



POLICY AND PROGRAM REPORT



Human Services

April 2016

Human services are essential services designed to meet the basic subsistence needs of individuals and families who cannot meet these needs on their own. In Nevada, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides such services. The mission of DHHS is to ensure that families are strengthened, public health is protected, and individuals achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency.

The availability of income supports, job training, food assistance, childcare, and similar services are critical for helping the State's most vulnerable residents take care of themselves. Two of the most vulnerable segments of the population—residents under 18 years of age and those over 65 years of age—account for 37 percent of the State population; 23 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

In 2015, the State Legislature approved \$2.172 billion in General Fund support for Human Services for the 2015-2017 Biennium. This represents a 5.8 percent increase compared to previous biennium.¹

This report provides an overview of economic assistance programs, child welfare services, mental health and developmental services, and substance abuse services in the State of Nevada.

¹Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, *Nevada Legislative Appropriations Report*, 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/fiscal/Appropriation%20Reports/2015AppropriationsReport/2015_78th_AppropriationsReport.pdf.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Economic Assistance Programs	2
<i>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</i>	2
<i>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</i>	3
<i>Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Food Program</i>	4
<i>Childcare Assistance</i>	4
Child Welfare Services	5
<i>Child Protective Services</i>	5
<i>Foster Care</i>	5
<i>Nevada Independent Living Program</i>	6
<i>Adoption</i>	6
Mental Health and Developmental Services	6
<i>Mental Health</i>	6
<i>Children's Mental Health</i>	7
<i>Involuntary Commitment</i>	8
<i>Developmental Services</i>	8
Substance Abuse Services	9
<i>Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency</i>	9
Resources	9
Research Staff Contacts.....	10
Glossary of Acronyms	11

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Various services are available through numerous programs to help Nevadans who are unable to meet basic economic needs. The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) of DHHS administers most of these programs, which provide cash, food, or employment assistance, or a combination thereof. Certain low-income individuals or families may be eligible for multiple programs. Key economic assistance programs in Nevada are described in brief below.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Nevada’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program offers temporary financial assistance and services to help families with dependent children achieve self-sufficiency. The TANF program provides time-limited assistance in the form of cash payments, vouchers, and other benefits to cover a family’s ongoing basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and utilities. Additional support services, such as childcare and transportation, are available to certain participants who are employed or actively looking for work.

To be eligible for TANF, an individual or family must meet certain financial and nonfinancial requirements, as outlined in the box below. In order to receive monthly benefits, participants must comply with the conditions outlined in their Personal Responsibility Plan, which specifies the services they will receive and steps they must take to achieve their goals—including work participation requirements. Failure to comply with these and other requirements may result in a loss of benefits.

TANF Eligibility Requirements

FINANCIAL	NONFINANCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income less than or equal to 130 percent of the federal poverty level (\$31,525 for a family of four in 2015); and • Less than \$6,000 in assets (not including a vehicle, home, household goods and personal items). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States citizen or qualifying immigrant; • Nevada resident; • Relative or adoptive caregiver of a child; • School attendance by child as required by State law; • Proof of child’s immunizations; and • Compliance with child support enforcement program.

New Employees of Nevada

All work-eligible TANF participants are required to participate in New Employees of Nevada (NEON), the Division of Welfare and Supportive Service’s employment and training program.

The program provides numerous services to help TANF households with a means to acquire basic and vocational skills to achieve economic independence through job training, employment, and wage gain in an effort to reduce or eliminate dependency on public assistance programs.

All TANF-NEON participants are evaluated to determine vocational abilities and interests. Additional screening identifies specific issues, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and parenting, which may inhibit successful transition to productive employment. Support services such as childcare, clothing, tools, transportation, and other items necessary to facilitate rapid transition into the workforce are available to help meet these needs.

Funding and Benefit Limitations for TANF and TANF-NEON

The TANF program is funded by State General Fund revenue, program revenue, and a federal block grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Federal law limits participation in TANF to a total five years during a person's lifetime. In Nevada, once a TANF recipient receives assistance for 24 months, he or she may not participate in the program for the following 12 consecutive months, unless suffering certain hardships.

