

The Power to Speed Up Nevada's Economic Growth Is In Our Hands

Nevada Speed Test
continues to support state's
digital economy

Federal Program introduced
to connect More Nevadans
to affordable High-Speed
Internet Access

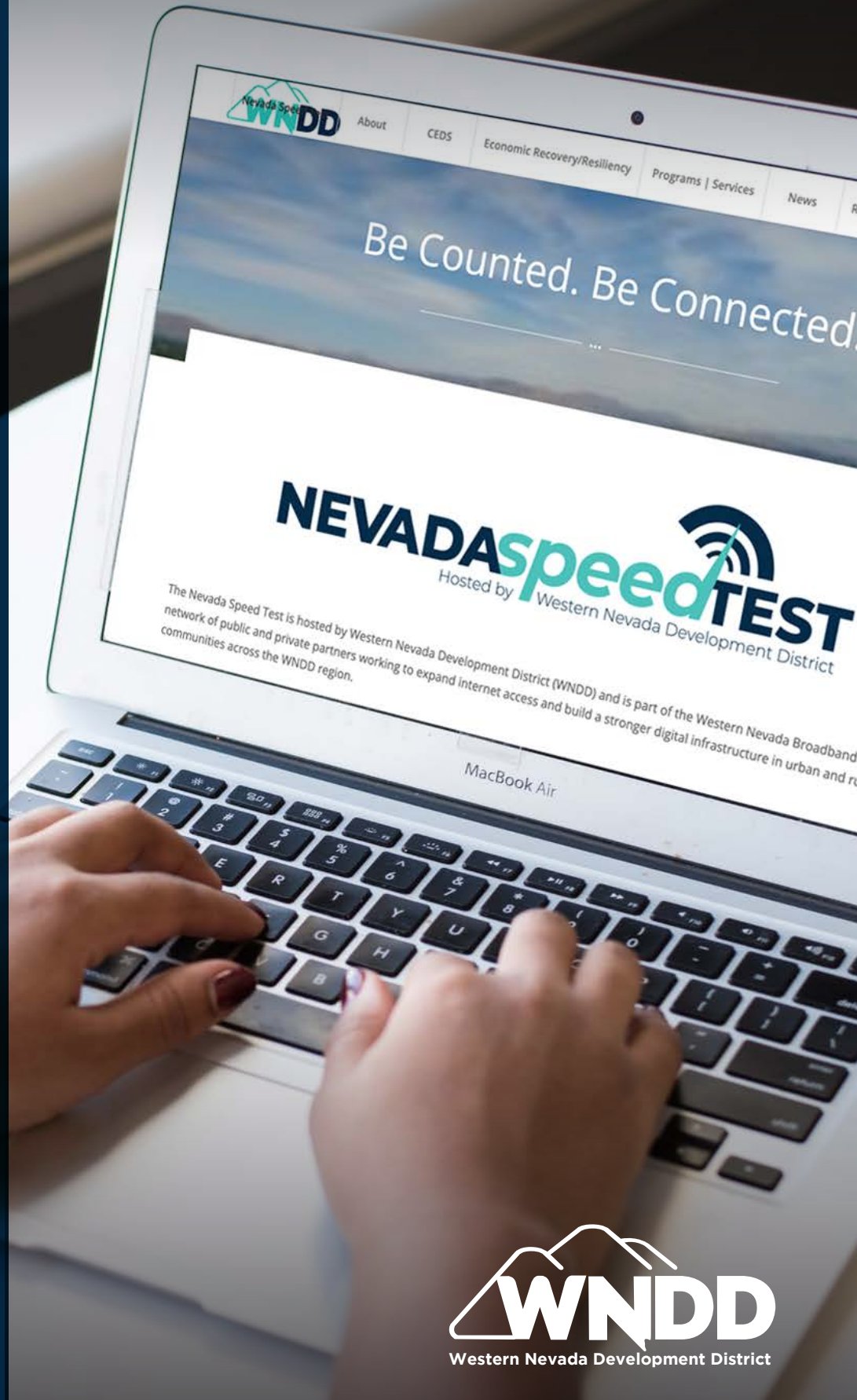
Internet For All Initiative
Includes \$45 Billion In
Funding

INSIDE:

89 Projects to Grow Western
Nevada's Economy Set For
2022 Strategy Update

Longtime Carson City
Resident Set to Become
Next WNDD Executive
Director

Regional Leaders Come
Together to Support
Economic Resilience



WELCOME

The Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) is pleased to present this edition of the Economic Recovery Report (ERR), which highlights efforts and ideas to strengthen our region's economy.

