

The Keep Nevada Working Task Force

2025 Report



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Submitted by:

The Office of the Secretary of State

The Keep Nevada Working Task Force

S.B. 24

The Keep Nevada Working Task Force Members

Name: Alissa Cooley, Vice Chair
Title, Organization: Law Offices of Martin Hart, LLC
Appointed by: Secretary of State, Francisco Aguilar

Name: Erika Castro
Title, Organization: Organizing Director, P.L.A.N
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Name: Vince Saavedra
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Name: Jasmin Coca
Title, Organization: Director of Immigration, Catholic Charities
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Name: Captain Josh Martinez
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Name: Jennie Kim
Title, Organization: EmpowHer Planning
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Name: Ruben Rodriguez, Chair
Title, Organization: Deputy Secretary of State, Southern Nevada
Appointed by: Secretary of State, Francisco Aguilar

Name: Iris Jones
Title, Organization: Director, Office of New Americans
Appointment by: Secretary of State, Francisco Aguilar

Sec. 4. 1. The Keep Nevada Working Task Force is hereby created within the Office of the Secretary of State. 2. The Task Force consists of: (a) The Secretary of State, or his or her designee;

(b) Eight members appointed by the Secretary of State; and (c) One member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. 3. The Secretary of State shall appoint the following persons

to serve on the Task Force: (a) One person who represents an immigrant advocacy group. (b) One person who represents a chamber of commerce in this State.

(c) One person who represents a labor organization. (d) One person who represents a local workforce board in this State.

(e) One person who represents a bar association or like association of lawyers which is involved in the advocacy of immigrants.

(f) One person who represents a small business that employs 50 or fewer full-time or part-time employees. (g) One person who represents a state agency that works on immigrant workforce development. (h) One person who represents an institution of higher education.

4. The members of the Task Force shall serve terms of 3 years. A member may be reappointed to the Task Force and any

vacancy must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Introduction

Assembly Bill 376 was passed in 2021 during the 81st Legislative Session. Sections 16 through 20 of the Bill created the Keep Nevada Working Task Force within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Section 20, paragraph 2 of AB 376 requires that the Task Force “submit a written report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for submission to the Legislative Commission” on or before July 1, 2022. In 2023, [S.B. 24](#) repealed the language in that NRS and added the requirement to [NRS 225.540](#). The Report must include a summary of work, as well as recommendations, if any.

History

AB 376 was signed into law by Governor Steve Sisolak on June 11, 2021. On September 8, 2021, Governor Sisolak and then-Lt. Governor Kate Marshall announced eight appointments to the Task Force. Lt. Governor Lisa Cano Burkhead was appointed as Nevada’s 36th Lt. Governor on December 16, 2021. Following her appointment, Lt. Governor Cano Burkhead prioritized quickly filling three vacancies in the Task Force and convening the Task Force’s first meeting. The Keep Nevada Working Task Force included the following members of the community: 1) Lt. Governor Lisa Cano Burkhead (Chair) 2) Maggie Salas Crespo, former Senior Advisor, Office for New Americans (Vice Chair) 3) Chris Aguiar, Lieutenant, Henderson Police Department 4) Alissa Cooley, Managing Attorney, UNLV Immigration Clinic 5) Michael Flores, Director of Government Relations, University of Nevada, Reno 6) Bethany Khan, Communications Director, Culinary Union 7) Jennie Kim, Clark County AAPI Commission & Adviser for NV AAPI Chamber of Commerce 8) Alletha Muzorewa, Workforce Development Expert 9) Vince Saavedra, President, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. The Task Force’s first meeting was held on March 15, 2022. The first action of the Task Force electing Lt. Governor Lisa Cano Burkhead as Chair, and Maggie Salas Crespo as Vice Chair. At this meeting, Task Force members also agreed on dividing themselves into “area experts” to evenly distribute workload and utilize the expertise of Task Force members. Those areas are: (1) supporting New American workers; (2) education and workforce development; and (3) small business. Additionally, Charina de Asis, Director of the Office for New Americans, gave an overview at ONA’s mission and work in the space of immigrant workforce development. The Task Force reconvened on May 2, 2022. The purpose of this meeting was to review small business ownership resources available to immigrant communities in Nevada. Michael Cullen, Chief of Staff to Lt. Governor Cano Burkhead, and Melissa Saavedra, Program Manager within the Office of Small Business Advocacy, presented on the new Office of Small Business Advocacy and how its work supports small business ownership within immigrant communities. Additionally, Task Force member Jennie Kim provided an overview of state agencies beyond OSBA that provide service and assistance to small business owners. Finally, the Task Force convened on June 29, 2022, to finalize and approve the first report on the Task Force.

