

# Nevada Council on Food Security (CFS)

Food Insecurity in Nevada  
2025-2026 Interim Study



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, DPBH

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### Report Prepared By:

Alexis Hogan, MPH

### Reviewed By:

DHS, DPBH, Office of Food Security  
2025 CFS Board Members (Appendix A)  
AB 405 & SB 233 Subcommittee Board Members (Appendix B)

DRAFT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 405, enacted during Nevada's 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session, directed the Council on Food Security (CFS) to conduct a study during the 2025–2026 Legislative interim to evaluate food insecurity in Nevada and develop strategies to coordinate statewide efforts to address food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

### REQUIREMENTS OF ASSEMBLY BILL 405

AB405 directs the Council on Food Security to conduct a study evaluating food insecurity in Nevada and developing strategies to coordinate statewide efforts to address food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

The legislation requires the study to include:

1. An evaluation of existing laws and policies designed to address food insecurity;
2. Identification of areas where community gardens and urban farms could be developed to reduce food insecurity;
3. A study of coordination among state government, local governments, and private organizations working to address food insecurity; and
4. Recommendations for strategies that improve statewide coordination and reduce food insecurity.

The legislation further requires the Council to submit a written report of its findings to the Director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau no later than December 1, 2026.<sup>1</sup>

To fulfill these requirements, the Council established a subcommittee that conducted policy reviews, examined existing food security resources and mapping efforts, reviewed current statutory authorities related to food access and urban agriculture, and initiated efforts to document coordination among organizations working to address food insecurity throughout Nevada.<sup>2</sup> The Council was able to benefit from the previous efforts of the Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC) to conduct three of these four studies within the one year time frame. Workshops designed by SNFC were facilitated with the Council to expand SNFC's regional perspectives to statewide data.

The Council reviewed 36 food access related laws and policies enacted between 2013 and 2025, encompassing approximately 13 years of legislative activity. The review included 33 statewide laws and policies, as well as three local ordinances, addressing the food system encompassing food production, processing, distribution, food retailers, food waste reduction and recovery, food access, nutrition assistance programs, and community food systems. The Council's review indicated that policies with clearly assigned agencies responsible for implementation, established tracking and reporting mechanisms, and dedicated funding or programmatic support were generally ranked as producing stronger impact to address food insecurity than policies lacking implementation guidance, accountability measures, or funding support.<sup>2</sup>

The Council also identified existing resources and public data to assist in evaluating opportunities for community gardens and urban farms, including food access analyses, vacant land inventories, and other planning resources developed through collaborative efforts led by the SNFC in partnership with the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) and the Center for Regional Studies. These resources were overlaid, representing conditions at a specific point in time to identify vacant land in areas of food insecurity to provide recommendations for areas to be used as community gardens and urban farms to inform the Council's review. Similar planning resources remain under development in portions of Northern Nevada.<sup>3</sup>

The Council identified food access focused stakeholders and agencies guided by the framework presented in the 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan developed by the Governors Council on Food Security, the Nevada Department of Social Services, and the Office of Food Security. Following the provided pillars of Lead, Grow, Feed, Reach, and Build, each agency was reviewed for their collaborative meetings and hosted conferences to assess coordination across public and private institutions. The Council concluded enhanced participation and support for strategic planning initiatives at one annual conference would greatly benefit Nevada's capacity to address food insecurity.

The Council participated in a policy scoping session to review and prioritize strategies for strengthening local food systems. Eleven policies identified through research and stakeholder engagement were presented and ranked based on food security impact, implementation timeline, implementation feasibility, and potential stakeholder endorsement. The Council ranked the following policies as their top five recommendations: Comprehensive Food Systems Planning, Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Strengthen the Regional Food Policy Council, Good Food Purchasing Program, and a Healthy Food Access Scorecard.

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to document the Council's activities undertaken pursuant to AB 405 and summarize findings developed through the study process. This report is intended to inform the Nevada Legislature, state agencies, local governments, community organizations, and members of the public regarding the current landscape of food insecurity policy and coordination efforts within Nevada. The report also provides an overview of existing food security related laws, community food system initiatives, statewide food security coordination and statewide policy efforts addressing food insecurity in Nevada.

## BACKGROUND

### Food Security in Nevada

Food security is commonly defined as having consistent physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs and support an active and healthy life.<sup>4</sup> According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2025 study (2023 estimates), approximately 481,460 Nevadans experienced food insecurity, representing 15.1% of the state's population. Feeding America further estimates an annual food budget shortfall of approximately \$316 million statewide, reflecting the gap between available household resources and the cost of obtaining adequate food.<sup>5</sup>

Food insecurity affects both urban and rural communities throughout Nevada and varies across geographic regions, demographic groups, and household types. County-level estimates developed through Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap project indicate that food insecurity exists in every Nevada county, reinforcing the importance of statewide coordination among public agencies, nonprofit organizations, food assistance programs, and community partners.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1. Food Insecurity Estimates by Nevada County (2023 Estimates)

| County | Food Insecurity | Estimated Food Insecure Population | Average Meal Cost | Annual Food Budget Shortfall |
|--------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
|--------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|

|                    | Rate  |         |        |               |
|--------------------|-------|---------|--------|---------------|
| Nevada (Statewide) | 15.1% | 481,460 | \$3.47 | \$316,369,000 |
| Clark              | 16.0% | 366,710 | \$3.63 | \$252,565,000 |
| Carson City        | 15.0% | 8,770   | \$3.71 | \$6,172,000   |
| Churchill          | 14.9% | 3,820   | \$3.59 | \$2,602,000   |
| Douglas            | 13.1% | 6,490   | \$3.92 | \$4,824,000   |
| Elko               | 13.4% | 7,210   | \$3.65 | \$4,982,000   |
| Esmeralda          | 21.9% | 210     | \$3.50 | \$139,000     |
| Eureka             | 17.6% | 290     | \$3.65 | \$200,000     |
| Humboldt           | 13.7% | 2,370   | \$3.65 | \$1,638,000   |
| Lander             | 14.2% | 810     | \$3.65 | \$560,000     |
| Lincoln            | 13.6% | 610     | \$3.72 | \$430,000     |
| Lyon               | 15.0% | 9,100   | \$3.69 | \$6,357,000   |
| Mineral            | 17.2% | 780     | \$3.59 | \$531,000     |
| Nye                | 18.3% | 9,740   | \$3.50 | \$6,466,000   |
| Pershing           | 13.7% | 890     | \$3.59 | \$606,000     |
| Storey             | 11.9% | 490     | \$4.06 | \$377,000     |
| Washoe             | 14.0% | 68,730  | \$4.06 | \$52,857,000  |
| White Pine         | 13.1% | 1,160   | \$3.65 | \$802,000     |

Source: Feeding America. *Map the Meal Gap 2025: Food Insecurity in Nevada (2023 estimates)*.  
<https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/nevada>

Table 1 presents county-level food insecurity estimates for Nevada based on Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap 2025* (2023 estimates). Food insecurity affects every region of Nevada but varies considerably in both prevalence and the number of individuals impacted. Rural counties such as Esmeralda, Nye, Eureka, and Mineral exhibited some of the highest food insecurity rates, while Clark and Washoe Counties accounted for the largest numbers of food-insecure residents because of their population size. These findings illustrate the importance of considering both the prevalence of food insecurity and the number of individuals affected when evaluating statewide food security needs and developing coordinated policy responses.

During the AB 405 study process, the Council utilized a food security framework that had previously been incorporated into food policy evaluation efforts conducted by the Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC).<sup>3</sup> The framework considers four dimensions of food security:

- *Availability* – whether food is consistently stocked and in sufficient quantity to meet community needs;

- *Accessibility*– whether food can be reasonably reached by residents through public transit or walking;
- *Affordability*– whether food is reasonably priced relative to median household income; and
- *Appropriateness*– whether variety of available foods meet cultural, health, and community preferences.

The Council also recognized the related concept of nutrition security, which emphasizes access to affordable foods that promote health and reduce risk of chronic disease.<sup>6</sup>

### Council on Food Security

The Council on Food Security was established in statute pursuant to [NRS 232.4966](#) and operates within the Department of Human Services.<sup>7</sup> The Council's responsibilities include developing, coordinating, and implementing a statewide food system; increasing access to food resource programs; supporting participation in federal nutrition programs; increasing food system capacity; researching community gardens and urban farms; reviewing food-related legislation; and advising the Governor on food policy matters.<sup>7</sup>

Implementation of Nevada's food security policies and programs is shared among multiple state agencies and community partners. Key state agencies include the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA), which administers several food and agricultural programs; the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), including the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) and the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS), which oversee nutrition assistance and public health initiatives; and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), which administers school nutrition programs. Local governments, Tribal governments, food banks, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners also play important roles in implementing and supporting food security initiatives throughout the state.

### Southern Nevada Food Council

The Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC) is a regional coalition that works to strengthen food security and improve the resilience of Southern Nevada's food system through policy development, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. The SNFC brings together representatives from local governments, nonprofit organizations, healthcare, education, agriculture, and community partners to identify and address food system challenges within Southern Nevada.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the enactment of AB 405, the SNFC independently conducted food policy assessments, developed resources to support evaluation of food access policies, community food systems, and replicable workshops to strategically identify food security initiatives to pursue for the region.<sup>3</sup> As part of the Council on Food Security's review conducted pursuant to AB 405, the Council utilized this foundational work, including previously compiled policy inventories, food security evaluation frameworks, food access mapping resources, and other planning tools developed through SNFC initiatives.

