

The Nevada Council on Food Security
Minutes
November 2, 2021

Nevada Council on Food Security held a public meeting on November 2, 2021 beginning at approximately 1:01 P.M. via video and teleconference. This meeting was held in accordance with Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency Directive 006; Subsection 1; The requirement contained in NRS 241.023 (1) (b) that there be a physical location designated for meetings of public bodies where members of the public are permitted to attend and participate is suspended.

Board Members Present

Jennifer Ott, Director of Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)
Brittany Price, Director of Sustainable Operations, MGM Resorts International
Candice McDaniel, Administrator, DHHS
Deacon Tom Roberts, President and Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada (CCSN)
Rique Robb, Deputy Administrator of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD), Child Services
Dr. Kenneth Osgood, Southern Nevada Health District Board of Health
Homa Annoshepoor, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Division, NDA
Michael Brown, Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development
Rebekah Stetson, Chief Executive Officer of Family
Jesus Mendoza, Regional Administrator, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Western Regional Office (WRO)
Jhone Ebert Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
Robert Thompson, Deputy Administrator Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS)
Kelli Kelly, Director, Fallon Food Hub
Marcia Blake, Executive Director, Helping Hands of Vegas Valley (HHOVV)
Marie Baxter, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN)
Jenny Yeager, Director of Programs and Community Engagement, Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN)
Sarah Rogers, Nutrition Unit Deputy Chief, Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

Board Members Not Present

Robert Thompson, Deputy Administrator Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS)
Dr. Aurora Calvillo Buffington, University of Nevada, Reno

Staff Present:

Laura Urban, Food Security and Wellness Manager, Office of Food Security and Wellness (OFSW), Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

Patricia Segura, MPH, Wellness and Prevention Program Coordinator, OFSW, Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

Dr. Kathrine Wright, PhD, MPH, Food Security Coordinator, OFSW, Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

Elleni Rioja, Food Security Analyst, OFSW, Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

Max Moskowitz, Wellness and Prevention Analyst, OFSW, Nutrition Unit, CFCW, DPBH, DHHS

1. Roll Call

Chair Jennifer Ott called the meeting to order at 1:01 P.M.

Roll call was taken, and it was determined a quorum of the Nevada Council on Food Security (CFS) was present, per Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 439.519 § 2.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chair Ott called for public comment and there was none.

3. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Approval of August 23, 2021 meeting minutes

CHAIR OTT ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 23, 2021 MEETING MINUTES. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY DR. KENNETH OSGOOD. MARCIA BLAKE SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.

4. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Presentation and discussion on Food Security Plan revision

Lois Ann Porter and Nancy Brune presented an update on the status of the food security strategic planning process, including progress to date.

Laura Urban summarized the progress and accomplishments of the 2018 Strategic Plan. The assessment focused on the accomplishments of the Council on Food Security (CFS) and the Office of Food Security (OFS). The summary of the plan can be found [here](#).

Rique Robb provided more information regarding the increase of the Meals on Wheels reimbursements. Congregate meals increased from \$3.20 - \$3.45 per meal and home delivered meals increased from \$3.65 - \$3.85 per meal.

Dr. Nancy Brune spoke about each of the goals for the four core areas and asked the council how they would define their progress for each goal and if they should keep, expand, or remove the goal. She also asked to explain where more work is needed and why, and to identify any barriers.

Dr. Nancy Brune read the first lead goal.

Jenny Yaeger stated a significant amount of work was done, but more work needs to be done. The goal should stay and work on strengthening the relationships between the state and local organizations. In addition, more work could be done to set clear expectations of what needs to be accomplished for the shared goals.

Dr. Osgood recognized the issue between state and local government and suggested using the mapping tool

created via the Data and Analysis Workgroup. Still, the financial licensing for the tool is expensive, and organizations may not have enough staff.

Marcia Blake stated great strides were made in a collaborative effort between state and non-state agencies.

Cortney Bloomer expressed that she likes the goal and thinks a lot has been done but cautions against the alignment of non-profit and state agencies to work together to align those goals and not only create alignment with the state's priorities.

Marcia Blake explains that regional subgroups for grantees meet once a quarter and share information on funding and other services. She states that this allows them to network and strengthen relationships with each other. For example, Marcia says that Three Square Food Bank meets together monthly, and the southern Nevada organizations work in coalition and groups and are sharing and disseminating information from funders from each other. She suggests that it gives all the partners a better perspective on the alignment of what is happening and what needs to happen.

