

**STATE OF NEVADA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, November 21, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.

The GWDB Employer Engagement and Economic Development Subcommittee held a public meeting
on Microsoft TEAMS

Audio Conference Number: +1 775-321-6111
Phone Conference ID: 996 543 036#

1. Call to Order - Opening remarks

Chair Perea called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Roll Call - Confirmation of Quorum

Tiffany Vazquez, OWINN, called roll and confirmed quorum.

Members Present

Dennis Perea, Chair
Ken Goodrich, Vice Chair
Edward Estipona, Vice Chair GWDB
George Gault
Tony Machabee
Andrew MacKay
Janel Thomas
Michael Yoder
Irene Bustamante-Adams
David Schmidt
Elaine Silverstone
Milt Stewart
Jeff Sutich

Absent

Louis Desalvio
Paul Kaplan

Others Present

Kara Abe
Daniel Dong
Frankie Mason
Ryan Hogan
Amy Respini
Tiffany Vazquez

3. **First Public Comment**

Chair Perea reminded anyone that speaks to identify themselves for the record.

There were none.

4. **Approval of September 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes - (For possible action)**

Chair Perea called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. It was moved by Ken Goodrich and seconded by Tony Machabee. The motion carried.

5. **Local Boards Ability to Help with Employer Outreach from Nevadaworks – (Discussion/Informational only)**

Chair Perea noted from earlier discussions the topics of how to get information out to employers and the employer community and how the local boards can help.

Milt Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, Nevadaworks acknowledged the importance of engaging with employers while leveraging existing efforts. He emphasized aligning new initiatives with ongoing work for stronger impact.

Ryan Hogan, Industry Engagement Specialist, Nevadaworks introduced Nevadaworks' mission to provide workforce solutions for employers and career seekers across Northern Nevada's 13 counties. Key challenges include rapid economic growth, the need to align talent pipelines with employer demand, and coordinating employer engagement efforts to avoid duplication.

He highlighted the challenge of multiple organizations engaging employers separately, resulting in confusion and inefficiency. Employers often participate reactively during hiring surges but lack consistent engagement for long-term workforce planning.

Industry Sector Partnerships (ISPs) address engagement challenges. "The true value proposition for the industry sector partnership model is it allows for employers to have a single conversation with several stakeholders, rather than several conversations with individual stakeholders." Northern Nevada initially focused on four key industries: Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Transportation, Healthcare, and Digital Technology.

Milt Stewart clarified that the four sectors were based on employer demand, growth projections, wage levels, and alignment with state priorities, in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Based on Northern Nevada's emergence as a clean energy hub, a new ISP focused on the lithium battery lifecycle was launched. Ryan emphasized the importance of partnerships across agencies, education providers, and workforce entities to build a cohesive system, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes.

Ryan Hogan highlighted an ISP event "Nevadaworks Together" that was held on October 24th at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. It featured plenary sessions, employer panels highlighting training and apprenticeship programs, and breakout ISP meetings. Employer panelists shared successful collaborations with workforce initiatives:

- KD Electric utilized Silver State Works for on-the-job training

- Chromalloy leveraged incumbent worker training
- Dragonfly Energy partnered with Truckee Meadows Community College for customized training

The event marked an increased scale and engagement, including strong participation from tribal representatives. Additionally, based on Northern Nevada’s emergence as a clean energy hub, a new ISP was formed for the lithium battery life cycle sector to support Northern Nevada’s clean energy transition, demonstrating adaptability to emerging industries. He emphasized the importance of partnerships across agencies, education providers, and workforce entities to build a cohesive system, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes.

How the GWDB Can Strengthen Employer Engagement

If I can ask this board for one thing today it would be to support efforts that cultivate champions and assist in removing barriers to participation for our employers

- Promote a consistent statewide message about the value of employer engagement, Industry Sector Partnership meetings, and available workforce resources to reduce confusion and create a clear point of entry.
- Serve as industry ambassadors by using board members’ networks and credibility to encourage peer employers to participate and champion the workforce system
- Elevate employer success stories to state and regional levels to demonstrate impact, build trust, and motivate additional employers to engage
- Support strategic workforce priorities to ensure ISP efforts align with high-demand sectors and statewide economic development goals, reinforcing employer confidence in system alignment

Chair Perea acknowledged a long-standing issue regarding brand confusion within the workforce system. He asked, “ Does this committee and does the governor's board have a role in trying to reduce that confusion and branding and everything else or has that been taken care of because it looks like EmployNV is doing a lot more than it used to?”

