

**STATE OF NEVADA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
FULL BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 – 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF FULL BOARD MEETING

Members Present

Don Soderberg, Chair
Edward Estipona, Vice Chair
Aubree Barnum
Robert Benner
Natalie Brown
Irene Bustamante Adams
Louis DeSalvio
Drazen Elez
George Gault
Kenneth Goodrich
Haith Johnson
Ken Lawson
Anthony Machabee
Sara Millett
Richard Neal
Suzanne Oetjen
Nancy Olsen
Cheryl Olson
John Parel
Dennis Perea, Councilman
Marchele Sneed
Michael Yoder

Members Absent

Scott Black, Councilman
Susan Brager
Tracy Brown-May, Assemblymember
Sarah Johns
Kevin Landry
Jerrie Merritt
Dina Neal, Senator
Janel Thomas
Jesse Wadhams

Others Present

Kara Abe
Nickoles Clason
Arianna Florence
Kim Jadidi
Juanita Robles
Elaine Rodriguez
Jared Smith

1. **CALL TO ORDER – OPENING REMARKS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
The full board meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, 2025. The meeting was held at Workforce Connections in Rosalie Boulware Conference Room and Video Conferenced at the DETR SAO Auditorium in Carson City.
2. **ROLL CALL – CONFIRMATION OF A QUORUM**
Tiffany Vazquez took roll call and affirmed for the record that a quorum was present.
3. **VERIFICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE POSTING**
Tiffany Vazquez verified that the meeting had been publicly posted pursuant to Nevada Open Meeting Law, NRS 241.020.
4. **FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT(S) NOTICE**
There were none.
5. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Welcome new GWDB members**
Chair Soderberg welcomed Natalie Brown, Louis DeSalvio, Anthony Machabee, Richard Neal, Suzanne Oetjen, and Dennis Perea to GWDB.
6. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – Approval of April 16, 2025, minutes**
Chair Soderberg called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. **It was moved by Drazen Elez and seconded by Nancy Olsen. The motion carried.**
7. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Presentation on purpose, findings, and recommendations of Skills Gap Analysis from the City of Henderson Economic Development Team**

Jared Smith, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, City of Henderson introduced a workforce research initiative led by Nick Clason in partnership with Hickey Global and supported by Kyle Wagner. The project focused on identifying skill gaps and workforce needs using data and AI tools. Henderson is the first U.S. city to use AI for industry monitoring. Smith noted that upcoming recommendations are suggestions only, acknowledging that not all partners may be ready to implement them.

Nickoles Clason, Economic Development Officer, City of Henderson in partnership with national consulting firm Hickey Global, conducted a workforce skills gap analysis using data from Lightcast and internal systems. This study builds on the city's 2023 Target Industry Analysis, which identified five key sectors for growth; Electrical equipment and component manufacturing, back-office support services, financial and credit services, logistics and tech management, and sports and media production. Community and workforce partners contributed insights, and projections show strong growth in industries like bare printed circuit board manufacturing and software publishing. The occupational analysis highlights high-growth roles such as data scientists, machinists, and financial examiners, with Henderson expected to outpace national trends. The skills gap analysis revealed shortages in warehousing, finance, computer science, and electrical engineering. Local education institutions like CSN, UNLV, and other NSHE institutions are positioned to help bridge these gaps through targeted workforce development programs.

Kyle Wagner, Economic Development Officer, City of Henderson emphasized the importance of turning workforce report findings into actionable steps rather than letting the data sit unused. Key findings confirmed expected growth in target industries and highlighted regional skill gaps. Although the report is Henderson-focused, it was noted as a valuable tool for the entire Las Vegas MSA. Recommendations include enhancing career pathway development, building a comprehensive training program inventory, increasing career awareness in K–12 (notably through sophomore-focused career fairs), and expanding employer engagement through externships and STEM-related initiatives. The city has partnered with regional entities like Workforce Connections, NSHE, DETR, and CCSD to align efforts, amplify existing resources, and better connect employers with the education and training pipeline.

Jared Smith, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, City of Henderson highlighted that companies prioritize access to a skilled workforce when expanding. They emphasized Henderson's commitment to supporting local businesses and developing the workforce to drive job growth and economic success.

Louis DeSalvio asked, “Is it a market you're trying to get into or it's a market that you're into and just cannot find the workforce?”

Nickoles Clason answered, “It is both. You know where we are and where we hope to be.”

Louis DeSalvio asked if other municipalities conduct a skills gap analysis.

Nickoles Clason said that this is the first one that's been done. He added that LVGEA published a workforce blueprint in 1.0 and 2.0.