It includes information on the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Project's (ERRP) activities and progress, such as the development and implementation of the ERRP Plan based on priority projects identified by the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Council (ERRC) and Economic Recovery and Resiliency Action Teams.

The data and information in this report can help WNDD members, other regional businesses, stakeholders, and other organizations develop and implement economic recovery and resiliency initiatives.

This publication is part of a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Supplemental Award for the United States. It aims to help the region attract industry, retain and develop businesses, and create long-term sustainable private-sector jobs and investments.

Economic Recovery By the Numbers

5,200: Nevada added 5,200 jobs in April 2022, an 8% annual increase. Reno's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) added 700 jobs, and Carson City's added 300.

\$1.3 BILLION: Nevada's nonrestricted gaming licensees reported a total gaming win of \$1,355,229,902 for March 2022, a 26.83% annual increase.

75 CENTS: Nevada's minimum wage will rise 75 cents on July 1 to \$9.50/hour for organizations with health insurance and \$10.50/hour for those without.

SIX: Governor Steve Sisolak appointed six members of his existing cabinet to a workforce development sub-cabinet to evaluate the state's workforce needs and provide recommendations.

\$15 MILLION: Washoe County plans to spend \$15 million in [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) funding](#) to provide supportive housing to disproportionately affected communities, including \$4.5 million for those with severe mental illness.

13: Spirit Airlines will be the 13th airline to service Western Nevada from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport when it begins twice-daily flights to the Harry Reid International Airport (LAS) in Las Vegas in August 2022.

Christine E. Brandon to Become Next WNDD Executive Director

Local Engineer and Community Member Brings 30 Years of Experience In Large-Scale Project Management



A longtime Carson-City local, active community member, and engineer by training, Christine E. Brandon will be the next executive director of the Western Nevada Development District (WNDD).

“Brandon’s credentials, experience, and personality make her an excellent leader for WNDD,” said Naomi Duerr, WNDD board president, and City of Reno councilwoman.

“We are confident she will bring great energy, innovation, and strategic direction as WNDD continues to build our region’s vibrant, resilient and sustainable economies.”

Brandon has unique and varied experience in economic development, engineering, project and program management, and nonprofit organizational leadership.

As an instructor at the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, she developed youth programming and managed grant funding. Before working with the university, she served as acting Executive Director of the Children’s Museum of Northern Nevada. As a member of the City of Arlington’s Industrial Development Board, she spearheaded industrial development and collaborated with various organizations to entice new businesses through tax incentives, special permitting, and government lease programs.

Brandon has a Bachelor of Science degree in geological engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla. After obtaining her degree, she worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, where she presided over the environmental cleanup of hazardous waste sites identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Defense (DOD).

She plans to draw on her extensive experience to support programming focused on improving much-needed infrastructure, attracting new businesses, and promoting economic resilience and vitality.

“In my professional experience, I developed expertise in bringing large-scale infrastructure projects to fruition,” Brandon said. “As WNDD’s Executive Director, I will bring this skill set and continue to create an environment that supports a vibrant and sustainable economy in our region.”

Retiring WNDD Executive Director Sheryl Gonzales joined WNDD in 2013 as a project manager and has served as the head of the organization since 2020.

“We are excited to welcome Christine Brandon as our incoming Executive Director and know she will do an outstanding job in her new position,” Gonzales said.

Test Your Internet Speed to Support Nevada’s Digital Economy



Nevada’s digital economy is only as strong as the broadband infrastructure that supports it. That’s why the Nevada Speed Test, spearheaded by WNDD, is so important.

The Nevada Speed Test aims to ensure that every home and business in Western Nevada has access to affordable, adequate, and reliable high-speed internet. This is essential for participating in a digital economy and society.

The Nevada Speed Test relies on participation from businesses and households in the WNDD region to be successful. The data provided

through nevadaspeedtest.org can guide funding distribution to boost Western Nevada’s broadband connectivity in the coming years.

