

JOE LOMBARDO  
*Governor*

## STATE OF NEVADA

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### DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NEVADA COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS

*"The central advisory body advocating and providing a voice for Nevada's minority community."*

### **MEETING MINUTES**

Agency: Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs

Date: January 9, 2025

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Hybrid meeting – 3300 W. Sahara Ave., Suite 430, Tahoe Room, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102 & Webex (Remote technology system)

#### **MEETING AGENDA**

##### **1. OPENING**

- A. Call to order & Roll call  
The meetings call to order at 9:30 am by Chair Gabriela Wyett

Commission Members in Attendance: Gabriela Wyett, Kim Le, Gina Jackson, Nic Steele, Demetrius Ware, Julio Jimenez-Wens.

Commission Members Absent: Juanny Romero, Nina Gallagher.

Department Leadership & Staff in Attendance:

Jessica Guerra, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Nevada Attorney General  
Angie Rojas, Management Analyst, Department of Business and Industry

Members of the Public Present:

Nadine Kienhoefer, Sabrina Schnur.

- B. Silent Meditation & Pledge of Allegiance, conducted by Chair Wyett  
C. Land Acknowledgements, conducted by Commissioner Jackson

##### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT (1<sup>st</sup> Period)**

None

##### **3. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- A. Approval of December 6, 2024, meeting minutes  
Commissioner Steele moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Ware seconded.  
Motioned carried unanimously.
- B. Pending Items from December 6, 2024, meeting
- Mid-Year subcommittee reports
    - Healthcare  
Healthcare Changes in Southern Nevada: Focus on Minorities, Veterans, and Disabled Citizens

Southern Nevada has experienced significant changes in its healthcare system over recent years, driven by population growth, demographic shifts, and policy changes.

**\*\*Key Changes\*\***

1. **\*\*Expansion of healthcare facilities\*\***: New hospitals and clinics have been established to meet rising demand.
2. **\*\*Implementation of telemedicine services\*\***: Increased use of telehealth options has improved access to care.
3. **\*\*Increased focus on culturally competent care\*\***: Training programs for healthcare providers have been enhanced to better serve diverse populations.

**\*\*Statistics for Specific Groups\*\***

**- \*\*Minorities\*\***

- Hispanic population: Grew by **\*\*70%\*\*** between 2010 and 2020.
- African American population: As of 2022, about an average of 10% remain uninsured compared to the 7% of White residents.
- Asian American population: Updated statistics for access to primary healthcare for Asian Americans in Nevada show both growth and gaps. Nevada's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population has seen significant increases, with over 9.9% of Nevada's population identifying as AAPI as of 2020. However, the "model minority" myth, often associated with AAPI communities, can obscure the health disparities faced by subgroups within the population. Many AAPI individuals, especially those in lower-income brackets or recent immigrants, struggle with access to culturally competent healthcare services

**- \*\*Veterans\*\***

- Recent data shows that the number of veterans receiving care increased by 2.8%, with 63,409 veterans treated in one fiscal year. Additionally, outpatient visits rose by over 18,000 compared to the previous year.

**- \*\*LGBTQIA+ Community\*\***

- Nationally, about 7.1% of the U.S. population identifies as LGBTQIA+, but this group faces disproportionately higher rates of health issues, including mental health challenges, HIV/AIDS, obesity, cancer, and more. In Nevada, specific statewide statistics on LGBTQIA+ access to primary healthcare are not widely available, but the national trends apply here, especially as this population continues to grow, particularly among younger generations like Generation Z. Programs supporting LGBTQIA+ health have expanded, particularly in areas like mental health and gender-affirming care. Mental

health services for LGBTQIA+ individuals have seen improvements, but about 60% of LGBTQ youth who sought mental healthcare in the past year were unable to access it

- **\*\*Disabled Citizens\*\***

- Percentage of the population with disabilities (2022): In 2022, approximately 26% of Nevada adults aged 18 and older reported having some form of disability
- Accessibility improvements in healthcare facilities: Around 25% of healthcare facilities in Nevada are now fully compliant with ADA standards. However, further efforts are still needed to ensure complete accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Employment rate increase among disabled individuals: Since 2018, employment for people with disabilities in Nevada has risen by about 2.3%. Despite this growth, the employment rate for disabled individuals remains lower than that of non-disabled populations, highlighting ongoing challenges

**\*\*Challenges and Future Directions\*\***

1. **\*\*Addressing healthcare disparities among minority populations\*\***: Continued efforts are needed to ensure equitable access to care.
2. **\*\*Improving mental health services for veterans\*\***: Expanding services and reducing stigma around mental health issues remain crucial.
3. **\*\*Enhancing accessibility and specialized care for disabled citizens\*\***: Ongoing assessments and improvements in healthcare infrastructure are necessary to better serve this population.

