

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

FULL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 2:00 p.m.

Location:

Nevada State Building
Governor's Conference Room - 4th floor
1 State of Nevada Way
Las Vegas, NV 89119

1. Call to Order - Opening Remarks and Pledge of Allegiance

The full board meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2026. The meeting was held at the Governor's Conference Room in the Nevada State Building. Carson City Video Conference location was closed due to inclement weather.

Greg Ott, Chief Deputy Attorney General, Nevada Attorney General's Office, confirmed meeting's validity through virtual and telephonic participation, despite the physical closure of the Carson City Office.

2. Roll Call

Tiffany Vazquez, Board Liaison, OWINN called roll and confirmed quorum.

Members Present

Don Soderberg, Chair
Edward Estipona, Vice Chair
Marchele Sneed
Dennis Perea, Councilman
Aubree Barnum
Robert Benner
Susan Brager
Natalie Brown
Irene Bustamante-Adams
Louis DeSalvio
Drazen Elez
George Gault
Toni Giddens
Haith Johnson
Kevin Landry
Ken Lawson
Tony Machabee
Andrew MacKay

Jerrie Merritt
Suzanne Oetjen
Nancy Olsen
John Parel
Humberto Trueba
Michael Yoder

Absent

Dina Neal, Senator
Tracy Brown-May, Assemblymember
Scott Black, Councilman
Ken Goodrich
Sarah Johns
Paul Kaplan
Richard Neal
Cheryl Olson
Janel Thomas
Jesse Wadhams

Others Present

Kara Abe
Ben Daseler
Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner
Kimberly Jadidi
Frankie Mason
Brett Miller
Milt Stewart
Kim Jadidi
Elaine Rodriguez
Tiffany Vazquez

3. First Public Comment

Chair Soderberg stated, “Members of the public are invited to provide comment at this time. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this public comment period unless the matter has been specifically included on the agenda as an action item. We will impose a three-minute time limit on comments. Please clearly state and spell your full name for the record.”

There were none.

4. Approval of December 17, 2025, minutes - (For possible action)

Chair Soderberg called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. It was moved by **Susan Brager** and seconded by **Jerrie Merritt**. The motion carried.

5. GWDB Subcommittee Reports/Updates - (Discussion/Informational only)

Susan Brager, Childcare Subcommittee Chair, informed the members about the upcoming Child Care Symposium that is scheduled for February 24 from 11am - 12:30pm at the City of North Las Vegas Hall. The goal is to finalize any legislative requests by October.

Councilman Dennis Perea, Employer Engagement and Economic Development Subcommittee Chair highlighted employer engagement efforts to simplify the branding of workforce systems and better market these services to the business community.

Nancy Olsen, Strategic Planning Subcommittee Chair, spoke on the working group that was created to complete required updates for the WIOA State Plan modifications. Now that the modifications are complete, the subcommittee will resume development of the simplified strategic plan to align with the full state plan.

Chair Soderberg reminded all that the board functions as a recommending body only. Any legislative proposals must follow the required approval path through the Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN), the full board, and then the Governor's Office.

6. **Approval of WIOA State Plan Modifications** - (For possible action)

Nancy Olsen, Chair, Strategic Planning Subcommittee, led the update on the WIOA State Plan Modifications. The revisions focused on adding apprenticeships and Perkins funding to align with federal priorities. Data was also updated reflecting current administration goals.

Chair Soderberg called for a motion to approve the WIOA State Plan Modifications. **Nancy Olsen** abstained due to leading the work. It was moved by **Susan Brager** and seconded by **Drazen Elez**. The motion carried.

7. **A Program Demand Gap Analysis of Nevada's Workforce and Workforce Development Efforts** - (Discussion/Informational only)

Fred Steinmann, Director of University Center for Economic Development, UNR and **Andrew Woods, Director of Center for Business and Economic Research, UNLV** presented an extensive gap analysis showing a tight labor market with significant workforce shortages across key sectors statewide. The report projected a need for over 138,000 new jobs by 2035, particularly within the healthcare sector. Labor shortages and supply chain leaks prevent local industries from meeting demand despite adequate educational alignment. Significant out-of-state spending occurs because Nevada-based firms lack the workforce capacity to scale their operations and satisfy the demands of major local industries.

Fred Steinmann mentioned, "One thing that we've heard across the state, especially with the regional development authorities, is that the ability to attract and retain a workforce, especially in our rural non metro communities, is largely dependent upon the availability of housing, the availability of education and child care services, and ultimately the availability of healthcare services itself."

Andrew Woods added that health care was the primary driver of job growth in 2025 at both national and state levels.

Fred Steinmann provided the slide below indicating "where demand is likely to be for the foreseeable future."

Targeted Occupation Sectors

14 Targeted Occupation Sectors:

Management and Occupation Sectors (NAICS 11-0000)	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations (NAICS 27-0000)
Business and Financial Occupations (NAICS 13-0000)	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (NAICS 29-0000)
Computer and Mathematical Occupations (NAICS 15-0000)	Healthcare Support Occupations (NAICS 31-0000)
Architecture and Engineering Occupations (NAICS 17-0000)	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (NAICS 35-0000)
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (NAICS 19-0000)	Construction and Extraction Occupations (NAICS 47-0000)
Legal Occupations (NAICS 23-0000)	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (NAICS 49-0000)
Educational and Instruction and Library Occupations (NAICS 25-0000)	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (NAICS 53-0000)



University of Nevada, Reno

Susan Brager commented on the importance of focusing on students who know where they want to go and what occupation they want to pursue.

