

NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACO)

Board of Directors' Meeting
February 27, 2026, 9:30am
NACO Conference Room
304 S. Minnesota Street
Carson City, NV 89703

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

The public may provide public comment in advance of a meeting by written submission to the following email address: info@nvnaco.org For inclusion or reference in the minutes of the meeting, your public comment must include your full name and be submitted via email by not later than 3:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.

The public may also join the meeting via remote access and provide verbal public comment during designated times by using the provided [Microsoft Teams Link](#).

AGENDA

NACO Board members may attend via remote technology from other locations. Items on the agenda may be taken out of order. The NACO Board may combine two or more agenda items for consideration. The NACO Board may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

1. Public Comment. **Please Limit Comments to 3 Minutes.**
2. Approval of Agenda. **For Possible Action**
3. NACO President's Report.
4. NACO Executive Director's Report.
5. Approval of Minutes of January 23, 2026, NACO Board of Directors Meeting. **For Possible Action**
6. Possible Selection of One (1) NACO Sponsored Applicant to Attend the National Association of Counties 2025 County Leadership Training Institute in Washington D.C. **For Possible Action.**
7. Possible Re-Appointment of Lorina Dellinger, Assistant County Manager, Nye County, to the Board on Indigent Defense Services (*NRS 180.300*). **For Possible Action**
8. Possible Re-Appointment of Shayla Holmes, Director, Lyon County Human Services, Grants Management Advisory Committee, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (*NRS 232.383*). **For Possible Action**
9. Possible Re-Appointment of Andrew Bennett, Director, Clark County Office of Traffic Safety to the Nevada Executive Committee on Traffic Safety (*NRS 408.581*). **For Possible Action**

10. Update Regarding the Nevada State Fair, from Representatives of the Office of the Director of The Nevada Department of Agriculture, Including but not limited to County Volunteers and Participation.
11. Update from NACO Health and Human Services Manager.
12. Update from NACO Staff Regarding Systems Transition and Engagement with the Nevada Department of Taxation and “True up” of Consolidated Tax Revenue.

Updates from Standing Committees:

13. NACO Legislative Committee
14. NACO Committee of the Emeritus
15. NACO Committee on Housing
16. NACO Committee on Cooperative Extension
17. **Update and Possible Action.** Regarding Public Lands and Natural Resources Issues Affecting Counties Including:
 - a. Updates from the NACO Public Lands and Natural Resources Subcommittee.
 - b. Possible Approval of Letter of Support and Recommendation for Former NACO President and Lincoln County Commissioner, Varlin Higbee, to Serve on the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. **For Possible Action**
 - c. Update on Baker Ranches vs. Haaland Amicus Brief.
18. Updates from Members of the National Association of Counties Board, Western Interstate Region Board, and Individual Counties.
19. Public Comment. **Please Limit Comments to 3 Minutes.**

Adjournment.

Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting are requested to notify NACO in writing at 304 S. Minnesota Street, Carson City, NV 89703, or by calling (775) 883-7863 at least three working days prior to the meeting.

Members of the public can request copies of the supporting material for the meeting by contacting Amanda Berg at (775) 883-7863. Supporting material will be available at the NACO office and on the NACO website at: www.nvnaco.org

This agenda was posted at the following locations:

NACO Office 304 S. Minnesota Street, Carson City, NV 89703
Washoe County Admin. Building 1001 E. Ninth Street, Reno, NV 89520
Elko County Manager’s Office 540 Court Street #101, Elko NV 89801
POOL/PACT 201 S. Roop Street, Carson City, NV 89701
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Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) 2026 Federal Priorities

Nevada's counties proudly serve as the foundation of the local social safety net, delivering essential community services that support Nevadans at every stage of life. As communities continue to evolve, counties are ready to thoughtfully and strategically respond to emerging needs. Counties are committed partners in strengthening Nevada's economy and the quality of life by fostering safe, healthy and resilient communities. Through collaboration at all levels of government and with partners in the private sector, counties help connect residents to opportunity, maintain vital public services, and support responsible growth. Continued investment in county programs ensures that communities across Nevada remain vibrant, prepared, and in a strong position for lasting success.

Local Public Health & Community Resiliency

Continued Support for Local Public Health: While unprecedented federal funding and aid to counties has occurred in recent years, it has served to highlight the need for additional long-term support for our country's public health system. In Nevada, public health is provided through a partnership between health districts, counties, and the State. During Nevada's response to a historic public health emergency, we saw that the lack of sustained resources for health districts, emergency responders and county hospitals complicated those efforts. As a result, in partnership with the State, Nevada's counties will focus on working with the federal delegation to support increased flexible funding for public health so that we can be better prepared for any future public health crisis while also improving health outcomes in our communities. This includes support for Federal scholarships, loan repayment programs, and direct support for training of all public health professionals in continuing efforts to build the state's public health workforce. This also includes support for the continuation of the CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG), which has been instrumental in improving local public health coordination, strategic planning, and public health infrastructure development across the State of Nevada. As Nevada's counties collaborate to stand up additional public health services, we look to the federal delegation to support these efforts with direct funding that supports these local programs. NACO supports a federal effort for a comprehensive state and local analysis of the Public Health System and current and effective local and regionally driven policy recommendations. In addition, NACO encourages initiatives that support rural health through incentives for health professionals practicing in rural and underserved areas, extended Medicare reimbursement for telemedicine to all rural areas, and enhancements to rural health infrastructure.

