

# WNDD IDENTIFIES TARGET AREAS AND GOALS FOR RECOVERY & RESILIENCY

**Comprehensive Economic  
Development Strategy  
Projects Reviewed**

**State Seeks Input on  
American Rescue Plan  
Funding Use**

**Ag Recovery: From Food  
Security to Farm Labor**



# WELCOME

Welcome to the May 2021 edition of the Western Nevada Development District's Economic Recovery and Resiliency Update. This monthly newsletter is part of WNDD's effort to identify and develop strategies to create and build a more resilient economy in our region.

The monthly Economic Recovery and Resiliency Update will share the activities and progress of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council. It will also offer information and data to help WNDD members and other regional businesses and organizations plan and implement their recovery and resiliency efforts.

Part of a CARES Act Supplemental Award, this newsletter aims to support the revitalization, expansion, and improvement of distressed communities' infrastructure to attract industry, encourage business retention, growth and recruitment, and generate long-term sustainable private-sector jobs and investments.

## 4 Key Takeaways

**1** The WNDD's Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council, with its associated team members, supported by WNDD staff, identified four broad target areas needing focus and attention to recover from COVID-19 and become more resilient to future economic shocks. The ERRC added a new team to represent the region's agriculture sector and address food security, supply chain, and farm labor supply.

**2** Nevada is beginning to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The booming housing market, the return of notable events in Reno, the Washoe County, Carson Valley and South Lake Tahoe gaming wins, projected statewide revenue projections, and increased traffic at the Reno Tahoe International Airport are a few metrics we analyzed across the state.

**3** The WNDD Board of Directors will review an update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and rankings of more than 30 projects related to the strategy at its June 28 meeting.

**4** In May, the Department of Treasury announced its Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds guidelines. The stimulus money marks one of the most significant infusions of federal dollars into the state in history.



# Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council Targets Four Key Areas For Regional Strategy

Four areas must be addressed for Western Nevada to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and become more resilient to future economic shocks: Economic Resiliency, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, and Government and Organizational Capacity.

WNDD's Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council (ERRC), with its associated team members, supported by WNDD staff, identified these areas as part of its planning process. These target areas and goals were submitted to the WNDD Board and approved at their April meeting. The council's members include representatives of more than 130 unique agencies.

Each target includes three goal areas and multiple strategies and actions to achieve those goals as outlined in the graphic:



The ERRC met twice in May to review the plan's framework and the first draft of action items and strategies developed through the team meetings occurring over the past six months.

WNDD staff is working to weave the strategies and actions from the Economic Recovery and Resiliency (ERR) Plan with the State of Nevada Plan for Recovery and Resilience and the 2021 update of the WNDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

To implement the ERR Plan, WNDD leadership will determine its best role in those action items and strategies, from direct administration to fostering partnerships.

For more information about the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council, visit [wndd.org/economic-recovery-resiliency-project](http://wndd.org/economic-recovery-resiliency-project).

# Agriculture Team Identifies Food Security and Supply Chain Issues for Recovery and Resiliency



Kelli Kelly

The ERRC added a new team to represent the region's agriculture sector and address food security, supply chain, and farm labor supply.

Led by Kelli Kelly of the Fallon Food Hub, the team's 10 members include farmers, food marketing organizations, and agencies, such

as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Nevada Department of Agriculture, and the University of Nevada and Cooperative Extension. The team identified many issues to address to support the agriculture sector's recovery and resiliency, including:

- 1. Insufficient infrastructure.** The new team identified inadequate agricultural processing facilities, e.g., slaughterhouses, meat processing, hemp decortication, as a critical challenge. The size and scope of the state's agriculture product marketing budget must also be addressed to weather future disruptions, the team agreed.
- 2. Training.** Members of the agriculture sector—especially small farmers who suffered as did all small business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic—need more training and resources to navigate recovery programs and grant opportunities.
- 3. Food security and supply chain.** Better education, research and flow of information, more diversification in enterprises, better marketing support, and the development of a robust seed production industry closer to home can aid the agriculture sector. Water and water availability data, particularly in the face of climate change, are also critical issues for the agriculture sector.

## Economic Recovery By the Numbers

Nevada is beginning to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Northern Nevada's booming housing market, the return of special events in Reno, the region's gaming win, projected statewide revenue projections, and increased traffic at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport are a few metrics we analyzed across the state.

**\$494,500** The median price for an existing single-family home in Reno-Sparks hit a record \$494,500 in April, the highest ever posted for both cities together, according to the [Reno Gazette Journal](#). Inventory is also still in short supply. At the current rate of sales, Reno-Sparks is looking at half a month's worth of inventory. Months' supply of inventory tracks how much time it takes to sell the current number of homes listed on the market if no new units are added to the inventory. A balanced market is one with six months of inventory.