I continue to do work with Community Partners to not only disseminate information but to continually offer my knowledge and expertise in building relationships with the Commission.

A collective effort helps to improve the overall health of the state. There are several state agencies who offer services that are similar if not the same and who focus primarily on statistics.

My goal as a member of this community is to drive action to impact the lives of others through improving efforts in healthcare. This starts by taking our conversations and implementing a CALL-TO-ACTION PLAN.

- **Nevada Housing Conference Update**

On October 16 & 17, 2024, I attended the Nevada Housing Coalition annual housing conference which was held at the Nugget in Sparks, Nevada. The conference was well attended with breakout sessions and mainstage discussions on multiple housing topics.

On October 16, 2024, a panel discussion was held with Claudia Aiken from Solution Lab, Miles Dickson from GrantLab, and Meredith Levine from the Guinn Center. The discussion revolved around leveraging research and data to inform solutions. In this discussion they explored how robust research and data can drive impactful policy solutions. One of the topics discussed was AB310; the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the Nevada Housing Coalition collaborated with state Assemblywoman Monroe-Moren, who sponsored the bill which was passed and a state appropriation of \$30 million was signed by Governor Lambardo. Here is a news article that provides information from when the bill was being signed by the governor.

The first breakout session on the 16th was focused on Direct Rental Assistance (DRA) which is gaining momentum among housing authorities throughout the country. DRA is similar to the HUD's housing voucher program, with one key difference, which is that

the housing subsidy will be paid directly to the family rather than the landlord. The panel speakers included a HUD representative as well as Dr. Hillary Lopez from the Reno Housing Authority. The Reno Housing Authority is in the early stages of piloting a DRA program and most of the discussion was focused on early data from the Philadelphia Housing authority that has been using this program on a smaller scale. So far the data seems to show a positive outcome. The reasoning behind this program is in part to take away the stigma of Housing Choice Vouchers.

The second breakout session was focused on Housing = Health, Well-Being and Hope. Stable, healthy, affordable housing is a cornerstone of community well-being, profoundly influencing both physical and mental health. The five person panel had an open discussion on how affordable housing not only provides shelter but also promotes holistic well-being, reduces healthcare costs and fosters hope. One of the panelists spoke on the Stockton, California study on the SEED program that provided \$500 to 125 families with no strings attached and the impact it made. The key findings of this program demonstrated an increase in employment, productivity, well-being, a reduction in stress, anxiety and depression and the stipend going towards paying off debt and household necessities. NPR covered this story and there is a 25-page white page outlining the findings. In addition, a continued discussion on DRA was made and how it can have a positive impact on families as well as the discussion on Moving to Work (MTW) Funds was discussed and how it can be beneficial for Housing Authorities. MTW is a demonstration program for public housing authorities (PHAs) that provides them the opportunity to design and test innovative, locally designed strategies that use federal dollars more efficiently, help residents find employment and become self-sufficient, and increase housing choices for low-income families. On the HUD website, you can find more details of this designation and funding.

**The second day** kicked off with words on gratitude and housing from Madline Burak from Governor Lambardo's office; Mark Amodei, Congressman for Nevada; Adrienne Babbitt, field Office Director for HUD; Ashley Jonkey, Director of Government Relations for Elevance Health; and Dr. Tiffany Manuel, keynote speaker who provided encouraging words on the work that housing organizations and their staff are doing while being understaff and underfunded.