Direct Assistance to Counties for Ongoing Mental Health Response: NACO remains grateful to our Nevada Congressional delegation for supporting vital relief packages that provide direct federal funding to counties. Counties have been able to stand up programs



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such as mobile crisis services, community-based behavioral health services, and housing stabilization services with these funds. Flexible, direct, federal funding allows for innovative solutions to public policy problems. For instance, in our smaller jurisdictions, direct federal funding could be utilized in creating a regional facility to alleviate the capacity challenges in our jails, which are currently being occupied by individuals with mental health challenges. Again, rural or urban, jails remain an unsuitable environment to house patients with significant mental health needs.

With 75% of the U.S. population reliant on county-based behavioral health services, the National Association of Counties (NACo) launched a [Commission on Mental Health and Wellbeing](#). The Commission aims to bring county leaders from across the country together to address the mounting mental health crisis from the local government perspective while building and supporting the mental health workforce and enhancing local crisis response systems. Due to the various touchpoints that counties have with residents seeking care, direct mental health service delivery responsibilities have steadily increased. Counties should be considered in any regulatory reforms that support the development and funding of long-term mental health support services.

Health & Human Services

Protect the Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid: NACO supports maintaining the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services while maximizing or enhancing flexibility to support local systems of care. Counties have made the most of Medicaid's flexibility and have supported health systems that serve a disproportionate share of low-income populations, including the homeless, and those cycling in and out of county jails. Nevada counties are opposed to any measures that would further shift Medicaid costs to counties. In Nevada, counties already provide an important part of Nevada's non-federal Medicaid contribution, and counties are concerned about any proposal that increases State or local responsibility for Medicaid funding. If Medicaid costs or costs for uncompensated care for indigent individuals were increased, counties in Nevada, who have limited ability to raise revenues, would be hard-pressed to meet new fiscal responsibilities. Medicaid funding also impacts Nevada's eight public hospitals, seven of which are designated Critical Access Hospitals. Without sustained funding, some hospitals may be forced to shutter their doors, especially in frontier and rural areas. The Rural Health Transformation Program enacted by H.R.1 is an important step in mitigating the impacts of federal Medicaid changes. NACO is in support of this program and also recognizes, because this is one-time funding with limitations on eligible uses, there is still a need to continue support for other sustainable funding sources of safety-net healthcare programs. For example, the CMS Hospital Provider Tax (implemented in Nevada in 2023) is a sustainable funding stream that is critical to the improvement of Nevada's Medicaid and Youth Behavioral Health system. The 15% administrative costs allowed to Nevada Medicaid under this program is earmarked for Children's Behavioral Health Transformation as a result of



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Nevada's settlement with the Department of Justice. While the Provider Tax is implemented by private hospitals and directly supports private hospitals, the H.R.1 tiered scale-down of the Provider Tax program will still negatively impact the public hospital system. Nevada's Critical Access Hospitals in particular, regularly transfer patients to private hospitals due to capacity issues and to access higher levels of care. NACO supports an ongoing robust Provider Tax Program that enables private hospitals, counties, states, and the federal government to partner in the cost of Medicaid. Counties also support efforts to improve the efficiency, flexibility, and effectiveness of policies and operations. NACO supports the strengthening of the intergovernmental partnership envisioned in the Medicaid statute and the provision that requires the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to be passed through to counties contributing to the non-federal share.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum-of-Care (CoC) Program: Nevada's counties are direct recipients and administrators of CoC funding and support the continued funding of this critical program for responding to homelessness. NACO is concerned with a last minute NOFO withdrawal that was reissued and included significant restrictions on permanent supportive housing funding. These last-minute changes have detrimental impacts for Nevada Counties and CoCs in the state and limit the county's ability to plan for policy changes to avoid funding gaps, seek alternative funding streams for current, effective permanent supportive housing programs, and revise processes to accommodate changes to the federal program. NACO supports HUD continuation of the prior fiscal year CoC program competition to enable counties to plan for policy changes. NACO also supports maintenance of current funding levels for the CoC Program.

Justice and Public Safety

Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP): The state of Nevada passed a state-based solution to the MIEP that required Nevada Medicaid to apply for a Section 1115 Reentry Services Demonstration waiver. The waiver will enable coverage of authorized services for Medicaid-eligible, incarcerated adults 90 days prior to scheduled release. Nevada is still awaiting approval of their waiver from CMS, which was anticipated in October, of 2025. NACO continues to support a federal solution to the policy, that upon detention (*not conviction*), inmates are no longer eligible for Federal health benefits. The current federal policy denies federal health benefits to individuals who are pending disposition and still presumed innocent under the U.S. Constitution. Instead, NACO supports access to federal health benefits for non-convicted individuals as it would allow for improved coordination of care and also decrease short-term costs to local taxpayers and long-term costs to the federal government. NACO additionally supports access to federal health benefits for all incarcerated individuals 90 days pre-release, as such a policy enables successful re-entry into the community and reduces recidivism, which reduces the financial and administrative burden on local government. On April 1, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives reintroduced the *Reentry Act* (H.R.2586) and the *Due Process Continuity of Care Act* (H.R. 1510), two bills which



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seek to improve health care access for justice-involved individuals. NACO, together with NACo, supports these measures. Regarding Justice Involved Reentry Initiatives for Youth, effective January 1, 2025, Nevada Medicaid began covering authorized services for youth up to age 21 and former foster youth up to age 26, thirty (30) days pre- and post-release. This includes Targeted Case Management (TCM). NACO continues to support programs that enable continuity of care, improve outcomes and reduce recidivism.