Caseload in Nevada

Since the 2007 recession, the number of Nevadans participating in TANF programs has grown—even as the economy improved. In 2015, TANF cash assistance programs served a monthly average of 12,233 Nevadans and TANF-NEON served an average of 8,220.

The DWSS attributes continued growth to the 2014 expansion of Medicaid, which streamlined the application process for both programs. More efficient eligibility and application processes have improved program access by eliminating certain barriers to entry. For example, new Medicaid applicants also learn whether they are eligible for TANF.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Formerly known as the Food Stamp program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program that helps low-income households buy nutritious food. Administered by DWSS, administrative costs are borne equally by State and federal government. Benefits are available to qualifying families, single adults, and elderly people.

To be eligible for SNAP, most applicants must not have more than set income limits; gross income must be less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and net income must be less than or equal to 100 percent of poverty (\$48,500 and \$24,250 for a family of four in 2015, respectively). Households that receive TANF, General Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, or a combination of these programs are “categorically eligible” and not subject to these requirements. The resource limit for households without elderly or disabled members is \$2,000; the limit increases to \$3,250 for households with elderly or disabled members. The limit excludes one vehicle, home, household goods, and personal items.

Employment and Training Requirement

Certain SNAP participants are required to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Employment and Training Program (SNAPET) as a condition of eligibility. This program promotes employment through job search activities and the provision of support services, such as transportation reimbursement, bus passes, and assistance paying for job search expenditures. Among those exempt from participating in SNAPET are participants under 16 years of age, those aged 60 and older, the disabled, those caring for children under the age of 6 or disabled family members, those already working or who are already required to participate in TANF-NEON, and those aged 16 or 17 who are attending school.

Caseload in Nevada

Since the recession began in 2007, the SNAP caseload has increased from a monthly average of approximately 56,600 Nevadans to 204,859 in 2015. The SNAPET caseload peaked in 2010, serving a monthly average of 343; in 2015, an average of 188 were served each month.

Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Food Program

The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federally funded program that provides nutritious foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and to infants and children up to five years of age who are at nutritional risk. Administered by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), DHHS, WIC provides access to healthy foods, health screening, and information on health care services, such as prenatal care, immunizations, and family planning, among other community services.

To qualify for WIC, an applicant must be: (1) a pregnant woman; (2) a postpartum woman, up to six months after giving birth; (3) a breastfeeding woman, up to the breastfed infant's first birthday; or (4) an infant or child under five years of age. Participants must live in Nevada and provide proof of residency. Income eligibility guidelines are higher than for most other public assistance programs—up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$44,863 for a family of four in 2015). Households participating in Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP automatically meet WIC income eligibility requirements. In order to qualify, applicants must also be determined to have a nutritional risk.

As the State population increased in recent years, and following the expansion of Medicaid, participation in WIC also grew, increasing from an average monthly caseload of 50,232 in 2007 to 71,706 in 2015.

Childcare Assistance

The Child Care and Development Program subsidizes childcare for low-income families receiving public assistance and those transitioning from public assistance in obtaining childcare so they can work or attend educational or training programs. Funded by both State and federal funds, and administered by DWSS, eligibility activities are conducted by program contractors—the Children's Cabinet in

northern Nevada and the Las Vegas Urban League in southern Nevada. Subsidies are available to low-income families who are working, searching for work, or participating in TANF-NEON.

To be eligible for childcare subsidy assistance, a family must have a child less than 13 years of age, or 19 years of age if the child has a verified special need, and family income must not surpass 75 percent of the State's median income, based on the size of the household. Other factors that determine eligibility include citizenship, immunizations, relationship, residency, and Social Security numbers.

In 2015, an average of 5,673 children were served each month.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The State provides numerous services to ensure the welfare of children—one of the most vulnerable segments of society. Services include direct child protective services, foster care, independent living services, and adoption. The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), DHHS, is responsible for oversight of child welfare and child welfare services statewide, and it provides direct services to children and families in all counties except those with a population of 100,000 or more. The Clark County Department of Family Services and the Washoe County Department of Social Services provide child welfare services respectively in Clark and Washoe Counties.