The Council's review expanded upon these regional efforts by applying the evaluation framework within a statewide context and considering food security policies, coordination strategies, and community food system opportunities affecting Nevada as a whole. The work completed by the SNFC provided an important foundation that informed the Council's analysis throughout the AB405 study process.<sup>3</sup>

### Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan

Nevada's [Food Security Strategic Plan](#) serves as a guiding framework for statewide food security

efforts.<sup>8</sup>

The Strategic Plan identifies priorities related to:

- Strengthening leadership and coordination;
- Increasing food production capacity;
- Improving food movement and distribution systems;
- Expanding nutrition access and utilization; and
- Supporting sustainable and equitable food systems.

Many of the themes identified within the Strategic Plan align directly with the requirements established under AB405 and informed the Council's study activities.

## METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the requirements of AB 405, the Council established a structured review process during the 2025–2026 interim. The study was organized around the four areas specifically identified in statute<sup>1</sup>:

1. Evaluation of existing laws and policies designed to address food insecurity;
2. Identification of opportunities for community gardens and urban farms;
3. Assessment of coordination among state government, local governments, and private organizations; and
4. Development of strategies and recommendations to improve statewide coordination and reduce food insecurity.

### Study Approach

The Council established a subcommittee of eight dedicated members to review study materials through regularly scheduled Council meetings and monthly subcommittee meetings that were open to the public and conducted in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law (OML).<sup>9</sup> These meetings included interest holder discussions, policy analysis activities, and review of existing food security planning documents. The study incorporated information from state agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, food councils, and other interest holders engaged in Nevada's food system. The Council also reviewed information contained within the Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan and considered ongoing food security initiatives occurring throughout the State.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the study process, the Council also reviewed presentations, planning materials, and technical briefings developed by state agencies and partner organizations to provide additional context regarding Nevada's food system, existing food security initiatives, policy implementation, and opportunities for improved statewide coordination. These materials informed Council discussions and supported evaluation of the statutory requirements established under AB 405.<sup>2</sup>

### Policy Evaluation Process

To evaluate existing laws and policies related to food security, the Council reviewed 36 food access related policies and legislative actions previously identified through food policy review efforts conducted by SNFC. Through a workshop designed by SNFC, the Council utilized this inventory for its AB 405 review and applied the policy evaluation framework outlined in Table 2 to assess food security impact against implementation characteristics. Policies examined included initiatives related to food production, food processing, food distribution, food waste reduction and recovery, nutrition assistance programs, school nutrition programs, community food systems, and food access.

The SNFC policy workshop and analysis were conducted to evaluate each policy using a standardized evaluation framework. The framework considered both the potential contribution of a policy to food security and the strength of its implementation structure, including designated implementation responsibility, tracking and reporting provisions, and fiscal support.<sup>10</sup>

Policies were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Food Security Impact – the extent to which a policy addresses food insecurity in Nevada;
- Implementation Responsibility – whether implementation authority is assigned to a specific organization or entity;
- Measurable Outcomes – whether policy outcomes can be monitored or evaluated;
- Funding Support – whether funding mechanisms or fiscal support were integrated.

Food Security Impact was scored on a scale of one to five points based on the professional experience and perspectives of members of the Council. Implementation Accountability, Tracking and Reporting, and Fiscal Support each received either zero or one point. The maximum possible score for any policy was eight points. The evaluation framework was intended to provide a consistent and transparent method for comparing policy characteristics and identifying common implementation features across food-security-related initiatives.

Table 2 outlines the policy evaluation framework utilized by the Council during review of food-access-related policies as part of the AB 405 study process.<sup>10</sup> The framework was designed to provide a standardized method for assessing both the potential impact of a policy on food security and the strength of its implementation characteristics. Policies were evaluated based on food security impact, organizational responsibility, tracking and reporting mechanisms, and fiscal support, resulting in a total possible score ranging from 0 to 8 points. This framework served as the foundation for the Council's comparative analysis of food security policies enacted between 2013 and 2025.

Table 2. Policy Evaluation Framework Used by the Council on Food Security

| Evaluation Criterion             | Assessment Question                                                                     | Score Range |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| A. Food Security Impact          | How well does the policy address food security in Nevada?                               | 1–5 Points  |
| B. Organizational Responsibility | Is implementation assigned to a specific organization or entity?                        | 0–1 Point   |
| C. Tracking and Reporting        | Does the policy include mechanisms to monitor implementation and report progress?       | 0–1 Point   |
| D. Fiscal Support                | Is dedicated funding, a fiscal note, or other financial support attached to the policy? | 0–1 Point   |
| Total Possible Score             | Sum of Criteria A–D                                                                     | 0–8 Points  |

Source: Council on Food Security. Policy Evaluation Workshop Materials (2026).

Scoring Formula

Food Security Impact = Criterion A

Implementation Language Quality = Criteria B + C + D

Overall Policy Score = A + B + C + D

Source: Council on Food Security Policy Evaluation Workshop, 2026. <sup>5</sup>

### Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Assessment

To address statutory requirements related to community gardens and urban farms, the Council

reviewed existing mapping resources, land-use information, and community food system initiatives occurring throughout Nevada.<sup>3</sup>

The Council examined available food access mapping tools, vacant land inventories, and other planning resources that may assist in identifying locations where community gardens or urban agriculture projects could contribute to local food access efforts.

SNFC developed the Healthy Food Access Map for Southern Nevada highlighting areas of food insecurity through live data connected to the US Census Bureau. The RTC of Southern Nevada published their vacant land inventory data collected from 2022 regarding available lots both publicly and privately owned as point in time information. The Center for Regional Studies partnered with the Council to review both data sets and overlay them to create a resource identifying vacant land located in food insecure neighborhoods to be recommended for use as community gardens or urban farms. This resource was reviewed to identify plots of vacant land located in areas of food insecurity that would be impactful if used for urban agriculture.

### Coordination Assessment

To evaluate statewide coordination efforts, the Council reviewed existing partnerships among state agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, food councils, educational institutions, food banks, agricultural interest holders, and community organizations. The Council also initiated efforts to identify existing coordination structures, areas of collaboration, and opportunities for improved alignment among organizations working to address food insecurity.<sup>2</sup>

The Council identified food access focused stakeholders and agencies guided by the framework presented in the 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan developed by the Governors Council on Food Security, the Nevada Department of Social Services, and the Office of Food Security. Following the provided pillars of Lead, Grow, Feed, Reach, and Build, each agency was reviewed for their collaborative meetings and hosted conferences to assess coordination across public and private institutions. Agencies were asked to report on their strategizing sessions, coalition involvement, partnership meetings, and participation in local, regional, and statewide conferences.

### Coordination and Food Security Strategy Recommendations

To provide recommendations to improve statewide coordination efforts and reduce food insecurity, the Council partook in an SNFC policy scoping workshop. The SNFC had previously reviewed numerous strategies seen as successful across the United State for strengthening local food systems. Eleven policies identified through community based participatory research and vetted based on relevance and feasibility were presented to the Council for review. The Council was presented policy summaries regarding governance and coordination, food access and retail opportunities, distribution and procurement, and production and land use. Each policy summary included its scope, reasons why SNFC prioritized it, and context for how this ties into Nevada's food security landscape. The Council was provided with a framework to rank each policy based on food security impact, implementation timeline, implementation feasibility, and potential stakeholder endorsement based on the professional capacity and perspectives of members of the Council.

### Study Limitations

Accordingly, findings presented in this report reflect information able to be collected and assessed for a total of four studies in the span of one year as outlined by AB 405 Results are based on professional expertise based on the seats held by members of the Council and perspectives their position instills, not data on impact of existing Nevada policies or outside data. The Council was limited to rely on existing resources and models for review and analysis developed for and by the SNFC and adapted for statewide application. All members and partners of the Council are

committing voluntary time to these efforts, limiting review meetings to once a month to accomplish quite lofty achievements. The restrictions around open meeting laws also limited communication to only these monthly meetings and strict timelines around information sharing outside of meetings, making additional progress, additional stakeholder engagement, or further review difficult. Future delegations of such studies should consider time, effort, support, capacity, and funding to carry out these important endeavors.

The Council's study incorporated information from statewide and regional food security initiatives, including policy scoping conducted by the Southern Nevada Food Council. Because portions of the policy scoping work were developed within the context of Southern Nevada, the resulting priorities may not reflect conditions, implementation capacity, or policy priorities in all Nevada communities. Conditions and available resources vary across Nevada's urban, rural, frontier, and Tribal communities, and regional findings should therefore be considered within their geographic and programmatic context.

## FINDING 1: EVALUATION OF EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES

### Policy Review Results

The Council reviewed 36 food access related laws and policies enacted between 2013 and 2025, encompassing approximately 13 years of legislative activity identified through digital archives such as the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS). The review included 33 statewide laws and policies, as well as 3 local ordinances, addressing the food system encompassing food production, processing, distribution, food retailers, food waste reduction and recovery, food access, nutrition assistance programs, and community food systems. The Council's review included policies addressing school nutrition, nutrition assistance programs, local food procurement, food distribution systems, urban agriculture, community food access, and agricultural development.<sup>2</sup>

Results from the policy assessment workshop by a total of 8 members of the Council were collected using an anonymous survey, assessed to ensure completion and clean data, averaged together to create a Council score for each policy, and charted on a matrix to provide visual review as seen in Figure 1. Several policies received relatively high scores during the review process. These policies generally demonstrated a combination of strong food security impact, clearly identified implementation responsibilities, measurable outcomes, and dedicated funding support.