Milt Stewart reflected on past challenges in marketing the public workforce development system due to budget and perception limitations. Marketing was often avoided, with “outreach” used instead. Over the last few years, the local boards in collaboration with DETR and other partners have started to develop and lean int EmployNV system.

An example highlighted alignment with DETR’s business services reps to avoid redundancy. During a Good Jobs Challenge Grant effort, sector misalignment arose, but DETR had already adjusted, demonstrating responsiveness. This reinforced confidence in the Northern Nevada EmployNV Hub model, which integrates employer engagement and sector partnerships. He acknowledged ongoing improvements, including statewide branding discussions to strengthen EmployNV’s no-wrong-door approach. New tools were being implemented to track referrals, and partnerships with GOED, NSHE, and others were expanding. The committee was asked to identify remaining gaps and act as ambassadors, leveraging networks beyond the local workforce system’s reach. The speaker emphasized continuous improvement while recognizing progress made.

Vice Chair Goodrich added that small businesses often lack awareness of workforce services and face barriers to accessing training and hiring resources. Many operate without formal HR departments and may not participate in traditional chambers of commerce. He shared a local example of small electrical contractors self-organizing training without knowledge of workforce system resources. He highlighted the opportunity to engage small business

associations to promote available services, which could generate new employer leads and add value to local communities.

Milt Stewart acknowledged that Nevadaworks system is less mature than Workforce Connections but affirmed the importance of reaching smaller businesses. DETR has invested over \$1 million in marketing the EmployNV brand to support this outreach. Alignment across organizations are critical. Success requires collective effort. He also mentioned the 2026 National Association of Workforce Boards conference in Las Vegas, highlighting Nevada's recognition for workforce innovation. "That's part of this ask here is you know how do we collectively make that impact and reach out to the folks that are in our circles to inform them of the work that's going on? And then at the same time, how do we get better through the input from those other folks."

Andrew MacKay asked Milt to share the event in March with the board. He offered to help spread the word among fellow association heads, noting that although their organizations are small, they represent tens of thousands of workers. Andrew requested guidance on how to assist and committed to taking action once informed.

Elaine Silverstone added link to NAWB Forum in chat. [The Forum 2026 | NAWB](#)

Milt Stewart mentioned that Nevadaworks and Workforce Connections are collaborating with NAWB to ensure a successful event in Las Vegas, with reduced attendance costs for Nevadans. The goal is to highlight Nevada's national best practices, which are often overlooked locally. The team aims to showcase Nevada's unique progress and improve further.

George Gault expressed concerns about insufficient workforce support and follow-up in rural Southern Nevada communities like Mesquite, Boulder, and Laughlin.

Milt Stewart acknowledged rural workforce challenges statewide, noting intentional efforts but recognizing room for improvement.

Chair Perea offered to start a specific conversation with the local boards about the rural areas and the differences in the workforce system.

George Gault commented that frequent reminders are needed in Las Vegas workforce meetings about including Mesquite and Laughlin. Efforts are advancing with visits from state staff. A recent meeting was set up with Crown Cork & Seal, a major beverage can manufacturer that has not engaged despite receiving tax incentives. He noted that a larger conversation about supporting rural communities would be beneficial.

Milt Stewart explained that Nevadaworks serves 13 counties with WIOA funding formulas based on population and unemployment, which impacts resource distribution. The Good Jobs Challenge grant has enabled more targeted rural investments. He recognized that it takes a lot of hard work and intention to serve the rural communities.

Tony Machabee asked, "If you can kind of explain if we have an employer that is looking for more employees, but where should we send them and maybe kind of give us the difference between the Nevadaworks website and the EmployNV How are you guys connected? What is the best course of action there?"