Mental Health and Jails: County jails are not the appropriate place to treat individuals with mental illness, but unfortunately, the incidence of mental illness for those that are incarcerated is significantly higher than the general population. Additionally, drug and alcohol abuse and addiction are factors in the crimes and incarceration of 80 percent of the inmates in local jails. In Nevada, our county jails are the largest provider of behavioral health services in the State. NACO supports sensible measures that promote and advance the overall safety of the public and the communities we serve. Within this context, we also support policies and approaches that would enhance the ability of counties to prevent and treat mental illness and substance use disorders, both in the community and within the context of the criminal justice system. This includes community continuation-of-care programs that ensure individuals transitioning out of a carceral setting are connected to clinical care and recovery supports. For example, NACO encourages continued federal support for the NACo [Stepping Up Initiative](#), a national project to reduce overincarceration of people with mental illnesses, that was launched in 2015 together with the CSG Justice Center and the APA Foundation. NACO also supports the continued funding of SAMHSA prevention, treatment, and recovery grants that save lives and divert individuals from carceral settings.

NACO also supports programs and legislation that divert non-violent individuals struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders from jails and into treatment programs while protecting overall public safety. One example of a critical federal program that counties rely on to provide services to our incarcerated populations and reduce recidivism is the Second Chance Act, which supports state and local government, and nonprofit organizations in their work to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for people returning from state and federal prisons, local jails, and juvenile facilities.

Public Lands & Natural Resources

Public Land Management and Funding County Services: As Nevada's Congressional Delegation is well aware, our state has the largest percentage of federal lands of any state in the contiguous 48 at over 80% federal ownership. Some of our counties (Nye, Esmeralda, Lander, Lincoln, and White Pine) have over 90 percent of their acreage administered by the federal government. As a result, Nevada's counties find their local economies, fiscal condition, and quality of life are greatly influenced by federal land management decisions. For example, in many Nevada communities, resource-based industries that are tied to public lands are their lifeblood with public access for recreation is also a high priority. It is



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important to recognize the impacts of public land use on local economies and ways of life, as well as on the demand for county services. As a western state with a large amount of Federal land, it is critical for all 17 of our counties to stay involved in federal land management planning and conservation efforts. Individual county governments have a critical role in policy development, planning, and management of federal land. Counties provide road maintenance, emergency response, law enforcement and other mandated services on public lands and to public lands users. Counties also manage assets that require federal permits, leases, or easements.

NACO supports the following: efforts to increase federal land managers' engagement with county governments; appropriate federal revenue sharing to support county services; and the transfer of select federal land to states or counties when feasible and where appropriate, based on consultation with or direct recommendation of the affected county. NACO thanks the Nevada delegation for their support of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program in Senate Bill 356 and urges full support of H.R. 6938, which fully funds the payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) program. These payments to counties offset a portion of the loss in tax revenue that result from federal land ownership within their jurisdictions. Because local governments are unable to collect property taxes on federal lands, Nevada's rural counties increasingly rely on these payments to balance their budgets and provide essential services. NACO supports comparable funding that allows counties to provide the above-mentioned essential services and remain solvent.

Consultation on Planning and Rulemakings: NACO is appreciative of the delegation's support on several significant land withdrawal proposals. Even when NACO is not a cooperating agency, consultation and coordination with counties is crucial. Whether it is a species listing, or a monument designation, counties take federal mandates to consult very seriously.

Renewable Energy: While supporting diversification of energy production that brings economic activity to Nevada, NACO has long held the position that public lands administered by the federal agencies should be managed for multiple uses. Nevada's counties recognize that achieving U.S. energy independence requires a responsible expansion of alternative energy resources. NACO supports coordination on the infrastructure for renewable energy on public lands with a thorough analysis showing that local economies will not be negatively impacted. Mechanisms such as tax abatements and exemptions extended to renewable energy companies result in county taxpayers subsidizing renewable energy projects. Renewable energy projects should contribute to local economies with ongoing revenue streams so that the counties are able to provide the required support services during the life of these projects. County government should be able to provide local input on renewable energy projects proposed on public lands and be remunerated for the permitting, infrastructure, safety and emergency services they will provide to these projects. NACO



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continues to support the principle of maintaining a revenue-sharing mechanism for renewable energy development on public lands.

Wild Horses and Burros: Nevada has by far the largest population of wild horses and burros (WHB) on public lands of any State. The Free-Roaming Wild Horses and Burros Act of 1971 requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to maintain populations at an agency-determined appropriate management level (AML). Wild horse and burro populations continue to far exceed AMLs. Overpopulation remains a major impediment to effective land management and has created serious environmental concerns for wildlife, the ecology of Nevada's rangelands, and for the horses themselves. Wild horses suffer inhumane death from starvation or dehydration due to resource scarcity. Nevada Counties remain concerned about appropriate management levels being met for the WHB program, as indicated with at least seven counties declaring states of emergency due to loss of habitat and resource impacts.