Examples of highly rated policies included initiatives related to school nutrition programs, supplemental food assistance programs, and food procurement efforts designed to strengthen connections between Nevada agriculture and food access programs.

In contrast, policies receiving lower scores often lacked one or more implementation components, such as designated funding sources, measurable performance indicators, or clearly assigned implementation responsibilities.

Table 3 identifies the policies reviewed and places them in the category of the food system that they most impact. Policies were scored using criteria related to food security impact, organizational responsibility, tracking and reporting, and fiscal support.

Table 3. Food Access Policy Evaluation Results

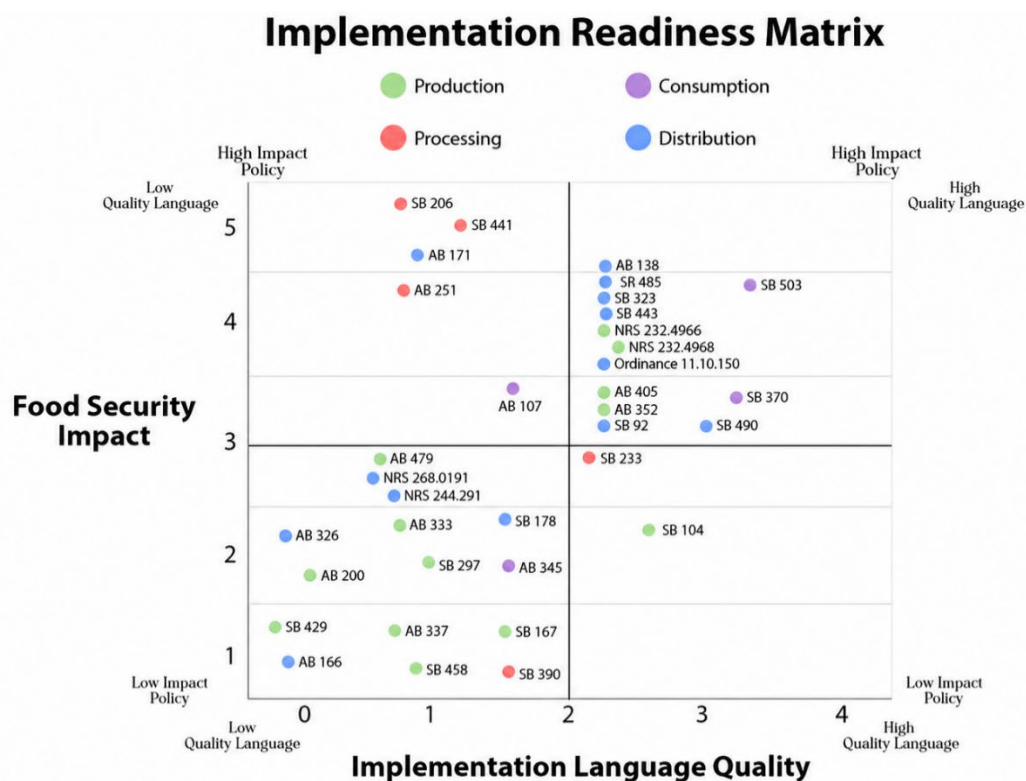
| Production                                                 |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">NRS 232.4966 – Creation of Council on Food</a> | Establishes the Nevada Council on Food Security. |

|                                                                                                              |                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Security</u></a>                                                                              |                                                                             |
| <a href="#"><u>NRS 232.4968 – Duties of Council on Food Security</u></a>                                     | Defines the Council's responsibilities and duties.                          |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 104 – School Gardens Funding Under Department of Education</u></a>                         | Provides support for school garden initiatives through NDE.                 |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 405 – Community Gardens and Urban Farms</u></a>                                            | Directs a statewide study of food insecurity and community food production. |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 352 – Cottage Foods with NDA</u></a>                                                       | Revises NDA oversight of cottage food operations.                           |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 479 – Tax on Agricultural Land</u></a>                                                     | Revises tax provisions affecting agricultural land.                         |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 167 – School Gardens Funding at Title I Schools for NDA</u></a>                            | Supports school gardens at eligible Title I schools.                        |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 333 – Nevada State Fair Grounds</u></a>                                                    | Addresses use and management of Nevada State Fairgrounds.                   |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 297 – Urban Farming and Community Gardens</u></a>                                          | Supports development of urban farming and community gardens.                |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 200 – Farm to Fork</u></a>                                                                 | Encourages local food procurement and farm-to-fork initiatives.             |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 337 – School Gardens, Farm2School, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP )</u></a>       | Supports school gardens and farm-to-school programs.                        |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 458 – School Gardens Funding at Title I Schools for Nonprofits</u></a>                     | Provides nonprofit funding for Title I school gardens.                      |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 429 – Urban Agriculture Zones</u></a>                                                      | Authorizes designation of urban agriculture zones.                          |
| <b>Consumption</b>                                                                                           |                                                                             |
| <a href="#"><u>Senate Bill (SB) 503 – Breakfast After the Bell</u></a>                                       | Expands breakfast access by serving meals after the school day begins.      |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 107 – Tracking Free/Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL)</u></a>                                    | Improves collection and reporting of FRPL participation data.               |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 345 – Higher Education Food Security</u></a>                                               | Addresses food insecurity among higher education students.                  |
| <b>Distribution</b>                                                                                          |                                                                             |
| <a href="#"><u>AB 171 – School Quality of Eggs (SQO)</u></a>                                                 | Encourages procurement of Nevada-produced eggs for school meal programs.    |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 490 – Supplemental Food Program Directed by Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)</u></a> | Establishes and administers Nevada's Supplemental Food Program.             |
| <a href="#"><u>SB 485 – SNAP Eligibility</u></a>                                                             | Expands or modifies eligibility for SNAP benefits.                          |

|                                                                                     |                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">SB 323 – SNAP Work</a>                                                  | Addresses SNAP employment and work participation requirements.         |
| <a href="#">SB 443 – Senior Meal Reimbursement</a>                                  | Supports meal reimbursements programs for older adults.                |
| <a href="#">SB 370 – Creates Home Feeds Nevada</a>                                  | Establishes the Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program.   |
| <a href="#">Ordinance 11.10.150 – Alternative Payment of Fines Donation Program</a> | Allows food donations as an alternative to certain fines.              |
| <a href="#">SB 233 – Home Feeds Nevada</a>                                          | Studies the long-term sustainability of the Home Feeds Nevada program. |
| <a href="#">SB 92 – Sidewalk Vendors</a>                                            | Establishes requirements for sidewalk food vendors.                    |
| <a href="#">SB 178 – Food for People Not Landfills</a>                              | Encourages food recovery and reduces food waste.                       |
| <a href="#">NRS 268.0191 – Powers and Duties</a>                                    | Authorizes local governments to support community gardens.             |
| <a href="#">NRS 244.291 – Ordinance</a>                                             | Authorizes county ordinances supporting community gardens.             |
| <a href="#">AB 326 – Fresh Food Retailers – New Market Jobs Act</a>                 | Encourages development of healthy food retail locations.               |
| <a href="#">AB 116 – Food Delivery Service Providers</a>                            | Regulates food delivery service providers.                             |
| <a href="#">AB 326 – Fresh Food Retailers – New Market Jobs Act</a>                 | Encourages development of healthy food retail locations.               |
| Processing                                                                          |                                                                        |
| <a href="#">SB 206 – Cottage Food</a>                                               | Expands opportunities for home-based food production.                  |
| <a href="#">SB 441 – Craft Food</a>                                                 | Establishes requirements for craft food operations.                    |
| <a href="#">AB 251 – Meat/Poultry Inspection</a>                                    | Revises state meat and poultry inspection requirements.                |
| <a href="#">SB 390 – Poultry Processing Initiative</a>                              | Supports poultry processing capacity in Nevada.                        |

Figure 1 illustrates the Council's policy evaluation results using the implementation readiness matrix developed from the AB 405 review process. Policies are positioned according to their assessed food security impact and the strength of the implementation characteristics written into the policy language, including identified organizational responsibility, tracking and reporting provisions, and fiscal support. This visualization highlights variation among food security related policies and provides a comparative view of implementation capacity and impact across multiple areas of Nevada's food system, with different colors signifying different sections of the food system.

Figure 1. Policy Evaluation Matrix. Source: Council on Food Security Policy Evaluation Workshop (2026).



#### Key Theme 1: Implementation of Structure Influences Policy Effectiveness

One of the most consistent observations emerging from the policy review was the importance of implementation structure written into the language of the policy. Of the 18 policies ranked as producing high impact on food security, 13 of them also had the implementation characteristics in the policy language. Of the 17 policies ranked as producing low impact of food security, 15 of them lacked the implementation characteristics in the policy language. This theme showcases the implementation characteristics specifically outlined in the policy language to produce more successful policy impact on food security.