Milt Stewart advised sending employers to their local EmployNV hub for direct support. Employers can also visit <https://www.employnv.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.

Jeff Sutich shared his extensive workforce development experience and praised recent workforce system strides in Northern Nevada, including data-driven employer engagement and strong collaboration with educational institutions and regional development authorities (RDA). He emphasized the importance of connecting businesses directly to workforce resources, bypassing intermediaries like RDAs, and encouraged rural business leaders to liaise with Workforce Connections and RDAs to channel workforce needs effectively.

He noted that The Nevada Builders Alliance is a statewide organization supporting builders, business/economic/workforce development, and trades through scholarships and grants. They are collaborating with Milt to secure federal grants and expanding efforts beyond Clark County, Washoe, and Carson City to rural areas. The speaker encourages sharing needs statewide to leverage existing resources and avoid redundancy, working with Milt and John to improve initiatives.

Vice Chair Estipona reflected on historical silos caused by multiple entities pursuing separate grant funding, leading to fragmented workforce services. He noted recent improvements as local workforce boards and DETR have worked to reduce duplication and foster collaboration. However, “not every player in the space of workforce has the intention of wanting to collaborate.”

Chair Perea asked Milt about the possibility of developing a tripartite agreement between the local boards to include in the state plan. He stressed the importance of careful employer engagement, noting that a poorly executed or confusing initial approach could permanently damage relationships with employers. He questioned whether the committee should formally recommend this approach to the full board and whether codifying such an agreement was even necessary.

Milt Stewart confirmed that active work is underway to advance the EmployNV branding initiative, with ongoing discussions to refine and improve the program. While progress is being made, some details still need adjustment. The EmployNV effort is advancing through collaborative, iterative refinement, with stakeholder input guiding next phases.

Chair Perea commented to some degree the board was intended to unify efforts without hindering progress. The team has improved significantly from five years ago, moving in the right direction. The challenge remains integrating all nine brands—not just the major three—effectively.

Vice Chair Goodrich asked for clarification, “Why is it that you can't market for the services to business owners?”

Milt Stewart explained that federal regulations and funding restrictions have constrained traditional marketing efforts, with “outreach” preferred over “marketing.” However, recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor now allows more flexibility, and DETR has committed significant funds to EmployNV marketing campaigns.

Vice Chair Goodrich discussed the gap in small business awareness about workforce services. “The whole universe of workforce groups in Nevada offers so much more that's so valuable to the community, and I guess the last question I have for you is do you think that we or the

workforce? We'll call it the community. Do they use all the budget every year? Is there a surplus?"

Milt Stewart noted that workforce funds are typically fully utilized annually, with continuous monitoring to maximize expenditure and impact. He also commented on the employer that needed additional training. Milt mentioned programs like incumbent worker training and apprenticeship grants specifically target retention and skill development for existing employees, including small business employees.

In addition, Nevadaworks applied for an apprenticeship grant through the US Department of Labor. The next step is applying to become an apprenticeship intermediary and sponsor to better support small businesses. Many small businesses already engage in apprenticeship-like training but lack formal structure. Once approved, Nevadaworks will develop adaptable apprenticeship templates to simplify compliance and reduce administrative burdens for smaller employers. EmployNV's Business Hub in Reno has a conference room, training room, two interview rooms, and staff. Small businesses lacking resources and infrastructure can use those resources at no cost.

Vice Chair Goodrich expressed his appreciation for the valuable services available to small businesses, noting that many are unaware of these resources. He highlighted the need for broader outreach to increase awareness.

Ryan Hogan pointed out that often small businesses mistakenly believe workforce services require large cohorts or complex processes; however, the system offers flexible, tailored solutions like incumbent worker training. "Those resources are out there for everybody and it's not a one-size-fits-all model."

Vice Chair Estipona reiterated that businesses referred to EmployNV are assigned account managers who provide personalized guidance. In Northern Nevada, account managers often conduct site visits. Attendees were encouraged to utilize the EmployNV system, as available services may change with federal funding updates, and businesses can stay informed through the platform.