Sage-Grouse: Stakeholders across Nevada have engaged in significant collaborative conservation efforts and species management planning regarding both the Bi-State and Greater Sage-grouse. NACO has been a cooperating agency in both the Departments of Interior's and Agriculture's previous Greater Sage-grouse Land Use Plan Amendments. Wildlife and habitat conservation are important to Nevada counties. Local communities both value and depend on the natural resources and ecosystems that surround them. It is NACO's belief that any Endangered Species Act reform should focus on promoting on-the-ground results and habitat restoration that recognizes efficiency as well as the importance of local government and stakeholder planning to conservation. Listing decisions should be based on verifiable science, consistent protocols, and the input of local and state stakeholders and we appreciate continued engagement on this issue.

Telecommunications and Technology

Boosting Broadband and Emerging Technologies: NACO supports the deployment of existing and emerging technologies that provide timely and effective services to support equitable economic and educational opportunities, emergency preparedness and response, as well as new public safety systems. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provided \$42.45 Billion to fund broadband deployment in underserved areas through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. NACO continues to be grateful for this 10-year Federal investment in broadband expansion and access, especially for the rural areas of the Silver State. As our Federal Delegation is aware, Nevada was recently approved to deploy \$170 million of the \$416 million total BEAD allocation for the state to connect reliable high-speed internet throughout the state using a mix of technologies, including fiber-optic, hybrid fiber-coax, licensed fixed wireless and satellite broadband.



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NACO has a history of calling for accurate broadband connectivity data which is essential to build out critical broadband infrastructure in areas lacking access to high-speed internet. As companies continue to look to business-friendly states such as Nevada and as our counties continue to look to diversify their economies, it is essential that Nevada's counties have the connectivity businesses require. Counties utilize advanced telecommunication systems for a full range of public and law enforcement services. This requires voice and data interoperability for coordination, programmatic integrity, and accountability.

NACO is in support of policies that speed up federal permitting, but not at the expense of intergovernmental coordination, ensure open and transparent broadband networks, and require fair access, performance standards, and local oversight for providers.

Cybersecurity: Unfortunately, Nevada is not immune to the ever-growing threat of cyber-attacks. Counties are on the front lines of protecting residents' data, critical infrastructure and essential records. Attacks are only becoming more frequent and sophisticated, requiring an evolving set of tools and standards. NACO supports strong collaboration with federal and private partners; including funding, training and information sharing.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of daily life for people around the world. As with any new technology, the implications can be both positive and negative. NACO recognizes that counties across the country have utilized AI to automate administrative tasks, analyze large amounts of public information in a short amount of time, and to provide language translation in public meetings or in the process of county transactions. NACO supports the responsible use of AI, with guardrails that advance innovation while minimizing risks to the public. This would include the ability to modify regulations as AI evolves, as well as strong coordination, oversight, and public engagement to address misuse, misinformation, consumer harm, and accountability.

County Financing and Funding

Optimizing Intergovernmental Partnerships and Federalism: NACO is pleased with our partnership with our federal delegation, and we look to continued coordination on policies that benefit and impact Nevadans. NACO continues to oppose unfunded mandates and federal initiatives that fail to protect county revenue. We support efforts that recognize and respect the unique roles and responsibilities of counties as essential partners in our nation's intergovernmental system of federal, state, local and tribal officials. It is the right and a responsibility for counties to be able to raise the necessary revenues to finance critical basic public services. County governments are tasked with implementing both state and federal policies as well as regulations at the local level and should be included in all stages of the governing process. NACO urges Congress to support measures that increase transparency, reduce regulatory burden, foster intergovernmental dialogue, and unite all levels of government in supporting our unparalleled system of federalism.



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Support Funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: NACO strongly supports the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program established in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The State of Nevada is a recipient of the State Administered CDBG program, also known as the Small Cities' CDBG program or the CDBG non-entitlement. Each State develops annual funding priorities and criteria for selecting projects. Nevada's priorities are established by the consolidated planning process, state priorities, and the regional community and economic development needs of each community. The CDBG program provides increased opportunities for elected county officials to plan, implement, and evaluate local community development and housing assistance programs. NACO asks for continued flexibility of the funds to address certain immediate and unanticipated priorities from all levels of government.

Transportation

Long-term Transportation Funding and Financing: As the five-year, \$973 billion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (P.L. 117-58), approaches its conclusion, NACO remains grateful for this historic investment in American infrastructure. Over 60,000 projects have gone forward, modernizing and making improvements across all modes of transportation. NACO maintains an [interactive funding matrix](#) which is continually updated and easy to interpret that includes, funding levels, program descriptions, and eligibility requirements. The most recent surface transportation reauthorization was included in the broad BIL, which will expire on September 30, 2026. As Congress works on reauthorizing surface transportation, NACO supports increasing local access to federal transportation funding, maintaining and improving grant opportunities, and streamlining permitting processes while preserving local input and environmental protections.

In Nevada, counties maintain over 75% of the roads in the State and have benefited from additional federal funding for our roads, broadband, wastewater systems and other critical infrastructure projects. Nevada's Counties support efforts by the administration and Congress to increase our nation's infrastructure investments to help promote economic development, public safety, and overall mobility. All federal infrastructure investment should reflect county priorities and capabilities. This includes allocating more federal seed capital and matching funds for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision-making authority and flexibility, and streamlining and shortening the federal permitting process. Additionally, the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund is critical as is the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funding.

NACO supports strengthening the Highway Trust Fund by maintaining its current structure, increasing and indexing fuel fees with revenues dedicated to roads and transit, and exploring fair, long-term funding sources while reducing administrative costs to maximize investment in highway improvements.