Jared Smith mentioned there is a difference between the workforce blueprint and the skills gap analysis. The analysis provides a detailed comparison of the growing demand for specific skills versus the current workforce, unlike the workforce blueprint, which only highlighted in-demand jobs in the region.

Richard Neal praised the effort and direction, noting that a more refined analysis of needs and gaps in the ecosystem will be helpful, especially for the group.

Vice Chair Estipona mentioned the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation, and Technology, which certifies STEM schools in Clark County from elementary to high school. He suggested contacting Brian Mitchell to connect with schools and explore opportunities for them to become STEM certified, as there are existing state resources to support this initiative.

Drazen Elez questioned what the skills gap specifically entails, asking if it involves short training periods (e.g., a few days or weeks) for roles like warehouse workers, or if it requires a more systematic approach to resolve. He acknowledged there may not be a clear-cut answer but sought further clarification on the issue.

Nickoles Clason clarified that some roles, like warehousing, can be addressed with on-the-job training, while others, like engineers or data scientists, require more time and are harder to train on the job. The skills gap is defined as the difference between the skills employers need to meet demand and the skills available in the current labor force. Some gaps can be filled quickly, while others will take longer to address.

Jared Smith emphasized the importance of economic mobility for workers, noting that roles like warehousing offer quicker training and faster access to higher wages. He also highlighted the need to view coding and computer science degrees as trades, rather than just traditional four-year degrees, as pointed out in the report.

Nancy Olsen inquired about the progress, if any, in the City of Henderson's collaboration with CSN to address skill gaps, specifically in areas like forklift training.

Nickoles Clason highlighted the Denver March Center of Excellence in West Henderson as an example of collaboration with CSN to address skills gaps, particularly in advanced manufacturing. This program aligns with the electrical equipment and component manufacturing sector and helps fill skill gaps through training and credentialing.

Jared Smith noted the shift from research recommendations to action, highlighting ongoing collaboration with CSN on the small business assistance program. He confirmed that discussions between the City of Henderson, Economic Development, CSN, UNLV, Nevada State, and other partners continue daily.

Kyle Wagner acknowledged the varying pace at which institutions can implement changes, noting that introducing new bachelor's degrees takes time, while initiatives like stackable micro-credentials can be implemented more quickly. They emphasized the need to balance quick actions with long-term goals, recognizing the different timelines for each approach.

Ken Lawson highlighted the challenge of hiring workers from outside local communities due to housing costs and transportation issues, which could be addressed by the Barrier Subcommittee. He thanked CSN and NSU for their willingness to develop tailored curriculum for employers, citing a recent collaboration with NSU on refining a leadership academy. CSN has been helpful in offering specialized classes in areas like electrical, welding, and CNC. The speaker emphasized the importance of employer investment in workforce training, both through in-house programs and external classes, and noted the availability of grants and scholarships, despite the challenges of navigating bureaucracy.

Jared Smith emphasized the importance of creating a program inventory. This inventory would help companies easily access available training resources in Southern Nevada, while recognizing that these programs are dynamic and subject to change.

Natalie Brown raised the need to assess the capacity of programs across all NSHE institutions and identify where gaps exist, whether in program offerings, capacity, or graduation timelines. She suggested a discussion to align efforts and streamline the process. Natalie also asked if a gap is where people are in the pipelines.

Kyle Wagner emphasized the value of further engagement at the NSHE level, building on the strong relationships with CSN and Nevada State in Henderson. He noted that the next step after the skills gap analysis is data collection and fact-finding to better understand the scope of the issues. Kyle expressed a desire for system-level discussions to determine the extent of each factor contributing to the gaps.

Jared Smith noted that no NSHE institution has ever turned them down due to lack of capacity. While funding is often required, institutions like CSN have been willing to take on projects once funding is secured. The speaker emphasized that there is ample talent at NSU, UNLV, and CSN to address workforce issues.

Chair Soderberg suggested that a follow-up presentation in 12 to 18 months would be helpful to review progress. He requested an update on the implementation, including what actions have been taken and how the process is advancing.

Jared Smith expressed a commitment to continuing the effort, acknowledging that progress will be ongoing with ups and downs. They emphasized the importance of collaboration and persistence in workforce development, focusing on creating meaningful outcomes despite challenges.

Ken Lawson asked if there was information on the graduation and dropout rate by county.

Drazen Elez said Nevada Department of Education or the school districts may keep track of that.

Marchele Sneed noted that DETR Research & Analysis division might have data on that.

8. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Presentation on Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). AEFLA is the largest federal investment in adult education and literacy.

