



Ready For Life Nevada Our Shared Youth Vision

Youth Well-Being Report **2011**

ALL YOUTH ARE
READY FOR LIFE,
SUPPORTED BY A
COMMUNITY ETHIC
THAT VALUES
EDUCATION

As a statewide convener of youth serving organizations, Ready for Life seeks to identify the initiatives, policies and practices impacting quality of life for Nevada's children and youth. By analyzing a composite set of local and statewide data reflecting important changes in the youth serving social services sector, our community can specifically pinpoint and respond to policy areas in need of attention. Since many systems may interact with the same

youth population, it is imperative to have a broader understanding of each system and how these systems interact with each other. Viewing the indicators collectively as a measure of overall youth well-being reflects the strength of Nevada as a place to live and call home.

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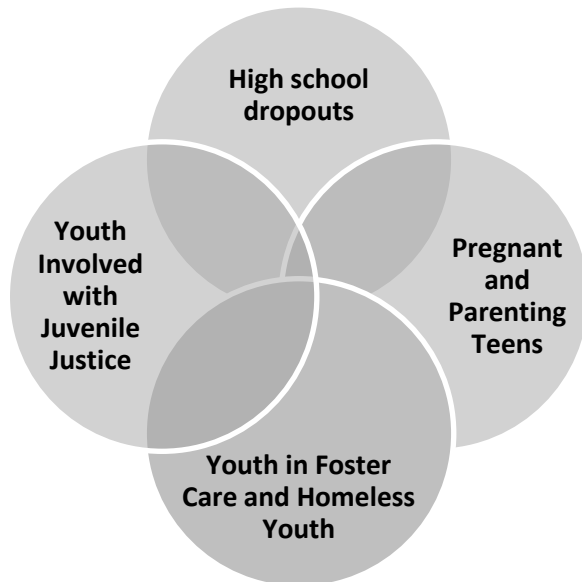
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YOUTH WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Ready for Life is a statewide movement in Nevada aimed at connecting local youth to education and/or employment by 25 years of age. Research demonstrates that youth who are not working or in school may have difficulty gaining the skills and knowledge needed to attain self-sufficiency, placing enormous and unnecessary strains on public social service delivery systems.

In today's society, the transition to adulthood is changing rapidly due to the increased educational requirements of an increasingly knowledge-based economy. Most young adults experience detours on the road to economic independence, including periods of unemployment and periodic interruptions in their education. These youth are at high risk of becoming 'disconnected'.

Certain youth populations are at increased risk for disconnection, including:



As a statewide convener of youth serving organizations, Ready for Life seeks to identify the initiatives, policies and practices impacting quality of life for Nevada's children and youth. By analyzing a composite set of **local and statewide data** reflecting important changes in the youth serving social services sector, our community can specifically pinpoint and respond to policy areas in need of attention. Since many systems may interact with the same youth population, it is imperative to have a broader understanding of each system and how these systems interact with each other.

This report was created to address questions such as the following:

- How has child and youth well-being in Nevada changed in the last several years?
- Did it improve or deteriorate?
- By approximately how much?
- Were certain social domains impacted more than others?

Ready for Life analyzed 27 key indicators across multiple youth serving systems. These indicators were chosen, with direction from the Ready for Life Nevada Statewide Council, because they are easy to understand, based on substantial research connecting them to child well-being, cut across important areas of children's lives, and are measured regularly in order to show trends over time. Additionally, many of the indicators chosen are aligned with Ready for Life target populations, including: high school dropouts, youth in the child welfare system, youth involved with the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, and pregnant and parenting teens.

Viewing the indicators collectively as a measure of overall youth well-being reflects the strength of Nevada as a place to live and call home: its social institutions, families, schools and communities. Ready for Life will update this report annually to measure and report on progress over time.

Ready for Life Nevada Youth Well-Being Indicators

	Previous Year		Most Recent		Change*	
Education Indicators						
NAEP 4th grade Reading Scores	211	(2007)	211	(2009)	0.0%	↔
NAEP 8th grade Reading Scores	252	(2007)	254	(2009)	0.8%	▲
NAEP 4th grade math scores	232	(2007)	235	(2009)	1.3%	▲
NAEP 8th grade math scores	271	(2007)	274	(2009)	1.1%	▲
High School Graduation Rates	52.0%	(2007)	51.3%	(2008)	-0.7%	▼
Residents who are High School Graduates	83.5%	(2008)	83.9%	(2009)	0.4%	▲



	Previous Year		Most Recent		Change*	
Workforce Indicators						
Unemployment Rate for Nevada Youth Ages 16-19	23.9%	(2009)	33.4%	(2010)	9.5%	▲
Unemployment Rate for High School Graduates	7.1%	(2009)	11.8%	(2009)	4.7%	▲
Child Welfare Indicators						
Number of children in out-of-home care	4,779	(2009)	5,089	(2010)	6.5%	▲
Substantiated Reports	2,136	(2009)	1,810	(2010)	-15.3%	▼
Juvenile Justice Indicators						
Bookings (Arrests)	12,510	(2009)	10,943	(2010)	-12.5%	▼
Youth Referred Back to DJJS	16.1%	(2008)	13.5%	(2009)	-2.6%	▼
Habitual Truancy (Discipline Events)	3,612	(2009)	4,205	(2010)	16.4%	▲
Housing and Economy Indicators						
Number of Homeless Youth	7,734	(2010)	7,916	(2011)	2.4%	▲
Children under 18 Living in Poverty	15.0%	(2008)	17.6%	(2009)	2.6%	▲
Number of Children Receiving TANF	17,028	(2009)	19,991	(2010)	17.4%	▲
Early Childhood Indicators						
Nursery School, Preschool Enrollment	26,865	(2008)	29,468	(2009)	9.7%	▲
Percent of Children Age 3-5 Not Enrolled in School	58.0%	(2008)	56.0%	(2009)	-2.0%	▼
Maternal and Child Health						
Teen Birth Rates	55.3	(2007)	53.5	(2008)	-3.3%	▼
Enrollment in Medicaid	238,590	(2009)	280,285	(2010)	17.5%	▲
Enrollment in Nevada Check Up	21,515	(2009)	21,002	(2010)	-2.4%	▼
Children without Health Insurance	16.0%	(2008)	17.8%	(2009)	1.8%	▲
Pregnant women receiving prenatal care	67.1%	(2007)	67.8%	(2008)	0.7%	▲
Behavioral Health						
Dependence on or Abuse of Illicit Drugs or Alcohol	9.4%	(2007)	9.5%	(2008)	0.1%	◀▶
Domestic Violence Incidents	21,072	(2008)	24,141	(2009)	14.6%	▲
Youth Experiencing a Major Depressive Episode	8.1%	(2007)	8.2%	(2008)	0.0%	◀▶
Youth reporting alcohol use in the past 30 days	37.0%	(2007)	38.6%	(2009)	1.6%	▲

*Green arrows represent positive change, red arrows indicate negative change, and yellow arrows indicate no change.