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Election Integrity & Funding

Administering our Nation's Elections: NACO supports federal policies that provide flexibility for local decision making and increased federal investments in the nation's elections system. The diversity of geography, population distribution, and language needs across the country and specifically across Nevada, require local understanding. Election integrity and safety is critical to a strong democracy. As administrators and financers of our elections, NACO continues to support a consistent, predictable, and dedicated federal funding stream to assist counties with meeting the significant federal requirements already imposed on local governments administering elections. We also support efforts by Congress and the Administration to combat cybersecurity threats by involving county election officials, promoting information sharing, and coordinating resources and guidance through agencies like the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Election Assistance Commission, and the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center. NACO continues to urge federal lawmakers to protect local control over election administration and to fully fund any new mandates and specific requirements regarding equipment, procedures, and personnel responsibilities.

NACO appreciates the advocacy and leadership of the Nevada Congressional delegation that led the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to reconsider downsizing and relocating part of the operations of the Reno Processing and Distribution Center and rerouting processing to Sacramento, California. The mail system, both domestically and internationally, is an integral support for our election system ensuring that all voters are able to fairly and freely participate in the process. NACO urges USPS to consult with counties before service changes, ensure reliable and transparent mail delivery for elections and essential services, support military and overseas voters, and provide discounted postage rates for required local government mailings.

NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACO)

Board of Directors' Meeting
January 23, 2026, 9:30am
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UNADOPTED MINUTES

Attendance: President Andreozzi, President Elect Gardner, Vice President Andriola, Past President Giomi, Clark County Commissioner Kirkpatrick, Douglas County Commissioner Tolbert, Esmeralda County Commissioner Perez, Humboldt County Commissioner Tipton, Lander County Commissioner Helming, Lincoln County Commissioner Poulson, Lyon County Commissioner Keller, Nye County Commissioner Boskovich, Storey County Commissioner Carmona, Washoe County Commissioner Herman and NACO staff (Vinson Guthreau, Jennifer Berthiaume, Amy Hyne-Sutherland and Amanda Berg)

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

1. **Public Comment.** None was given.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda was approved on a motion by Vice President Andriola with second by Past President Giomi.
3. **Investiture of the 2026 NACO Officers.** The investiture of the 2026 NACO Officers was conducted by retired Senior Carson City Judge John Tatro. Douglas County Commissioner Mark Gardner took the oath of office as President, Washoe County Commissioner Clara Andriola took the oath of office as President Elect, and Lyon County Commissioner Keller took the oath of office as Vice President.
4. **NACO President's Report.** President Gardner thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as President, remarked on the distinguished list of NACO Presidents including many from Douglas County and noted that Former Commissioner and 2011 NACO President Doug Johnson currently serves on the Emeritus Committee, remarking on the importance of maintain institutional knowledge. He discussed his theme for the year noting that counties are stronger together and that during his first year on the Board when Commissioner Kirkpatrick was President, he learned that respect for individual counties was as important as commonality. He noted that it is important to respect counties' unique issues while recognizing commonalities and advocating for the whole. President Gardner discussed the vast accomplishments across Nevada's counties and encouraged submission for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards given at their annual conference. He also highlighted the NACo Operation Green Light campaign and its history to honor veterans and encouraged registration for the upcoming NACo Legislative Conference. President Gardner also informed the Board that he had attended the President's and Executive's fly-in earlier in the month and discussed the new *We are Counties* initiative by NACo which is a two year \$3M dollar campaign by NACo. He announced the appointment of Commissioner Tipton and President Elect Andriola as Chairs of the Public Lands and Natural Resources and Legislative Subcommittees, respectively, and encouraged investigating partnerships with legislators on county initiatives to leverage the non-

partisan status of NACO to advance county policy priorities at the legislature. He also discussed the 2026 NACO Annual Conference being hosted by Douglas County at the Tahoe Blue event center and encouraged county staff to take advantage of both NACO and NACO resources. He concluded his report by sharing a quote he felt would benefit Commissioners as they navigate often unpleasant constituent communications: "You never win an argument on the day of the argument." He then encouraged them to practice strategic patience.

5. **NACO Executive Director's Report.** Vinson congratulated the newly installed Officers and thanked them for their service to NACO. He reminded the Board of the upcoming NACO Legislative Conference in Washington DC, thanking Storey County for their sponsorship of the dinner to be hosted on Saturday, February 21st. Vinson also remarked on the robust content the schedule holds for the Conference and informed the Board that both he and Jennifer would be in attendance. Vinson discussed the workshop on AB211 and how receivership is a tool that can help counties to address neighborhood blight, held earlier in the month. He informed the Board that a recording of the workshop could be found on the NACO website and thanked the bill Sponsor and speakers as well as Jennifer for the work she completed on organizing the event, noting that it was well attended. Vinson next discussed the Fuel Resiliency Committee recently formed by Governor Lombardo to reduce Nevada's reliance on fuels from other states, informing them that he had been appointed to the Committee by the Governor and noted that it is good that NACO and counties will have representation on the Committee. Vinson informed the Board that staff had led a call with County Managers and fiscal staff regarding the Board direction to address CTAX distribution discrepancies. He informed the Board that a lot of data had been received and the next step would be to have the Department of Taxation give a presentation to the Board. Supervisor Giomi inquired as to whether there would be more value in having the presentation in a symposium style and Vinson stated that County Managers and fiscal staff would be invited to the meeting as previous town halls on the subject had spurred questions that he anticipated would be answered during the presentation. Past President Andreozzi noted that the issue is of great importance and questioned where the parameters of a Board meeting would allow for the deep dive the matter requires. He echoed the Supervisor's inquiry for a separate discussion or suggesting a clearer Board agenda to allow for the time the discussion will need. President Gardner discussed a presentation his Board of Commissioners received and noted that equitable treatment is important.
6. **Approval of Minutes of December 12, 2025, NACO Board of Directors Meeting.** The minutes were approved as presented on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Past President Andreozzi. Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that his vote was in form only as he missed the previous meeting.
7. **Discussion and Possible Approval of NACO's 2026 Federal Priorities.** Jennifer directed the Board members' attention to the draft document included in the agenda packet for their consideration. She reminded the Board that the document is updated annually and is an important resource for communication with the Washington Delegation. Jennifer informed the Board that the portions highlighted in yellow indicate added content and noted that the content is also informed by the National Association of Counties (NACo) Federal Policy platform. She then gave an overview of the new documents and updated content, noting that the common theme throughout the document is coordination with counties. Past President Andreozzi commented on the portion of page one that referred to direct assistance for mental health response, noting that the funding under the CARES and ARPA legislation is defunct. Amy informed the Board that the portion was left in the document to signal that the funding packages were helpful but acknowledged that no funding is being

