

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 405, enacted during Nevada's 83rd 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.¹

REQUIREMENTS OF ASSEMBLY BILL 405

Assembly Bill 405 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.¹

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, 2026.¹

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.²

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 3 local ordinances, addressing 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 implementation responsibilities, established tracking and reporting mechanisms, and dedicated funding or programmatic support generally received higher evaluation scores than policies lacking implementation guidance, accountability measures, or funding support.²

The Council also identified existing resources 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 Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC) in partnership with the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) and other community partners. These resources represent conditions at a specific point in time and were used to inform the Council's review. Similar planning resources remain under development in portions of Northern Nevada.³

The Council's recommendation development process remains ongoing. Additional discussion and consideration of recommendations is anticipated during future Council meetings.

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, and statewide policy efforts addressing food insecurity in Nevada. In addition, it identifies key findings and considerations intended to inform future Council deliberations regarding statewide food security coordination and policy development.

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.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁵

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

County	Food Insecurity Rate	Estimated Food Insecure Population	Average Meal Cost	Annual Food Budget Shortfall
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%	7,120	\$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	\$560,000
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).³ The framework considers four dimensions of food security:

- *Availability* – whether food is consistently available and sufficient to meet community needs;
- *Accessibility* – whether food can be reasonably accessed by residents;
- *Affordability* – whether food is reasonably priced relative to household income; and
- *Appropriateness* – whether 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.⁶

Southern Nevada Food Council

The Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC) is a regional collaborative 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.³

Prior to the enactment of Assembly Bill 405, the SNFC conducted food policy review efforts and developed resources to support evaluation of food access policies, community food systems, and food security initiatives.³ As part of the Council on Food Security's review conducted pursuant to AB405, the Council utilized and built upon 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.³

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.⁷ 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.⁷

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.

Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan

Nevada's [Food Security Strategic Plan](#) serves as a guiding framework for statewide food security efforts.⁸

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 CFS established a structured review process during the 2025–2026 interim. The study was organized around the four areas specifically identified in statute¹:

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 conducted its review through regularly scheduled Council meetings and monthly subcommittee meetings that were conducted in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law (OML) and were open to the public.⁹ 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.⁸

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 AB405.²

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.¹⁰ 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 implantation 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, 2026.⁵

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 including work conducted by SNFC. The Council utilized this inventory as a starting point for its AB 405 review and applied its policy evaluation framework to assess food security impact and 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.

A policy workshop and scoring process 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 implementation accountability, tracking and reporting provisions, and fiscal support.¹⁰

Policies were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Food Security Impact – the extent to which a policy addresses food security needs 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 identified.

Food Security Impact was scored on a scale of one to five points. 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.

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.³

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.

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.²

Study Limitations

As for the preparation of this draft report, portions of the Council's work remain ongoing. Additional interest holder engagement, data review, and recommendation development activities are anticipated during future Council meetings.

Accordingly, findings presented in this report reflect information available during the initial phases of the AB 405 study process and may be supplemented or revised as additional information becomes available.

FINDING 1: EVALUATION OF EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES

Policy Review Process

The Council utilized a standardized evaluation framework that was adapted from prior food policy review efforts conducted by the Southern Nevada Food Council (SNFC). Through the AB 405 study process, the Council applied this framework to evaluate policies according to CFS's determination of both their potential contribution to food security and the strength of their implementation mechanisms.^{3,10}

Each policy received a score based on four criteria:

- Food Security Impact
- Implementation Responsibility
- Measurable Outcomes
- Funding Support

Food Security Impact was assigned a score ranging from one to five points. The remaining criteria each received a score of either zero or one point. The maximum possible score for a policy was eight points.¹⁰

This framework enabled the Council to compare policies across multiple sectors of the food system while applying a consistent methodology.

Policy Review Results

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.²

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 summarizes the policy evaluation conducted by the CFS as part of the AB 405 study process. Policies were scored using criteria related to food security impact, organizational responsibility, tracking and reporting, and fiscal support. Scores are presented in descending order based on total points awarded during the evaluation process.

