

STATE OF NEVADA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD BARRIERS
AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 23, 2024 - 2:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Link

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YzEyZDIzODEtZjA2ZS00Mzg2LWJiN2MtNDZjMWNmZTM2YTEw%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%227f623176-c126-427b-afd6-ff48c73468b7%22%7d

Meeting ID: 218 391 469 161

Passcode: ReLbSd

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Ken Evans (Chair), Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner (Vice Chair), Jerrie Merritt, George Gault, Kevin Landry, Michael Yoder, Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, David Schmidt

Absent: Derrick Gyamfi, Crystal Slaughter, David Dreibelbis, Kam Green

Also present: Katie Gilbertson

1. CALL TO ORDER - OPENING REMARKS

Chair Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed participants.

2. ROLL CALL – CONFIRMATION OF A QUORUM

Katie Gilbertson took roll call and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

3. VERIFICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE POSTING

Ms. Gilbertson affirmed that the agenda and notice of the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Subcommittee meeting on October 23, 2024, was posted pursuant to Nevada's Open Meeting Law, NRS 241.020.

4. FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT(S) NOTICE

Chair Evans opened the first period of public comment. There were none.

5. *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – Approval of July 24, 2024, minutes

Chair Evans called for any discussion on the July 24, 2024, meeting minutes. **It was moved by Kevin Landry and seconded by Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert to approve the July 24, 2024, minutes. The motion passed.**

6. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Data Update on Underserved Populations

Chair Evans recognized Chief Economist of DETR, Mr. David Schmidt, to share data updates on the underserved populations. Before he turned the floor over to Mr. Schmidt, he noted for the record that early on, the committee focused on underserved populations, specifically African American males in southern Nevada, Latinx males in northern Nevada, differently abled individuals statewide, and single mothers with elementary-aged children across the state. These were the three main target groups of which the committee also made it a point to periodically check in for updates on employment data for these groups.

David Schmidt started by sharing data on the slight softening in labor market conditions for September. This includes:

- Employment Growth at 2.1%
- Unemployment at 5.6%
- Participation Rate – 62.7%
- Hourly Wages – 4.2%

Mr. Schmidt stated that currently we are ranked 9th in the country for job growth. Adding one of the impacts being from the closure of the Mirage within the last couple of months.

He then touched on the data for:

- Leisure and construction being down over the month
- Unemployment remains elevated
- Most unemployment rates are not driven by job loss (rather, it includes workers who are employed that are re-entering the labor market, first time workers, or workers who quit their prior employment).
- Job loss unemployment rising in the states
- Unemployment by reason - path
- Hires, openings, layoffs, quitting, are down
- Unemployment Insurance duration and exhaustion rising
- Unemployment claims still relatively low to employment
- Claims that are focused on typical industries (such as construction, retail trade, logistics, temp & admin support, and leisure)
- Statewide level employment forecasts – Current growth and annualized long-term projections

Mr. Schmidt previewed the release of the updated 2023 one-year data American Community Survey. The ACS surveys thousands of households, giving Nevada a much clearer picture with greater accuracy. This provides a flexible way to look at data by region, even in smaller or more rural areas.

He referenced an excel workbook that was provided for the committee in the meeting materials and prepared to provide a quick summarization. The spreadsheet is based on two of the three criteria for identifying high unemployment groups from AB 354, passed during the 2017 legislative session. It identifies groups where:

1. The unemployment rate is at least 4 percentage points higher than the overall population in that area, or
2. The unemployment rate is more than double the area's overall rate.

There is a third criterion in the legislation that requires higher rates for three consecutive years. However, changes in definitions over time can make the ACS data less consistent, which affects whether a group is included or has three full years of data. Also, since these are census-designated places, the area names and boundaries may change slightly over time.

Moving on in the workbook, he explained row 22 displayed nothing but zeros, due to insufficient data, then began explaining further in the table on data:

- For women with pre-school aged children
- The share of the labor force
- The labor force participation rate

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Gardner asked, “If the data was able to determine any real changes in the rates for this population and whether there have been noticeable improvements or decline over time?”

