

Joe Lombardo
Governor

Laura Rich
Director



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



Andrea R. Rivers,
*MS
Administrator*

Ihsan Azzam,
*Ph.D., M.D.,
Chief Medical
Officer*

March 9, 2026

Dianne Thornton
Legislative Counsel Bureau
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Director Thornton:

Please see the attached 2025 Council on Food Security Annual Report from the Department of Human Services (DHS) in accordance with the Nevada Revised Statutes [\(NRS\) 232.4968](#).

The report reviews the achievements and suggestions put forth by the Council regarding food security, which encompass, but are not limited to, any proposals related to community gardens and urban farms.

The report was prepared by the Office of Food Security, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Health Promotion Section (CDPHP), Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), DHS.

Any questions about this report may be directed to Lori A. Taylor, MSW, Office of Food Security and Wellness Manager, CDPHP, DPBH, DHS at l.taylor@health.nv.gov

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea R. Rivers".

Andrea R. Rivers, MS
Administrator
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Nevada Council on Food Security

2025 Annual Report



Nevada Department of Human Services

Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Office of Food Security

JOE LOMBARDO
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

ANDREA R. RIVERS, MS
ADMINISTRATOR, DPBH

Laura Rich,
DIRECTOR, DHS

IHSAN AZZAM, PHD, MD
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, DP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nevada's Council on Food Security (CFS) was established in 2014 through an executive order and subsequently codified into state law during the 80th Legislative Session in 2019 as Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) [232.4968](#).¹ The primary objective of CFS is to combat hunger among Nevadans, particularly children and older adults, who face a heightened risk of food insecurity. The tasks associated with this objective include, but are not limited to, evaluating legislation and protocols that influence food policy infrastructure. CFS also convenes special-session meetings and holds regular quarterly meetings to deliberate on various subjects (e.g., funding sources, food-security emergency response strategies, quality of service and meals provided to Nevadans, and food security policy); offer feedback; and formulate recommendations, which include an annual report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB). This report additionally contains details on community gardens and urban farms as stipulated by per NRS [232.4968](#).¹

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

According to [NRS 232.4968](#), CFS is required to prepare a report to, "... review the accomplishments and recommendations of the CFS concerning food security, including, without limitation, any recommendations concerning community gardens and urban farms."¹ The CFS Annual Report is due to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau by Jan. 31, 2026 and is written in collaboration with the Office of Food Security located within the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH).

INTRODUCTION

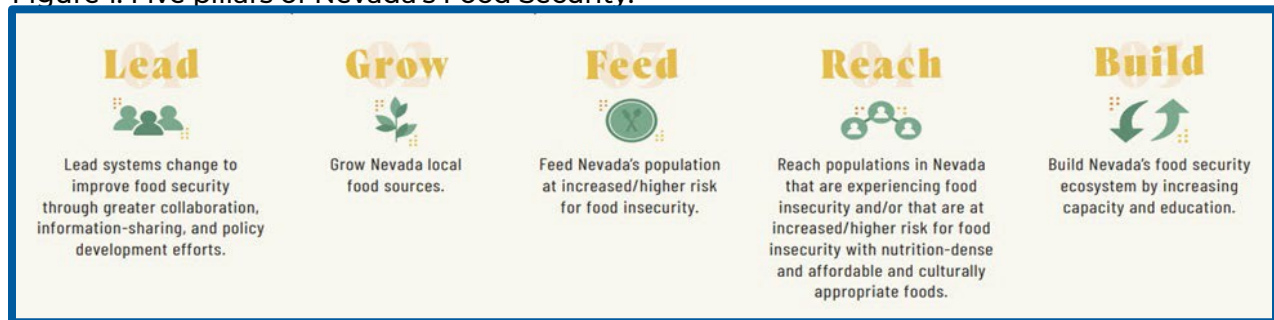
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as, "... a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food."² The impact of this may lead to an increased risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, hypertension, asthma, and COPD.³⁻⁵ Factors that contribute to the escalation of food insecurity may include race/ethnicity, age, income, geographic location, disability, employment, and health status. Moreover, insufficient access to nutritious food may perpetuate the cycle of food insecurity among vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. For example, children who face food insecurity tend to have poorer overall health and lower academic performance.⁶⁻⁸ Additionally, these children are more likely to repeat grades in elementary school, suffer from developmental delays, and experience increased social and behavioral issues.⁹⁻¹¹ Seniors who experience food insecurity frequently suffer from negative mental and physical health issues, including diabetes, mental health disorders, hypertension, gum disease, heart failure, and asthma.¹⁴ Contributing factors to this vulnerability include poor health conditions, limited financial resources, mobility issues, and low health literacy.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