In 2023, [the Task Force was moved](#) from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to the Office of the Secretary of State.

Task Force Objectives / Needs

- More awareness for immigrants, especially high school students, on the availability of union apprenticeship programs.
- A standardized database across state agencies measuring common datapoints.
- An increase in resources made available in languages other than English and Spanish.
- A review of professional licensure requirements for immigrants possessing certain skills in their home countries, especially in high-need areas. Moving forward, the Task Forces hopes to:
 - Lean on the expertise of its members and working groups to identify opportunities to better support Nevada's immigrant population.
 - Work with the Governor's Office of Economic Development to identify long-term employment trends.
 - Study workforce development best practices across the nation, including but not limited to working with an organization like the National Skills Coalition or similar group, as well as Nevada unions.
 - Coordinate further with the Office for New Americans on opportunities to add capacity to each other's work.
 - Support immigrant small business owners in partnership with the Office of Small Business Advocacy and other state agencies; and
 - Provide input to the Attorney General on publication of its model policies and request an Attorney General opinion regarding local law enforcement policies on the continued detention of non-citizens for immigration violations.

Duties of the Nevada Working Task Force

As prescribed by Senate Bill 24, Section 1.7, the Task Force may:

1. The Task Force may:
 - (a) Develop strategies with private sector businesses, labor organizations and immigrant advocacy groups to support current and future industries across this State.
 - (b) Conduct research on methods to strengthen career pathways for immigrants and create enhanced partnerships with projected growth industries.
 - (c) Support the efforts of business leadership, civic groups, government and immigrant advocacy groups to provide predictability and stability to the workforce in this State.

(d) Recommend approaches to improve the ability of this State to attract and retain immigrant business owners that provide new business and trade opportunities.

The Task Force is required to submit a written report to the Director of the Legislative Council Bureau on or before July 1, 2024, of each even-numbered year. The report must include, without limitation, a summary of the work of the Task Force and any recommendations for legislation and regulations.

Meeting Activities – 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda
08/30/24	1 st meeting of the Task Force was conducted with presentations from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assemblywoman Selena Torres
09/25/24	2 nd meeting of the Task Force was conducted with a discussion to break out the Task Force in subcommittees.
10/23/24	3 rd meeting of the Task Force was conducted with presentation from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chris Weiss, Business and Industry
11/21/24	4 TH meeting of the Task Force was conducted to outline each subcommittee's role for the final LCB report.
12/12/24	5 TH meeting of the Task Force was conducted to review committee, subcommittee final reports.

The Keep Nevada Working Task Force

2025 Report

List of Recommendations

Executive Summary

The Keep Nevada Working Task Force advocates for the extension of Assembly Bill 480 (AB480) funding to strengthen Language Access Programs (LAPs), bolster support for immigrant entrepreneurs, and promote sustained community and economic growth across Nevada. This report outlines strategic recommendations, supported by relevant data, to achieve these objectives.

1. Enhancing Language Access Programs (LAPs)

AB480, enacted in 2023, allocated \$25 million from the state's general fund to the Interim Finance Committee for distribution among state agencies to develop and implement language access plans. This initiative aims to improve services for Nevada residents with limited English proficiency.

Recommendations:

- **Implementation of Multilingual Resources:** State agencies should develop comprehensive language access plans to provide multilingual resources, ensuring that all residents can access essential services regardless of language barriers.
- **Hiring Language Access Coordinators:** Agencies should prioritize the recruitment of Language Access Coordinators to oversee the development and implementation of these plans, ensuring cultural competency and effective communication.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Regular training sessions should be conducted for state employees to enhance their ability to serve diverse populations effectively.

2. Supporting Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Immigrant entrepreneurs are vital contributors to Nevada's economy, bringing innovation and fostering job creation. However, they often face challenges in accessing capital and resources.

Recommendations:

- **Expansion of the Battle Born Growth Microloan Program (BBGMP):** The BBGMP offers flexible, fixed-rate loans of up to \$250,000 to Nevada-based small businesses with 100 or fewer employees and annual revenues under \$5 million. As of October 2023, \$5.3 million was available in the first tranche, with up to \$15.9 million planned over three tranches. Expanding this program will improve access to capital for minority entrepreneurs.
- **Leveraging the Minority Business Development Agency and NV Grow:** These programs should be utilized to enhance financial literacy and grant accessibility for immigrant-owned small businesses, providing them with the necessary tools to succeed.