Policies that identified a responsible agency or organization, established accountability mechanisms, included dedicated funding or programmatic support, and provided clear pathways to improve food access were generally overwhelmingly associated with having higher impact on addressing food security.<sup>2</sup>

The Council observed that policies supporting implementation through funding streams, established programs, farmer and business support, or data collection and reporting mechanisms were often better positioned to achieve their intended objectives. Conversely, some lower-rated policies reflected strong legislative intent but contained narrowly defined eligibility criteria or implementation language that tend to limit practical application or reduce accessibility for intended beneficiaries. While policy goals varied considerably across the food system, successful implementation frequently depended upon clearly defined administrative responsibilities, available resources, and sufficient flexibility to support implementation in practice.

### Key Theme 2: Food Distribution and Food Access Policies Received Strong Evaluations

The policy review identified numerous highly rated initiatives focused on food distribution, food access, and nutrition assistance.

Programs supporting school meals, supplemental food distribution, food purchasing programs, and nutrition assistance systems generally demonstrated strong implementation characteristics and direct connections to food security outcomes.

These findings reflect Nevada's continued investment in programs designed to increase food access and improve food distribution networks throughout the State.<sup>2</sup>

### Key Theme 3: Food Production and Processing Emerged as Areas for Further Investment and Attention

During policy review discussions, Council members noted that comparatively fewer highly rated policies focused on food production and food processing, mirroring the processing gaps in the Nevada food system.

While production and processing policies were recognized as important components of a resilient food system, some initiatives lacked implementation supports that were present in higher impact food distribution and nutrition assistance programs. The policy impact was limited due to unclear language to implement policies into practice, which reduced the ability to help those it had intended to support. Recommendations discussed improved higher stakeholder engagement and clearer bureaucratic paths to increase statewide food production capacity.

This observation does not indicate that production and processing initiatives are less important to food security outcomes. Rather, it reflects differences in policy design, implementation structure, and available resources among the policies reviewed.<sup>2</sup>

### Limitations of Policy Review

The policy evaluation framework was developed as a comparative assessment tool and was not intended to serve as a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis or program evaluation. Policy scores reflect the Council's review methodology and should not be interpreted as a definitive measure of policy success. Instead, the scores provide a structured means of comparing policy characteristics and identifying implementation trends across Nevada's food security policy environment.

The evaluation also reflects the professional experience, expertise, and perspectives of Council members participating in the policy review process. While the standardized evaluation framework was applied consistently across all policies, individual scoring decisions regarding impact on food security necessarily involved professional judgment based on the information available during the review.

### Summary of Findings

The Council's review identified a wide-ranging portfolio of laws and policies addressing food insecurity in Nevada. Preliminary findings suggest policies with dedicated funding, assigned implementation responsibilities, and measurable outcomes frequently demonstrated stronger implementation characteristics than policies lacking these elements per the CFS.

The review also identified food production and food processing as recurring areas of discussion, while food distribution and food access programs generally exhibited well-developed implementation structures. These observations may inform future Council discussions regarding statewide food security coordination and policy development.

## FINDING 2: COMMUNITY GARDENS AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

### Existing Statutory Framework

Nevada has established several statutory provisions intended to encourage the development of

community gardens and urban farms.<sup>11</sup>

Current statutes authorize and encourage various public entities to support community gardening and urban agriculture activities through land use planning, resource allocation, and community development efforts. Existing law also authorizes certain local governments to lease or utilize public land for community gardening purposes and provides tax-related incentives under specific circumstances.

In addition, the CFS is statutorily directed to promote and encourage the development of community gardens and urban farms as part of its broader food security responsibilities. During the Council's review of Nevada statutes related to community gardens and urban farms, a potential implementation issue was identified regarding NRS 244.291 and its interaction with the general county property leasing provisions of NRS 244.281 and NRS 244.284. NRS 244.291 authorizes counties to adopt ordinances allowing county-owned vacant or blighted property to be used for community gardens and urban farms; however, the statute does not expressly establish a separate process for leasing or authorizing the use of such property.

Information provided during the study indicated that the absence of an expressly defined process may create uncertainty regarding whether agreements entered into pursuant to NRS 244.291 remain subject to the general public auction requirements applicable to county property under NRS 244.281, except where another statutory exception applies. This uncertainty may present a practical barrier for counties seeking to make county-owned property available for community garden or urban farm purposes.

The issue is particularly relevant following the expansion of NRS 244.291 through Senate Bill 297 (2021), which broadened provisions related to community gardens and urban farms. As part of its evaluation under AB 405, the Council identified clarification of the relationship between NRS 244.291 and Nevada's county property leasing requirements as an area that may warrant further consideration. Such clarification could provide counties choosing to implement NRS 244.291 with a clearer statutory mechanism for doing so without requiring counties to make property available for these purposes.

Collectively, these provisions provide a foundation for local governments and community organizations seeking to develop community food production projects.

### Relationship with Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan

Community gardens and urban agriculture are also incorporated within Nevada's Food Security Strategic Plan, particularly through the "Grow" pillar, which focuses on increasing food production capacity and strengthening local food systems.<sup>8</sup>

The Strategic Plan recognizes that Nevada imports a substantial portion of its food supply and identifies opportunities to expand local food production, improve connections between producers and consumers, and strengthen community-based food systems. Although community gardens alone are not intended to address all dimensions of food insecurity, they may serve as one strategy among several approaches intended to improve local food access and community engagement.

### Food Access Mapping and Planning Resources

As part of the AB 405 study process, the Council reviewed existing food access mapping and planning resources available within Nevada.<sup>2</sup>

In Southern Nevada, the SNFC has developed [food access maps](#) identifying food insecure zip codes and vacant land inventories that may assist in identifying locations where community gardens, urban farms, or other food production initiatives could potentially be established. These resources provide information regarding food access conditions and land availability that may support future planning efforts.

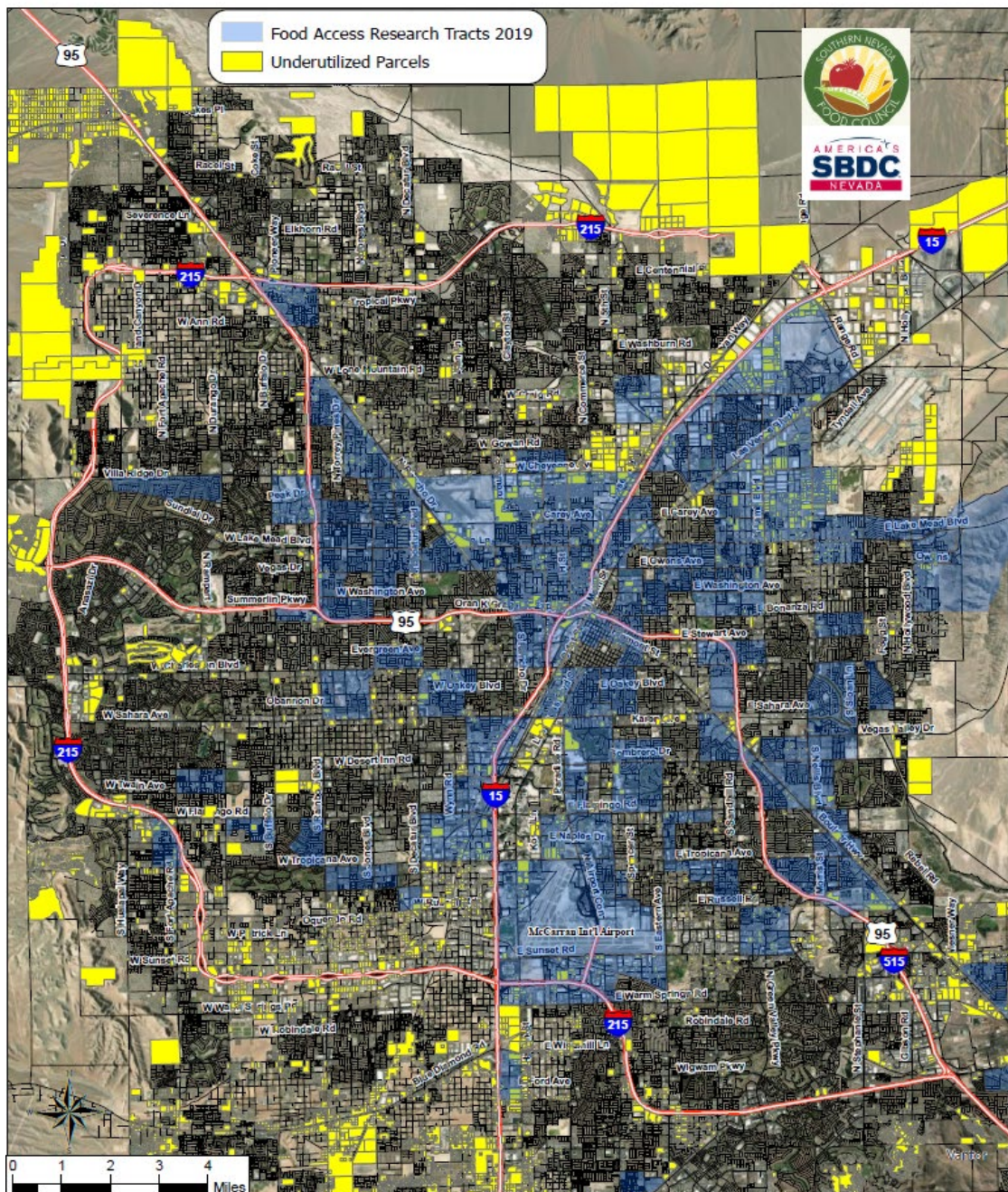
Through data published by RTC of Southern Nevada, approximately 40,000 acres of vacant land have been identified through existing inventories in Southern Nevada. While not all identified parcels would still be available for production activities, these resources may provide a starting point for future analysis and planning efforts.<sup>3</sup>

Areas in the resulting map that shown as both yellow and blue indicate spaces that would provide high impact on food insecurity if allocated for urban agriculture use through urban farms or community gardens.