received and informed the Board that she will refresh the language to acknowledge the depletion of the funding. Vinson also pointed out that the language pointed to the importance of direct funding to local government. Past President Andreozzi then inquired as to if the entirety of the Health and Human Services portion on the second page was in relation to the \$180 million the State is expected to receive. Amy stated that yes, the section is regarding H.R.1 and is meant to express thanks for the funding, but also to call out the limitations of the funding and the fact that it is not sustainable. She also noted that the section includes support for continuation of the provider tax that requires private hospitals to tax themselves in order to receive matching federal funds to improve Medicaid sustainability. This program will be phased down as a part of H.R.1.. Amy noted that the Provider Tax was only recently instituted in Nevada, but through agreement with the state and the Nevada Hospital Association, a portion would be dedicated to Children's Behavioral Health. Reduction of the Provider Tax reduces funds available for that effort. Past President Andreozzi discussed the fact that jails are not the place to provide proper mental health treatment, suggesting that the use of empty honor camps may be an avenue to explore for inpatient care of the justice involved. Commissioner Kirkpatrick agreed with Past President Andreozzi's point, stating that Washington needs to give flexible funding to address the need for 'out of the box' solutions such as a rural Lakes Crossing facility. President Elect Andriola agreed, using the example of the grant funded program at Washoe County's Parr Blvd. jail that is successful because of non-profit partnerships and stressed that jails are not where mental health services should be administered by law enforcement trained staff. Jennifer stated that adjustments would be made to the sections regarding mental health response to include direct funding to counties. President Gardner reiterated that directing funding to counties is important and that widespread funding does not address the issue effectively. Past President Andreozzi then suggested changing the renewable energy phrasing under the Public Lands and Natural Resources portion to energy production, noting that referencing renewables seemed to narrow of a focus. Supervisor Giomi inquired why the change was suggested, and if other forms of energy were included. Vinson stated that renewable energy could include nuclear energy, and for that reason the intent was to make the item broad, shadowing the NACo document. President Gardner informed the Board that he had brought copies of NACo's Federal Priorities for the entire Board. The 2026 Federal Priorities were approved pending the inclusion of the edits discussed on a motion by Past President Andreozzi with second by Supervisor Giomi.

8. **Review and Possible Approval of the NACO 2026 County Directory.** Amanda directed the Board's attention to the draft directory in the agenda packet. She explained that the update process begins in late fall and that the individual county pages had been sent to the county administration offices for review, requesting that the Board members reach out to her directly with any edits. President Gardner remarked as to how many members of the Board were Chairs of their individual Commissions. Vinson drew the Board's attention to the redesign of the Directory and informed them that the approval request was to honor the work that staff puts into the document each year. The 2026 County Directory was approved on a motion by President Elect Andriola with second by Vice President Keller.
9. **Presentation from the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), Regarding the America the Entrepreneurial Initiative, Doug Erwin, SVP Entrepreneurial Development, EDAWN.** Mr. Erwin thanked the Board for their time and gave an overview of his experience in economic development. He began his presentation by explaining the initiative and its creation by AB77, sponsored by Speaker Yeager during the 2023 Legislative Session in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Mr. Erwin noted that small companies create most jobs and that it is important to level the playing field for the creation of smaller companies given the