David Schmidt responded, “The benefit of using these specific city designations instead of a census tracts or zip codes is that the Census publishes the annual data, making it easier to track changes each year.” He added that he would share charts for 2022 with the committee through Ms. Gilbertson.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner inquired, “Based on what is known about job growth and available opportunities, is this group having trouble finding a good job match for their needs or are they not engaging with the workforce?”

David Schmidt answered, “The participation rates for women with children under six are generally only slightly lower than the overall population, by 5 to 10 percentage points. Unemployment rates are also similar, and recent data shows improvements are likely due to the recovering economy.”

Chair Evans speculated, “Looking at the chart for the North Las Vegas area, it appears that this group almost has double the unemployment rate compared to the overall population.”

David Schmidt pointed out the high unemployment section of the table. Stating “North Las Vegas is the only place where women with young children show up. Their unemployment rate is 9.2%, which is about 5 percentage points higher than the overall rate of 4.2% for adults aged 20 to 64 in that area.”

Chair Evans explained the reason he pointed out this area, was so that it may be discussed on a later agenda item. Noting that the key part of the subcommittee’s role is to dig into disparities like this and figure out what is causing them. Such as the anecdotally higher population of communities of color, which alone isn’t the reason, but why the focus should align with the targeted populations and how the workforce system can help address it.

Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert wondered if there was a way to measure what percentage of the population in North Las Vegas was new to the state, as it is a big factor in Southern Nevada.

David Schmidt replied that the American Community Survey has detailed data that can help track whether people have moved, including if they live in the same home as a year ago. While it's hard to get this info specifically for North Las Vegas, you can analyze a slightly larger area within Clark County.

Mr. Schmidt continued with his presentation sharing data on unemployment and labor force percentage rates for:

- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Two or more races
- Ages 20-24
- Ages 25-29
- Individuals with education less than high school
- Individuals with high school education or equivalent
- Individuals with disabilities

George Gault was interested in knowing if retirees were included in this group, since about 40% of Mesquite’s population is over 65 and they are not looking for work.

David Schmidt indicated that retirees were not included in the education population data, which focuses on ages 25 to 64. However, in broader labor force data, retirees are included, with growing numbers of about 20% of the population, that are impacting overall labor force participation rates. Mr. Schmidt concluded his presentation and offered to address any other specific items for the subcommittee in a future presentation if needed, as well as answer any further questions.

Chair Evans thanked Mr. Schmidt for his presentation then went back to a couple of slide in the presentation where he emphasized the group’s role in improving and promoting the workforce system and asked whether the system is effectively guiding people away from oversaturated sectors and toward areas with growing job opportunities. Suggesting using data to evaluate the system’s effectiveness in doing so.

David Schmidt detailed that the spike in unemployment claims in certain industries, like construction or education, often reflect normal seasonal patterns rather than widespread layoffs or reduced demand. These fluctuations are expected and part of how unemployment insurance helps maintain workers' connection to the labor force.

They also involved community reviewers to provide feedback on the proposals, which should lead to better-informed decisions. Lastly, the contracting process was slow, and it required a lot of work to finalize contracts on both sides.

Chair Evans concluded by expressing that the goal for this subcommittee, larger board, and the entire system is to be proactive rather than reactive, and to be mindful of all Nevadans we aim to serve. He thanked Mr. Schmidt for the great presentation and the subcommittee members for their follow-up and questions, then moved on to the next agenda item.

7. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Presentation on UNLV NTIA Grant Proposal
Chair Evans introduced Dr. Maria Marinch, Executive Director of the National Institute for the Advancement of Education.

Dr. Maria Marinch thanked the Chair for the introduction and shared that she would briefly go over information about the institute, as well as discuss the grant which UNLV has applied for that would offer great opportunities for partnerships that would align well with the work of the committee.