Table 3. Food Access Policy Evaluation Results

Policy	Category
<u>Senate Bill (SB) 503 – Breakfast After the Bell</u> Expands breakfast access by serving meals after the school day begins.	Consumption
<u>AB 171 – School Quality of Eggs (SQO)</u> Encourages procurement of Nevada-produced eggs for school meal programs.	Distribution
<u>SB 490 – Supplemental Food Program Directed by Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)</u> Establishes and administers Nevada’s Supplemental Food Program.	Distribution
<u>SB 485 – SNAP Eligibility</u> Expands or modifies eligibility for SNAP benefits.	Distribution
<u>SB 323 – SNAP Work</u> Address SNAP employment and work participation requirements.	Distribution
<u>SB 443 – Senior Meal Reimbursement</u> Supports meal reimbursements programs for older adults.	Distribution
<u>NRS 232.4966 – Creation of Council on Food Security</u> Establishes the Nevada Council on Food Security.	Production
<u>NRS 232.4968 – Duties of Council on Food Security</u> Defines the Council's responsibilities and duties.	Production
<u>SB 206 – Cottage Food</u> Expands opportunities for home-based food production.	Processing
<u>SB 441 – Craft Food</u> Establishes requirements for craft food operations.	Processing
<u>SB 370 – Creates Home Feeds Nevada</u> Establishes the Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program.	Distribution
<u>Ordinance 11.10.150 – Alternative Payment of Fines Donation Program</u> Allows food donations as an alternative to certain fines.	Distribution
<u>SB 233 – Home Feeds Nevada</u>	Distribution

Studies the long-term sustainability of the Home Feeds Nevada program.	
AB 107 – Tracking Free/Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) Improves collection and reporting of FRPL participation data.	Consumption
SB 104 – School Gardens Funding Under Department of Education Provides support for school garden initiatives through NDE.	Production
AB 405 – Community Gardens and Urban Farms Directs a statewide study of food insecurity and community food production.	Production
AB 352 – Cottage Foods with NDA Revises NDA oversight of cottage food operations.	Production
AB 251 – Meat/Poultry Inspection Revises state meat and poultry inspection requirements.	Processing
SB 92 – Sidewalk Vendors Establishes requirements for sidewalk food vendors.	Distribution
AB 345 – Higher Education Food Security Addresses food insecurity among higher education students.	Consumption
AB 479 – Tax on Agricultural Land Revises tax provisions affecting agricultural land.	Production
SB 178 – Food for People Not Landfills Encourages food recovery and reduces food waste.	Distribution
NRS 268.0191 – Powers and Duties Authorizes local governments to support community gardens.	Distribution
NRS 244.291 – Ordinance Authorizes county ordinances supporting community gardens.	Distribution
SB 167 – School Gardens Funding at Title I Schools for NDA Supports school gardens at eligible Title I schools.	Production
AB 333 – Nevada State Fair Grounds	Production

Addresses use and management of Nevada State Fairgrounds.	
<u>SB 297 – Urban Farming and Community Gardens</u> Supports development of urban farming and community gardens.	Production
<u>SB 390 – Poultry Processing Initiative</u> Supports poultry processing capacity in Nevada.	Processing
<u>AB 200 – Farm to Fork</u> Encourages local food procurement and farm-to-fork initiatives.	Production
<u>AB 326 – Fresh Food Retailers – New Market Jobs Act</u> Encourages development of healthy food retail locations.	Distribution
<u>AB 337 – School Gardens, Farm2School, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)</u> Supports school gardens and farm-to-school programs.	Production
<u>SB 458 – School Gardens Funding at Title I Schools for Nonprofits</u> Provides nonprofit funding for Title I school gardens.	Production
<u>SB 429 – Urban Agriculture Zones</u> Authorizes designation of urban agriculture zones.	Production
<u>AB 116 – Food Delivery Service Providers</u> Regulates food delivery service providers.	Distribution