Nancy Olsen, WIOA Title II State Director, NDE highlighted that adult education can help address skill gaps through partnerships with NSHE institutions and other training providers, combining adult education with occupational training to accelerate outcomes. She noted ongoing collaboration with employers and local providers. Nancy also shared research from the American Institute for Research on Nevada's adult education, utilizing the state's longitudinal data system (NPWR). Specific adult education data can be accessed at <https://npwr.nv.gov/Reports>.

Arianna Florence, Education Programs, NDE emphasized the need to raise awareness about adult education in Nevada, noting seven funded providers, including community colleges and nonprofits. Educational gains are measured by advancing two grade levels or achieving other milestones. Despite challenges, Nevada serves over 7,000 adult learners, with nearly 77% showing progress. Most participants are Hispanic women aged 25-44.

Nancy Olsen pointed out that the need for adult education remains urgent at a national level. In Nevada, from 2018–2024, over 24,000 individuals exited adult education programs and consented to share their data. Among those already employed during program participation, wages increased by 11% in the first year and 33% by the fifth-year post-exit—reaching \$22.90/hour, surpassing the state average and the basic needs threshold for a single adult household. Participants who were unemployed during the program and entered the workforce after completion saw a 42% wage increase over five years. These outcomes underscore the significant economic value and impact of adult education programs.

Arianna Florence added that adult education is currently at risk of defunding by Congress.

Suzanne Oetjen asked, “What industry or particular positions were these folks employed in that saw the most growth in their wage?”

Nancy Olsen responded that the data did not provide information on specific occupations. It only indicated whether individuals were employed and their median earnings. Employers'

reports to DETR included the overall occupational cluster but did not specify individual job titles or positions held.

Drazen Elez asked for clarification on the statement, “The President’s budget zeroed out adult education for the following program year, 2026-27.” He asked what it means for their agency in terms of the budget and how does that impact Nevadans.

Nancy Olsen informed that the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, Title 2 of WIOA, is currently funded through WIOA. However, if federal funding is eliminated—marking the first time in over 60 years—it would effectively become an unfunded mandate under WIOA for Nevada. The state allocates about \$600,000, with \$400,000 going to local programs and \$200,000 covering state salaries, including those for overseeing the Adult High School Diploma program and high school equivalency testing. Without federal funding, both the state program and the seven local programs with over 40 locations would be at risk.

Drazen Elez inquired about the number of students that would be impacted and how the quality of adult education would be impacted by not having the funding.

Nancy Olsen said that about 7100 students were enrolled in the federally funded adult education program. If funding is cut, these students would lose access to vital services, including workplace literacy programs. While the Adult High School Diploma program serves some similar needs, it does not cater to individuals with a high school diploma or equivalency, nor does it provide skill gap training for adults who completed their education years ago. They also do not work with employers. There would be a great deficit and an impact on the services they provide that help to bring those adults into the workforce.

Vice Chair Estipona raised the question about student enrollment trends, particularly since the drop during COVID. The inquiry focused on whether enrollment numbers have been steadily increasing since then and if the current figure of 7,100 students is likely to change in the near future.

Nancy Olsen stated that before the pandemic, the program served around 6,000 students, with participants defined as those receiving at least 12 hours of instruction and completing a pretest. During the pandemic, enrollment dropped to about 4,000 in the first year, then gradually increased to 5,000, followed by 6,500 the year before and 7,100 this year. The demand for adult education remains strong, with over 300,000 Nevadans aged 18 and older lacking a high school diploma.

9. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – New business and next steps

Chair Soderberg asked if anyone had anything to share. He noted that it would be helpful to understand the direction moving forward, specifically regarding what workforce groups are still active, what is not being addressed, and whether any new initiatives are being introduced. A request was made for a presentation on these updates in the future.

Vice Chair Estipona discussed revisiting the various titles to gather specific insights on how their programming is impacted. The focus should be on understanding the effects, not just the numbers, and getting input from those with direct experience on the ground. This will help clarify the actual impact on the programs moving forward.

Chair Soderberg talked about the titles sending a brief one-or-two-page update on the current status before planning any presentations. Once the information is received, it will determine how to incorporate it into the larger presentation. The next two meetings will involve a significant amount of information, and the goal is to handle it efficiently without disrupting the host's agenda.

10. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

Ann Silver, CEO, Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce expressed concern about high absenteeism and low graduation rates in Washoe County. She emphasized the importance of teaching in-demand skills in high school, particularly in 11th and 12th grades, or even as early as 8th grade. The speaker urged support for technical training classes within the public school system, as many students may be intimidated by or unwilling to pursue community college or university education.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Soderberg called for a motion to adjourn. **It was moved by Louis DeSalvio and seconded by Drazen Elez. The motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.