The clock is ticking!

Participating jurisdictions in the Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) region are nearing in on the number of tests needed to meet the minimum objective of 4% of households taking the test. With everyone doing their part, the region can achieve this goal a year after the Nevada Speed Test official started.



Participating Jurisdiction	Total Households	Test locations as of May 25, 2022	Percent participation of all households as of May 25, 2022
City of Fallon	3,979	34	0.85%
City of Fernley	7,975	200	2.51%
Douglas County	23,671	1032	4.36%
Mineral County	2,830	39	1.38%
Storey County	1,990	96	4.82%
Humboldt County (Including Winnemucca)	7,123	232	3.26%
Pershing County (Including Lovelock)	2,464	179	7.26%
Washoe County (Including Reno and Sparks)	184,841	1085	0.59%
Total	234,873	2,897	1.23%

B R O A D B A N D U P D A T E S

Outreach and promotion are vital to spreading the word about the Nevada Speed Test and encouraging participation. WNDD has been working with local governments, community organizations, and the media to help promote the Nevada Speed Test. So far, KOLO 8 News, Channel 2 News, Northern Nevada Business Weekly, and others have covered the Broadband Mapping Project.

Recent and ongoing efforts to market the Nevada Speed Test include sending individual requests to WNDD members, senior centers, community centers, libraries, school districts, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and other groups.

The project's lead sponsor is Uprise Fiber, an associate member of WNDD.

HOW THE MAP WORKS

The interactive map is progressively taking shape as residents take the Nevada Speed Test and may be viewed at [nevadaspeedtest.org](https://www.nevadaspeedtest.org).

Each speed test is shown on the map as a dot, and the color of the dot indicates the download and upload speeds.

BE COUNTED!

Take the Nevada Speed Test at [nevadaspeedtest.org](https://www.nevadaspeedtest.org).

The more people who take the test, the more representative the data will be and the more valuable the map will be as a planning tool.

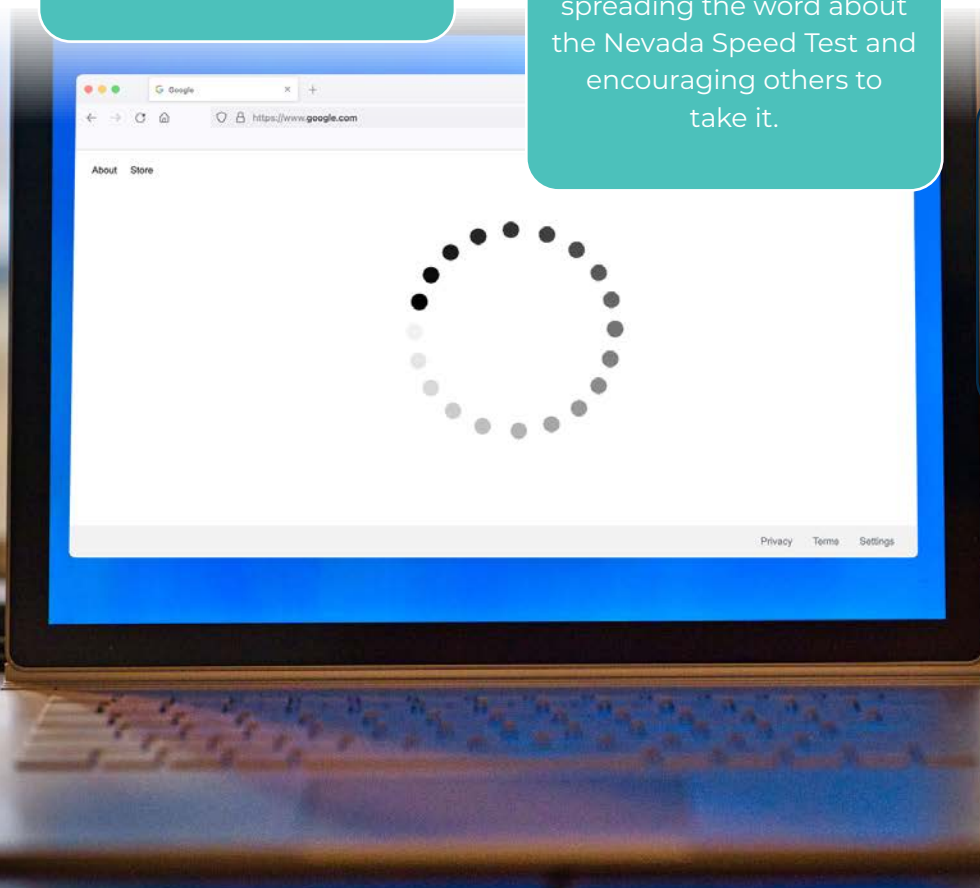
You can also help by spreading the word about the Nevada Speed Test and encouraging others to take it.