3. Fostering Economic Resilience through Strategic Partnerships

Collaborations with community organizations can amplify efforts to support immigrant entrepreneurs and promote economic equity.

Recommendations:

- **Partnerships with Organizations:** Collaborate with entities like the Asian Community Development Council and local chambers of commerce to provide outreach, education, and resources to immigrant entrepreneurs.
- **Targeted Investments:** Allocate funds for microloans, grants, and technical assistance tailored to the needs of immigrant and minority entrepreneurs, ensuring they have the support necessary for success.

4. Ensuring Accountability and Transparency

To maintain public trust and ensure effective use of funds, robust accountability measures are essential.

Recommendations:

- **Quarterly Progress Reviews:** Implement regular assessments to monitor the effectiveness of funded programs and initiatives.
- **Independent Review Committee:** Establish a committee to oversee fund utilization, ensuring that resources are used responsibly and align with program goals.

Strengthening Student Privacy to Build Trust and Encourage Workforce Participation

Objective: Ensure that all students, regardless of immigration status, can receive an education without fear, enabling them to contribute to Nevada's workforce and economy.

- **Business & the Economy:**
 - Privacy protections allow students from immigrant backgrounds to remain in school and complete their education, ensuring they develop the skills Nevada's industries need.

- If families fear that schools could share their information with immigration authorities, students may drop out or disengage from education, leading to lower workforce participation and reduced economic mobility.
- Prohibit unnecessary collection of immigration-related information in schools to protect students and their families.
- Ensure compliance with federal privacy laws (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA) to prevent unauthorized disclosure of student records.
- Provide annual privacy rights notifications so families feel secure enrolling their children in school, reinforcing education as an economic asset.
- **Economic Impact:**
 - Increased high school and college graduation rates lead to higher wages, more skilled workers, and a stronger state economy.
 - Nevada businesses benefit from a growing, educated labor force that meets industry demands.

Creating Safe Zones in Schools to Encourage Economic Mobility

Objective: Establish policies that prevent immigration enforcement actions in schools, ensuring students can focus on their education and future careers.

- **Business & the Economy:**
 - Uncertainty and fear about immigration enforcement disrupts educational attainment, leading to lower college enrollment rates and workforce participation.
 - Businesses depend on a stable and trained workforce, and students must feel safe in schools to develop critical skills.
 - The economy benefits when students can complete their education and enter high-skilled job markets rather than being forced into low-wage work due to fear and instability.
- **Recommendations:**
 - Designate all schools as “Safe Zones” where immigration enforcement is not allowed without a court order.
 - Establish clear protocols for responding to immigration enforcement actions, ensuring minimal disruption to students and families.
 - Ensure schools notify parents before allowing law enforcement access to students, reducing fear-based absenteeism.
- **Economic Impact:**
 - Keeping students in school reduces dropout rates and improves workforce readiness.
 - A stable, well-educated workforce reduces reliance on social safety nets and increases consumer spending and economic contributions.

5. Addressing Immigration-Related Discrimination to Strengthen Workforce Retention

Objective: Implement policies that prevent discrimination against students and families based on national origin, ensuring a positive impact on Nevada's labor market.

- **Business & the Economy:**
 - Workforce retention is a major challenge in Nevada, particularly in service industries, healthcare, and STEM fields.
 - A climate of discrimination or hostile policies against immigrant families can push skilled workers out of the state.
 - Businesses that embrace inclusive hiring practices and employee retention strategies perform better economically and attract a wider talent pool.
- **Recommendations:**
 - Establish anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies related to immigration status in schools.
 - Implement workforce development programs that specifically support first-generation college students and those from immigrant backgrounds.
 - Partner with businesses to create mentorship programs for students, ensuring they have a pathway to employment post-graduation.
- **Economic Impact:**
 - Increased workforce retention in key industries like technology, healthcare, and logistics.
 - Companies benefit from a larger, more stable talent pipeline as students transition from school to employment.

Conclusion

Extending AB480 funding presents a strategic opportunity to enhance language access, support immigrant entrepreneurs, and foster sustained economic growth in Nevada. By implementing these recommendations, the state can build a more inclusive and resilient economy that benefits all residents.