To support the identification of potential areas for community gardens and urban agriculture, the Southern Nevada mapping analysis compared Food Access Research Tracts with parcels identified as underutilized. The analysis provides a geographic screening tool for identifying areas where food access needs and underutilized land intersect. Figure X illustrates the relationship between these two datasets.

Figure 2. Food Access Research Tracts and Underutilized Parcels in Southern Nevada

### Target Areas for Urban Agriculture in Southern Nevada

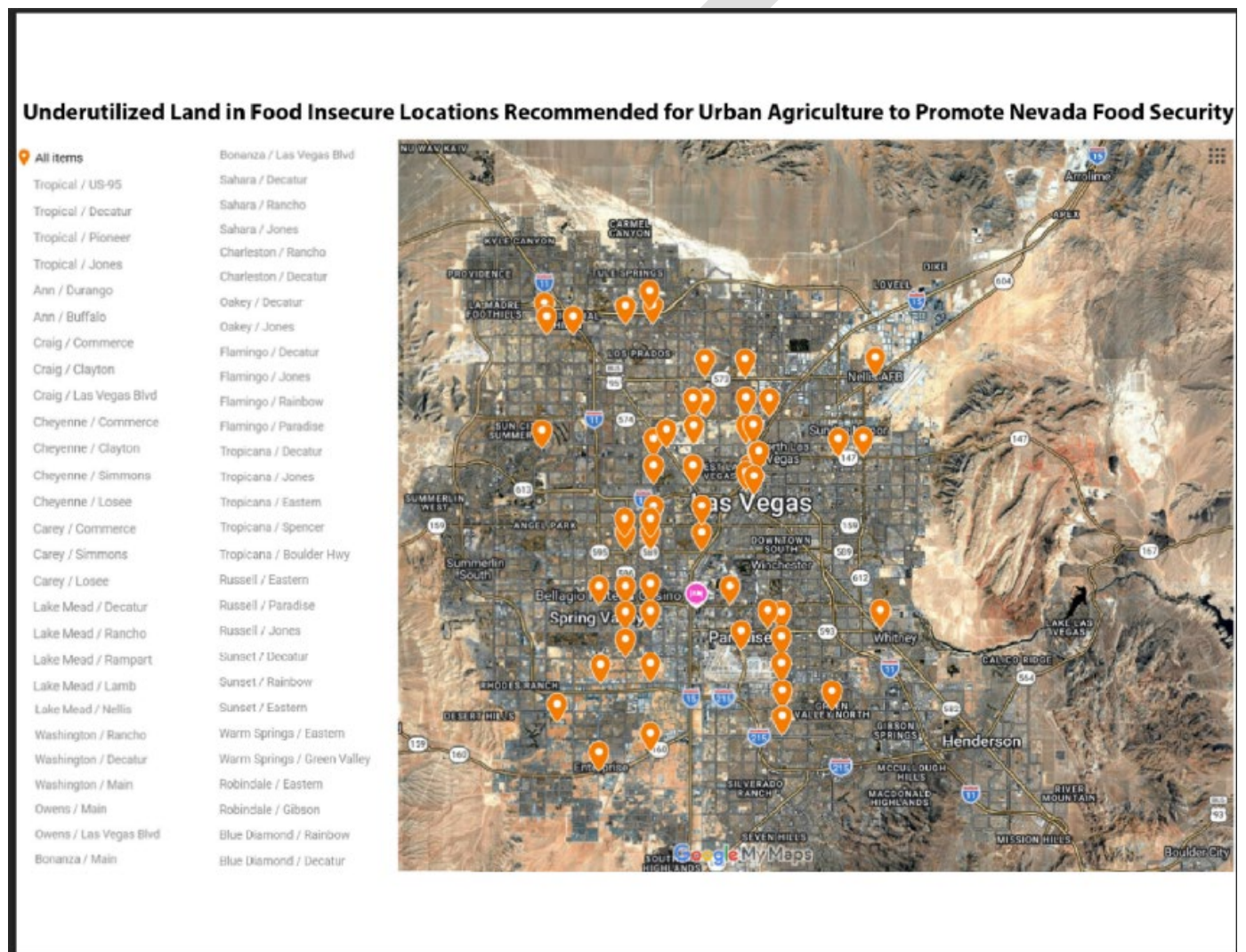


*Note: Blue areas represent Food Access Research Tracts (2019), and yellow areas represent parcels identified as underutilized. Identification of an underutilized parcel does not establish current availability, ownership, or suitability for agricultural use.*

*Source: Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), Southern Nevada food access and underutilized parcel mapping analysis.*

Building upon the broader geographic analysis shown in Figure 2, the mapping process further identified underutilized parcels within food access research areas for potential further assessment. Figure 3 presents the locations identified through this more targeted analysis. These locations represent potential areas for additional evaluation rather than parcels determined to be available or suitable for urban agriculture.

**Figure 3. Underutilized Parcels Within Food Access Research Areas Identified for Further Urban Agriculture Assessment**



*Note: Mapped locations represent underutilized parcels identified through the food access and land availability analysis for further consideration. Additional assessment would be necessary to determine ownership, current availability, zoning and regulatory requirements, infrastructure and water availability, and suitability for food production.*

*Source: Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), Southern Nevada food access and underutilized parcel mapping analysis.*

The underlying analysis identified 4,145 underutilized parcels encompassing approximately 5,139 acres across 31 ZIP codes within the Las Vegas study area. Based on the relationship between underutilized land and 2017 food insecurity rates, five ZIP codes—89106, 89169, 89101, 89119, and 89115—were identified as priority locations for further consideration. Collectively, these priority areas included 1,361 underutilized parcels encompassing approximately 1,983 acres. The complete ZIP-code-level analysis is provided in Appendix C.

These findings represent a point-in-time planning analysis and do not establish current parcel availability, ownership, or suitability for community garden or urban agriculture use.

#### Limitations of Urban Agriculture Review

The availability of mapping resources varies across regions of the State. Council discussions indicated food access mapping efforts in portions of Northern Nevada remain under development, and additional information may be needed to support statewide assessments of potential urban agriculture opportunities. Publicly available data were used to develop the resulting map. However, the vacant land inventory was point in time data and not up to date. The vacant land identified in this map could be already sold and utilized. The inventory also did not indicate whether the land is publicly or privately owned to prioritize recommendations to those that Legislators would have jurisdiction to allocate it for an urban farm or community garden.

#### Opportunities and Considerations Identified During Review

Throughout the study process, Council members discussed several factors that may influence the development of community gardens and urban agriculture projects.

Factors discussed included:

- Availability and accessibility of suitable land;
- Water access and infrastructure considerations;
- Local zoning and land-use regulations;
- Community interest and organizational capacity;
- Long-term maintenance requirements;
- Partnerships among local governments, nonprofit organizations, schools, and community groups; and
- Alignment with broader food access and community development goals.

Council discussions also emphasized successful community garden initiatives often depend upon sustained local leadership, community participation, and organizational support. Specifically, the zoning and land use regulations could be addressed by an increase in the number of jurisdictions adopting the urban agriculture overlay to streamline permitting issues. These efforts align with federal priorities outlined by the USDA to support agricultural growth. These are well supported by the Council as they provide food access, community green spaces, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and improved access to nutritious foods promotes mental health and wellness.

#### Need for Additional Assessment

As part of ongoing discussions, Council members identified potential opportunities for additional statewide assessment of food access conditions, land availability, and community food production capacity.

Existing mapping resources and inventories provide useful information in some regions of Nevada; however, comparable information is not currently available statewide. Additional assessment efforts may assist policymakers, local governments, and community organizations in identifying

areas where community gardens or urban agriculture initiatives could complement existing food security strategies.<sup>2</sup>

### Summary of Findings

Nevada has established statutory authority and policy support for community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives. Existing planning resources, including food access maps and vacant land inventories, provide useful tools for identifying potential opportunities in portions of the state. The Council's review found that community gardens and urban farms may contribute to local food access and community food system development when supported by appropriate planning, infrastructure, and community partnerships. The review also identified variations in available data and planning resources across Nevada, suggesting that additional statewide assessment may support future decision-making and program development.

## FINDING 3: COORDINATION OF STATE, LOCAL, AND PRIVATE EFFORTS

### Nevada's Food Security Network

Nevada's food security system consists of a network of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, community organizations, agricultural interest holders, and private-sector partners.

Table 4 summarizes representative organizations and activities identified during the Council's review of statewide food security coordination efforts. Organizations represented multiple sectors of Nevada's food system and contributed to leadership, food production, food distribution, community outreach, and capacity-building activities. The inventory demonstrates the breadth of public, private, nonprofit, Tribal, educational, and community partners engaged in addressing food insecurity throughout Nevada.

