

Summary of 2024 Research Recommendations

This document summarizes the policy recommendations that come from the grant-funded research projects of SFY 2024. The full reports will provide more detail and context to these recommendations.

Full reports can be found here: <https://npwr.nv.gov/Research>

I. A Comprehensive Examination of Nevada's Healthcare Industry Sector's Value Network and Supply Chain

- 1) Mental Health Network Improvement: 86.9% of Nevadans, and 100% of rural Nevadans, reside in Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. The lack of coverage for children with mental health issues is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- 2) Increase Home Healthcare Services and Assisted Living: 69.7% of Nevadans live in Health Professional Shortage Areas. Nevada lacks in-home services, crisis services, intensive care coordination, respite, and therapeutic foster care. Projections of state trends show that by 2030, Nevadans over the age of 65 will make up 20.3% of the total population. This increase in the aging population will increase the demand for home care and assisted living.
- 3) Increase the Number of Active Physicians: Nevada is ranked very low nationally for active physicians, primary care physicians, and general surgeons per 100,000 population. The state has a need for more active licensed physicians, especially considering the increase in the aging population. Recent changes to the state's malpractice law, an increase in the statute of limitations, and an increase in the compensation cap, discourage physicians from practicing here, and that in turn could increase insurance costs.
- 4) Status of Nursing in Nevada: Nevada has a lower-than-average number of nurses. Over the past five years, there has been a significant increase in total nurses and nurses per 100,000 population. This trend would have to continue in order to meet the population's needs.
- 5) Public and Private Entity Information: Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR) data is currently specific to records connected to public universities and institutions. The NPWR data should include records from all educational institutions including private universities. This would be essential in understanding the state's Healthcare industry sector workforce.
- 6) Churchill Area Recommendations: With no medical center, it is suggested to follow the statewide recommendations above. Specifically, a program that

is focused on telehealth medicine for mental health appointments could be vital to correcting statewide compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- 7) Western Nevada Recommendations: The Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada should seek to improve its educational quality and enrollment. This will help meet the need for skilled healthcare workers. It is recommended that the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada increase the residency, retention, incentive and opportunities for its in-state physicians and nurses. The addition of more specialized residency programs could help to retain specialized physicians.
- 8) Las Vegas Area Recommendations: The Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance should seek to increase its medical device manufacturing capabilities. Additional investment into the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine will help to address the physician shortage in the region.
- 9) Lincoln Area Recommendations: Telehealth is the favorable option in rural areas like this, but the required infrastructure is not present. It is recommended that the Lincoln County Regional Development Authority improve its telecommunication capability to better support the growth of telehealth services within the region's boundaries.
- 10) Nevada 95-80 Area Recommendations: This rural region should seek to increase investment in telemedicine centers to provide virtual healthcare services. Additional effort should be made in addressing major gaps in the Healthcare industry sector's supply chain. The region should also seek to develop strategies to retain capital within the local economy by addressing these gaps, and to partner with neighboring regions. Infrastructure improvement projects should address road conditions, highway access, and weather disruptions. Collaborating with educational institutions and training providers to offer tailored programs that meet the specific needs of the healthcare industry is also recommended.
- 11) Northern Nevada Area Recommendations: The Northern Nevada Development Authority should invest in development and maintenance of roads, railways, and airports. Development of rail to truck or air to truck should also be explored. Partnerships with logistics companies to optimize transportation routes and reduce shipping times and costs is vital. Exploring the development of warehousing and storage facilities to meet the increasing demand for storage space, emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles, drones, and blockchain is recommended.
- 12) Northeastern Nevada Recommendations: The Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority should seek to develop training programs with local education institutions to combat the shortage of professionals in

areas like in-vitro diagnostic substances, biological products (except diagnostic), and surgical appliances and supplies. This should be explored by offering internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities. The region should also offer student loan forgiveness programs for graduates who choose to work in key sectors. Tax incentives for companies that invest in training and affordable housing to make the region more attractive to young professionals and families are part of the strategy. Launching awareness campaigns to promote careers and engaging with local schools, colleges, and community organizations to inform students could potentially aid in the overall improvement of the region's Healthcare industry sector.

- 13) Southwest Central Nevada Recommendations: The Southwest Central Regional Economic Development Authority should seek to enhance its overall reporting of wages and economic data.

II. Strengthening Nevada's PK-20 Teacher Pipeline: An Assessment to Meet Workforce Projections

- 1) Establish a career pathway for future teachers: An increase in guest speakers, university-school partnerships, and dual enrollment coursework will create this pathway.
- 2) Employ a more comprehensive future teacher pipeline: Programs should engage students in meaningful, applicable lessons. Engagement should be incorporated at each level of the program, including internships and apprenticeships.
- 3) Make Structural Changes to the Program of Study: Employ a full-time teacher in each high school CTE Teaching program to set up and refine the program, establish internships, community opportunities, and a recruitment program. Create a robust advertising and marketing program.
- 4) Evaluate the academic preparedness of students: Determine to what extent additional services and academic support can be provided.
- 5) Enhance accountability for CTE Programs: An evaluation that considers barriers to student matriculation, academic preparedness, and engagement opportunities should be conducted if there is more than 50% attrition at any level of completion.

III. 30k by 2030: The Potential Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Connecting 30,000 Disconnected Youth in Nevada to Education and Employment

- 1) For workforce and economic development entities: These entities should be supporting employment in targeted industry sectors that are both high growth and above-average contributors to GDP, such as Accommodation, Professional/Technical, Mining, Food Services, Specialty Trade Contractors, and Hospitals. Greater investment in programs that connect

high school graduates (and HSE) to employment in high GDP-contribution sectors and occupations is recommended.