To help combat these issues, CFS was established to transform food security and assist Nevadans living in food-insecure households by executing the objectives of the 2013 Food Strategic Plan titled, "Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action."¹⁵ In 2018, the plan underwent revisions, and further updates were made in 2023 after a thorough review and needs assessment conducted from July 2021 to November 2022.¹⁶ The revised [2023 Food Strategic Plan](#)¹⁶ is published on the [Office of Food Security webpage here](#). This updated

strategic plan outlines five pillars aimed at tackling the fundamental causes of hunger and fostering a more robust food security ecosystem across Nevada (Figure 1).¹⁶

To assist CFS in the establishment, coordination, and implementation of a robust food system in Nevada, OFS was tasked with providing administrative support. The associated activities are outlined in the [2023-2028 State Health Improvement Plan \(SHIP\)](#)¹⁷ and the [2023 Food Security Strategic Plan](#).¹⁶ In 2025, OFS also continued its collaboration with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) Public Health AmeriCorps to retain three part-time service members, of which two were assigned to food initiatives that further supported CFS. However, the NACDD AmeriCorps program ended with Nevada in July 2025.

Figure 1. Five pillars of Nevada's Food Security:



FOOD SECURITY IN NEVADA

As of 2024, approximately 481,460 individuals (15% of Nevada's population) are classified as food insecure, a figure that has consistently risen since 2019.¹⁸ In addition, 8% of Nevada's population lives in areas characterized by low income and limited access to affordable, nutritious food.¹⁹ According to the [2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan](#), approximately 80,000 Nevada residents aged 60 and above have reported experiencing food insecurity with projections indicating the older adult population in Nevada to grow by 36% over the next decade.^{16,19} Initiatives such as The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and The Senior Nutrition and Wellness Program (SNWP) are designed to help low-income seniors receive healthy nutritious food.²⁰⁻²¹ Among children in Nevada, 20% are considered food insecure.²² Programs such as the Universal School Meals were implemented to provide free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks to school-aged children, but the national program concluded in 2022.²³ The [Free or Reduced-Price School Meal Fact Sheet](#) offers further details regarding the 2024-2025 school year as provided by Gov. Joe Lombardo.²⁴

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program overseen by the Division of Social Services (DSS, formerly known as the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services) that aids low-income families in acquiring nutritious food.²⁵⁻²⁶ There are 500,816 (16%) residents of Nevada, with a significant portion being Hispanic, utilizing SNAP benefits.²⁷⁻²⁹ For every dollar received through SNAP, it is projected to create \$1.50 in economic activity, and estimates show that Nevada has received \$1.01 billion in SNAP benefits.³⁰ Further analysis of SNAP recipients in Nevada indicates that 62% of SNAP belong to families with children.³⁰

Another program to support food insecurity is the Nevada is the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, administered by DPBH. WIC provides nutrition education,

breastfeeding support services, supplemental nutritious foods, and referrals to health and social services. Since September 2025, there have been 55,854 total recipients: 31,838 children served, 13,083 infants served, and 10,933 women. Additional information can be found at the [WIC Data Dashboard](#). In 2025, the federal government shutdown led to uncertainty regarding SNAP and WIC benefits. Funding for these programs resumed in November 2025 with the end of the shutdown, although it resulted in disruptions to the program operations. To promote food security in Nevada, \$7.3 million in state emergency funds was designated for WIC (although it was not used), and a combined total of \$30 million was allocated to two food banks in the state. CFS continues to monitor the circumstances and its effects on the residents of Nevada.