NO INTERNET AT HOME? NO PROBLEM!

If you don't have internet access at home, it's crucial that you take the Nevada Speed Test!

This will help your elected officials and the Nevada State Office of Science Innovation and Technology know what areas of the region need the most help to achieve reliable, affordable broadband connectivity.

Visit [nevadaspeedtest.org](https://www.nevadaspeedtest.org) and select the option to "Enter an address with NO AVAILABLE SERVICE" to be counted!



\$45 Billion Federal Program Aims To Provide Affordable, Reliable High-Speed Internet To All Americans By 2030

The Biden-Harris Administration launched an Internet for All initiative, investing \$45 billion to provide affordable, reliable, high-speed internet for everyone in America by the end of the decade. The initiative will be administered and implemented by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The program will build internet infrastructure, teach digital skills, and provide the necessary technology to ensure that everyone in America—including communities of color, rural communities, and older Americans—has the access and skills to participate in today's society fully.

The Internet for All program includes three Notices of Funding Opportunities:

- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program: \$42.5 billion
- Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program: \$1 billion
- State Digital Equity Act programs: \$1.5 billion

To learn more about the Internet for All Initiative and funding opportunities, visit tinyurl.com/Internet-For-All-Fact-Sheet.



Regional Leaders Take Action to Create Economic Resilience

Action Teams Preparing Next Steps for ERRP Implementation

The Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP) Action Teams are preparing a presentation for the June 27 Board meeting to outline their activities.

The Board approved the ERRP in June 2021. The Action Plan identified target areas, goals, strategies, and actions to be implemented to create economic resilience and prepare for recovery in the face of events that negatively impact the region.

Four Action Teams were formed for each target area to implement the ERRP:

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

The region can withstand, prevent, and quickly recover from shocks to its underlying economic base, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, by engaging in activities, programs, and steady-state and responsive initiatives.

Action Team Members

- Brian Addington, Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), Professor of Logistics Management
- Teri Bath, Salmon Point Development, Owner, WNDD Executive Board, Secretary/Treasurer
- Sara Bebee, Churchill Entrepreneur Development Association (CEDA), Director of Operations, WNDD Associate Member
- Kathy Halbardier, Nevada Small Business Development Center (NSBDC), Business Counselor & Economic Development Specialist
- Mike Hix, Meadows Bank, Regional President
- Kelli Kelly, Fallon Food Hub, Executive Director
- Tom Simpkins, Nevada Industry Excellence (NVIE), Director
- Alexander Stettinski, Downtown Reno Partnership, Executive Director, WNDD Associate Member

INFRASTRUCTURE

The region's planned, modern, and resilient infrastructure includes widespread broadband access to connect its urban and rural areas while supporting an increasingly mobile and remote workforce.

Action Team Members

- Christine Hess, Nevada Housing Coalition (NHC), Executive Director
- Vas Kamyshamov, The Balanced Agency
- Lowell Patton, CP Construction Group, Operations Manager
- Mario Pino, Connected Life Solutions, Founder, Senior Consultant, Portfolio Manager
- Sam Sanders, Uprise Fiber, Chief Executive Officer, WNDD Associate Member
- Kaya Stanley, TEDxReno, Life Tastes Good, LLC, President, Owner
- Gus Wegren, USDA Rural Development, Community Programs Director
- Brian Wilcox, CyberPros360, Founder

ERRP ACTION TEAMS

QUALITY OF LIFE

The region offers more diverse housing opportunities to fit the needs of many populations, accessible health and wellness services and amenities, and opportunities for leisure pursuits that enhance a sense of place and community.