Edward Estipona brought up the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the numbers.

Fred Steinmann noted that as of 23-24, the demand for hands-on, physical workers in Nevada's key industries still exceeds the available workforce, even with the adoption of automation, robotics, and AI.

Andrew Woods explained that their economic model continues to evolve and focuses on productivity gains. While AI will be disruptive, it is not expected to eliminate jobs entirely. In addition, the bigger concern in the population forecast is immigration.

Humberto Trueba raised the topic of transferable skills, expressing the need to do a better job in opening up opportunities as individuals get older. He asked, "What are the universities at UNLV and university doing to open that up and open the curriculums?"

Natalie Brown noted that NSHE's focus areas include expanding credit for prior learning-recognizing skills gained through certifications, exams, and work experience and clearly identifying the skills students gain from each course. A shared skills taxonomy is needed to help students better describe their competencies.

Susan Brager highlighted the need to focus on the age group of 30 to 50 year-olds. Many are ready to re-enter or advance in workforce, but don't necessarily need calculus or traditional academic pathways.

Humberto Trueba discussed the need to avoid creating barriers; certifications can be costly and limit access for individuals without financial resources. He suggested that employers may need to play a larger role in supporting training and skill development. He raised a question about how current data is being used and if there is engagement with gaming industry executives regarding long-term workforce and industry trends.

Susan Brager mentioned a future meeting discussion about encouraging children and parents about continuing education.

Ken Lawson asked if there is data on employers contribution for tuition reimbursement or some sort of skills-based advancement income for their employees.

Natalie Brown mentioned the institutions having employer partnerships and working closely with workforce boards, including related training funds that can be provided. That information has not been collected.

Michael Yoder commented that it often requires coordination between the workforce system and local workforce boards to engage industry and encourage businesses to participate. There is funding in the workforce system, along with incentives to retain workers and build ongoing talent pipelines.

Vice Chair Estipona mentioned programs that exist around that space. The need is to spread the knowledge of these programs that are happening. He mentioned that key partners are now talking, breaking down past silos. Vice Chair Estipona added that board members are ambassadors and also responsible for spreading the word as well.

Andrew MacKay asked about wage growth, if it was standalone growth or factored inflation.

Fred Steinmann answered yes, the USBLS incorporates inflation into their annual estimates.

George Gault asked for a copy of the slides. He asked for clarity on the mismatch of the disconnect between reports of college graduates struggling to find jobs in their fields and current hiring needs.

Fred Steinmann informed there are massive disconnects in the workforce within the state of Nevada.

- Geographic disconnect
- Skills that workers have vs. skills that they need
- Availability of housing
- Availability of child care
- Access to healthcare

Andrew Woods mentioned the struggle to find qualified applicants due to gaps in the soft skills needed. Over the long term, we are producing graduates in the right fields, but not enough of them. There is also a mismatch between short-term labor market conditions and long-term demand.

Suzanne Oetjen talked about Renown Health's partnership with NSHE, including a new respiratory program with Great Basin College. Hiring qualified instructors is challenging, and industry partners want to support NSHE in building faculty capacity. Tuition reimbursement and student loan repayment are key tools for recruitment and retention. There is also a need to bring experienced nurses and physicians from outside Nevada to help train new graduates and relieve preceptor strain. Priorities include strengthening educator pipelines, attracting experienced clinicians, and supporting overall workforce growth in Northern Nevada.

Tony Machabee asked for clarification on why Storey County employment appears to have decreased despite recent industrial growth.

Fred Steinmann clarified that the employment numbers are reflective of the unemployment rate of individuals that live in that county. Most of the people that work in the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center in Storey County live in other counties.

John Parel added that both local boards have sector strategies. The state programs for training and promotion within are not getting enough attention statewide. A discussion is needed on an inventory of what we are doing in this space and in these sectors along with the gap analysis just provided.

Chair Soderberg asked, “Are your numbers based on what the industries are doing or what they could be doing?”

Fred Steinmann explained that Nevada’s supply-chain gaps are based on what firms actually buy to support their operations across key industries. While some items, like refined oil, aren’t practical for Nevada to produce, many services such as advertising, accounting, and linens could be supplied locally. However, companies say Nevada providers can’t meet their volume needs, forcing them to purchase from out-of-state vendors. Economic development groups see real opportunity to grow local supply, but businesses report they cannot expand because they don’t have enough workers. Even with advances in automation, labor remains the main limitation. As a result, Nevada lacks the workforce capacity needed to scale local suppliers to meet statewide demand.

Michael Yoder verified John Parel’s comment about industry sector partnerships happening in both Northern and Southern Nevada.

8. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Overview -
(Discussion/Informational only)

Item 8 deferred to a future meeting. Presenter was unable to make the meeting.

9. New Business from Full Board Members (Discussion/Informational only)

There were none.

10. Second Public comment

There were none.

11. Adjournment

Chair Soderberg called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by **Jerrie Merritt** and seconded by **Vice Chair Estipona**. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.