She began by providing background for the National Institute for the Advancement of Education. It was created three years ago by the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents. Its mission is to transform education through innovation, excellence, evidence, and equity. While it's based in the College of Education, the Institute works across different disciplines and institutions. Right now, they're focused on local and state issues, but the long-term goal is to grow into a national and international leader in educational innovation. Some of the framework of the institute includes:

- Supporting innovative research
- Growing an educator pipeline
- Informing educational policy
- Developing partnerships

The institute works on a community-based fellowship model which has:

- Research scholar
- Research faculty
- Educational practitioner

Currently they are working on a few projects in assessing the impact of RR services offering academic interventions and support, that involve working with the city of Henderson and are exploring opportunities with the city of Las Vegas, as well as North Las Vegas. These projects include:

- Assessing the impact of wrap-around services offering academic interventions and support
- An examination of novice teachers persistence trends
- Comprehensive model for teacher retention
- An innovator learning center
- IT workforce talent pipeline project

The institute has a variety of grants that focus on teacher retention, preparation, special education, as well as pathways for paraprofessionals to become teachers.

This was the perfect segue for Dr. Marinch to detail the NTIA Grant which stands for National

Telecommunications and Information Administration. In the past, they've released several calls for proposals for grants focused on closing the digital gap and promoting digital equity.

The most recent competition closed a few weeks ago, and UNLV submitted a proposal. The grant application has been completed, and they hope to hear back from the NTIA in the spring. The project they applied for was Bridging the Digital Divide, empowering Las Vegas through broadband access, digital literacy, and financial inclusion. This project aims to address critical barriers to digital equity in Las Vegas by:

- Enhancing broadband access
- Providing access to technology and
- Improving digital and financial literacy
- As well as life skills aligned with community and workforce needs

The three main activities for the project will serve diverse communities that include:

- Low-income families receiving state benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Veterans; aging individuals; incarcerated individuals or individuals recently released from incarceration
- Along with underrepresented minority populations

The activities will include adaption and support for individuals with a language barrier, including English learners and those with low levels of literacy.

As Dr. Marinch previously mentioned, this is a three-part project. The way the grant works, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) could choose to fund all three parts or just one. They include:

Project 1: Digital and financial literacy, as well as life skills courses, that will be developed and delivered in partnership with municipalities, state agencies, workforce development entities and community organizations.

Project 2: The development of broadband infrastructure on the UNLV campus and the expansion of Eduroam into the Las Vegas Valley, ensuring reliable internet access for underserved populations

Project 3: The expansion of the UNLV device assistance program, as well as direct distribution of devices to program participants, to ensure they have access to the necessary technology.

If approved for the grant, they already have strong internal collaboration with UNLV and would need to build a strong community network with committees, organizations, and agencies to help connect individuals to the resources this grant provides. The project would be led by their VP of Digital Transformation, Gan Owner, and Dr. Jonathan Hilberg from the College of Education.

Dr. Marinch also stated that on the professional development side, a unique part of the project is creating adaptive and targeted training. The idea is that while topics like digital literacy or life skills are useful for many, different communities have different needs. Instead, they want to offer flexible course options where individuals can choose what's most relevant to them. They're also working with case workers and community organizations to make sure the examples and content reflect the real experiences of each group. Even if they don't get the grant, they're already exploring this approach with state agencies.

She concluded her presentation by mentioning that they plan to set up advisory boards to stay connected with the community by spring, when they will reach out for help from the committee members in connecting them with organizations or individuals that may want to help support the project in the following areas:

- Research projects
- Grants
- Fellowships
- Strategic planning support
- Programmatic support
- Dissemination Strategies
- Community partnerships

Chair Evans emphasized the opportunity to bring resources to Nevada and encouraged connecting with potential advisory board members or spreading awareness through stakeholders. The approach was praised for being adaptive and community-focused, aligning with the system's goal of cultural and professional competence.

8. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – King of Jewels Update

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner asked if Dr. Maria Marinch joined the earlier discussion identifying three key populations: women with children, individuals with special needs, and the disproportionately unemployed. She inquired how existing or planned programs might align with workforce development goals for these groups and how support can be provided.