**\$5 million** Another good sign is that the special events season Northern Nevada is known for is starting to rebound, according to the [Reno Gazette Journal](#). Festivals like Artown, the Reno River Festival, Reno Rodeo, Hot August Nights, the Great Reno Balloon Race, and the Reno Air Races are returning this year. In 2018, the RGJ reported that [more than 5 million visitors had visited Reno during the previous year \(2017\)](#), and special events are a large regional draw every year.

**\$1.066 billion** Gaming also is rebounding aggressively with the statewide gaming win at \$1.066 billion in March 2021 across the state, according to [Northern Nevada Business Weekly](#). In Northern Nevada, Carson Valley's gaming win was \$11.977 million; Lake Tahoe's North Shore: \$2.032 million; South Shore: \$24.08 million; and Washoe County: \$83.02 million. These winnings represent between a 133% to 166% increase compared to March 2020.

**\$900 million** And at the statehouse, the panel of finance and business executives who make up the state's Economic Forum [have added \\$900 million to projected revenues](#) for the upcoming budget for the upcoming fiscal year that begins July 1, 2021, according to the Nevada Appeal. The general fund is projected to end the current fiscal year at \$4.33 billion.

**29.8%** [According to March 2021 data from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority](#), Reno-Tahoe International Airport had 252,828 passengers in March 2021, an increase of 29.8% versus March 2020 but a decrease of 34.0% versus March 2019. The airport was the site of 1,587 departures to 20 non-stop destinations in March 2021.

**8,400** According to the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation's (DETR) April 2021 economic report, Nevada added back 8,400 jobs over the month as the state continues to recover. The number of jobs remains below typical levels, but is up by 196,200 since April 2020, an annual increase of 17.6%. Reno employment had a decrease of 300 jobs (-0.1%) since March 2021 but saw an increase of 30,200 jobs (14.1%) since April 2020. Carson City employment had an increase of 100 jobs (0.3%) since March 2021 and saw an increase of 3,000 jobs (10.9%) since April 2020. [Statewide April \(nevadaworkforce.com\)](#)

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy And Projects To Be Presented At June WNDD Board Meeting

The WNDD Board of Directors will review an update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) at its June 28 meeting including the rankings of more than 30-plus projects submitted by WNDD members that relate to the strategy.

The Economic Development Administration of the US Department of Commerce requires WNDD to update the CEDS each year and rewrite the entire document every five years. Each update includes a list of projects that EDA and other grantors could fund.

For this year's update, 62 projects were submitted, and 39 projects were ranked based on their alignment with WNDD's regional goals, economic and community benefits, as well as "funding ready" status.

The project submissions showed a wide range of target areas, including transportation, water and sewer projects, workforce training, infrastructure

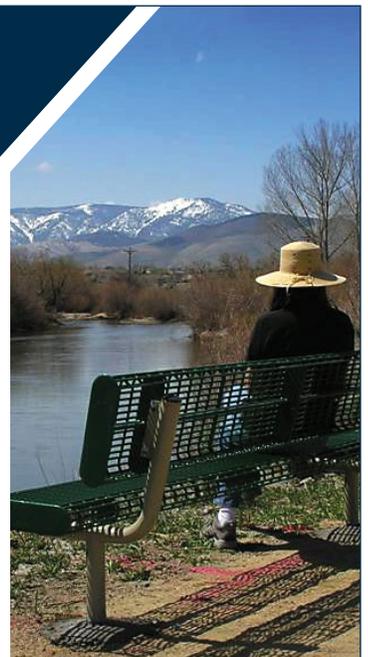
for tourism, public safety, and small business support.

The top projects will become part of the WNDD work plan, including researching, applying for, and administering grants.

The Board will also review one of the top emerging issues in federal infrastructure grants: broadband connectivity. Improving rural connectivity is a supported project in the 2020-2025 CEDS. WNDD staff will take input on a Regional Broadband Connectivity Project to determine needs and design actionable projects which take advantage of federal and other funding sources targeted at improving broadband, particularly for last-mile connections to homes and businesses.

Both the CEDS update and projects will be available for public comment on the WNDD website in June.

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025





## Key Takeaways from Nevada's Plan For Recovery and Resiliency Webinar

On April 9, the WNDD hosted a free presentation from the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development to review "Nevada's Plan for Recovery and Resiliency." The report was released on Jan. 19 following Gov. Steve Sisolak's State of the State address and gives the state a plan for moving forward through 2021 and beyond.