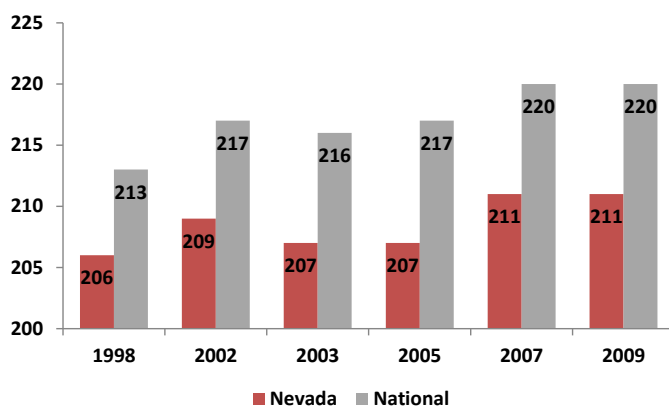
EDUCATION INDICATORS

Average reading and math scores for students in grades 4 and 8

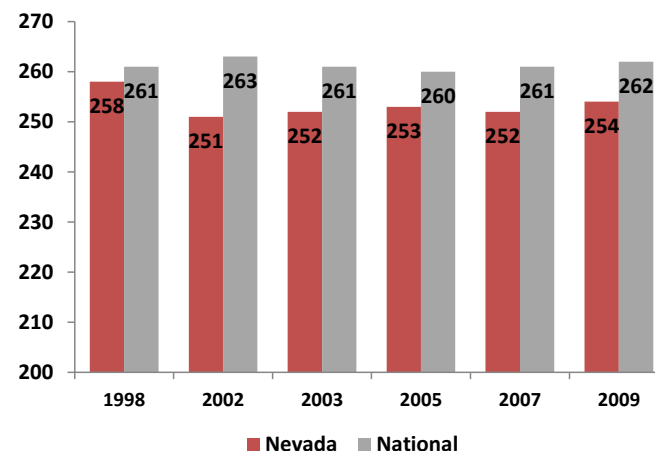
Research indicates that increasing student performance by the fourth grade is critical for longer-term educational success. The necessity of having a solid foundation of basic skills, including reading and math, is increasingly important as today's workforce requires new and more demanding skills. Reading and math skills are measured nationally in the 4th and 8th grades by the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Nevada's 4th and 8th grade average reading scores are presented below, in comparison to national 4th and 8th grade average reading scores.

4th Grade Average Reading Scoresⁱ



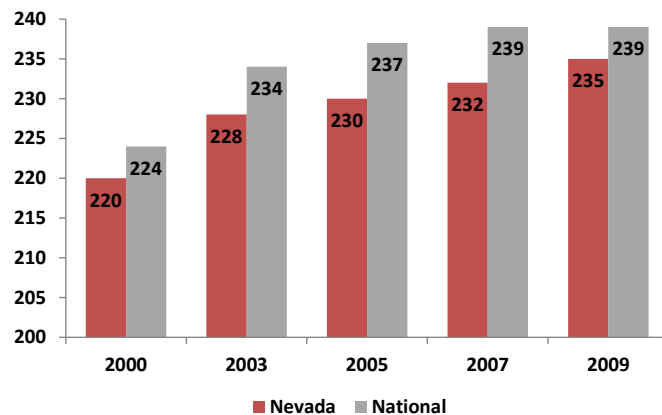
8th Grade Average Reading Scoresⁱⁱ



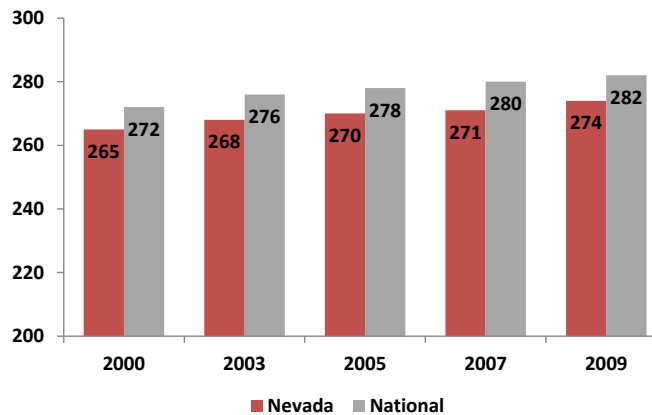
Nevada's average reading test scores are significantly lower than the national average in both the 4th and 8th grades. As evidenced by the figures above, this discrepancy is more pronounced among Nevada 4th grade reading scores. Additionally, it is important to note that in 1998, 8th grade reading scores were only three points lower than the national average – over the course of the last 11 years Nevada's 8th grade average reading scores have decreased while national scores have seen little variation.

A mere 24 percent of Nevada's 4th graders are reading at or above proficiency, and by 8th grade that percentage drops even more – only 22 percent of Nevada's 8th graders tested at or above proficiency.ⁱⁱⁱ Only four percent of Nevada's 4th graders tested at an advanced level of proficiency.^{iv} Nevada female students achieved higher reading scores than their male counterparts in both the 4th and 8th grade.^v

4th Grade Average Math Scores^{vi}



8th Grade Average Math Scores^{vii}



From 2000 to 2009, Nevada's 4th grade average math scores increased 6.8 percent. During that same time period, national average 4th grade math scores increased by a similar measure, at 6.7 percent. Test score increases are more subtle in the 8th grade, increasing by 3.4 percent in Nevada and 3.7 percent nationwide. Similar to the trend observed in reading scores, Nevada's average mathematics test scores are also significantly lower than the national average in both the 4th and 8th grades.