Table 4. Representative Statewide Food Security Coordination Activities

| Food System Pillar | Representative Organizations                                                                                                                                                                | Examples of Activities                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lead               | Office of Food Security (DPBH); Council on Food Security; Northern Nevada Food Council; Southern Nevada Food Council; Division of Welfare and Supportive Services; Local Government Offices | Statewide leadership, food policy coordination, strategic planning, advisory councils, regional food council meetings, SNAP coordination.      |
| Grow               | Nevada Department of Agriculture; Nevada Farm Bureau; Master Gardeners; Green Our Planet; Garden Farms of Southern Nevada; Farmers Markets                                                  | Agricultural production, producer support, community gardens, urban agriculture, food education, licensing, and local food system development. |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feed  | Three Square Food Bank; Food Bank of Northern Nevada; UNLV Food Pantry; UNR PACK Provisions; Catholic Charities; Food For People, Not Landfills; Dignity Health Wellness Center                       | Food procurement, emergency food assistance, food distribution, campus food pantries, nutrition services, food recovery, and food waste reduction.                                    |
| Reach | Nevada 211; Access to Healthcare Network; Nevada Department of Education; University of Nevada, Reno Extension; Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada; Communities in Schools; Healthy Communities Coalition | Community outreach, nutrition education, resource navigation, enrollment assistance, food access mapping, school-based initiatives, Tribal food programs, and community partnerships. |
| Build | Governor's Office of Economic Development; Nevada Grant Lab; Office of Financial Assistance; RTC Northern Nevada; Small Business Development Center                                                   | Grant assistance, economic development, technical assistance, business support, statewide conferences, partnership development, and food system capacity building.                    |

Key participants include:

- Nevada Department of Human Services;
- Division of Public and Behavioral Health;
- Office of Food Security;
- Nevada Department of Agriculture;
- Local governments and city planning departments;
- Tribal governments and tribal organizations;
- Food banks and food pantries;
- Community-based organizations involved in food access;
- School districts and educational institutions;
- Agricultural producers;
- Local and regional food councils; and
- Federal program partners.

Many organizations perform distinct roles within the food system while also participating in collaborative efforts that support food access, nutrition assistance, food production, and food distribution.<sup>8</sup> Efforts in coordination are only strengthened by participation of all agencies in annual strategic planning efforts and regional coalitions. While participation cannot be mandated as it requires time, funding, and capacity, the Council recommends and highly encourages listed key stakeholders to become active participants in the planning process and to join the annual food system conference to ensure Nevada's best chance at making strides to solve food insecurity issues together.

### Role of the Council on Food Security

The Council serves as a statewide advisory body charged with supporting coordination among organizations involved in food system activities.

The Council's statutory responsibilities include:

- Developing and coordinating a statewide food system;
- Increasing access to food resources;

- Supporting participation in federal nutrition assistance programs;
- Encouraging community gardens and urban farms;
- Reviewing food-related legislation;
- Advising the Governor regarding food security issues; and
- Promoting collaboration among interest holders.

Because Council membership includes representatives from multiple sectors, the Council provides a forum for discussion and information sharing among organizations that may not otherwise regularly interact.<sup>7</sup> Regional food councils continue these efforts.

Should this be in methods? Council discussions also incorporated information presented by partner organizations regarding existing food security initiatives, coordination efforts, and statewide planning activities. These presentations provided additional context regarding current partnerships, ongoing initiatives, and opportunities for strengthening collaboration among organizations working to address food insecurity in Nevada.<sup>2</sup>

### Relationship with Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan

Coordination is a recurring theme throughout Nevada's Food Security Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan identifies collaboration among agencies, organizations, and interest holders as an important component of statewide food security efforts. Several objectives within the Strategic Plan focus on strengthening partnerships, reducing duplication of effort, improving communication, and increasing alignment among organizations working within the food system. Council discussions conducted pursuant to AB 405 frequently referenced priorities identified in the Strategic Plan and how improving participation in these existing coordination efforts support broader statewide food security goals.<sup>8</sup>

### Relationship with the Nevada State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The Nevada State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) provides a statewide framework for improving population health through collaboration among public agencies, healthcare organizations, community-based organizations, and other partners. The SHIP recognizes the social determinants of health, including access to nutritious food, as important factors influencing health outcomes and quality of life.<sup>12</sup>

The Council's work under Assembly Bill 405 complements the goals of the SHIP by examining policies, partnerships, and strategies intended to strengthen food security and improve coordination among organizations working to address food insecurity throughout Nevada. By supporting cross-sector collaboration and promoting alignment with existing statewide planning efforts, the Council's activities contribute to broader public health objectives identified in the SHIP.

<sup>12</sup>

### Existing Collaborative Efforts

During the study process, the Council reviewed examples of collaboration occurring throughout Nevada's food system.

Examples include:

- *Nutrition Assistance Programs* - Federal nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and school nutrition programs require coordination among federal agencies, state agencies, local governments, schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations. DHS and DSS quarterly meetings.
- *Food Distribution Networks* - Food banks, food pantries, community organizations, agricultural producers, transportation partners, and government agencies collaborate to

distribute food resources throughout Nevada communities. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada and Three-Square Food Bank each meet annually in September with their regional partners for strategic planning and program improvement.

- *Local Food Councils* - Regional food councils provide monthly opportunities for interest holders to coordinate food system planning, identify community needs, conduct research, aggregate community data, gain community perspectives, and support local food initiatives. The SNFC meets each month on the fourth Thursday at 2pm virtually through zoom and meets quarterly in person. The Northern Nevada Food Council meets each month on the fourth Tuesday and 12pm.
- *Agricultural and Food Procurement Initiatives* - Programs connecting Nevada producers with schools, food banks, and community organizations require coordination among agricultural interest holders, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and institutional purchasers. NDA meetings, Nevada Farm Bureau meetings, Roots to Results annual conference with UNR Extension held in February for a southern and northern conference.
- *Partner Mapping and Interest Holder Identification* - As part of the AB 405 study process, the Council initiated efforts to identify organizations engaged in food security activities throughout Nevada.

The purpose of this effort was to better understand existing partnerships, identify areas of collaboration, and document the range of organizations contributing to food security initiatives. Council discussions indicated that many organizations are already engaged in food security activities; however, the scale, scope, and geographic coverage of these activities may vary considerably across the state.<sup>2</sup>

## FINDING 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE COORDINATION AND ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

Following evaluation of the 11 policy concepts, the Southern Nevada Food Council identified six priority concepts for further consideration: Comprehensive Food Systems Planning, Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Edible Food Recovery Program, Urban Agriculture Zoning Reform, Community Land Trust with a Food Systems Priority, and strengthening regional food policy council capacity. The prioritized concepts collectively address planning and strategy, food access and distribution, production and land use, and coordination and governance.

Table 5. Food System Policy Concepts Evaluated Through the Southern Nevada Food Council Policy Scoping Project

| Policy Area               | Policy Concept                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance & Coordination | Comprehensive Food Systems Planning | Integrates food production, distribution, access, and recovery considerations into comprehensive planning processes and aligns food systems with related planning areas such as land use, transportation, housing, and |

|                            |                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            |                                         | economic development.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Governance & Coordination  | Strengthen Regional Food Policy Council | Establishes or strengthens a formal regional food policy structure with dedicated staffing, resources, and coordination responsibilities to support accountability, community participation, and long-term implementation. |
| Food Access & Retail       | Healthy Corner Store Initiative         | Provides grants, equipment, technical assistance, or other support to neighborhood retailers to increase the availability of healthy foods, including SNAP-eligible fresh foods.                                           |
| Food Access & Retail       | Healthy Checkout Program                | Establishes nutrition standards for foods offered at checkout areas to encourage healthier purchasing options and support public health goals.                                                                             |
| Food Access & Retail       | Healthy Food Access Scorecard           | Evaluates how development projects affect access to healthy food and provides a mechanism for incorporating food access considerations into community planning and development decisions.                                  |
| Distribution & Procurement | Edible Food Recovery Program            | Strengthens systems for recovering, coordinating, and redistributing edible surplus food before disposal to reduce food waste and increase the availability of food for community distribution.                            |
| Distribution & Procurement | Good Food Purchasing Program            | Uses institutional purchasing practices to support local food systems, strengthen regional supply chains, and improve food quality through public-sector procurement decisions.                                            |
| Production & Land          | Urban Agriculture Zoning Reform         | Modernizes zoning codes to explicitly permit urban agriculture activities, reduce                                                                                                                                          |

|                   |                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   |                                                      | regulatory barriers, and establish clearer requirements for local food producers.                                                                                      |
| Production & Land | Community Land Trust with a Food Systems Priority    | Acquires and preserves land for long-term food production and food access uses, supporting community ownership and permanent food system infrastructure.               |
| Production & Land | Urban Agriculture Overlay                            | Establishes designated zoning areas that prioritize food production, reduce permitting barriers, protect agricultural uses, and support neighborhood-scale production. |
| Production & Land | Adopt-A-Lot: Public Land Leasing for Food Production | Adopt-A-Lot: Public Land Leasing for Food Production                                                                                                                   |

As part of the policy scoping process, CFS members participated in a workshop exercise to prioritize eight policy concepts for further consideration. Each participant ranking the concepts from 1 through 8. The results reflect the relative priorities identified by participating Council members and provide additional context for the policy concepts considered through the AB 405 study. The complete workshop ranking results are presented below.