Dr. Maria Marinch answered there is strong alignment with the identified communities, especially in tailoring programs to meet their specific needs. The team is exploring flexible options like asynchronous and non-in-person training, and holding sessions in accessible community locations. They emphasize the importance of asking communities what they need rather than assuming, to ensure programs are truly supportive and impactful.

Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert appreciated the focus on community input and customization, noting that systems are often too top-down. She mentioned UCLA's asset mapping as a helpful resource and expressed interest in continuing the conversation offline. They offered support to ensure community voices are included in program development.

Chair Evans added that UNLV is a key academic partner, especially in Southern Nevada, and a valuable stakeholder in advancing workforce development efforts.

Michael Yoder asked in chat “Is there an ESL component to the soft skills training?”

Dr. Maria Marinch shared that materials will be translated into at least Spanish and one other language, with ESL support integrated as needed. The goal is to not only offer courses in multiple languages but also ensure language learners have access to support services. Resource lists will be shared carefully, pointing to ESL offerings at colleges, universities, and community organizations.

Chair Evans noted that collaboration is already underway—one example being a research project by Elizabeth Collins, funded through an NPWR grant. This stems from earlier outreach to the academic community for research support on the longitudinal system. This effort reflects ongoing and growing cooperation.

9. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Strategic Plan Implementation and execution

Chair Evans opened the agenda item announcing the subcommittee aims to identify community organizations working with target populations, track their efforts, share lessons learned, and explore ways to scale and support their work through workforce development stakeholders.

The King of Jewels group, led by Sean Tory and Nick Matthews, focuses on mentoring African American males in Southern Nevada, though they serve a broader population as needed. Active since 2016, their mission is to empower Black and Brown youth through mentoring, life skills, networking, and family engagement. They've impacted thousands, with increasing enrollment due to their engaging approach.

They meet with students three times a month and reach about 150 Clark County students per session. Programming includes emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and college/career readiness. The

subcommittee asked them to identify a cohort for tracking outcomes related to both their standard programming and added workforce development or entrepreneurship exposure, especially for the high-need 16–24 age group.

The King of Jewels group’s mentorship program meets monthly to track progress and explore potential pathways for students. They engage about 67 in mentorship and 25 per session. A key part of their work is career exploration tours, mainly within the local business community, with some out-of-state exposure. Recent tours included a visit to the Raiders’ open practice, where students learned about various business roles, leading to paid internships and job opportunities. This hands-on approach helps engage middle and high school-aged young men of color by providing access to career paths and paid opportunities.

The King of Jewels group actively engages the business community and provides career exposure, including a VIP tour to Warner Brothers Studio with 25 youth participants. Notably, one youth secured employment before graduating high school. Key stats include 100% high school graduation, 80% employment for those 17+, and the introduction of youth to over 150 careers. Participation increased by 50%, demonstrating the program’s success and strong word-of-mouth impact.

The goal is for the subcommittee to identify other community organizations working with targeted populations and explore ways to support them through collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

10. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Leadership transition discussion and items for next agenda, next steps, and concluding remarks

Chair Evans opened the agenda item announcing there will be a transition to new leadership, with Hugh Anderson as chair and the speaker as vice chair. The strategic planning effort will continue, focusing on raising awareness and making an impact, particularly through collaborations with groups like King of Jewels. The need for this work remains clear.

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner spoke of key progress that includes the establishment of the Westside Education and Training Center in partnership with CSN and the approval of a career connection hub.

Moving forward, the committee plans to review ongoing projects, including King of Jewels, and invest in 2-3 additional initiatives with regional and statewide representation. There will be a continued focus on asset mapping and tracking progress with performance metrics and dashboarding, leveraging existing tools like Workforce Connections’ ROI dashboard. The committee will refine asset mapping and further analyze state and local initiatives.

Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert inquired whether a written sub-strategic plan should be developed to document the subcommittee’s work, or if that would be too extensive.

Chair Evans agreed that creating a written sub-strategic plan would be beneficial to align the subcommittee’s efforts with other subcommittees and the broader board strategy. This would support focus, impact, and long-term sustainability.

11. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Evans called for a second round of public comment. There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:12 pm.