Action Team Members

- Amy Fleming, Governor’s Office of Workforce Innovation, Program Development and Engagement Specialist, WNDD Associate Member
- Kara Harris, First Independent Bank, Assistant Vice President Business Banking, WNDD Associate Member
- Colin Robertson, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation at State of Nevada, Administrator
- Dr. Dana Ryan, TMCC, Special Assistant to the President, WNDD Associate Member
- Kris Zierolf, Renown Health, Enterprise Applications Executive

GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The region’s government and stakeholder organizations seamlessly coordinate to institute innovative solutions that are streamlined, technologically advanced, and better positioned to grow a sustainable and resilient economy.

Action Team Members

- Shari Davis, Governor’s Office of Economic Development, Director, Rural Economic and Community Development
- Wesley Harper, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, Executive Director
- Calli Wilsey, City of Reno, Senior Management Analyst



Action Team members met periodically until 2022 to study the ERRP and its actions and assess if additions or changes were needed. Teams prioritized actions using a ranking mechanism and examined action partner lists for additions or revisions.

Projects to Aid Economic Development Included in Comprehensive Strategy

The Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) Board of Directors approved a variety of projects for the 2022 WNDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Update, including 26 that carried forward from the 2021 CEDs Update, 10 new projects submitted in 2022, and 54 projects from the 2022 Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP) Implementation process.

The CEDs will be submitted to US Economic Development Administration in June.

These initiatives promote economic growth and align with the CEDs' vision, goals, and objectives. CEDs inclusion makes these projects more competitive for U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds and other finance and informs WNDD Board and staff about regional community and economic development initiatives.

Developing the list of projects for the 2022 CEDs update began in 2021. First, the 2021 CEDs Update projects were examined to establish their status based on the following questions:

1. Has the project been implemented or partially implemented?
2. Has a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) been initiated or completed?
3. Has reliable project financing been identified and secured for the project?
4. Are matching funds available for the project?
5. Will the project result in job creation or retention per EDA standards?

2020-2025 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)





2022 UPDATE

6. Does the project align with at least one WNDD 2022 Goal?
7. Does the project align with at least one EDA investment priority?

New project ideas for the 2022 CEDs Update were evaluated by WNDD employees and scored by an external evaluation panel based on project readiness and funding availability.

Then, the ERRP Action Teams reviewed all the actions and projects, prioritizing them to be completed in one of three categories:

- High Priority Action: To be completed in 1 to 3 years
- Medium Priority Action: To be completed in 3 to 5 years
- Low Priority: To be completed 5 years and beyond

8 Takeaways from the National Association of Development Organizations Annual Policy Conference

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) recently held its annual policy conference in Washington, D.C. The conference was a chance for NADO members to come together and discuss the pressing issues affecting rural communities across America.

Des Craig, Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) Economic Recovery Coordinator, attended the conference. His takeaways provide a snapshot of some of the major themes discussed at the conference and insights into NADO's evolving policy agenda.

8 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Many states and towns reported significant progress in allocating and using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants to identify broadband needs and undertake connectivity projects.
2. Local communities should collaborate closely with their state broadband offices and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to develop, build, and implement broadband projects. Despite a federal preference for fiber-based projects, alternate distribution options must be considered, especially for rural populations.
3. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) wants to allocate more funds to Economic Development Districts (EDDs) for regional planning and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). However, getting additional planning funds from Congress is difficult due to prior relief planning funds' slow and low drawdown rate.
4. In addition to stories, EDDs and local municipalities must produce statistics to indicate regional planning and project benefits. A helpful quote emerged: "Stories may be memorable, but data makes them credible."
5. Despite being held in the nation's capital, rural development was a significant focus at the conference.
6. History, geography, money, etc., affect how states approach economic development. A conference session discussed strategies and best practices for coordinating state, local, and EDD initiatives to produce better results and accomplish local, regional, and statewide goals.
7. Many EDDs at the conference provide community services with and for local governments, including regional strategic planning, aging services management, transportation planning and services, workforce development, broadband planning, and implementation, grant writing and project management, and more.
8. A special session on CEDS explored the shift from complex, prose-heavy texts to more accessible, user-friendly ones. Next-generation CEDS might include SMART goals, effective tactics and performance indicators, disaster resilience planning, and inclusion of climate change and outdoor recreation.