There are several charitable food systems as well as private and public sector programs across Nevada to address food insecurity. Input from food banks and pantries have indicated several factors that influence Nevada's efforts to tackle food insecurity, namely the rising cost of living, particularly consumer prices for food. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN) partnered with the Nevada Center for Surveys, Evaluation and Statistics (CSES) at the University of Nevada, Reno, to conduct a yearlong (2021-2022) surveillance-style survey to understand food security in Northern Nevada. This survey determined the leading cause of food insecurity to be poverty, with one in five individuals indicating that they frequently run out of food and do not have the financial means to purchase more.³¹ Furthermore, 33% of those surveyed reported that food pantries were their primary source of food.³¹

To further improve access to food, the Home Feeds Nevada (HFN) program was established in [NRS Ch. 561](#).³² The HFN was created to procure food that is cultivated and produced within the state. The objective was, "to help Nevada become more food secure and create economic opportunity for Nevada agricultural producers".³³ This initiative was initially financed by the USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Program as well as funds allocated by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).³⁴⁻³⁵ As of early 2024, the program had acquired approximately 2.3 million pounds of food, translating to around \$3.5 million in revenue for local producers.³⁶ Between June 1 and November 2024, the program distributed more than 511,727 pounds of food and extended support to 19 local producers.³⁷ [Information about the divisions of the Nevada Department of Agriculture \(NDA\) can be found on its website here](#). Information about NDA's role in community nutrition and school nutrition can be found on [that agency's Data and Reports web page](#).

NEVADA CFS 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2025, CFS maintained the implementation of the strategic plan and the food security focus area of the SHIP. By Dec. 31, 2025, CFS convened a total of nine times (Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11, April 15, May 13, July 15, Sept. 30, Oct. 14, and Nov. 14), with one meeting held in person to facilitate improved partner collaboration, enhance cohesiveness, and minimize council vacancies. In addition, four of the meetings were designated as special sessions to evaluate food-related legislation proposed during the 83rd Legislative Session. The accomplishments of the CFS in 2025 are outlined as follows:

- Reviewed the following annual reports:
 - a. SFY25 Fund for a Healthy Nevada (FHN)
 - b. 2025 CFS
 - c. 2025 Food for People, Not Landfills (FFPNL)
- Discussed and reviewed the following:
 - a. State Emergency Food Plan

- b. FFY25 Home Feeds Nevada
 - c. Maternal Child Health Policy Innovation Program Project Opportunity
- Established a Northern Nevada Food Security Conference workgroup.
- Discussed activities to comply with [SB 233](#) (Home Feeds Nevada study) and [AB 405](#) (food insecurity study) and voted to form a subcommittee to complete these reports.
- Determined the FFPNL subcommittee member list (Table 1).
- Delegated logistics to OFS to reestablish the FFPNL subcommittee.
- Monitored FFPNL deliverables as a CFS standing agenda item.
- Assured progress and guidance on the 2023 food strategic plan pillars (regular duties per legislation).
- Addressed roles and responsibilities under the pillars in the 2023 Food Strategic Plan and expectations within the SHIP.
- Addressed two goals under the Lead pillar
 - a. Lead goal: Enhance cooperation, communication, and representation to support policy development and resource utilization.
 - i. CFS provided a platform for community members, tribes, implementing partners, interested parties/groups, and subject-matter experts to make recommendations to state agencies on addressing food insecurity in Nevada and has enhanced connectivity among food security initiatives and partners. The OFS notified the Partners for a Healthy Nevada (PHN) on CFS activities. A member of the Southern Nevada Food Council was seated on CFS.
 - b. Lead goal: Reduce food insecurity through funding and policy efforts.
 - i. CFS provided recommendations on bills related to food security throughout the 83rd legislative session.
- Addressed three objectives under the Lead Pillar.
 - a. Lead objective: This objective is to convene local food ecosystem partners, community members, policymakers, and keynote food security speakers.
 - I. One SHIP objective developed by the CFS aligns with this Lead objective: “Improve collaboration, communication, coordination, and information and data- sharing among food ecosystem partners by developing and delivering a well- designed presentation to the Nevada legislature on food insecurity and food needs in Nevada. Collaborating with existing organizations like DPBH and CFS, as well as other relevant food ecosystem partners, to increase the effectiveness of these presentations. Host two food security fairs/conferences in Southern and Northern Nevada, bringing together local food ecosystem partners, community members, and policy makers to engage through various keynote speakers and discussions. Also, the provision of opportunities to interact with local vendors, farmers, and community organizations to learn about local foods and resources is essential.”
 - II. In 2025, the CFS maintained a workgroup with the support of OFS to establish a food security conference in Northern Nevada. The conference was initially planned for 2025 to align with the SHIP objectives and the 2023 Food Security Plan to convene the local food ecosystem. This conference has shifted to 2026 due to a lack of funding.
 - III. In 2025, CFS received presentations on food security data from the following: Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, Food Bank of Northern Nevada, and Three Square. Also, the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity presented a Nutritional Health Literacy survey.
 - b. Lead Objective: This objective is to increase the representation of partners from the transportation and housing sectors, Tribal communities, and those who have