Table 6. Policy Rank from Council Workshop

|         | Comprehensive Food Systems Planning | Strengthen the Regional Food Policy Council | Healthy Corner Store Initiative | Healthy Food Access Scorecard | Edible Food Recovery Program | Good Food Purchasing Program | Urban Agriculture Zoning Reform | Community Land Trust |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| GCFS1   | 2                                   | 1                                           | 3                               | 6                             | 5                            | 4                            | 7                               | 8                    |
| GCFS2   | 2                                   | 1                                           | 7                               | 3                             | 5                            | 4                            | 6                               | 8                    |
| GCFS3   | 2                                   | 1                                           | 3                               | 4                             | 6                            | 5                            | 7                               | 8                    |
| GCFS4   | 2                                   | 8                                           | 3                               | 7                             | 6                            | 1                            | 5                               | 4                    |
| GCFS5   | 4                                   | 8                                           | 1                               | 2                             | 3                            | 5                            | 6                               | 7                    |
| Average | 2.4                                 | 3.8                                         | 3.4                             | 4.4                           | 5                            | 3.8                          | 6.2                             | 7                    |

*Note: A ranking of 1 represents the highest priority and a ranking of 8 represents the lowest priority. Average rankings reflect the five responses received.*

### Emerging Themes from Council Discussions

Several themes emerged during Council discussions regarding statewide coordination.

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration** - Food security initiatives frequently involve multiple sectors, including public health, agriculture, education, economic development, transportation, and community services. Council members noted the importance of maintaining communication and collaboration across these sectors. State investment in these meetings will strengthen these growing movements. The Council recommends to build upon existing efforts and improve capacity for participation to breed innovation or replicate successful endeavors seen across the country.
- **Regional Variation** - Nevada's geography presents unique opportunities and challenges for

food security coordination. Urban, rural, frontier, and Tribal communities may experience different food access conditions and may require different approaches to coordination and service delivery.

- *Information Sharing* - Council discussions emphasized the value of information sharing among organizations. Existing planning efforts, food access data, community assessments, and program information may support more informed decision-making when shared among interest holders.
- *Alignment of Efforts* - Council members discussed opportunities to better understand how existing programs, initiatives, and organizations contribute to statewide food security objectives. Improved understanding of these relationships may support future planning and coordination efforts.

### Summary of Findings

The Council's review found that Nevada's food security system relies upon collaboration among numerous public, private, nonprofit, Tribal, and community partners. Existing coordination efforts occur through formal programs, strategic planning initiatives, regional food councils, nutrition assistance programs, and community-based partnerships. The Council's review also identified opportunities for continued assessment of organizational relationships, information sharing practices, and statewide coordination strategies as the AB 405 study process continues.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Pursuant to AB 405, the Council conducted a review of food-security-related laws and policies, examined opportunities for community gardens and urban agriculture, and assessed coordination efforts among organizations working to address food insecurity in Nevada.<sup>1,2</sup>

Several findings emerged during the Council's review conducted pursuant to Assembly Bill 405.

### *Finding 1: Nevada Has Established Food Security Policy Framework*

The Council reviewed 36 policies and legislative initiatives related to food production, food processing, food distribution, nutrition assistance, school nutrition, and community food systems ranging from 2013 to 2025.

The Council encourages policy-makers and legislators to attend regular CFS meetings to make informed decisions when proposing future policies to strengthen Nevada's food policy framework. Policy considerations should include input from CFS members as well as focus on expanding food and nutrition security program access. These policies and subsequent programs should support local agriculture procurement, food access and engage the community in developing stronger food systems.

The review found that Nevada has established a broad range of policies intended to address food insecurity through multiple approaches. These efforts span direct food assistance programs, agricultural initiatives, food procurement programs, nutrition programs, and community-based food access strategies.<sup>2</sup>

### *Finding 2: Policies With Defined Implementation Structures Frequently Demonstrated Stronger Implementation Characteristics*

The Council also identified comprehensive food systems planning as an emerging area for future discussion, recognizing opportunities to further integrate food system considerations into long-range planning efforts that support food access, agricultural resilience, and community development.

**Finding 3:** *Policies With Defined Implementation Structures Frequently Demonstrated Stronger Impact on addressing food insecurity*

The Council's policy review identified recurring implementation factors among highly rated policies. Policies with assigned implementation responsibilities, measurable outcomes, and dedicated funding mechanisms relayed a stronger impact on food insecurity, than policies lacking these elements.

These observations were consistent across multiple areas of Nevada's food system and may provide useful context for future policy discussions.<sup>2</sup>

Council discussions also highlighted the importance of implementation tools, including designated leadership, dedicated funding mechanisms, and tracking and reporting provisions, in supporting successful policy implementation across diverse food system initiatives.

**Finding 4:** *Food Distribution and Food Access Programs Represent Significant Components of Nevada's Food Security Efforts*

Many of the highest-rated policies reviewed by the Council focused on food distribution systems, nutrition assistance programs, school nutrition initiatives, and food access efforts.

These programs represent important components of Nevada's existing food security infrastructure and involve coordination among numerous public and private partners.<sup>2</sup>

Council discussions also identified institutional food procurement as an area for continued exploration, including opportunities to strengthen connections between Nevada food producers and institutions that purchase food for public programs.

The Council encourages strengthening local agricultural procurement to aid local farmers while supporting local economy and strengthening the connection between Nevada farmers, ranchers, and producers, to local community organizations that support food and nutrition security efforts. The Council supports increased funding for these efforts.

**Finding 5:** *Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture would benefit from strengthening Existing Statutory Authorities*

Nevada has established statutory provisions supporting the development of community gardens and urban farms. Existing planning tools, food access maps, and vacant land inventories may provide useful resources for identifying future opportunities for community food production initiatives. This requires thoughtful planning and participation from city planning on land use zoning and pairing it with funding for maintenance. The resulting map showcases potential avenues to address food insecurity through promotion of urban agriculture in vacant land located in food insecure areas. Each plot of vacant or underutilized land will have to be reviewed for current status and ownership, but the developed map provides a guide for placement.

The Council also identified opportunities for additional assessment and planning activities that may support future community garden and urban agriculture efforts.<sup>3,11</sup>

**Finding 6:** *Existing Planning Resources and Data Availability Vary Across Regions of Nevada*

The Council's review identified differences in the availability of food access mapping resources and planning tools across Nevada. This can be improved by instilling data sharing mechanisms with lead agencies for regular maintenance of resources such as the Healthy Food Access Map and Nevada 211. State investment and participation would be necessary to continue these critical program updates.

The council encourages establishing memorandum of understandings between partner agencies, local food banks, community organizations and state agencies to strengthen accurate data sharing. Strengthening data shared between these entities will provide underserved Nevadan's and the general public with the most up-to-date resources to receive food and nutrition assistance within their area.

Existing resources in some regions provide useful information regarding food access conditions and land availability, while similar information remains under development in other areas of the state.<sup>3</sup>

**Finding 7: *Coordination Is a Central Component of Nevada's Food Security System***

Food security efforts in Nevada rely upon collaboration among state agencies, local governments, Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, food banks, educational institutions, agricultural interest holders, and community organizations. The Council's review identified coordination activities occurring across multiple components of Nevada's food system, including statewide and regional food policy councils, food bank and pantry networks, food distribution and recovery partnerships, nutrition assistance outreach and enrollment efforts, community- and school-based food access initiatives, agricultural and producer support, and cross-sector planning and information sharing. These activities connect organizations involved in food production, distribution, access, outreach, and system capacity and align with priorities identified in Nevada's Food Security Strategic Plan.<sup>8</sup> Council discussions identified opportunities to build upon these existing coordination structures by strengthening connections among regional food policy councils, the Office of Food Security, the Council on Food Security, local governments, food assistance providers, and other partners engaged in Nevada's food system.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE POLICY

As part of the AB 405 study process, the Council reviewed policy-scoping work conducted by the Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC) to identify potential strategies for strengthening local and regional food systems. The scoping process evaluated policy concepts related to governance and coordination, food access and retail, distribution and procurement, and food production and land use. Concepts were considered based on their potential food security impact, implementation feasibility and timeline, and stakeholder priority and support. The process identified six priority policy concepts for consideration. These concepts are presented as areas for continued Council discussion and evaluation and do not represent final legislative recommendations.

**Consideration 1: *Comprehensive Food Systems Planning***

Consider integrating food production, distribution, access, and recovery considerations into long-range planning processes. This approach could provide a mechanism for considering food systems alongside land use, transportation, housing, and economic development and for establishing measurable food system goals.

**Consideration 2: *Healthy Corner Store Initiative***

Consider approaches to support neighborhood food retailers in increasing access to healthy foods, including potential grants, equipment, or technical assistance. The policy-scoping project identified this concept as an opportunity to use existing neighborhood retail infrastructure to improve access to healthy and SNAP-eligible foods in communities experiencing food insecurity.

**Consideration 3: *Edible Food Recovery Program***

Consider strengthening systems for recovering, coordinating, and redistributing edible surplus food before disposal. The policy-scoping project identified food recovery as an opportunity to simultaneously reduce food waste, expand the emergency food supply, and strengthen partnerships among organizations participating in food recovery and distribution.

