training.

"I earned 39 credit hours at Rio Salado to apply toward an associate degree. I then continued my education, earning a bachelor's degree, and attending law school." LaRoque said. She continued her education, earning a bachelor's degree, and attending law school.



Pictured: Graduates of Class #506 from the Phoenix Regional Police Academy

*"What's nice about Rio Salado is they offer classes that keep officers relevant in today's society," LaRoque said. "It gives them that value and education and helps them continue with their career."*

"It helped me not only personally, but also with the organization," LaRoque said. "Rio affords us an opportunity to get an education we may not have been able to afford prior to coming into this profession."

Rio Salado is proud of this partnership and its ability to provide police officers with the means to pursue higher learning and career advancement - in a cost-effective, timely way.

Although they only need a GED or high school diploma to start as a police officer, the minimum education requirement to promote to sergeant and earn substantially more money is 75 hours of college credit. The Rio Salado partnership with the law enforcement community has contributed to an officer's ability to earn more money based on education, job performance and promotion.

What's nice about Rio Salado is they offer classes that keep officers relevant in today's society," LaRoque said. "It gives them that value and education and helps them continue with their career."

# Cox Employees Earn College Credit at Work

Employees at Cox Communications receive an extra advantage when they complete their new hire training. They earn college credits at the same time from Rio Salado College, at no cost! These credits can be applied toward a certificate or degree.

The courses originated from Cox training manuals and are developed into a college curriculum by Rio Salado. The courses are then taught by Cox trainers who have been certified as adjunct faculty with the college.

*"We are really proud of the partnership that we have with Rio, it has stood the test of time, and continues to be extremely beneficial."*

According to Jim Barrier, training manager at Cox, the experience often gives employees a jumpstart to college.

Cox encourages employees to continue to earn a certificate or degree after the training through a tuition reimbursement plan.

"Those who do become a more well-rounded employee, which often leads to advancement and promotion," Barrier said.

This type of partnership supports employees, the organization and the community.



# City of Tempe Educational Partnership



Recruiting the best and brightest is only half of the story when it comes to maintaining a high-quality workforce. The other half is employee development. That is why the City of Tempe works with Rio Salado College to provide employees with continuing education and career growth opportunities.

The city has been encouraging life-long learning through educational partnerships since the late 90s and has more recently expanded its offerings to include bachelor's and post-baccalaureate degree courses.

Rio Salado College was awarded the Educational Partnership for the third time to provide an associate

degree to interested employees through an online cohort model. Rio offers almost every Monday start dates so students can begin the cohort with varying college credits and continue with the courses needed to graduate as quickly as possible. The employees never had to wait until the course they needed was offered.

*"The program with Rio Salado was tailored for my career and available personal time without the cost incurred in both out-of-pocket tuition and lost time wages," said Kominska, a fire engineer paramedic. "It took into account the education I had already completed and built upon it."*

Rio managed enrollment, textbooks, and pre-paid tuition for the cohort for the term of the partnership.

Cost and convenience are two of the reasons why City of Tempe employee Mike Kominska took part in the educational cohort.

"The program with Rio Salado was tailored for my career and available personal time without the cost incurred in both out-of-

pocket tuition and lost time wages," said Kominska, a Fire Engineer Paramedic. "It took into account the education I had already completed and built upon it."

Kominska said he felt some anxiety about starting classes after having been away from college for several years, but that proved to be short-lived.

"Rio's courses were well organized and challenging with realistic completion dates and coursework," Kominska said. "The program paid for tuition and materials to include textbooks, lab equipment, and online tutorial. This is as about risk-free and low-stress as it gets."

With an end-goal of creating a more skilled workforce, Rio Salado's educational partnerships benefit not only the local communities and organizations they partner with, but also the individual employees as well.

"I believe that a person never stops learning and Rio Salado has allowed me to expand my education and knowledge," Kominska said. "My education is not at an end, but the next step."