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) aims to ensure the safety of children who have been reported as being abused or neglected. The goal of CPS is to protect children from harm and the risk of harm. CPS agencies respond to reports of child abuse and neglect as defined in statute, including nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, maltreatment, and excessive corporal punishment. Such reports are investigated, family assessments are conducted and, if necessary, emergency shelter care or foster care is provided. Referrals also may be made to community-based services to prevent entry into the child welfare system. Chapter 432B (“Protection of Children From Abuse and Neglect”) of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) addresses child protection services and procedures in Nevada.

Additional CPS information is available at: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CWS/CPS/CPS/>.

Foster Care

If a child's protection and safety cannot be met in the child's home, substitute care, such as foster care, may be necessary. Foster care provides a temporary placement for children removed from their home for their protection, until a permanent placement is established. The circumstances in which a child is or may need protection are outlined in NRS 432B.330 and include, but are not limited to, abandonment, abuse, or neglect by a person responsible for the child's welfare.

A foster care caseworker assigned to a child assists in developing a plan and works to reduce the safety threats in the child's family with the goal of the child returning home. Depending on the situation, a permanency plan developed with the district court may include family reunification,

placement with relatives, adoption, or independent living. Chapter 424 (“Foster Homes for Children”) of NRS addresses foster care in greater detail.

Nevada Independent Living Program

Designed to help youth in foster care and former foster youth transition from foster care to adulthood, the Nevada Independent Living Program provides opportunities to learn skills—such as money management, decision-making, substance abuse, and pregnancy prevention—that help youth become independent and self-sufficient. It also provides services such as financial assistance with college or vocational schools, mentorship, and counseling. Certain Nevada youth are eligible for the program until their 21st birthday. These include Nevada foster youth aged 15 and older, youth who aged-out of foster care at age 18, and foster youth who were adopted when they were 16 or older.

Additional information on the program is available at: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CWS/IL/>.

Adoption

The goal of the State’s adoption program is to provide safe and permanent homes for children whose birth parents cannot care for them. Most foster children are adopted by relatives and foster parents; others may require recruitment efforts to locate appropriate families. The DCFS and county agencies providing child welfare services offer financial, medical, and social services to help adoptive parents and to encourage and support adoption of foster children with special needs.

Additional adoption information is available at: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CWS/Adoption/>.

MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The State provides a diverse array of mental health care and developmental services. Services include varying levels of inpatient, outpatient, and community-based care for Nevadans of all ages. Within the DHHS, adult mental health care services are provided primarily by the DPBH, children’s mental health services are provided by DCFS, and developmental services are provided by the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD). Prior to DHHS’s reorganization in 2013, mental health and developmental services for adults were provided by the former Division of Mental Health.

Mental Health

The following mental health programs and services are offered in Nevada, although some are only available in urban areas:

- Consumer-directed peer-support programs;
- Inpatient psychiatric hospital services (urban areas);
- Medication clinics;

- Mental health court counseling and treatment services;
- Mobile crisis units (urban areas);
- Outpatient and co-occurring disorders treatment services;
- Outpatient counseling;
- Programs for assertive community treatment (urban areas);
- Psychiatric emergency services (urban areas);
- Psychosocial rehabilitation;
- Residential programs;
- Senior outreach; and
- Service coordination.

In 2015, more than 15,000 adults received mental health services on average every month. Of those, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health served a monthly average of 8,582 individuals and Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health served approximately 4,120. Rural clinics served more than 2,500 on average each month.

Title 39 (“Mental Health”) of NRS outlines key provisions regarding mental health in Nevada. Additional information on key mental health programs is available at: <http://dpbh.nv.gov/Programs/Programs/>.

Children’s Mental Health

Children’s mental health services are provided by DCFS. Pursuant to Chapter 433B (“Additional Provisions Relating to Children”) of NRS, the State is required to provide certain mental health services to people less than 18 years of age or, if in school, until graduation from high school. The DCFS provides mental and behavioral health services and psychiatric services through community-based, inpatient, outpatient, and residential services to children and families. Services are available for children with emotional disturbances, and mental health programming includes early childhood services, residential care, residential treatment center for adolescents, and an acute residential treatment center. Children’s mental health services are provided regionally—by Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services in the Reno/Sparks area, Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services in the Las Vegas valley, and by Rural Mental Health, DPBH, in rural regions of the State.