The webinar covered how the Governor's Office of Economic Development and its partners are working to pursue visionary policies that set Nevada apart for the future and build resilience and diversification of the state's economy. Nevada is well-situated in the western U.S. regarding its innovation ecosystem, economy, physical infrastructure, quality of life,

governance, and natural resources. The state must diversify its economic base, shifting from tourism and gaming toward high-skill industries and adding jobs in that sector.

The plan notes that the Silver State has invested in renewable energy integration with geothermal energy in Northern Nevada and solar in Southern Nevada. Nevada boasts a strong transportation system and strong broadband connectivity in its metropolitan areas, although the rural communities lag behind the urban centers. In addition, it has a shortage of medical professionals. The state needs to continue to expand economically so that highly educated partners of skilled workers coming to Nevada can find fulfilling work.

## In case you missed the webinar, here are the six most important takeaways:

### 1. Resources for People and Businesses

Overall, the state needs to modernize its agencies and public systems around payments to individuals and the overall banking network. During the pandemic, Nevada missed opportunities that other states did not because the South depended on large commercial banks that weren't invested in the community in the way small community banks are.

### 2. Business Support and Expansion

The state should mainstream efforts to show small and medium enterprises how to operate in this new climate. It could set the national standard for guiding small business owners to increase funding for technology-based entrepreneurship, such as targeted support for technology-based firms focused on the automation and digital technologies space.

### 3. Workforce for the Next Economy

Nevada needs to help colleges recruit and graduate students in high-need careers across all sectors, including healthcare, as well as a radical expansion of health services programs at all levels.

Leaders must accelerate the integration of workforce programs with business needs, develop fast-track training programs at community colleges for continuing education, protect funding streams for growing academic programs at the state's four-year institutions and revisit the funding formula to favor community colleges.

### 4. New Technology Businesses

Small- and medium-sized enterprises in the Silver State have struggled to adapt to online/

contactless payments and eCommerce, so they need support in developing websites and eCommerce capabilities. The state could aggregate and share vendor information for contactless and online payment systems and support increased security technologies.

### 5. Expansion and Innovation

Nevada's leaders must pursue innovation to ensure the state's economic health and resilience in the future, such as the development of an advanced manufacturing hub, world-class zero-carbon economy focused around renewable energy and electric vehicle technologies, complete technological connectedness, best-in-class health and wellness services, and serving as the ultimate remote work playground. Ultimately, Nevada should be the place where entrepreneurs across the West Coast think of as the hub for their businesses – especially in the key audience segments of Millennials and Gen Z.

### 6. Data and Integrated Planning for Decision-Making

In the short term, the state should integrate public health data and economic data to provide valuable insights to the state's business and workforce institutions. This would create a quick analysis of the state's economic and societal health at any given moment. The state could integrate statewide data with other Western states and distribute data in real-time, enabling entrepreneurs and policymakers to make critical decisions.

As 2021 continues, consumer confidence and spending likely will return, along with leisure travel. The pandemic sparked a wave of innovation and will launch a new generation of entrepreneurs with technological advances bringing us into a fourth Industrial Revolution.

# Every Nevadan Recovery Framework: State Seeks Input on How to Administer American Rescue Plan Funding

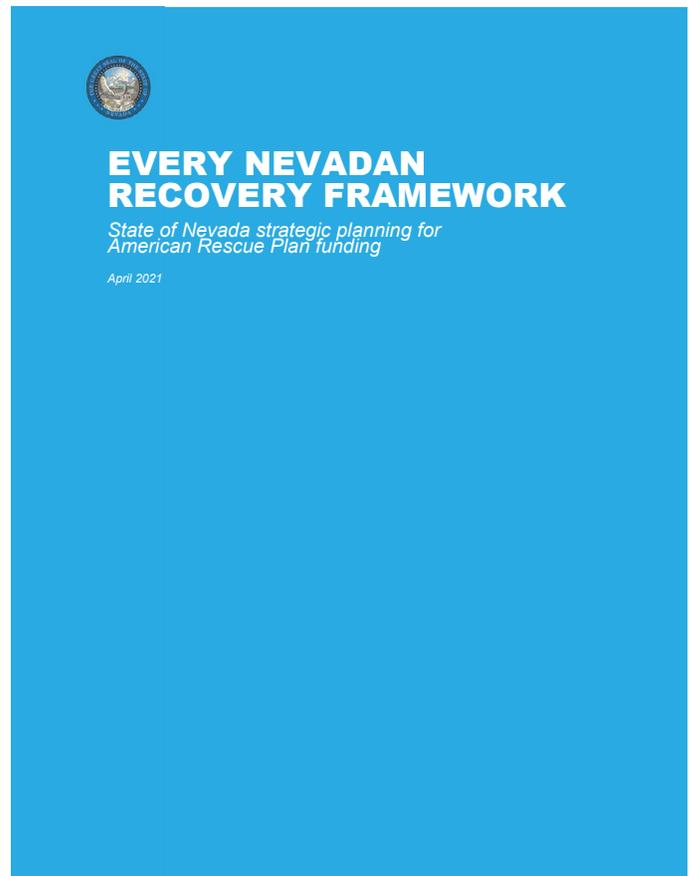
In May, the Department of Treasury announced its Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds guidelines.