Nevada's 4th graders are faring better in mathematics than reading, with 32 percent of Nevada's 4th graders performing at or above proficiency.^{viii} By 8th grade that percentage decreases substantially – only 25 percent of Nevada's 8th graders are math proficient.^{ix}

While female students performed better than their male counterparts in reading proficiency, no such distinction was found in mathematics scores, with both genders achieving similar scores.

The percentage of 4th grade Nevada students who are proficient in mathematics increased from 2000 to 2009 for all race/ethnicity groups. In general, Caucasian and Asian students had the highest percentage of proficient students in both reading and mathematics in both 4th and 8th grades, while African American and Hispanic residents had much lower rates of reading proficiency.^x Students eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low income, had average test scores that were 16 - 20 points lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch. These trends persisted irrespective of grade or test subject.^{xi}

Although NAEP results are commonly cited as a benchmark for elementary and middle school performance, comparisons based on these tests may be somewhat flawed. NAEP does not administer tests every year and

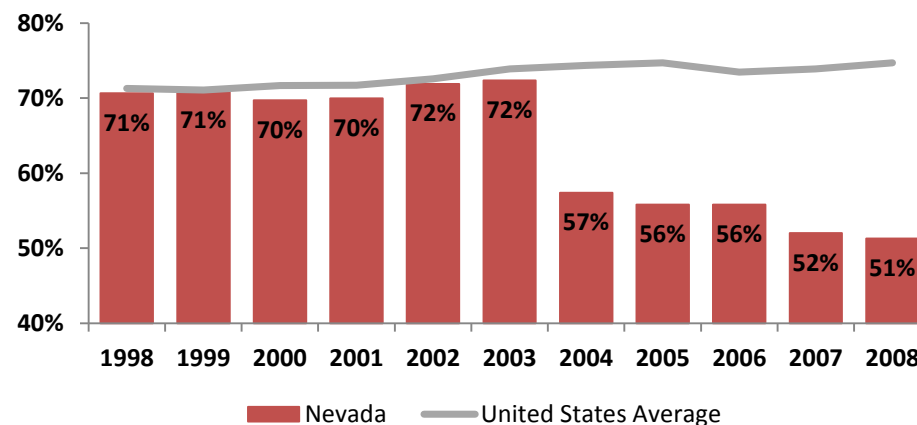
tests are given only to a sampling of students, only in selected schools (140 of 608 Nevada public schools), only in grades 4 and 8, and the content is not based on the Nevada curriculum.^{xii}

High school graduation rates

Educational attainment is correlated with greater earnings potential, lower rates of joblessness, and an overall healthier population and safer community.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 1998, Nevada's high school graduation rate was on par with the national average. While the United States as a whole has maintained, and even marginally increased (by 3 percent) its graduation rate, Nevada's has declined substantially (19 percent).^{xiii}

High School Graduation Rates^{xiv}



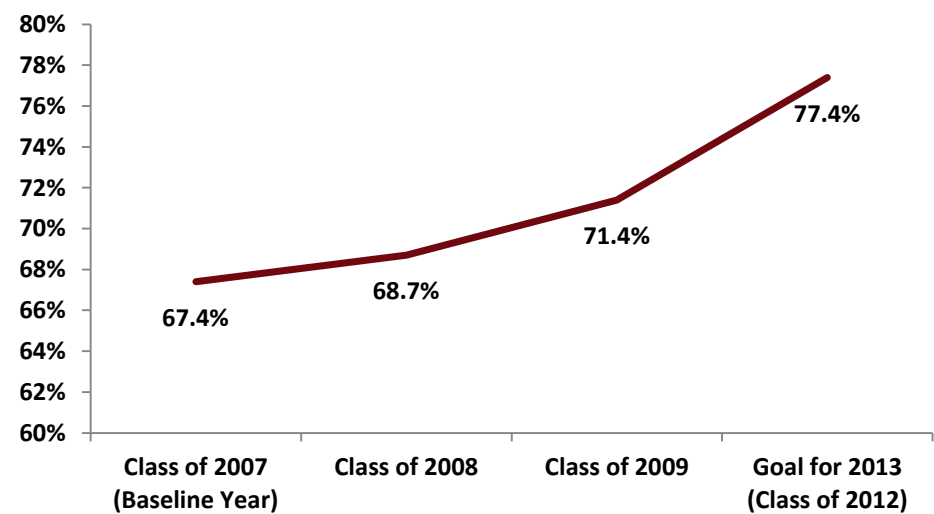
Today, Nevada has the worst graduation rate in the country, and has maintained claim to this title for the last five successive years.^{xv} In the space of one school year (2003 – 2004), Nevada's national ranking dropped from 38 to 52. However, this drop of 15 percentage points in a single year was caused by a change in calculation methods: prior to 2004, the Nevada Department of Education reported the completion rate rather than the graduation rate.

Since 2004, Nevada has used the Leaver Rate, which calculates graduation rates by dividing the number of diploma recipients by the number of completers plus the number of dropouts, and multiplying by 100 to generate a percentage value. Beginning in 2011, calculation methods are changing again as Nevada shifts to the graduation rate definition promoted by the National Governors Association and adopted by the vast majority of states. This new method is more accurate, as it tracks a specific cohort of students over time.

Poor and often conflicting definitions have resulted in a range of confusing graduation rate calculations that do not provide accurate measurement. Over the last few years, independent researchers have confirmed that many more of the nation’s youth are dropping out during high school than had been reported. This is certainly true for Nevada, where there is a 20% variation between state reported, federally reported, and independently reported rates. (According to the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, about 44 percent of all students in Nevada graduate from high school with a regular diploma in four years.) While methodologies differ, NPEF has chosen to adhere to those published by the U.S. Department of Education for the purposes of this report.

Despite the downward trend shown above, Nevada has made progress in improving its graduation rate over the last several years. In 2008, Ready for Life Nevada, with statewide support, set a goal to achieve a 10 percent increase in graduation rates by 2013. Using the Nevada Department of Education-reported rate of 67.4 percent for the Class of 2007 as the baseline year, Nevada is on track to achieve this goal, as shown in the chart below. Data for the Class of 2010 and the Class of 2011 has not yet been released. In 2010, Washoe County achieved an impressive seven percent increase in high school graduation rates, due in part to a door-to-door campaign to locate and reconnect dropouts.

