



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Rachael Myer Curley, DRA Collective  
602.956.8834, x 125  
[Rachael@DRACollective.com](mailto:Rachael@DRACollective.com)

The Precisionists, Inc.  
Media Contact: Patricia Pfarrer, 302.588.2353  
Business Opportunities: [info@theprecisionists.com](mailto:info@theprecisionists.com)  
Career Opportunities: [careers@theprecisionists.com](mailto:careers@theprecisionists.com)  
[www.theprecisionists.com/careers/](http://www.theprecisionists.com/careers/)

### **Governor Ducey announces innovative program supporting employment of individuals with autism; hundreds of jobs projected**

*Arizona Department of Economic Security, Salt River Project (SRP) and Mobile Mini are first to join forces with The Precisionists, Inc. (TPI), providing life-changing opportunities; others to join soon*

**Phoenix, AZ** (Feb. 5, 2019) – Governor Doug Ducey, SRP, the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) and **First Place® AZ** today announced the creation of an innovative program, known as the “Phoenix Precision Project,” providing employment opportunities for adults with autism. The program, established in collaboration with **The Precisionists, Inc.** (TPI), a Wilmington, Delaware-based company that creates jobs for individuals across a broad range of disabilities, will provide jobs for hundreds of local adults with autism and other different abilities over the next three to five years.

Charter members of the Phoenix Precision Project will utilize The Precisionists’ innovative disability employment model in a number of areas of their businesses, including IT and administrative services. The first three organizations to participate are the Arizona Department of Economic Security, SRP and Mobile Mini.

“When properly assessed, trained and employed, people with autism and other developmental disabilities are high-performing in critical and challenging jobs, such as administrative business functions, software testing and data analytics,” says Ernie Dianastasis, CEO of The Precisionists. “Considering that 75-80 percent of people with autism in the country are either unemployed or underemployed, we are making a true difference in engaging a significant, untapped and high-performing labor force right here in the Greater Phoenix area. I am thrilled to be working with innovative and pioneering organizations like Salt River Project, Mobile Mini and the State of Arizona.”

“Arizona is a place where opportunity for all means just that,” says Arizona Governor Doug Ducey. “With this announcement from The Precisionists, Arizona is helping fulfill our commitment to empower all Arizonans with meaningful opportunities to work for individuals with disabilities. Thank you to all of our community partners and stakeholders who are working with Arizona to make this initiative a success and joining with us to make Arizona an Employment First state.”



First Place AZ, a nonprofit real estate and community developer, led the recruitment of The Precisionists to the Valley over the past 22 months. “The Precisionists is providing unique employment solutions that complement the innovative housing options and community opportunities we are developing,” says Denise D. Resnik, Founder and President/CEO of First Place AZ and Co-Founder of the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC). “Together, these offerings place Phoenix on the national forefront of empowering individuals with autism and other neuro-diversities to live more independently in a very supportive community.”

“Employment brings with it a sense of fulfillment and independence, and the State of Arizona is committed to ensuring all individuals are able to reach their potential,” says Michael Traylor, Director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security. “This project exemplifies the opportunities DES provides to individuals with disabilities within our communities, and we are thrilled to partner with The Precisionists and First Place AZ to fulfill our shared objectives.”

“Good people with diverse skills should be able to find work in the fastest-growing county in the nation,” says Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Chucri. “When governments, businesses like The Precisionists, and nonprofits like First Place work together, we build a Maricopa County where there is truly opportunity for all.”

“Although in the early stages, we have already found the opportunity to partner with TPI to be invaluable as we provide meaningful employment and fill an important work need within our organization,” says Mike Hummel, SRP General Manager and CEO. “Our partnership with TPI is one way SRP is achieving a diverse team to build a better company and be a stronger community partner.”

“At Mobile Mini, we are committed to our core values, one of which is ‘People Make it Happen.’ We firmly believe that both a diverse workforce and an inclusive environment produce the best results. We are excited to be partnering on this project and look forward to welcoming our newest faces,” says Mark Krivoruchka, Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Mobile Mini.

With the launch of the Phoenix Precision Project, TPI is making a major commitment to Greater Phoenix and the surrounding community through the creation of a new Innovation & Technology Center (ITC), scheduled to open in the first half of 2019. Site selection is currently in progress. TPI plans to secure 10 clients from a variety of sectors in 2019.

Participants in the program are assessed, trained and employed by The Precisionists and carry out project-based work, including software development, software testing, database analytics, cybersecurity, back-office accounting, data entry and auditing reports. Some of these tasks will be performed on-site at charter member companies’ locations; others will be performed at TPI’s Innovation & Technology Center (ITC).

The Precisionists’ new ITC is expected to create more than 500 Arizona jobs for adults with autism and other special abilities within the next three to five years—and about 1,000 total by 2025, according to GPEC’s economic impact analysis.

As part of the program, charter members are identifying additional companies that expand this employment model more broadly throughout Greater Phoenix, further supporting The Precisionists’ goal of employing 10,000 people with disabilities in the U.S. by 2025.



“When we stop focusing on the disability, we start to see the true potential of the human spirit,” says Chris Camacho, President and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council. “The Precisionists’ program is not only building our economy through providing employment to a skilled population, they are delivering hope and opportunity to our entire workforce.”

“This program will help make our Phoenix region a national leader in innovative disability employment, a business and community asset we can all be proud of,” says Todd Sanders, President and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. “It further distinguishes the Greater Phoenix area as the perfect place to establish and grow a business.”

The First Place Global Leadership Institute’s Maricopa County IDA Center for Education, Training & Employment focuses on fostering jobs and vocational positions for First Place–Phoenix residents and the broader community and aims to facilitate the creation of those 1,000 Arizona jobs forecast by 2025.

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#### ***About The Precisionists, Inc.***

*The Precisionists, Inc. (TPI), a Benefit Corporation, is a national company focused on providing industry best practices for delivering administrative and technology services by building teams that include individuals with disabilities. This approach enables The Precisionists to meet each customer’s specific needs and to deliver projects with the highest degree of productivity. The Precisionists, headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware, is dedicated to creating jobs for individuals with disabilities in all the markets it serves. Learn more at [theprecisionists.com](http://theprecisionists.com).*

#### ***About First Place<sup>®</sup> AZ***

*First Place AZ is a nonprofit organization advancing innovative residential options for adults with autism and other special abilities. First Place is creating replicable residential and post-secondary education models that promote collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, serving as a catalyst for advancing public policy focused on housing solutions for special populations. First Place celebrates neuro-diversity, independent living and the belief that housing options for people with autism and other special abilities should be as bountiful as they are for everyone else. First Place–Phoenix, the nonprofit’s first new property, opened in 2018. Leasing is underway. View the 2016 PBS NewsHour segments at [“Giving Adults with Autism the Skills to Build Independent Lives”](#) and [“How Phoenix Became the Most Autism-Friendly City in the World.”](#) Learn more at [firstplaceaz.org](http://firstplaceaz.org).*