The Council's review identified existing statutory authorities and planning resources that support

community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives. Farmers and producers commonly need support for land access resources. State investment in expanding these resources and maintaining these databases would support improved food production and food access. Land access for agriculture endeavors alone cannot sustain food security. These must be paired with funding for maintenance, repairs, labor, farmers, expansion, and waste diversion strategies such as composting. Future discussions will consider opportunities to better understand local implementation practices, community needs, infrastructure requirements, and potential partnerships that support community-based food production efforts.<sup>3,11</sup> Regional and city planning offices should be strongly recommended to consult with the resulting resources from these studies when working with community groups or developers to approve new projects. These offices would benefit from annual trainings from regional food councils to promote equitable food access in Nevada. This consideration supports the top ranked policy recommendations of healthy corner store policies and programs as well as comprehensive food system planning.

#### *Consideration 4: Urban Agriculture Zoning Reform*

Consider opportunities to modernize local zoning provisions to more explicitly accommodate urban agriculture activities. The policy-scoping project identified zoning reform as a potential strategy for reducing regulatory barriers, providing clearer requirements for producers, and expanding opportunities for local food production. The Council's review identified existing statutory authorities and planning resources that support community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives. Farmers and producers commonly need support for land access resources. State investment in expanding these resources and maintaining these databases would support improved food production and food access. Land access for agriculture endeavors alone cannot sustain food security. These must be paired with funding for maintenance, repairs, labor, farmers, expansion, and waste diversion strategies such as composting.

Future discussions will consider opportunities to better understand local implementation practices, community needs, infrastructure requirements, and potential partnerships that support community-based food production efforts.<sup>3,11</sup> Regional and city planning offices should be strongly recommended to consult with the resulting resources from these studies when working with community groups or developers to approve new projects. These offices would benefit from annual trainings from regional food councils to promote equitable food access in Nevada. This consideration supports the top ranked policy recommendations of healthy corner store policies and programs as well as comprehensive food system planning.

#### *Consideration 5: Community Land Trust With a Food Systems Priority*

Consider mechanisms to acquire or preserve land for long-term food production and food access uses. The policy-scoping project identified a food-systems-focused land trust as a potential strategy for expanding long-term access to land for agricultural production, urban farms, and community gardens while supporting community stewardship of food-producing land.

#### *Consideration 6: Strengthen Food Policy Councils:*

Consider opportunities to strengthen the capacity of food policy councils to support regional and statewide food system coordination. The policy-scoping project identified dedicated staffing, resources, defined responsibilities, and stronger coordination structures as potential mechanisms for improving accountability, elevating community participation, and supporting long-term implementation of food system initiatives. The Council's policy review identified several implementation characteristics that were commonly associated with higher-rated policies, including clearly assigned responsibilities, measurable outcomes, and dedicated funding mechanisms. The Council now has established specialized expertise in understanding Nevada food access policies and how they would best function due to participation in these studies and workshops in addition to their professional capacity. The Council could serve as an excellent

resource for stakeholder engagement and critical review of future policy proposals brought forward to Nevada legislative sessions prior to submission to the legislature. Further, after conducting these 4 studies as part of AB 405, the Council is optimally positioned to prepare well researched, feasible, and impactful bill draft requests to improve food insecurity in Nevada through policy change. This consideration supports the top-ranked policy recommendations of strengthening the regional food councils.

DRAFT

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*Several findings contained within this draft report were derived from Council meeting notes, policy workshop materials, policy evaluation matrices, and other working documents*

*developed as part of the AB 405 study process. Additional references may be added as the study progresses and the report is updated.*

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## APPENDIX A

2025 CFS Board Members (Updated 1/14/2026)

| Members                                                                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Amber Torres                                                                     | <i>A person who is a representative of a food bank serving Northern Nevada</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| Designee: Dr. Dorian E. Stonebarger                                              | <i>Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development or his or her designee within the Office.</i>                                                                                              |
| 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>                                                                              |
| Designee: Kelly Cantrelle                                                        | <i>Administrator of the Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services or designee from within the Division.</i>                                                                                           |
| Designee: Lori Lutu                                                              | <i>The Administrator of the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Department or his or her designee from within the Department</i>                                                                     |
| Dr. Julian Goicoechea<br>(Proxies: Brittany Mally &<br>Designee: Patricia Hoppe) | <i>Director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department.</i>                                                                                                                |
| Dr. Muzafar Makhdoomi                                                            | <i>Western Regional Director of the United States Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department.</i>                                                                                        |
| Dr. Sabina Malik                                                                 | <i>A person who is a representative of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension</i>                                                                                                                      |
| Jeff Duncan                                                                      | <i>A person who is a representative of a food bank serving Southern Nevada</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| Jill Moe                                                                         | <i>One member who is a representative of farmers or ranchers engaged in food production</i>                                                                                                                    |
| Marcia Blake                                                                     | <i>The State of Nevada Governor's Designee.</i>                                                                                                                                                                |
| Nishat Gould                                                                     | <i>One member who is a representative of retailers of food.</i>                                                                                                                                                |
| Roberto (Carlos) 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 northern Nevada</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 southern Nevada</i> |
| Designee: Vickie Ives                                                            | <i>Administrator of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health or his or her designee from within the Division.</i>                                                                                   |
| Samantha (Tori) Lawson-Bofelli                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## APPENDIX B

2026 AB 405 & SB 233 Subcommittee Board Members (Updated 7/30/2026)

| Members                         | Description                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. Pamela Juniel               | <i>State Coordinator at Nevada Department of Education</i>                                        |
| Marcia Black                    | <i>Executive Director at Helping Hands of Vegas Valley</i>                                        |
| Nishat Gould                    | <i>Attorney</i>                                                                                   |
| Samantha (Tori) Lawson-Boffelli | <i>Program Analyst at USDA</i>                                                                    |
| Shane Piccinini                 | <i>Manager of Public Policy Advocate and Government Relations at Food Bank of Northern Nevada</i> |
| Vickie S. Ives                  | <i>Health Bureau Chief at Department of Public and Behavioral Health</i>                          |
| Jeff Duncan                     | <i>Chief of Staff at Three Square</i>                                                             |
| Dr. Dorian Stonebarger          | <i>Deputy Director for the Governor's Office of Economic Development</i>                          |
| Chair – Dr. Sabina Malik        | <i>Assistant Professor and State Specialist at the University of Nevada, Reno Extension</i>       |

## Appendix C

Underutilized Acres Within Food Access Research Tracts in Las Vegas, Nevada

### Under-Utilized Acres Within Food Access Research Tracts

Las Vegas, Nevada

| Zip Code | Under Utilized<br>Parcels | Total<br>Acres | Food Insecurity Rates<br>(2017) |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 89011    | 80                        | 43             | 11.80%                          |
| 89014    | 4                         | 8              | 14.80%                          |
| 89015    | 295                       | 236            | 15.30%                          |
| 89027    | 64                        | 92             | unknown                         |
| 89030    | 764                       | 520            | 15.30%                          |
| 89032    | 295                       | 369            | 13.30%                          |
| 89081    | 39                        | 119            | 14.00%                          |
| 89101    | 134                       | 101            | 20.20%                          |
| 89102    | 216                       | 184            | 17.60%                          |
| 89103    | 74                        | 187            | 16.70%                          |
| 89104    | 104                       | 75             | 13.90%                          |
| 89106    | 545                       | 336            | 25.50%                          |
| 89107    | 8                         | 13             | 12.80%                          |
| 89108    | 175                       | 159            | 15.90%                          |
| 89109    | 31                        | 158            | 16.00%                          |
| 89110    | 116                       | 76             | 11.00%                          |
| 89115    | 509                       | 1,187          | 18.00%                          |
| 89118    | 2                         | 18             | 16.00%                          |

|                    |                   |                                       |                    |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 89119              | 99                | 232                                   | 18.70%             |
| 89120              | 53                | 71                                    | 12.20%             |
| 89121              | 78                | 108                                   | 15.60%             |
| 89122              | 44                | 160                                   | 13.80%             |
| 89123              | 17                | 81                                    | 12.80%             |
| 89128              | 12                | 30                                    | 15.50%             |
| 89130              | 67                | 90                                    | 11.90%             |
| 89142              | 4                 | 5                                     | 9.90%              |
| 89145              | 3                 | 13                                    | 13.30%             |
| 89146              | 12                | 21                                    | 15.20%             |
| 89147              | 21                | 59                                    | 14.30%             |
| 89156              | 206               | 263                                   | 15.00%             |
| 89169              | 74                | 128                                   | 20.60%             |
| Total              | 4145              | 5139                                  | 31 total zip codes |
| Priority Locations | 5 total zip codes | 89106, 89169, 89101, 89119, and 89115 |                    |
| Total parcels      | 1361              |                                       |                    |
| Total acres        | 1983              |                                       |                    |

Sources: RTC, Southern Nevada Food Council, Three Square Food Bank  
 Provided by: Center for Regional Studies and Extension, University of Nevada, Reno

This appendix presents the ZIP-code-level data used in the Southern Nevada food access and underutilized parcel analysis. The dataset identifies the number and acreage of underutilized parcels within Food Access Research Tracts and provides corresponding 2017 food insecurity rates where available. The analysis was used to identify areas where food access conditions and underutilized land geographically intersect and to support further consideration of potential locations for community gardens and urban agriculture. Identification within the dataset does not establish current parcel availability, ownership, zoning eligibility, or suitability for agricultural use.