Jenny Yaeger believes that sometimes there is a challenge of alignment between state agencies, and it could be difficult for a non-state agency to know where to pull money from. She suggests that more consistency and understanding around those shared strategies be in place.

Brittany Price asks if there is an opportunity to broaden Goal #1 lightly. She suggests that there should be more engagement interaction and more support for the private sectors in hospitality.

Nancy Brune indicates that Brittany has identified a gap and that is a great gap for future conversation.

Discussion of Lead Goal #1 ends at 1:42 pm.

Nancy Brune begins the discussion about goal #2.

Homa Anooshepoor explains that this goal should stay and that this goal has been accomplished to some extent.

Marcia Blake states that goal #2 should be expanded, identified, and supported while more involved. She mentioned that at the end of the legislative session there was a significant discussion regarding what are our boundaries? And for the Council, what role do they play? How do we better interact with legislators and get them involved during the process rather than at the end?

Chair Ott says that there needs to be more shape in this goal, and it would be nice to work on the framework of how we should go about it.

Cortney Bloomer expresses that there are many local and state policy opportunities to help increase food insecurity and food production and thinks it's a great expansion area.

Caitlin G (Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association) mentions that it is currently a prime time to have conversations with legislators so that we can identify who can be a policy champion for various policies and ideas.

Nancy Brune reads Feed goal #1 and asks the council about the progress of the goal.

Jenny Yaeger explains that there is work to do here and determine the number of children not using the breakfast or other food assistance programs. Some of these goals align with goal #1 of lead. However, she says that the way some of these policies are written creates barriers to them accessing them. She states how we could be more

aligned as a state on how these programs are offered and to who.

Marcia Blake agrees with Jenny Yaeger. She also stated that there are a lot of misconceptions for senior citizens, and for some, pride prevents them from seeking services.

Cortney Bloomer brings up the point of hearing from people on why they're reticent and not involving themselves in these programs. Some community members have expressed that signing up for SNAP isn't beneficial because they cannot use their benefits where they live. Her organization is helping different retailers or organizations sign up to accept SNAP benefits in rural communities. Additionally, the organization is working on accepting online SNAP payments so the people can participate in their CSAs, farmer's markets, etc., in rural areas where grocery stores do not currently accept SNAP. She thinks think researching that and then implementing solutions based on that information would be a great project.

Natalie states that there are a lot of older people that don't qualify for SNAP.

Nancy Brune reads Feed Goal #2.

Marcia Blake stated that all the work done from the pandemic could be helpful with goal two. During the Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions were taken away, so many restrictions went away because it was emergency ordered. The focus was placed on just feeding everyone without restrictions behind it. Another thing is that people don't want to share personal information that wasn't required during the pandemic and don't want these services anymore. Marcia explains that they removed a lot of barriers that will hopefully keep gone so that we can continue to serve people.

Director Ott mentioned taking the client-centered strategies and working on federal policy changes.

Homa Anooshepoor said there had been great success during the pandemic providing food access to a larger number of people, especially to seniors in home delivery. They are currently looking to expand and reduce restrictions in order to provide more access and resources to more individuals.

Dr. Osgood said success was focusing on a client-centered strategy by listening to the consumers' needs and accommodating their needs through policy changes.

Discussion of Feed Goal #2 ends.

Council begins discussing Grow Goal #1.

Dr. Osgood states that food banks initially didn't have enough food and thinks it was successful by integrating the private sector into food banks.

Cortney Bloomer thinks that this goal can relate to lead goal #1 and states a ton of work is being done in this area, but not necessarily connecting it with this council in the northern Nevada food security coalition. She expresses that she would love to see us recognize that connecting local farms to food banks is not the best right now and to develop strategies around it.

Marcia Blake suggests incorporating the word identify into the goal so they could identify and then support it.

Discussion of Grow goal #1 ends.

Dr. Osgood thought we did significant work and should continue to collect data. He gave examples of identifying

the number of children in schools that weren't having breakfasts and lunches.

Jenny Yaeger states that there is a lot of data collected but asks how we can bring that together. She explains that we collect all this data, but how do we collaborate, and what do we do with it? She mentioned that there isn't a shared platform for everyone to access the data if needed.

Jodi Tyson says that the technology concluded that as a state, there has been good traction with oasis.

Marcia Blake explained that she was shocked that all the state agencies used six different data programs, and they haven't adjusted to one main program because employees don't want to learn a new data process.

Chair Ott states that databases consist of clients who receive services and remind others to collect food insecurity data. She says to make sure we collect data on populations and communities that we haven't identified yet to meet their needs and receive assistance if needed.