**On the second day first breakout session** the topic was Digging Into the Nevada's Supportive Housing Opportunities and Community Round Table. This was an interactive roundtable that highlighted various efforts currently happening related to supportive housing statewide. They also covered strategies for sustainable solutions for supportive housing. The roundtable consisted of Juawana Grant from the Nevada Housing Division, Brooke Page from CSH, Catrina Peters from Washoe County, and Dagny Stapleton from Clark County Community Housing Office.

This session provided some information on health insurance companies entering the supportive housing space, some of which are providing grants to non-profits to assist their health insurance clients with rental assistance, bus passes to get to doctor or other appointments and services that will enhance their life.

In addition, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) was a topic that was talked about for which funding was received and which organizations received the federally funded block grant. These funds are allocated to designated Community Action Agencies to support services for low-income families, alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty in under resourced communities to attain skills and knowledge to achieve self-sufficiency.

Services are based on local community needs and include, but not limited to, Child & Youth Services, Education Services, Emergency Services, Employment Services, Food & Nutrition Services, Housing Services, Senior Services and Transportation Services

In Nevada, 12 agencies have been designated to receive CSBG funds. These agencies formed the Nevada Community Action Association to network with one another, develop strategic plans to address rural and urban poverty in our state, and provide training opportunities to member agencies. To learn more, visit the state's website for more information.

**On the second day, the final breakout session** was Planning for Transit-Oriented Development. The discussion was moderated by Michelle Larime from the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada. One of the discussions centered on the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan and how it's a guide for improving the future of Southern Nevada. The plan has a focus on three main areas: boosting the economy, investing in complete communities, and increasing transportation.

Two major projects in Southern Nevada that are in progress are the Reimagined Boulder Highway that is in its initial stage. This project came from the need of increased traffic and the growth in this section of Henderson and Las Vegas. The Maryland Parkway Project will connect people to jobs, education, medical services, downtown, shopping, neighborhood services, and more. This corridor is home to 63,000 residents, 109,000 jobs and 9,000 transit riders daily.

The conference concluded with community leaders discussing how we can dig deeper into key challenges like preservation of affordable housing, innovative financing models, energy-efficient housing solutions, and creating equitable communities that ensure access for all Nevadans. It was mentioned that collaboration across sectors is key to achieving long-term housing affordability and sustainability in Nevada.

There were many great discussions held at this conference, and although I have highlighted some of the information shared, we still have a need for affordable housing in Nevada. Nevada lacks federal funding which can help with vital public assets, programs and services. In fiscal year 2022, Nevada ranked in the bottom 20% in 5 of the 10 largest funding categories. In the same fiscal year, we received approximately \$800 less per person than the national average and we received among the least federal grant funding despite having some of the highest needs.

In fiscal years 2022 – 2024, Nevada ranked the lowest in HUD funding in the region. Grant programs for affordable housing include Community Development Block Grants, HOME investment partnership Program, National Housing Trust Fund, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities.

We know that Low-Income Tax Credits are essential to affordable housing finance and currently produces approximately 90% of all affordable rental housing and this needs to continue to house our low-income individuals and families. In addition, Nevada's nonprofit sectors are undersized, underfunded and understaffed, which places a burden in many nonprofits where staff members are having to take on multiple roles to provide the needed services that the community needs.

In conclusion the **Guinn Center**, Nevada's only statewide, nonpartisan policy research center, shared a study overview where they see that housing affordability is at an all-time high, that there is a pronounced shortage of available homes which has a negative impact on families' well-being and economic security. The Guinn Center will be releasing a full report on housing by the end of November 2024.

- Strategic plan continuation  
Commissioner Ware requested the strategic plan to be pushed to the next meeting. Commissioner Steele moved to approve; Commissioner Jimenez-Wenz seconded. Motioned carried unanimously.

- By-laws review for changes

Chair Wyett went over the steps she took to update the By-laws and asked DAG, Jessica Guerra, to go over some of the changes that were made.

MA Rojas reminded Chair Wyett that the Commission needed to do a reading of the changes before moving to approved.

The Commission decided to move the reading until the next meeting.

Commissioner Steele moved to move, Commissioner Le seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT (2<sup>nd</sup> Period)**

Additional comments were added to the Housing Conference updates and to the Diversity and Inclusion Liaison initiative.

**5. NEXT MEETING**

March 13, 2025

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Jimenez-Wenz moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Jackson seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.