**Nevada’s High School Graduation Rate
As Reported by the Nevada Department of Education**

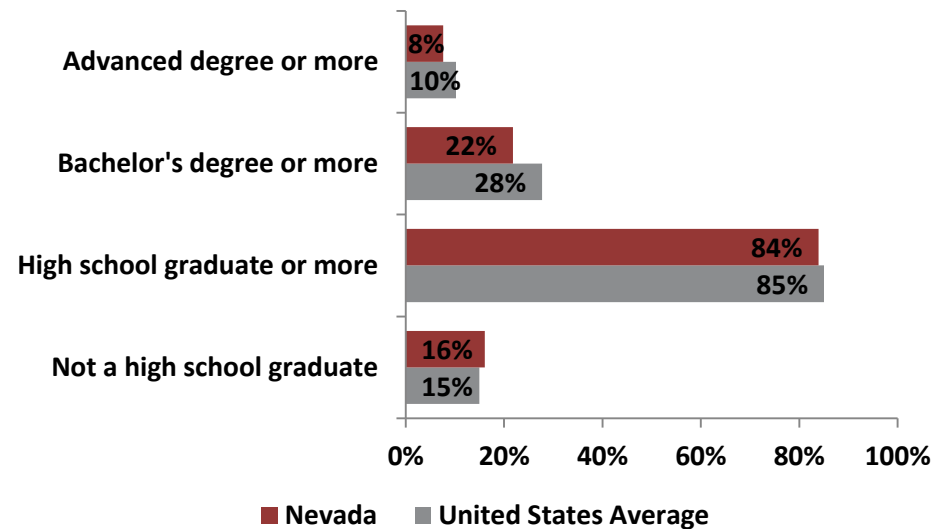


Level of educational attainment

Nevada residents' level of educational attainment closely approximates the national average, with the exception of college graduates. The percentage of Nevada residents earning a bachelor's degree is substantially lower (6 percentage points) than the national average.^{xvi}

Lower graduation rates in Nevada may take up to ten years before showing an impact in the overall percentage of residents 25 and older without a high school degree. Even then, the numbers may not be severely impacted, as high school dropouts may still finish high school at a later date separate from their original cohorts, or in alternative settings. Resident migration in and out of the state may also impact the levels displayed in the chart below.

Level of Educational Attainment^{xvii}
(Percentage of Residents 25 and Older, 2009)





Nevada Public Education Foundation

REAL NEVADA IMPACT

Ready for Life and NPEF Response

REAL NEVADA NEEDS

**Wise Investments &
Leveraging of Resources**

Granted nearly \$1 million in grants and leveraged \$23.5 million in investments over the past six years.

**National Best Practices
Implementation**

Supported a training opportunity that led to a successful grant award of \$15 million for youth re-engagement.

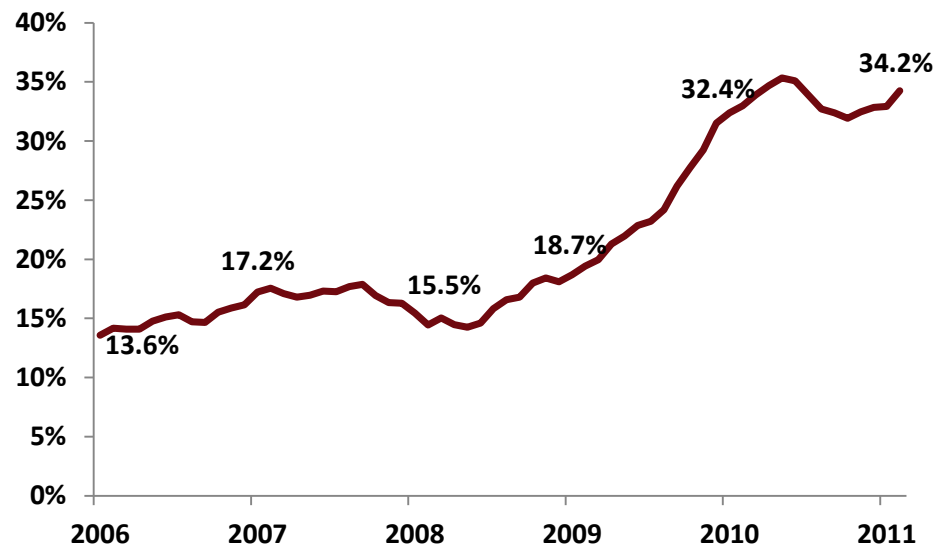
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

High school youth with early work experience

Research has shown that early work experiences are crucial to youth acquisition of 21st Century skills. School and employment are fundamental activities that occupy the time of youth, and detachment from these activities put youth at increased risk of disconnection. At risk for years of unemployment and social hardships, these youth are frequently unable to reconnect to education or the workforce.

Nevada's teenagers had the 5th highest unemployment rate in the nation during the 12-month period ending January 2011, with an astounding 34.2 percent of teenagers in the labor force currently unemployed.^{xviii} Georgia's teen unemployment rate of 37.3 percent was the highest in the nation, followed by California, South Carolina and the state of Washington.^{xix} High rates of youth unemployment are not surprising given the current status of Nevada's overall employment market. The silver state leads the nation in record high unemployment, a spot it claimed from Michigan more than a year ago.

**Unemployment Rate for Nevada Youth
(Nevadans 16 - 19 Years of Age)**



More than 48,000 Nevada youths ages 16-19 wish to obtain employment, or 36 percent of the total Nevada population aged 16-19. Of these 48,000 youth, 34.2 percent, or 16,558 are unemployed. This rate has more than doubled since the start of the Great Recession in December 2007.