Jhone Ebert states there is a lot of data; it's just not useable. She suggests that there should be a one-stop-shop to enhance the data system and own capacity in what the data is.

Discussion of Data goal ends at 2:14 pm.

Nancy Brune begins to explain the challenges in the Nevada Food Security ecosystem.

Marcia Blake asks what the emergency food plan looks like in case of a natural disaster.

Chair Ott states that there is a plan in place, but it is a matter of executing it when the time comes. She also ensured that there is an entire agency responsible for developing a plan. The plan has segments depending on the sector being addressed. For example, every disaster plan has food, shelter, health, transportation, and energy-sector elements. The plans are public.

Jenny Yeager mentioned that one thing COVID-19 exposed was how individuals and families are right on the bubble to being food insecure. Many people that typically do not experience food insecurity regularly were accessing food insecurity services for the first time.

Cortney Bloomer explains that the pandemic exposed a lack of infrastructure and partnerships across the food system. She states that her agency did not have enough cold storage because the number of people in need of food increased. In addition, many farms had food but faced challenges identifying where to send it. She said that it was essential to foster relationships with producers and consumers to make those connections.

Marcia Blake said that this emphasized including the private sector in food sector conversations as they are a tremendous asset to the food ecosystem. She gave the example of the casinos donating food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cortney Bloomer shared that developing a common language would be helpful to ensure that we all are talking in the same language when speaking to each other, the community, legislators, etc.

Dr. Osgood indicated that it was important to look into other social determinants and identify their challenges with food access, such as those in charge of hospital discharges.

Marcia Blake mentioned that a significant challenge is that legislators don't know about the Council on Food Security (CFS). They don't know what the CFS does and what we're trying to accomplish. She said that working

with them to create policy isn't going to happen until this is done. Marcia noted that creating priorities around the Strategic Plan will allow the CFS to work on policies at the state and local levels.

Lois Ann Porter read off the next steps slides. She will be meeting with the working group in December and January. In December, they will start drafting questions for the different needs assessments, such as the interviews and small group meetings, and other information needed for the Needs Assessment, such as surveys. In January, conversations around measures of success will begin. The Needs Assessment component of this work will probably continue until March. Another report will be brought to the CFS in January for CFS member input.

5. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Presentation and possible action to approve the 2021 Council on Food Security Annual Report Draft

Laura Urban presented the initial draft of food security 2021.

Chair Ott asks for any comments or updates and there were none.

6. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Discussion and possible action to make recommendations regarding American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding

Chair Ott proposed we hold off until next meeting and entertained a motion to approve and none opposed.

7. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Discussion and possible action to make recommendations for Interim Committee on Health presentation regarding food security issues and priorities

Laura Urban stated she has been in contact with the committee and explains that they are identifying a chair and once that happens, they will start to schedule meetings.

Council agrees that Dr. Osgood present to the interim committee.

8. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Present member updates

Chair Ott asks for any council member updates.

Rique Robb, Rebekah Stetson, and Homa Anooshepoor shared updates on their programs and successes.

Rique Robb mentioned that her agency finalized recommendations for community providers who provided congregate and home-delivered meals for older adults across Nevada. The Notice of Funding Opportunity included \$10 million in available funding. They had 57 applicants and an overall request of \$13 million. Three grant applications were not funded, so the total of 54 applications at approximately \$10.3 million.

Dr. Osgood mentioned research that is occurring in Southern Nevada. The data indicated that approximately 28% of people living in Southern Nevada had transportation barriers to accessing food. This data, in addition to information regarding community safety, was presented earlier in the week.

Rebekah Stetson mentioned that her non-profit has expanded its program to the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Nevada. The program is growing and currently has about 2000 youth participants. The youth are taught skills related to social and emotional learning and growing food.

Homa Anooshepoor mentioned that her organization has a new partner for their commodity food program. They have begun distributing food to seniors in their area and are committed to increasing participation in the program, distributing pre-made meals, and improving access to the program. They have provided more than 14,000 pounds of Nevada-grown, fresh produce. The program provides coupons for fresh produce. In addition, they have purchased \$5.3 million of food for their emergency food assistance program that will be distributed from

January to June to their food bank.

9. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Discussion and approval of future agenda items.

Chair Ott requested suggestions for future agenda items. There were none.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Ott asked for public comment. There were none.

11. Adjournment

Chair Ott adjourned the meeting at 3:06 PM