- 2) For secondary education: Greater investments in CTE programs will mean greater economic growth.
- 3) For postsecondary education: NSHE and NDE should further invest in all postsecondary credential programs that align with the needs of employers in Nevada's high growth, high GDP-contribution industry sectors. Credentials that qualify graduates for occupations that greatly boost the state's GDP should be a priority.
- 4) For policymakers: Conversations need to be had with leaders of the high GDP-contribution industries to determine forecasts of employment, and the need for high-education attainment. \$2.1 billion in public support—for postsecondary education, housing, childcare, transportation, etc. will be needed for some disconnected youth to complete postsecondary education.

II. AI-Enhanced Education in Nevada and its Transformative Impact on Workforce Development, Employment Prospects, and Tomorrow's Job Market Proficiencies

- 1) STEM-focused Curriculum Implementation: NDOE should expand its curricular offerings beyond a foundational course at the secondary level and introduce students to computer science instruction at the primary level.
- 2) AI Enhanced Primary Education: Determine how best to promote AI-enhanced learning in the K-5 classroom in a uniform way to meet the AI literacy needs of all of Nevada's primary education students.
- 3) Expand K-12 and Higher Education Partnerships: Adapt or replicate UNR's K-12 Robotics Center and UNLV's iD Tech camps with the goal of meeting the needs of rural K-12 students. Community colleges should develop their own initiatives on a smaller scale, such as holding after-school programs.
- 4) Expand Online Degree and Remote Learning Opportunities: NSHE could work with higher education institutions to establish virtual labs and learning to reach student outside the Reno and Las Vegas areas.
- 5) Build Upon Industry Partnerships: Expand successful initiatives, partner with tech industry leaders, and develop new strategies to build an AI-competent workforce. Use generative AI systems to tackle problems like education funding, medical professional shortage, and lack of affordable housing.
- 6) Targeted and Flexible Upskilling Programs: Nevada can expand the model of the Transmosis Program to include AI and computer literacy. These programs could be modeled after UNLV's Tech Bootcamps.
- 7) Remote Workforce Recruitment and Scalability: The scalability of remote work should be considered an advantage. Nevada can attract a wider pool

of talent that is AI-proficient, and can work from different areas effectively addressing workforce gaps in critical areas. This strategy has been used by companies with a great deal of success. It would promote Nevada as a flexible, adaptive employment hub.

III. An Examination of Novice Teacher Career Persistence Trends

- 1) Only 29% of Nevada teachers who began their career in 2018 stayed in their profession after 5 years, with a substantial influence of local conditions on workforce stability. A negative correlation between standardized mean wages and attrition emphasizes the role of economic factors. There is a need for nuanced, region-specific policy interventions that address economic and local contextual factors. Additional research on what influences a Nevada novice teacher's decision to leave the profession must be explored. Support systems like teacher education programs, mentoring programs, and professional development opportunities are vital for retaining early career teachers, with a focus on quality of implementation.

IV. Nevada's Care Workforce: Obstacles and Opportunities for Policymakers

- 1) **Childcare Workforce:** The most straightforward path to growing the childcare workforce is to increase wages. Subsidies for childcare facilities and tax abatements to reduce operating costs can make it possible for owners to boost employee compensation. Another approach that has gained traction outside of Nevada is providing childcare subsidies for staff working in early childcare education facilities. The estimated annual economic loss from lost productivity due to childcare challenges for states with similar populations to Nevada is about \$1 billion. Policies that decrease the costs for families must also make investments in facilities and the workforce to ensure that the supply is able to meet increased demand. A first step for Nevada is to create a taskforce within the NDE that codifies occupational data, provides competency-based training, evaluates operating and workforce costs to provide quality childcare, and identifies state and federal funding sources. Addressing regulatory and licensing barriers would increase the supply of childcare workers. The report recommends fee waivers for potential childcare workers; per worker, instead of per worker per site, and the creation of a one-stop hub to access and process the required documents needed to become a licensed childcare provider.
- 2) **Elder Care Workforce:** It is not uncommon for employees in these fields to qualify for income-based social-service programs such as SNAP or Medicaid, and employees frequently change jobs to secure better working conditions and compensation. Additional wage increases should help to grow the workforce, but other policy interventions are likely to be needed.

This includes improving worker training programs and making them eligible to access federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, developing career lattices, and targeted immigration reforms to grow the sector's workforce. Nevada policymakers should look to AZ and CO examples of the report as ways to grow the workforce. Other policy interventions that should be pursued are reducing the costs for licensing and background checks, creating a centralized job posting platform, and subsidizing continuing education opportunities via tax credits for employers.

- 3) **Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce:** The Nevada Legislature must provide permanent state funding for both BeHERENV and UNLV PRACTICE. Policies must ease licensing hurdles and ensure that providers can sustain their practices. The state needs to invest in post-graduate educational opportunities that are required for licensing and implement licensing reciprocity for all mental health professions. Sustaining Medicaid funding coupled with more aggressive enforcement of the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act's requirement that insurers offer plans that provide coverage for mental health benefits similar to the coverage for physical health services should increase the number of providers that are accepted for paneling and expand access to those in need who are reliant on Medicaid.

V. The Dynamics of Labor Force Participation in Post-Pandemic Nevada: A Statewide Analysis

- 1) Youth-oriented policies, such as work-based learning, apprenticeships, and credentials, along with pathway navigators.
- 2) Sectoral training and partnerships to align dislocated workers – particularly those without four-year degrees – with jobs in high-demand sectors.
- 3) Elimination of degree requirements for state jobs to be replaced with skills-based training.
- 4) Strengthening relationships between higher education institutions and private industry to ensure those who earn degrees have work opportunities to stay in Nevada.
- 5) Training opportunities and employee supports, such as child care assistance.