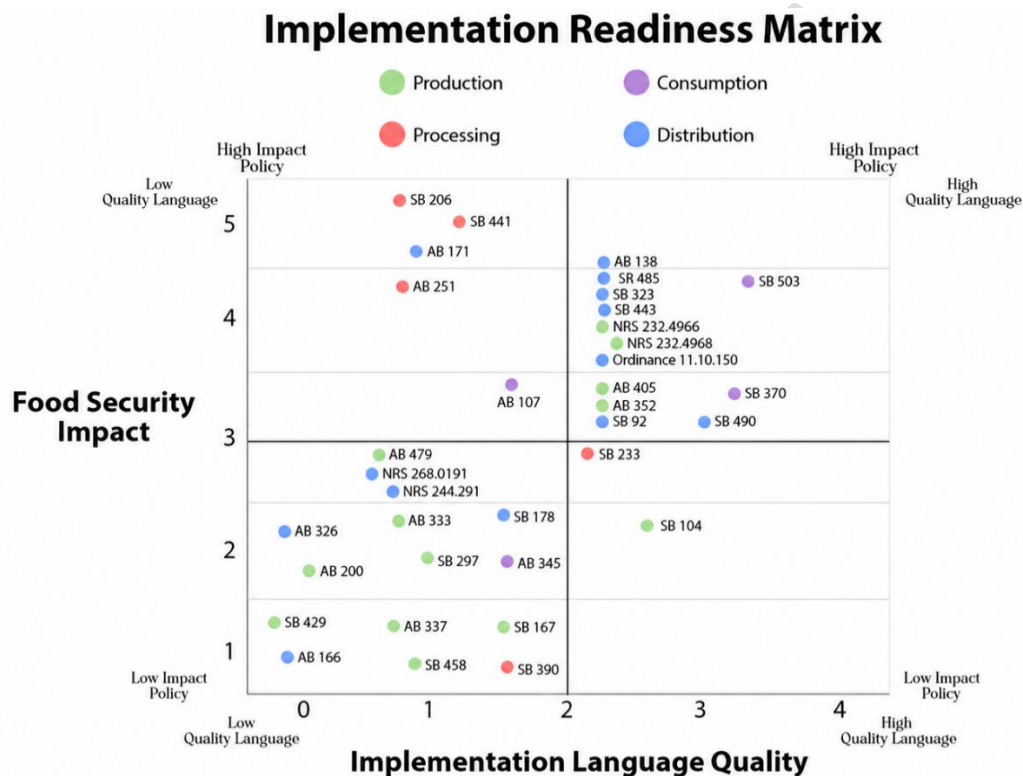
Table 4 summarizes representative organizations and activities identified during the Council's review of statewide food security coordination efforts. Organizations represented multiple sectors of Nevada's food system and contributed to leadership, food production, food distribution, community outreach, 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.

Figure 1 illustrates the Council's policy evaluation results using the implementation readiness matrix developed during the AB 405 review process. Policies are positioned according to their assessed food security impact and the strength of their implementation characteristics, including 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 readiness across multiple areas of Nevada's 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.

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 generally received higher evaluations than policies lacking these elements.² 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 could 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.²

Key Theme 3: Food Production and Processing Emerged as Areas for Further Discussion

During policy review discussions, Council members noted that comparatively fewer highly rated policies focused on food production and food processing.

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-scoring food distribution and nutrition assistance programs.

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.²

Key Theme 4: Measurable Outcomes Support Evaluation and Accountability

The review process highlighted the value of measurable outcomes in policy implementation.

Policies that established performance measures, reporting requirements, or identifiable outcomes were generally easier to evaluate than policies lacking measurable benchmarks.

The Council observed that performance measures may support ongoing evaluation efforts and help policymakers assess progress toward intended objectives.²

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 necessarily involved professional judgment based on the information available during the review.

In addition, this draft report reflects the Council's work completed to date. Broader stakeholder engagement and public input are ongoing as part of the AB405 study process, and additional information, perspectives, and recommendations may be incorporated into future drafts as the Council's review continues.

Finally, the review was conducted within the timeframe established by AB405 for the 2025–2026 Legislative Interim. As additional information becomes available through continued Council deliberations and stakeholder engagement, findings and recommendations may be further refined prior to submission of the final report.

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.¹¹

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.

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.⁸

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.²

In Southern Nevada, interest holders have developed [food access maps](#) 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. During Council discussions, members noted that approximately 40,000 acres of vacant land have been identified through existing inventories in Southern Nevada. While not all identified parcels would be suitable for food production activities, these resources may provide a starting point for future analysis and planning efforts.³

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.

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 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.

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.²

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.

Key participants include:

- Nevada Department of Human Services;
- Division of Public and Behavioral Health;
- Office of Food Security;
- Nevada Department of Agriculture;
- Local governments;

- Tribal governments and tribal organizations;
- Food banks and food pantries;
- Community-based organizations;
- School districts and educational institutions;
- Agricultural producers;
- Local 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.⁸

Role of the Council on Food Security

The CFS 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.⁷

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.²

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 considered how existing coordination efforts support broader statewide food security goals.⁸

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.¹²

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.