incentives that large companies receive for relocation and expansion. He explained that the support of counties is important because counties influence or control zoning, permitting, licensing etc., thereby lowering or eliminating the burden of small business entrepreneurship. He informed the Board that Nevada was the first State to enact the Initiative and explained that he would like Nevada to be the first State to have buy-in from all counties, going over a list of ideas on how counties can support the Initiative and introducing a QR code for a toolkit counties can utilize. Mr. Erwin announced that the Initiative would officially be announced at the EDAWN State of the Economy event on February 5th, to generate energy for the year-long campaign. Past President Andreozzi inquired as to if presentations could be made to the individual county commissions and the Board was informed that the other Rural Development Authorities are on board with the campaign. Commissioner Helming inquired as to what assistance would be provided to small business owners, giving examples of hurdles she had experienced opening her own small business. Mr. Erwin stated that there are toolkits available, and the streamlining of licensing requirements and fees would be important, noting that Nevada is a high fee State because there are no income taxes giving the example that Washoe County could remove a notary fee that is not required under NRS; further explaining that 60% of the population wants to open a business but only 2% do because of costs and complications. Commissioner Kirkpatrick expressed frustration with the assertion that high county fees are the major barrier to entrepreneurship. She explained that a person that had difficulty with \$25 fees would not be in a position to open a longstanding successful business and further explained that there are resources available to assist entrepreneurs like Extension which provides information on demographics etc. that are extremely useful in determining the appropriate location for a new business, having a much larger impact on potential success than the elimination of fees or regulations. Commissioner Kirkpatrick used the example of the success of Made in Nevada and noted that it is not leveraged by economic development groups and stated that counties have services to provide that cost money that fees pay for and regulatory requirements are often tied to items like public health and important infrastructure. Mr. Erwin explained that the initiative is not just about lowering fees but recognizing the power of entrepreneurship, noting the robust northern program and that his example of high fees was based on fee rates across the nation. Commissioner Tolbert noted that challenges are more about regulations than fees, and that most small businesses start out as passions or hobbies. He explained that Douglas County has an organization that takes economic vitality funding and gives loans at lower interest rates to assist start up business. He also urged the need to consider the failure rate of new businesses. Mr. Erwin thanked the Board for their comments, noting that conversation is important and part of what the initiative is about. President Gardner informed the Board that his Commission had requested their Economic Vitality Manager create a toolkit specific to Douglas County to assist people interested in starting a business navigate the process. He also inquired as to if Mr. Erwin had a specific date, he was looking for proclamations. Mr. Erwin stated that he could organize a date, and it would be great to push the Initiative on social media platforms for further marketing and communication, acknowledging that a universal date would provide greater leverage. He also stated that they are coordinating with the Main Street programs across the State. Commissioner Perez stated that the cost of insurance is a challenge for start-up companies and recommended resources like the Small Business Development Center and the communications available with EDAWN members.

10. **Update from NACO Health and Human Services Manager.** Amy drew the Board's attention to the flyer for the symposium being held in February regarding the community reinvestment program, which requires all of Nevada's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations to invest a percentage of their profits back into the communities they serve. She also discussed the upcoming workshop series on Rural child welfare and specifically

highlighted the third of the planned workshops that will center around youth parole and alternative placement, noting that it was an opportunity for collaborative solutions as many of the county Juvenile Probation Officers had registered for attendance. Amy also reminded the Board of the State hosting a workshop the following week on the Rural Health Transformation Grant and informed them that the grant has opportunities for specific dollars called out for emergency medical services within the State's plan, as well as specific initiatives regarding technology and workforce pipeline supports. Past President Andreozzi reiterated that any entity can submit a plan for the funding and noted the importance of having a strategic plan for the best use of the available dollars instead of diluting the funds. He also suggested focusing the funds on plans for "home grown" medical professionals, highlighting the challenges of recruitment from outside the state. Supervisor Giomi informed the Board that he is aware of several groups joining forces for application and stressed the importance of regional organization. He discussed the PACE program as a potential benefit to communities that moves Medicaid and Medicare dollars away from nursing homes and allows seniors to stay in their homes, by providing transport to medical care among other services. Supervisor Giomi reiterated that the program is not currently in Nevada, but it is being worked on with the Nevada Health Authority and may be a good collaborative use of the funding. He also reminded the Board that any plans must be new, and it would be important that the program be sustainable following the five years of funding within the Grant. It was also discussed that scholarships for medical professionals are an allowable use of the funding, and Amy stated that she would be happy to provide support to counties should they need assistance coordinating with partners. Supervisor Giomi closed the item by informing the Board that he would check on the eligibility of for-profit hospitals to apply for the funding and get back to the Board with the information.

11. Update and Possible Action. Regarding Public Lands and Natural Resources Issues Affecting Counties Including:

a. Updates from the NACO Public Lands and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

Jeremy Drew from Resource Concepts Inc., informed the Board that Chase McNamara from the Governor's office was leaving his position to take a post with the Army National Guard and that Gracie Garret was named as his replacement. He discussed their attendance at the previous day's meeting. Mr. Drew discussed recent developments surrounding the Greater Sage Grouse and the Record of Decision (ROD) that was released in December. He noted that the ROD was better than the previous version but not as favorable as the 2019 version. Mr. Drew also informed the Board that there would be opportunities for closing some gaps within the implementation phase and that there was litigation expected. He also discussed the advancement of renewable energy transmission projects on federal lands but noted that production projects are currently on hold. He also discussed wild horse and burro issues, noting that he confirmed that the current Continuing Resolution does not have funding for gathers and that there are no planned gathers in 2026, expressing concern that the population is expected to rise to 3X the Appropriate Management Level based upon a new foal crop and drought conditions. Commissioner Helming inquired as to why the State Department of Wildlife does not step in for help with range management, and Mr. Drew clarified that they do not have authority. Legal remedies and issues with long term holding were also discussed as continuing barriers to addressing the problem. He also noted that there is always funding available for emergency gathers if public safety becomes an issue. Mr. Drew also informed the Board that the interim natural resources committee would be meeting in February and that Lincoln County would be presenting on their Pinion Juniper project. He concluded the item by informing the Board that a 60-day

comment period was open for a Secretarial Order from the Department of the Interior regarding improving access to hunting and fishing.