Milt Stewart mentioned Ryan Woodward of NTI in Southern Nevada talking about coming up to Northern Nevada.

Irene Bustamante-Adams acknowledged Ken's ongoing concerns and emphasized the importance of staying informed to better advocate for workforce initiatives. She stressed the need to expand outreach efforts and thanked Ken for his continued support.

Chair Perea noted that the complexity of federal funding streams is a nationwide issue, not unique to Nevada. While improvements have been made in recent years, the system remains complex. He acknowledged ongoing efforts to streamline processes and the need for continued improvement.

6. Workforce Innovations for a New Nevada (WINN) – (Discussion/Informational only)

Elaine Silverstone, Director of Workforce Development, Governor's Office of Economic Development provided an overview of the WINN program, a state resource designed to

diversify Nevada’s economy by supporting high-wage workforce training initiatives aligned with economic development priorities.

Five core sectors identified by GOED include advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, information technology, natural/clean resources, and creative industries including an expanded hospitality sector. Two additional community development sectors are water sustainability and healthcare.

The WINN program is a state statutory workforce training fund supporting industry-led training programs that are typically 12 months or less. WINN funding supports equipment, curriculum development, and program creation but not salaries or tuition. Applications require collaboration with multiple employers to ensure sector-wide impact rather than single-employer benefit. Recent awards totaled \$10 million over a two-year term, building 18 new programs across community colleges. GOED awards funding quarterly, with a \$4 million budget for the current term and 60% of funds already awarded to various community colleges for sector-specific training programs.

GOED maintains transparency with public access to applications, reports, and board meeting materials via its website. WINN emphasizes data-driven applications, including wage and job analysis, to ensure alignment with high-wage job creation. Elaine encouraged early engagement with GOED for workforce program development and noted increasing collaboration with workforce boards and educational providers.

David Schmidt asked in chat, “Would it be possible to see the volume of affected students in the WINN pipeline (maybe with some milestones like program established / students in Y1/Y2.Y3 etc. / # employed in targeted occupation)? Is there data you would need to make that happen (from DETR / employers / other)?”

Elaine Silverstone will address the question offline. She noted that GOED Steve Scheetz and Natalie Brown, are collaborating on a statewide program gap analysis. Last year, capacity was built for over 2,000 student completers across 61 companies. However, institutions lack consistent data on student outcomes due to limited employer reporting. A more structured data system is needed, especially for legislative use.

Irene Bustamante-Adams raised a question about the status of regional collaboration on industry sectors in Southern Nevada, originally outlined in the workforce blueprint developed by GOED, LVGEA, the Chamber, and Workforce Connections. Concern was expressed about a lack of recent coordination and potential misalignment—specifically regarding emerging sectors like water sustainability not being reflected in local workforce board priorities. Improved communication across organizations was recommended.

Elaine Silverstone mentioned the 2020–2025 State Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) is currently being refreshed, with updates to be shared soon in coordination with RDAs and workforce partners. Water sustainability is actively supported through initiatives like WaterStart and partnerships with educational institutions. The need for better alignment and communication across the system was acknowledged.

Vice Chair Goodrich has an associate negotiating to acquire a standby generator manufacturing company and plans to open the plant in Nevada. He asked, “Is WINN the 1st

place that team would go and start talking with the state to help them develop a workforce for that venture?”

Elaine Silverstone welcomes inquiries and, depending on the request, may refer individuals to the appropriate regional development authority or local workforce board. The goal is to operate as a cohesive system, ensuring partners are well-informed and able to guide stakeholders effectively.

George Gault noted that creating a new CTE program in Mesquite takes a year through CCSD.

Elaine Silverstone responded, “If your question is specific to CCSD task again, I will restate how important I think it is that they're always on the line here with us when we're talking about workforce.”

Janel Thomas raised concerns about the reduction of local training programs, such as firefighting and EMT courses, at Great Basin College. While efforts like the NORCAT partnership are expanding industrial training, questions remain about how and when GOED can support program development. Clarification was requested on whether colleges should initiate contact or if GOED can be involved earlier in the process to help guide program offerings.