The NADO policy conference provides a valuable opportunity for economic development professionals to come together and discuss the pressing issues affecting their communities. This year's conference was no exception. Craig's insights provide great food for thought, and we look forward to continuing to work with NADO as they support economic recovery in communities nationwide.

\$400,000 Grant Will Grow Commercial Driver's License Program at Western Nevada College

The Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) Board approved a \$400,000 grant from the Workforce Innovations for the New Nevada (WINN) fund to grow a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training Program at Western Nevada College (WNC).

Nevada has 4,500 fewer licensed commercial drivers than the national average, according to In-Demand Occupations. The American Trucking Association's 2021 National Truck Driving Shortage Report estimates a shortage of 80,000 commercial drivers, which could climb to 170,000.

The Nevada Trucking Association estimates that 92% of manufactured items in Nevada are transported by truck, making a qualified trucking workforce essential.

This program, which will be offered in Carson City and Fallon, intends to provide 100 training slots for \$24 per hour positions.

"The CDL program will help train workers for an industry seeing significant vacancies," said Kyle Dalpe, WNC Interim President. "This funding will help educate students faster and into jobs sooner."

Nevada Small Businesses Still Struggling Two Years After Start of Global Pandemic

Nevada small businesses are still struggling significantly with staffing, supply chains, and COVID-related issues, according to the 2020-2021 [Nevada Small Business Development Center](#) (NSBDC) client survey.

More than 40% of participants reported unfavorable effects on staffing and 72% on supply chains. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents said they still have COVID-19-related concerns two years after the pandemic began.

Accommodation, restaurants, manufacturing, professional services, and science/technical services are most affected by supply chain and COVID difficulties, according to the survey. Staffing issues affected administrative, trash, professional, technical and science services, and lodging and food service.

Homeowner And Rental Vacancy Rates Declined During COVID-19 Pandemic

Housing vacancy rates—both for homeowner and rental housing—are at or near historic lows, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's recently released [Housing Vacancy Survey](#) (HVS).

Vacancy rates for rental housing are lower than at

any point during the 35 years from 1985 until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. The homeowner vacancy rate in the first quarter of 2022 was 0.8%—the lowest in the 66-year history of the HVS.

USDA And EDA Launch Resource Guide to Boost Economic Development in Rural Communities

Community organizations can build strategies to boost economic development in rural America using a [new resource guide](#) produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The resource guide outlines programs and services that can be used to advance community and economic development in rural communities through four key focus areas:

- Planning and technical assistance
- Infrastructure and broadband expansion
- Entrepreneurship and business assistance
- Workforce development and livability

The guide also features information and links to USDA Rural Development and EDA key priorities and resources.



Annual Retail Trade Survey Shows Impact of Online Shopping on Retail Sales During COVID-19 Pandemic

E-commerce sales increased by \$244.2 billion or 43% in 2020, the first year of the pandemic, according to the most recent 2020 Census Bureau's [Annual Retail Trade Survey \(ARTS\) release](#).

While retail e-commerce grew, sales in some industries declined from 2019 to 2020 as pandemic-related lockdowns kept people at home, working, shopping, and even studying online.

Here's how some U.S. retail sectors fared in this virtual world:

- Gas station sales fell from \$513.5 billion in 2019 to \$428.1 billion in 2020 as commuting became unnecessary for many and travel slowed down.
- Sales at [bookstores](#) dropped from \$8.9 billion in 2019 to \$6.2 billion in 2020.
- Sales at clothing and accessories stores slipped from \$269.5 billion in 2019 to \$201.4 billion in 2020 as the need for new clothes and accessories for the workplace or social outings waned.

ACCELERATING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN ENERGY

The Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) of the U.S. Department of State invites organizations to apply to carry out the Accelerating Women's Empowerment in Energy (AWEEA) initiative. This initiative will provide a convening forum and workforce development activities to support the empowerment and professional development of women working in or looking for work in the clean energy sector to overcome historic gender-based marginalization.