12

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.
- *Food Distribution Networks* - Food banks, food pantries, community organizations, agricultural producers, transportation partners, and government agencies frequently collaborate to distribute food resources throughout Nevada communities.
- *Local Food Councils* - Regional food councils provide opportunities for interest holders to coordinate food system planning, identify community needs, and support local food initiatives.
- *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.
- *Partner Mapping and Interest Holder Identification* - As part of the AB405 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.²

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.
- *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 CFS 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.^{1,2}

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

Finding 1: Nevada Has Established an Assorted 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. 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.²

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 2: Policies With Defined Implementation Structures Frequently Demonstrated Stronger Implementation Characteristics

The Council's policy review identified recurring implementation factors among highly rated policies. Policies with assigned implementation responsibilities, measurable outcomes, and dedicated funding mechanisms generally demonstrated stronger implementation characteristics 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.²

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

Finding 3: 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.²

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.

Finding 4: Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Remain Supported Through 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.

The Council also identified opportunities for additional assessment and planning activities that may support future community garden and urban agriculture efforts.^{3,11}

Finding 5: 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.

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.³

Finding 6: 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 found that coordination activities occur through a variety of formal and informal partnerships and align with priorities identified in Nevada's Food Security Strategic Plan.⁸ Council discussions also identified opportunities to further strengthen coordination among regional food policy councils, the Office of Food Security, the Council on Food Security, local governments, and other partners engaged in Nevada's food system.

Finding 7: Additional Review and Recommendation Development Remain Ongoing

The Council's work pursuing AB 405 remains ongoing. Additional interest holder engagement, data review, and discussion of potential strategies are anticipated during future Council meetings. Additional findings, recommendations, and supporting information may be incorporated into future drafts as the Council's review and deliberations continue.²

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE COUNCIL DISCUSSION

As for the preparation of this draft report, the CFS's recommendation development process remains ongoing. Additional discussion is anticipated during future Council meetings and interest-holder engagement activities.

The considerations outlined below are intended to summarize recurring themes identified during the study process to date. These considerations should not be interpreted as formal recommendations of the Council and are presented for future discussion and evaluation.

Consideration 1: Continued Assessment of Statewide Food Access Conditions

During the study process, the Council reviewed existing food access mapping resources and land-use inventories available in portions of Nevada. These resources provided valuable information regarding food access conditions and potential opportunities for community food production

initiatives.

Council discussions identified variations in the availability of food access data and planning resources across different regions of the state. Future discussions may consider opportunities to further assess food access conditions and planning resources to support local decision-making and community food system development efforts.³

Consideration 2: Evaluation of Policy Implementation Characteristics

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.

Future discussions may consider how implementation characteristics influence the effectiveness of food-security-related initiatives and whether additional evaluation tools or performance measures may support ongoing policy assessment efforts.²

Consideration 3: Food Production and Food Processing Capacity

Council discussions identified food production and food processing as important components of Nevada's food system.

Future discussions may examine opportunities to better understand how food production, food processing, food distribution, and food access initiatives contribute to statewide food security objectives and food system resilience.²

Consideration 4: Continued Support for Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture

The Council's review identified existing statutory authorities and planning resources that support community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives.

Future discussions may consider opportunities to better understand local implementation practices, community needs, infrastructure requirements, and potential partnerships that support community-based food production efforts.^{3,11}

Consideration 5: Strengthening Information Sharing and Coordination

The Council's review highlighted the extensive network of organizations involved in food security efforts throughout Nevada.

Future discussions may consider opportunities to further document existing partnerships, improve information sharing among interest holders, and support alignment among organizations working toward common food security objectives.²

Consideration 6: Data Collection and Performance Measurement

The Council's study process emphasized the importance of data in evaluating food security conditions, policy implementation, and program outcomes.

Future discussions may consider opportunities to strengthen data collection, improve access to food-security-related information, and support ongoing evaluation of statewide food security efforts.²

Future Recommendation Development

The Council anticipates continued discussion regarding potential strategies and recommendations prior to submission of the final report required by AB 405.

Recommendations ultimately included in the final report will reflect future Council deliberations, interest-holder input, and information developed during the remaining phases of the study process.

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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 (Proxies: Brittany Mally & 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	
Marcia Black	
Nishat Gould	
Samantha (Tori) Lawson-Boffelli	
Shane Piccinini	
Vickie S. Ives	
Jeff Duncan	
Dr. Dorian Stonebarger	
Chair – Dr. Sabina Malik	

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