lived experience with food insecurity in decision-making processes related to food security.

- I. The CFS developed one SHIP objective to align with this Lead objective: “Partner with local farmers, food vendors, Tribal communities, and other community organizations to support initiatives aimed at increasing mobile access (food trucks, community gardens, mobile markets, etc.) to healthy foods throughout the State of Nevada, specifically the underserved and remote areas (Churchill County, Elko, Esmeralda County, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Mineral, Nye, Pershing, Lyon, Storey, Douglas, and White Pine).”
 - II. In 2025, the CFS continues its endeavors to support a food security workgroup aimed at organizing a conference in both the Northern and Southern regions of Nevada. Funding for the SNAP-Ed program for FFY26 was requested but not awarded for this project due to budget cuts. The work group has suggested a cohosting partnership with the University of Reno, NDA, and DSS. Discussions are ongoing.
- c. Lead Objective: This objective is to fund efforts to assist programs and initiatives to reduce food insecurity, expand the availability and accessibility of food, and improve food affordability.
- I. The CFS developed two SHIP objectives to align with this Lead objective.
 - II. SHIP Objective: “Support new strategic partnerships and increase awareness among the food security ecosystem regarding service providers and funding opportunities can assist with distributing food to people, particularly individuals at increased/higher risk for food insecurity.”
 - OFS and CFS are making ongoing efforts to create a statewide food security fair/conference and are using their resources to assist with awareness.
 - III. SHIP Objective: “Utilize existing outreach channels and participate in marketing opportunities to inform eligible individuals and eligible households about WIC and SNAP benefits, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and any other additional summer food, school lunch, and breakfast programs. Increase awareness of existing campaigns that emphasize the benefits, requirements, and application processes for sponsors.”
 - To assist in making well-informed decisions regarding this objective, the CFS engaged in discussions about statewide food security data and evaluated various programs. The data reviewed encompassed statistics on food insecurity (such as the amount of food distributed, the number of individuals served, etc.), food distribution methods, overall food access, awareness of food insecurity initiatives, and existing food databases that provide access to food-related resources across the state. Additionally, CFS examined the state's nutrition statistics to identify possible obstacles to enhancing food security, the measures being taken to address food insecurity in hard-to-reach areas and/or food deserts in Nevada, and the opportunities for the CFS to advocate for necessary changes. The programs and data that were discussed included the following, presented in no order:

- 1) NDA on the Community Food Access Project, gaps analysis on food security.
 - 2) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)
 - 3) Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA)
 - 4) The Summer Food Program (SFP)
 - 5) Home Delivered Meals Program
 - 6) Home Feeds Nevada Program
 - 7) Medicaid Waiver 1115 programs as it relates to food security
 - 8) Food Bank of Northern Nevada data
 - 9) Southern Nevada Food Council data
 - 10) Three Square data
 - 11) Nutritional Health Literacy Survey
 - 12) Office of Analytics (OOA) data available on Nevada's Food Security Statistics.
- The CFS' efforts on the FFPNL program also align with this objective. This program is designed to increase food security by decreasing food waste and redirecting excess consumable food to underserved communities throughout the state. The CFS monitors the program as a standing agenda item and DHS continues to look for funding to support the unfunded mandate.
 - The CFS reviewed the SFY25 Fund for a Healthy Nevada-Hunger Funds Annual Report, whose funds are administered through the DHS Grants Management Unit (GMU) and utilize 60% of tobacco settlements received/recovered by the State of Nevada. The Hunger Funds supported the 2019 Statewide Community Needs Assessment and aligns with the updated 2023 Food Strategic Plan (NRS 439.630). Please reference the SFY25 FHN Hunger Funds annual report at [Home - Office of Food Security \(nv.gov\)](https://www.nv.gov) (expected to be posted in 2026).
- Supported OFS under the Build pillar regarding two strategies.
 - 1.) Build Strategy: This strategy is about supporting efforts to increase FHN resources dedicated to food security.
 - In 2025, CFS continued to ensure progress and guidance of the strategic plan along with the SHIP. The council discussed funding concerns and the need to determine the future of the program. This included the continued partnership with OFS who oversees FHN funds that align with the FEED and Build pillar in the strategic plan and carries out initiatives that increase access to nutrition-dense and affordable food for populations at increased/higher risk for food insecurity.
 - 2.) Build Strategy: This strategy works to identify and coordinate with designated state Tribal Liaisons, community partners established within tribal communities, and points of contact at the Nevada Indian Commission. CFS members to attend Intertribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) meetings.
 - In 2025, the Council sought assistance of OFS to collaborate with a tribal liaison to place CFS on the ITCN agenda, thereby enhancing the Council's visibility among tribal members.

Table 1. 2025 FFPNL Subcommittee Agencies

United States of Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)

Three Square
University of Nevada, Reno, Extension
Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, includes food rescue
Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada
Food Bank Northern Nevada, includes food rescue
North Nevada Gaming Industry
Southern Nevada Gaming Industry
Retail or grocery
Reno Gleaning Project
A representative from an organization that does farmers market buy back and/or food rescue from agricultural producers
Helping Hands of Vegas Valley
A representative from food service
A representative from a community partner involved in food rescue

CFS 2025 RECOMMENDATIONS

Advise and Inform the Governor on the Food Policy of this State

The CFS is actively engaged in discussions regarding the necessity of a legislative brief aimed at addressing food policy within the State of Nevada. The 83rd Legislative Session required the Council to undertake a thorough study of the Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program and a food insecurity study. These studies will concentrate on determining long-term financial sustainability and exploring potential sustainable revenue sources. Special CFS sessions were held to discuss the following and a subcommittee formed:

- [SB233](#) related to agriculture; requiring “the Council on Food Security within the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program; making an appropriation; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.”
- [AB405](#) related to agriculture; requiring “the Council on Food Security to conduct a study during the 2025-2026 interim to evaluate food insecurity in this State and develop strategies to coordinate statewide efforts to address food insecurity; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.”

Funding the Plan

The Council can evaluate grant proposals and alternative funding sources upon the Director's request to offer funding recommendations. No grants proposals were reviewed in 2025. The Council examined and deliberated various food security bills introduced during the 83rd Legislative Session.

Advise, Assist and Make Recommendations to the Director

Efforts to provide guidance and recommendations regarding food insecurity in Nevada continued, including special sessions focused on the studies related to SB233 and AB405, as mentioned.

Community Gardens and Urban Farms

The Council is authorized to investigate and formulate recommendations regarding community gardens and urban farms. This must encompass, but is not limited to, the analysis of the following aspects:

- Local and regional initiatives aimed at establishing community gardens and urban farm;
- Regulatory and policy obstacles hindering the development of community gardens and urban farm;
- The possible implications of community gardens and urban farms on economic growth within this State; and
- In 2025, the Council persisted in its endeavors related to the SHIP and strategic plan initiatives, which have a direct or indirect influence on Community Gardens and Urban Farms.