Elaine Silverstone restated, “a key differentiator of the WINN resource versus other resources in the workforce ecosystem and that is that we are an industry lead training model, so as our representatives of business development, seeking to attract economic diversification in our sectors, bring new business and industry into the state and or help those that are here to expand.” She encouraged early engagement in program planning and emphasized strong partnerships with institutions like Great Basin College to meet employer needs.

7. **Workforce Resources** – (Discussion/Informational only)

Amy Respini, Workforce Talent Liaison, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance introduced her role as Workforce Talent Liaison embedded within the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA), with a mission to streamline workforce resource navigation for businesses across Southern Nevada.

Being embedded in LVGEA allows early engagement with businesses, often years in advance, to align workforce support with expansion plans. LVGEA partners with chambers, municipalities, and service providers (Equus and C2) to ensure outreach across Southern Nevada. She promotes no-cost workforce resources, including EmployNV, Silver State Works, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), and industry sector partnerships. The industry sector partnership model, with over 300 active businesses, helps identify workforce needs and align training programs accordingly. There is ongoing effort to increase awareness of workforce services among small and large businesses alike.

Tony Machabee asked if the Work Opportunity Tax Credit included Veterans.

Amy Respini noted that businesses that hire individuals from specific populations—such as those receiving state assistance (SNAP, TANF, housing), veterans and their spouses, the formerly incarcerated, or unemployment insurance recipients—may qualify for a federal tax credit. Eligibility requires the employee to be W-2 status.

Tony Machabee asked if it mattered if a veteran was disabled or not.

Amy Respini said “No, they can be fully functioning or within our disability population.”

Chair Perea asked Tony if he would want somebody from DETR to talk about WOTC in the future.

Tony Machabee agreed.

Chair Perea asked if anyone had questions for Amy, to summarize and send to Tiffany Vazquez. T-vazquez@detr.nv.gov. He wanted to address George Gault’s question about the differences between rural and urban areas.

Amy Respini mentioned, “DETR does now have a currently assigned person that goes out there to represent them. I see a lot of the issues that George has had to navigate through his years of inconsistent support for that city because it has ebbed and flowed and without consistency, without those professional relationships established, a consistent touch point. It makes it even more challenging to get the word out, get them to take advantage of it, and to have that continued support to see how these resources can really be a benefit in the long term.”

Chair Perea mentioned he will also reach out to Milt even though they are slightly different issues.

George Gault added that Amy has been in Mesquite.

8. New Business and Next Steps - (Discussion/Informational only)

Item 8 not discussed due to time restraints.

9. Second Public Comment

Marchele Sneed, Executive Director, OWINN commented, “I just wanted to advise everyone that the GWDB is a member of NAWB who is hosting the event Milt mentioned in Las Vegas next year. We had planned to share this information with the board at the next meeting and via email. Please note: There is a registration fee but members receive a discounted rate so you can look for this information coming soon from the OWINN office. Thanks!”

Frankie Mason, EmployNV Business Hub South Manager, DETR acknowledged George Gault’s advocacy for rural areas. She noted recent efforts including biweekly account manager visits and support for the first apprentice trade conference. Frankie committed to improving communication and providing updates on rural engagement progress.

Daniel Dong, EmployNV Business Hub North Supervisor, DETR provided his contact information as well as the general number for the business office in Reno. He encouraged attendees to reach out with questions. Daniel noted that both Northern and Southern offices support small and large businesses. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to assist.

Daniel left his contact info in chat. EmployNV Business Hub assists employers with no-cost recruiting services. 775-284-9660; Daniel Dong, ENV Supervisor direct # 775-284-9611; dddong@detr.nv.gov.

Kara Abe, ESD Program Chief Workforce Innovation Support Service Office, DETR informed the subcommittee that the WOTC program is under DETR. She offered to present

more detailed information to the subcommittee or full board. Contact information is available with Tiffany Vazquez.

Chair Perea asked Kara to present on WOTC program under DETR for a future meeting.

Kara Abe agreed and can also do the state programs that Amy referred to.

10. Adjournment

Chair Perea called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Irene Bustamante-Adams and seconded by Edward Estipona. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 am.