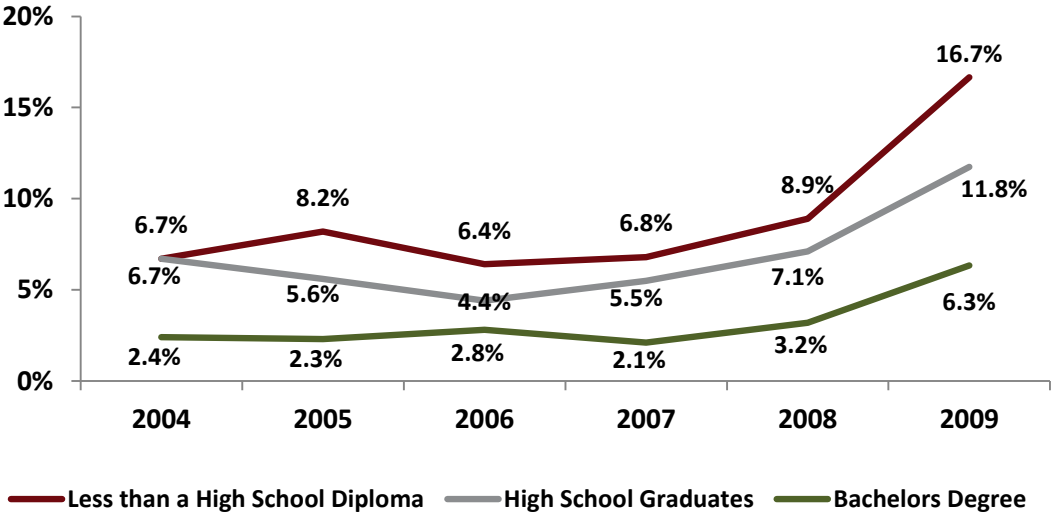
Overall, 25 states had teen unemployment rates that stood above 25 percent throughout 2010, with 1.94 million teens wanting jobs, but not able to find them.^{xx} Nationally, teen unemployment stood at 42.1 percent for African American teens, 31.9 percent for Hispanics and 21.6 percent for Caucasians.^{xxi}

Disconnected youth are at increased risk of interaction with other expensive social service systems, including, but not limited to: welfare, corrections, emergency health care, substance abuse, mental health, Medicaid, unemployment insurance payments, and/or homelessness.

Unemployment rate for high school graduates as compared to non-graduates

Those without high school diplomas or the equivalent are overrepresented among the adult unemployed population, making up more than 16% of Nevada’s jobless adults. Higher levels of educational attainment are directly correlated with increased rates of employment. While the impacts of Nevada’s current economic and financial crisis have been felt by all residents, high school and college graduates have fared better than those who left school without obtaining a high school diploma.

Nevada Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment
(Civilian Non-institutional Population 25 and Over)



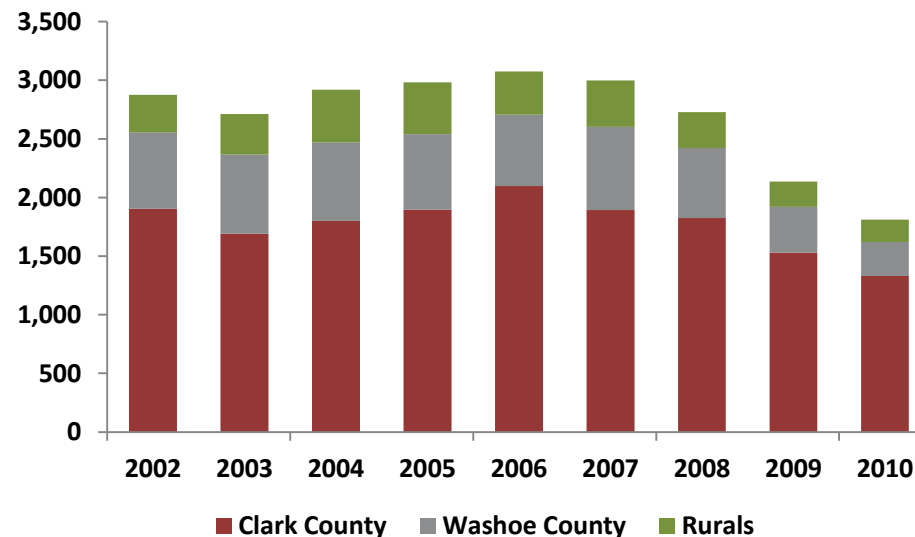
CHILD WELFARE INDICATORS

Substantiated reports of child maltreatment

Child maltreatment comprises neglect (including medical neglect), as well as overt physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Young people who are victims of abuse and/or neglect oftentimes have difficulty transitioning from childhood and adolescence to becoming adults.^{xxii} Children who are abused or neglected, including those who witness domestic violence, often exhibit emotional, cognitive, and behavioral problems, such as depression, suicidal behavior, difficulty in school, use of alcohol and other drugs, and early sexual activity. These children are also more likely to repeat this cycle of violence by entering into violent relationships as teens and adults or abusing their own children.^{xxiii}

Approximately 1,800 reports of child abuse and neglect were substantiated in Nevada during 2010, nearly 25 percent of all reports.^{xxiv} The majority of reports, 73.5 percent, originated in Clark County; Washoe County reported 15.6 percent, and the rurals consisted of 12.1 percent of statewide substantiated reports.^{xxv}

Substantiated Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect^{xxvi}



An analysis of the data provided concludes that substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect have been declining for the last four years, representing a 41 percent decrease between 2006 and 2010. Within the last year alone, substantiated reports declined 15 percent. For many observers, this trend was not at all anticipated. In fact, industry leaders as well as community members expected quite the opposite given the severity of the Great Recession on the state of Nevada. Both local law enforcement and child protective

services agree that they are not seeing the increases in incidents they expected. That said, the incidents they do see appear to be more serious.^{xxvii} That is, violent acts toward children and spouses or partners are resulting in more serious injuries than commonly seen in the past.^{xxviii}