- **Deadline:** July 6, 2022
- **More information:** grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=340295

NATIONAL LAB JOBS ACCESS PROGRAM

The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration will accept applications for grants for the Department of Energy National Lab Jobs Apprenticeships for Complete and Committed Employment for Specialized Skills (ACCESS) Program. The ACCESS Program is a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program that leads to postsecondary qualifications for high school and college students. It focuses on skills and qualifications needed to fill traditional and emerging technician positions (including machinists and cybersecurity technicians) at the National Laboratories.

- **Deadline:** July 7, 2022
- **More information:** grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=339830

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS) will solicit applications for \$12.3 million in Community Economic Development (CED) discretionary grant funds to Community Development Corporations (CDC) for well-planned, financially viable, and innovative projects to enhance job creation and business development for low-income individuals.

- **Deadline:** July 11, 2022
- **More information:** grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=333377

EVIDENCE-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP TRAINING

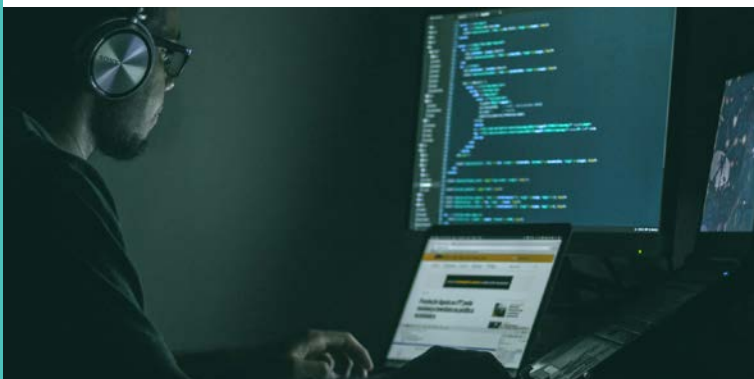
The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is seeking applications for funding to revise the current 40-Hour blended Evidence-based Workforce Development curriculum into a virtual instruction-led format. This project aims to develop a blended training curriculum to provide criminal justice practitioners and stakeholders with the knowledge/skills needed to support justice-involved adults' workforce development and reentry efforts effectively.

- **Deadline:** July 18, 2022
- **More information:** grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=333377

WILDFIRE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is offering up to \$600,000 to study the effectiveness of disaster recovery funding after a wildfire. The project aims to improve the ability of wildfire-affected communities to employ disaster aid to build resilience, especially in low- and moderate-income areas.

- **Deadline:** July 19, 2022
- **More information:** grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=340500



White House Releases Technical Assistance Guide to \$700 Million in Funding

A Bipartisan Infrastructure Law technical assistance guide released by the White House can help state, local, Tribal, and territorial governments navigate, access, and deploy infrastructure resources that will build a better America. The Biden Administration has identified more than \$700 million in dedicated funding across more than 65 technical assistance programs.

The White House Infrastructure Implementation Team has worked with philanthropic, labor, and nonprofit organizations to highlight nongovernmental resources and create a pipeline to help communities access and deploy federal infrastructure funding quickly and equitably.

More than 90% of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's funding will go to non-federal partners. Too many towns lacked the resources to apply for and construct revolutionary infrastructure. Based on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Guidebook and Rural Playbook, this guide outlines programs that assist communities in implementing infrastructure projects. Some of these initiatives give communities hands-on and intense planning and delivery support, while others are self-directed webinars, websites, or money that might support project preparation.

In response to the Administration's external engagement efforts, philanthropic, labor, and nonprofit organizations have pledged new resources to help localities receive and implement federal infrastructure money, including:

- **Local Infrastructure Hub:** Guidance and resources to help leaders access and leverage funding to advance groundbreaking solutions to significant challenges. The hub is a joint effort by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Emerson Collective, Ford Foundation, and Kresge Foundation, in collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and Results for America.
- **Accelerator for America:** Technical assistance, in-kind support for strategic planning and grant writing, communications strategy, policy research, and guides to help local government and development leaders navigate the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and complementary funding opportunities.
- **The Climate Jobs National Resource Center:** Resources to support expanding and strengthening initiatives to increase access to union climate jobs for infrastructure workers in under-resourced communities on the frontlines of climate change.

Learn more at tinyurl.com/wh-technical-assistance-guide.

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, visit wndd.org/contact-2/.

Share this newsletter

To share this newsletter and encourage your colleagues and friends to subscribe, [CLICK HERE](#)