CFS FUTURE FOCUS

In the year 2026, CFS will maintain its emphasis on [SHIP](#) food security initiatives, oversee the FFPNL subcommittee, and engage in activities outlined in the 2023 Food Strategic Plan. The Council recognizes the need for collaboration between all partners to reduce hunger and improve wellness outcomes. The Council will concentrate more specifically on the following:

- Provide a second presentation to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services (JHHS) and a legislative brief with the necessary data needed to make informed funding decisions regarding food security in Nevada.
- Conduct ongoing meetings to expand knowledge and understanding of food insecurity in Nevada.
- Continue efforts to host a food security conference in Northern and Southern Nevada.
- Guide and monitor the FFPNL Program and partner with OFS to support Council goals, focusing on subcommittee selection, diversion of food from landfills, and increasing food security.
- Continue addressing food insecurity in hard-to-reach areas and/or food deserts.
- Host presentations, which are focused on food insecurity statistics (pounds of food distributed, people served, etc.), food distribution (e.g., home delivered meals), general food access, nutritional health literacy, and building awareness on food insecurity programs and existing food databases to access food-related resources statewide.
- Prioritize building awareness around food distribution, support, and general food access throughout Nevada, including the clarification of food insecure and distribution terminology as well as a review of food hubs and mobile food distributions in the state.
- Plan and review the emergency food plans and the need for dissemination throughout Nevada.
- Continuation of at least one in-person meeting for CFS in Carson City and/or Las Vegas Office(s) to enhance collaboration, cohesiveness, and to increase efforts to reduce Council vacancies.
- DPBH to coordinate and collaborate with the Tribal Liaisons on Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada meetings to increase the number of CFS seats that represent individuals' tribal, housing, and transportation sectors, and individuals with lived experience.

- Review of the Home Feeds Nevada Program Annual Report and/or outcomes.
- Review the FHN Hunger Funds, including but not limited to the annual report and funding allocations.
- Review federal standards or policies that create barriers and food insecurity risks.
- Determine where the Council can advocate for change.

Table 2: 2025 CFS Board Members (Updated 11/06/2025)

Members	Description
Charlotte Williams Jeff Duncan	<i>A person who is a representative of a food bank serving northern Nevada</i>
Gabriela Everett	<i>A person who is a representative of a food bank serving southern Nevada</i>
VACANT	<i>A person who is a representative of a local health authority</i>
Sara Ramirez	<i>A person who is a representative of an organization that provides community-based services, including, without limitation, services that focus on the social determinants of health, in northern Nevada</i>
Roberto Carrillo	<i>A person who is a representative of an organization that provides community-based services, including, without limitation, services that focus on the social determinants of health, in southern Nevada</i>
Dr. Sabina Malik	<i>A person who is a representative of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension</i>
Marcia Blake	<i>A person who possesses knowledge, skill and experience in the provision of services to senior citizens and persons with disabilities</i>
(Tori) Samantha Lawson-Boffelli	<i>A person who possesses knowledge, skill, and experience in the provision of services to children and families</i>
DPBH Administrator Designee: Vickie Ives	<i>Administrator of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health or his or her designee from within the Division.</i>
Administrator Designee: Kelly Cantrelle	<i>Administrator of the Nevada Division of Supportive Services or designee from within the Division.</i>
Dr. Julian Goicoechea	<i>Director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department.</i>
Director Designee: Dr. Dorian Stonebarger	<i>Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development or his or her designee within the Office.</i>
Maria Menjivar	<i>One member representing community-based services (Rural Nevada).</i>
Jill Moe	<i>One member who is a representative of farmers or ranchers engaged in food production</i>
VACANT	<i>One member who is a representative of manufacturing that is not related to food.</i>
Bethany Herzing	<i>One member who is a representative of persons engaged in the business of processing or distributing food</i>
Nishat Gould	<i>One member who is a representative of retailers of food.</i>
VACANT	<i>One member who is a representative of the gaming industry, hospitality industry, or restaurant industry.</i>
VACANT-Appoint as Needed	<i>Such other representatives of State Government as may be designated by the Governor</i>
Designee for Administrator: Lori Lutu & Jeff Duncan	<i>The Administrator of the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Department or his or her designee from within the Department</i>
DHS Designee: (Director Rich): to be appointed	<i>The Director or his or her designee</i>
Governor Designee: Allison Herzik	<i>The State of Nevada Governor's Designee.</i>
Superintendent Designee: Dr. Pamela Juniel	<i>The Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Nevada Department of education or his or her designee within the Division.</i>
Jesus Mendoza, Jr.	<i>Western Regional Director of the United States Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department.</i>

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