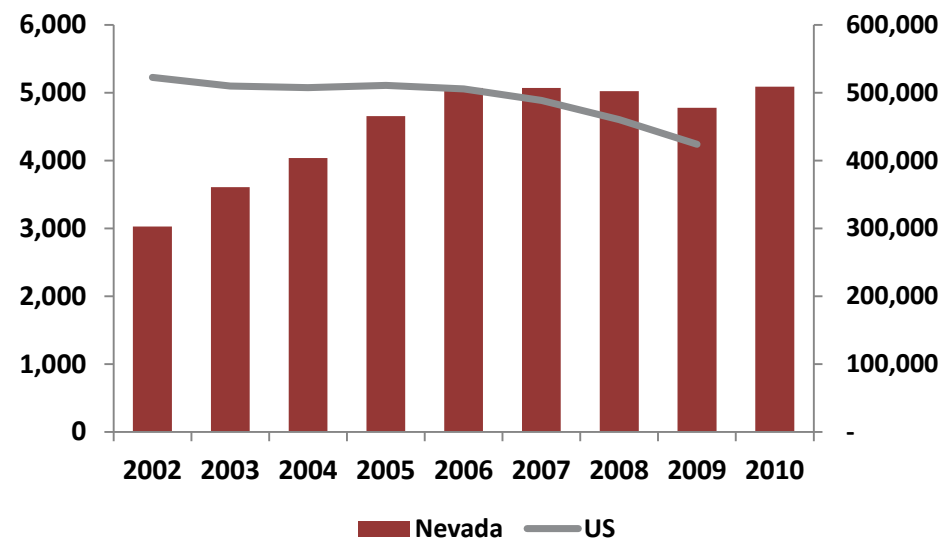
Number of children in out-of-home care

Children who lack permanent connections with either family members or a caring adult face numerous barriers as they struggle to become self-sufficient adults. This fact is even more pronounced when a child is removed from their home and placed in foster care. Approximately 42 percent of foster youth do not finish high school.

National trends in recent years have placed an important emphasis on avoiding entry into the foster care system by providing preventative services to families in crisis. For those youth already in care, there is a renewed sense of urgency in expediting these children into more permanent placement settings, and exiting them from care. For older youth especially, it is less likely that foster care systems will find a suitable foster family or relative and many youth age out of the system.

As a result, the number of children in foster care nationwide has decreased by more than 19 percent from 2002 to 2009. Conversely, the number of children in out of home care in Nevada has increased by 58 percent during the same time period. As of December 31, 2010, 5,089 Nevada children were living in out of home foster care placements. Approximately 29 percent of these children are between the ages of 13 and 17.

Total Children in Foster Care

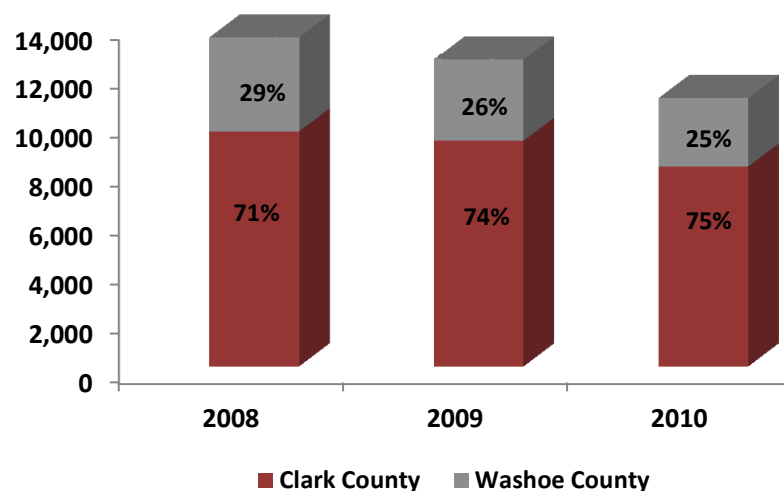


JUVENILE JUSTICE INDICATORS

Number of juvenile arrests

The link between education and delinquency problems is well established. Researchers have documented that youth with educational difficulties have a heightened risk of behavior problems and crime. A five percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses.^{xxix} Incarceration during late adolescence also appears to increase the risk for other high risk behavior. The number one referral to the juvenile justice system is truancy.^{xxx} Additionally, youth offenders in custody use drugs and alcohol at higher rates than the general population.^{xxxi}

Number of Juvenile Bookings (Arrests)^{xxxii}



The majority of youth arrests occurred in Clark County, consistent with the population distribution of the state. A report prepared by the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice portrays the average youth brought to booking as a Hispanic male, as approximately 78 percent of bookings involved male youths, and 38 percent of all youth arrested are of Hispanic origin.

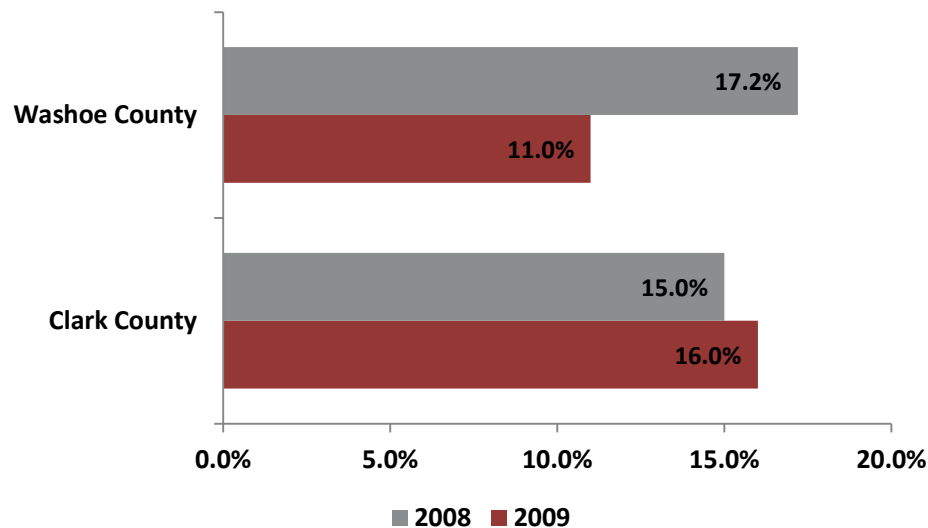
Youth success in leaving the juvenile justice system (recidivism rates)

The prevalence of serious juvenile delinquency could be reduced significantly by identifying and treating the small percentage of juveniles who are at risk of becoming chronic offenders when they first come into contact

with the juvenile justice system. Low juvenile recidivism indicates that juveniles are successfully leaving the juvenile justice system.

Unfortunately, there is no national recidivism rate for juveniles. While the majority of jurisdictions do track the measure, many use different meanings to define what constitutes a re-offense, making comparisons across jurisdictions difficult if not impossible. That said, as a general measure, it is estimated that among juveniles with no prior referrals, 4 in 10 returned to juvenile court while 6 in 10 did not. Among juveniles 14 or younger with at least 1 prior referral, more than three-quarters returned to juvenile court.^{xxxiii} These general statements should be cautiously compared to the rates presented below for Nevada, since it is unclear how the general measure was calculated and whether the same definitions are being used.