- b. **Federal Agency Comment Letters, Including, but not limited to The Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS).** Mr. Drew informed the Board that there were several comment letters that were due between the December and January meetings and directed their attention to the items included in the agenda packet. He discussed the four different dockets under the ESA and informed the Board that the submitted letters were supported by comments previously approved in 2019. Mr. Drew noted that the letters were generally supportive and that the same was true of the letter submitted regarding WOTUS, which was also based in part on previously approved comments. He also informed the Board that the WOTUS document was in tune with the Sacket decision from the Supreme Court and that additional guidance was requested. Mr. Drew concluded the item by informing the Board that the anticipation for the final rule release was prior to the March meeting of the Board. Commissioner Tipton thanked Mr. Drew for providing the update on his behalf.

Updates from Standing Committees:

12. **NACO Legislative Committee.** Jennifer informed the Board that she was looking forward to working with the Committee and reminded them that monthly meetings would begin on the first Friday of February. She noted that she would be utilizing the same distribution list from the Legislative Session and that she would incorporate additions and removals as requested. She discussed the need to begin the process for Bill Draft Request recommendations to present to the Board for approval prior to the submission deadline in September. President Gardner thanked those who would be participating on the interim committee and noted the importance of continuing State funding for the China Spring facility and encouraged the Board members and county staff participation on the Committee.
13. **NACO Committee of the Emeritus.** Vinson reminded the Board that Past President Andreozzi was new Chair of the Committee and informed them that the next meeting would take place in February and that work was underway on the first quarterly workshop sponsored by the Committee.

Items 14 and 15 were combined for discussion purposes.

14. **NACO Committee on Housing.**
15. **NACO Committee on Cooperative Extension.**

Vinson reminded the Board that the Committees were approved during their December meeting to leverage resources and best practices for housing from the urban areas and share local level successes and programs from Extension. He stressed that Committee membership was not just for Board members, and that interested Commissioners and staff were welcome to participate. He informed the Board that another notice would be sent regarding the dollars available to the rural counties for housing and Commissioner Kirkpatrick reminded them that she worked hard to ensure the inclusion of those dollars specified for the rural communities and that NACo has a list of rural developers that are putting together options. She also noted that she believes in Extension but that they can do a better job with their existing and proposed programming, stressing that they cannot simply rely on county dollars, that the State and the University have funding available to support the important program and the Committee will be able to push the envelope for other resources. Commissioner Kirkpatrick also mentioned a

collaboration on healthcare which Amy was unaware of, and she concluded the item by noting that it would be important for Director DeDecker to be involved with the Extension Committee and not simply rely on staff for updates.

16. **Updates from Members of the National Association of Counties Board, Western Interstate Region Board, and Individual Counties.** President Gardner informed the Board that the next meeting of the NACo Board of Directors would be held at the upcoming Legislative Conference and referred to the previously discussed policy booklet. Commissioner Tipton informed the Board that the most recent meeting of the WIR Board was centered around preparations for the Legislative Conference and pushing for yearly funding of Secure Rural Schools and a new PILT funding process. He also informed the Board that discussions were held regarding the proposed WOTUS rule and possible amendments to the Greater Sage Grouse ROD. Members of the Board gave updates on activities within their counties.

17. **Public Comment.** None was given.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

DRAFT

County Leadership Institute

The County Leadership Institute (CLI) is a rigorous program comprised of three days of in-person instruction and virtual meetings offered by NACo to enhance the capability of county officials to identify and implement innovative solutions to complex challenges facing county government.

Attendees learn how to effectively address the demands of personal leadership in a new era of government. This era is characterized as a “permanent crisis” by CLI Program Developer and Cambridge Leadership co-founder Marty Linsky. Please note that nominations are accepted from state county associations. If you are interested in attending the CLI program, please contact your state county association for a nomination.

Agenda Items 7, 8, & 9

Agenda Item 7

Nevada Board on Indigent Defense Services

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-180.html#NRS180Sec300>

Agenda Item 8

Nevada Grants Management Advisory Committee

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-232.html#NRS232Sec383>

Agenda Item 9

Nevada Executive Committee on Traffic Safety

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-408.html#NRS408Sec581>

NACO and the Nevada Health Authority presents

Nevada's Rural Health Transformation Program: Guidance for County Officials

February 27th
1:00PM-2:00PM



*Presentation and
Q&A with
Nevada Health
Authority &
Nevada Rural
Hospital Partners
Leadership*

The Rural Health Transformation Program is a historic investment in Nevada's rural health infrastructure.

Join us for a presentation and discussion on the program and learn how County Officials can connect with and support their local healthcare system.



In-Person Location: 304 S. Minnesota Street, Carson City
Remote Option via TEAMS
Email NACO to register & receive link



Bill Draft Request (BDR) Process for 2027 Legislative Session

**Initial Meeting
of the
Legislative
Committee
February 2026**

**Committee
Internal
Deadline
Jun 5, 2026**

**Final
Committee
Vote on
BDRs
Jul 10, 2026**

**Committee
Presentation
to the
NACO Board
Jul 31, 2026**

**NACO Board
Final
Approval
Aug 28, 2026**

**NACO
BDRs due
to LCB
Sept 1, 2026**

**Pre-filed
BDRs
published
by LCB
(Early
December
2026)**

**84th Session of
the Nevada
Legislature
Begins
Feb 1, 2027**

2026 - 2027