The stimulus money marks one of the most significant infusions of federal dollars into the state in history, an estimated \$2.9 billion. Ensuring the money is spent following eligibility guidelines and within the eligible timeframe—which ends on Dec. 31, 2024—is a priority. Governor Steve Sisolak, State Treasurer Zach Conine, and majority leaders from the Nevada Legislature have been working on a framework for this since early April.

Specific goals outlined [in the plan](#) include:

- Addressing budget shortfalls
- Increasing access to health care and community-based services
- Investing in infrastructure projects
- Modernizing state government services
- Strengthening public education
- Strengthening the state's workforce
- Supporting disadvantaged communities
- Supporting small businesses and the economy in general

Many of the framework's priorities align with the projects and strategic priorities of WNDD's regionally-driven CEDS projects, as well as the work of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council. Broadband, infrastructure, and workforce training and development are crucial elements of the recovery framework.



The Governor's office is offering a stakeholder engagement process, which includes a form to share ideas which can be accessed [here](#).

The Governor's office said there would be other significant engagement opportunities for state and community leaders, businesses, and Nevada residents, including public town hall meetings, to receive input and determine funding priorities.

# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

WNDD offers technical assistance, management, research, and consultation in the federal, state, and private grants/loans ecosystem. These funding programs can be crucial in economic recovery and resiliency throughout the state and region and address the WNDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy goals.

## Building Broadband Infrastructure

The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration is making available \$288 million in grant funding to deploy broadband infrastructure. Grants will be awarded to partnerships between a state or political subdivisions of a state and providers of fixed broadband service.

NTIA will accept applications for projects that are designed to:

- Provide broadband service to the greatest number of households in an eligible service area
- Provide broadband service to rural areas
- Be most cost-effective in providing broadband service
- Provide broadband service with a download speed of at least 100 Mbps and an upload speed of at least 20 Mbps.

NTIA is holding a [series of webinars](#) on June 9 and 10 to inform the public about the program further. More information about the program, including requirements for grant applications, can be found in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

*Application Deadline: August 17, 2021*

**BUILDING BROADBAND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

## Emergency Connectivity Program

The Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Connectivity Fund Program will help libraries purchase laptops, Wi-Fi hot spots and more for patrons.

The \$7.17 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund Program is part of the American Rescue Plan and aims to make it easier for teachers and students to participate in virtual learning via consistent access to reliable internet. The funding is available for schools and libraries to bring Wi-Fi to underserved parts of their communities.

The program allows eligible libraries to apply for funding for future purchases of eligible equipment, "including Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and connected devices, as well as advanced telecommunications and information services."

The funds will be administered by the nonprofit [Universal Service Administrative Company](#), with oversight by the FCC.

*Application Deadline: The initial 45-day application period is expected to open in June and close in August for eligible purchases made between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.*

**UNIVERSAL SERVICE  
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY**

## Community Ties Giving Program

The Union Pacific Railroad's Community Ties Giving Program provides Local Grants to nonprofit organizations that address safety, workforce development, and community spaces. Grants generally range from \$2,500 to \$25,000. Organizations interested in receiving a grant must complete an online survey to determine eligibility from June 1 through July 31, 2021, which is also the last day that eligible organizations may submit an online application. Visit the Union Pacific Foundation's website here for detailed information about the funding priorities and application process.

*Application Deadline: July 31, 2021*

**COMMUNITY TIES GIVING PROGRAM**

## 2021 Community Mobility Design Challenge

The National Center for Mobility Management, with funding for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA), will support communities seeking innovative ways to improve transportation access for community members traveling for health care, economic opportunity, healthy food, or community and peer support opportunities. Grants of up to \$25,000 will be available for design and planning purposes. Applicant organizations must be non-profits or government agencies that are able to receive or be a subrecipient of federal funding.

**COMMUNITY MOBILITY DESIGN CHALLENGE**



## SHARE WITH US

### Send us your updates and stories

We want to highlight your success stories or opportunities with other WNDD members. To get in touch with us about what you're doing to rebuild a vibrant, resilient, sustainable economy, email Economic Recovery Coordinator Don Vetter at [dvetter@wndd.org](mailto:dvetter@wndd.org).

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