Youth Referred Back to DJJS within One Year (Recidivism Rates)^{xxxiv}



Washoe County experienced a dramatic decrease in rates of recidivism from 2008 to 2009. Department officials identified two factors believed to have contributed to this success^{xxxv}:

- Increased efforts with diversion services, providing appropriate services and programs to youth and families which allow them to exit the system at the earliest possible point (usually before formal court proceedings).
- Development of specialty units to provide supervision to youth on formal probation with specific needs or supervision requirements. Specialized units include: Sex Offender Unit, Mental Health Unit, Substance Abuse Unit and Gang Unit.

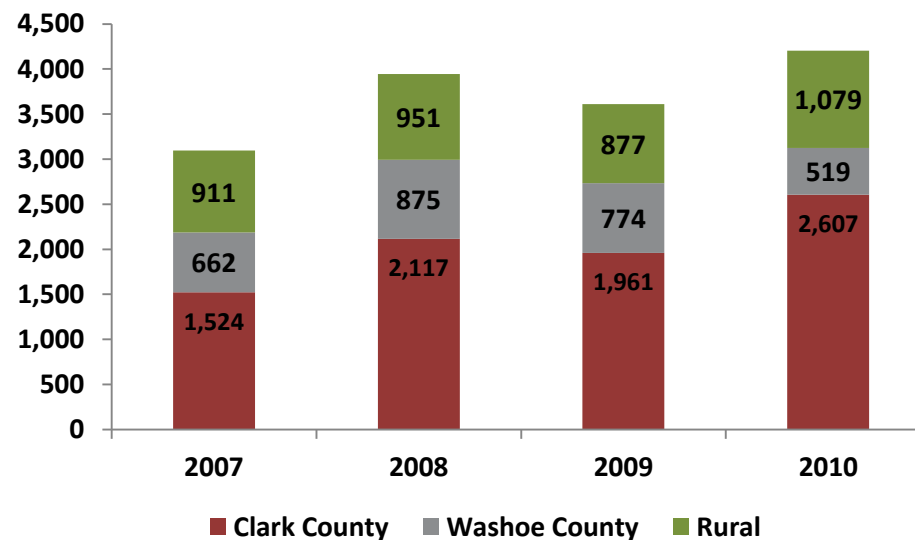
Success using up front services, or diversion services, have ultimately decreased the number of formal cases requiring supervision. Decreased caseload numbers and the development of specialty units allow Probation Officers more time to focus on their caseloads and the needs of youth.

Truancy rates

Students who are continually absent from school and fall into truant status are more likely to be at risk of dropping out. As mentioned previously, truancy is the number one referral to the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice. Truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs of students headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure via suspension, expulsion, or dropping out.^{xxxvi} Factors such as these explain why truancy is often labeled as the gateway to the juvenile justice system.

Truancy is more prevalent than most people realize. While there is not an abundance of national truancy data, some metropolitan areas report thousands of unexcused absences each day.^{xxxvii}

Nevada Habitual Truancy Discipline Events



The numbers depicted above represent only those incidents that have been reported to the Department of Juvenile Justice, and subsequently, only a small portion of all Nevada truancy incidents. The majority of Nevada truanancies remain undiscovered and underreported.



Nevada Public Education Foundation

REAL NEVADA IMPACT

Ready for Life and NPEF Response

REAL NEVADA NEEDS

**Organizational & Policy
Barriers Removed**

**A Community Ethic
that Values Education**

**Increased Academic
Opportunities for At-Risk
Students**

**Contributed to multi-system policy. Senate Bill 312
now provides credit-deficient students alternatives to
attaining necessary credits.**

**Created the Nevada Compact, reflecting a statewide
cross-sector commitment to education.**

**Facilitated the creation of a child care center at Desert
Rose High School and awarded grants directly
benefiting 105,000 students.**

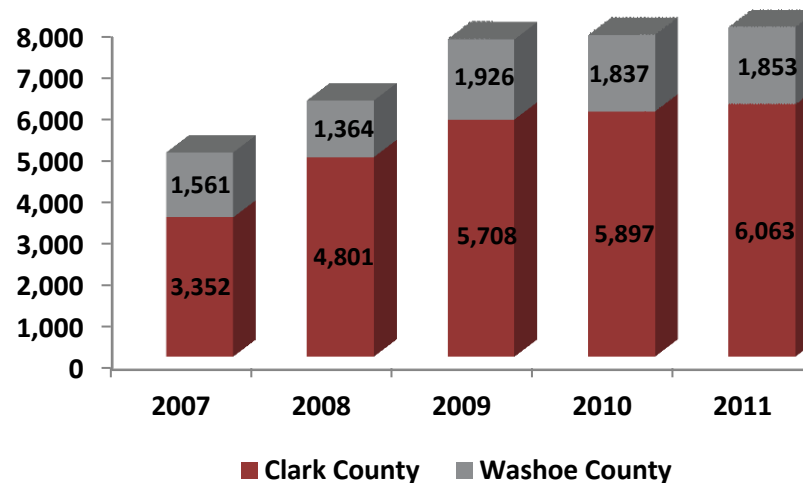
HOUSING AND ECONOMY INDICATORS

Homeless Youth

Stable housing is the foundation upon which people build their lives – absent a safe, decent, affordable place to live, it is next to impossible to achieve good health, positive educational outcomes, or reach one’s economic potential.^{xxxviii} Homelessness has particularly adverse effects on children and youth including hunger, poor physical and mental health, and missed educational opportunities. Schooling for homeless children is often interrupted and delayed, with homeless children twice as likely to have a learning disability, repeat a grade, or to be suspended from school.^{xxxix}

School districts must adhere to the federal definition of homelessness when identifying homeless students, which is anyone lacking a ‘fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence’. This definition specifically includes children and youth living in shelters, transitional housing, cars, campgrounds, motels, and sharing the housing of others temporarily due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons. Prior to 2007, the state’s homeless student population had been relatively steady, with the exception of a spike in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina, when hundreds of families relocated temporarily from New Orleans.^{xi} But between 2007 and 2008, the number of homeless students in Clark County jumped 45 percent, to 4,700. Washoe County soon followed, with a 41 percent increase in enrolled homeless students from 2008 to 2009. Statewide, since the start of the Great Recession, the number of homeless Nevada youth has increased 61 percent.