In addition, the Mobile Crisis Response Team provides immediate care and treatment to children and youth who have mental and behavioral health needs in order to reduce unnecessary psychiatric hospitalizations and other disruptions.

Additional information is available at: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/CMH/>.

Involuntary Commitment

Three types of admission to a mental health facility exist in Nevada: (1) voluntary; (2) emergency; and (3) involuntary. These are governed by Chapter 433A (“Admission to Mental Health Facilities or Programs of Community-Based or Outpatient Services; Hospitalization”) of NRS. Involuntary, or court-ordered, admission of a person alleged to be suffering from a mental illness, as defined in statute, as well as emergency admission of such a person, may be commenced by certain persons, including certain family, health care professionals, and law enforcement.

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature added physician assistants to the list of people authorized to file an application for an emergency admission or a petition for the involuntary court-ordered admission of a person alleged to have a mental illness to a mental health facility or to a program of community-based or outpatient services.

The Legislature also expanded the list of health professionals authorized to complete a certificate stating that a person has a mental illness and, because of that mental illness, is likely to harm himself or herself or others if not admitted to certain facilities or programs, to include a physician assistant under the supervision of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a clinical social worker with certain psychiatric training and experience, an advanced practice registered nurse with certain psychiatric training and experience, or an accredited agent of the DHHS. The State Board of Nursing and the Board of Examiners for Social Workers must adopt regulations prescribing the psychiatric training and experience necessary for the professionals they license to meet the qualifications to complete the certificate.

In addition, a person who is related by blood or marriage within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity to a person alleged to have a mental illness is now prohibited from completing: (1) an application for emergency admission; (2) a certificate stating that a person has a mental illness and, because of that mental illness, is likely to harm himself or herself or others; or (3) a certificate stating that a person does not have a mental illness.

Developmental Services

The ADSD provides a wide range of coordinated, community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities and related conditions and to their families, with the goal of helping people with disabilities to live independent, satisfactory lives. To qualify for developmental services, a person must meet certain eligibility requirements, including a diagnosis of intellectual disability or related conditions, as well as have at least three of six major life-skill limitations. Individuals and families receive assistance in developing a plan based on an individual’s needs and in finding

and obtaining services and funding to achieve their goals and integration with the community. Many developmental services are provided to Medicaid eligible individuals.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency

Within the DPBH, the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA) was established to reduce the impact of substance abuse in Nevada. With responsibility for the federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, SAPTA identifies alcohol and drug abuse needs throughout the State and provides competitive funding to nonprofit and governmental organizations to support a continuum of services including prevention, early intervention, and treatment. The SAPTA is responsible for the development and implementation of a State plan for prevention and treatment, coordination of State and federal funding, and development of standards for the certification and approval of prevention and treatment programs.

Rather than providing direct substance abuse prevention or treatment services, SAPTA coordinates substance abuse service delivery programs and provides technical assistance to ensure the effective use of resources.

Additional information is available at: http://mh.nv.gov/Meetings/SAPTA_Program_Page/.

RESOURCES

Nevada 2-1-1: <http://dhhs.nv.gov/Programs/Grants/Programs/2-1-1/>.

Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation: <http://detr.state.nv.us/>.

Department of Health and Human Services: <http://dhhs.nv.gov/>.

Division of Child and Family Services: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/>.

Division of Public and Behavioral Health: <http://dpbh.nv.gov/>.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency: http://mh.nv.gov/Meetings/SAPTA_Program_Page/.

Division of Welfare and Supportive Services: <https://dwss.nv.gov/>.

Clark County Department of Family Services: http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/depts/family_services/pages/default.aspx.

Washoe County Department of Social Services: <http://www.washoecounty.us/socsrv/>.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ADSD.....	Aging and Disability Services Division
CPS	Child Protective Services
DCFS	Division of Child and Family Services
DHHS.....	Department of Health and Human Services
DPBH.....	Division of Public and Behavioral Health
DWSS.....	Division of Welfare and Supportive Services
NEON	New Employees of Nevada
NRS	<i>Nevada Revised Statutes</i>
SAPTA	Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SNAPET	Supplemental Nutritional Employment and Training Program
TANF.....	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WIC.....	Women, Infants, and Children