Homeless Youth Identified by School Districts in Nevada^{xli}



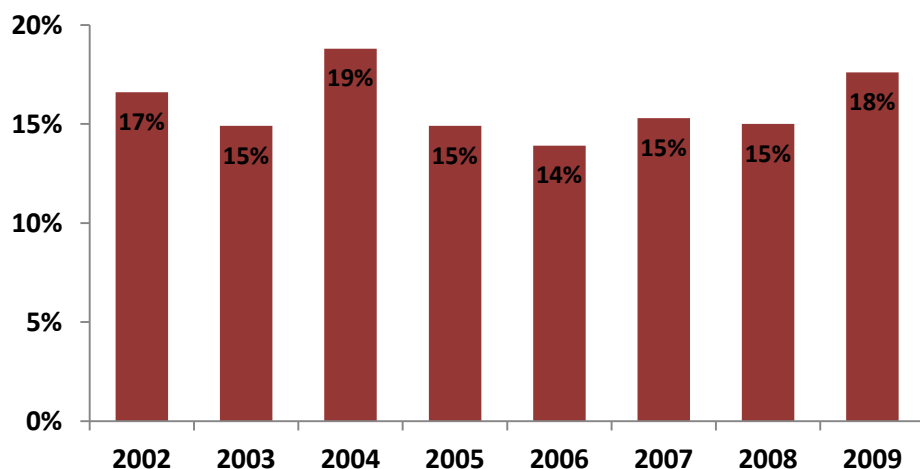
School district officials estimate – and social service agencies agree- there are thousands of additional students who meet the definition of homeless but are not identified, particularly in the higher grades.

This trend is not unique to Nevada - school districts across the country have reported increases in the number of homeless students in the classroom due to the economic downturn and foreclosure crisis. In the latest survey by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 330 school districts reported that by the fall of 2008, they had already met or exceeded their homeless student count for the entire prior academic year. A whopping 459 school districts reported their homeless student populations were up at least 25 percent between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 academic years.

Children under 18 Living in Poverty

Nearly 15 million children in the United States – 21% of all children – live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level – \$22,050 a year for a family of four.^{xlii} Research shows that, on average, families need an income of about twice that level to cover basic expenses.^{xliii} Using this standard, 42% of children live in low-income families.^{xliv} In Nevada, 17.6 percent of children under 18 are living in poverty. While this rate is lower than the national average, it is the highest rate of child poverty locally in more than five years. Younger children are particularly vulnerable; the National Center for Children in Poverty estimates that 43 percent of Nevadans under age 6 are living in low-income families.

Children under 18 Living in Poverty^{xliv}



Growing up at or near the poverty line increases a child's risk of experiencing many potential negative outcomes, including decreased educational performance and cognitive problems, social and emotional development difficulties, including behavior problems and mental health disorders, and, as an adult, to experience economic disadvantages, earning less and experiencing greater unemployment.

Low levels of parental education are a primary risk factor for being low income. Eighty-three percent of children whose parents have less than a high school diploma live in low-income families, and over half of children whose parents have only a high school degree are low income as well. Low income African American and Latino children are generally more susceptible to the consequences of economic fluctuations, as are the children of immigrant families. Although low-income rates for minority children are considerably higher than those for Caucasian children, this is due largely to a higher prevalence of other risk factors, for example, higher rates of single parenthood and lower levels of parental education and earnings.^{xlvi}

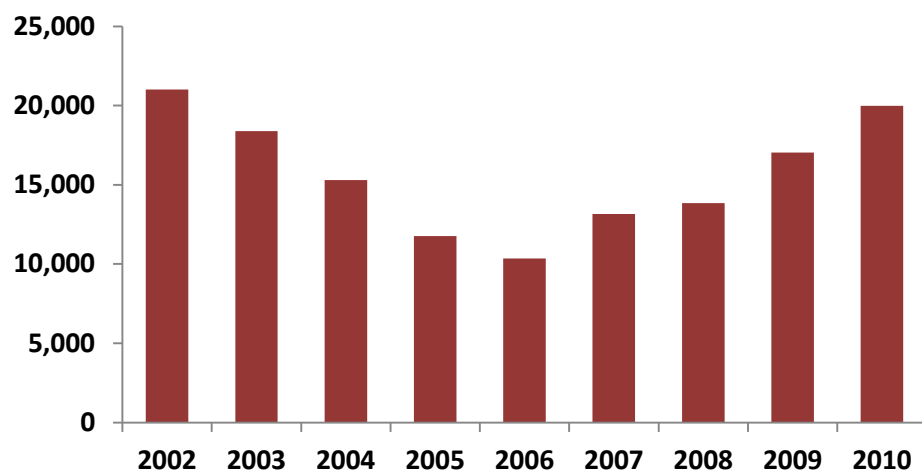
Average Number of Children Receiving TANF Assistance

The purpose of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is to:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives
- End the dependence of low-income parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

Between 2002 and 2006, the number of children receiving TANF assistance was steadily decreasing. This trend reversed in 2007, and 2010 marked the 4th year of annual increases, the majority of which were double digit increases. From 2007 to 2010, the number of Nevada children receiving TANF assistance increased by 52 percent.

Average Monthly Number of Children Receiving TANF Assistance



Children make up three out of every four TANF recipients. In many cases, the child is the only beneficiary in the household. So-called 'children only' cases, where the child is eligible for welfare benefits, but the adult parent is not, account for almost half of the total TANF caseload.

Child-only cases are classified as either parental or non-parental. Parental child-only cases are those cases in which a parent is present in the household, but is ineligible for TANF receipt due to a sanction, time limit, SSI receipt or alien status. Non-parental cases are those cases in which no parent is present; the children are residing with a relative or other adult with legal guardianship or custody.

Dramatic increases in caseloads such as those witnessed in Nevada may be partially attributable to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). In February 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Congress created a new TANF Emergency Fund, funded at \$5 billion and available to states, territories, and tribes for federal fiscal years 2009 and 2010. The original TANF law provided for a Contingency Fund funded at \$2 billion which allows states meeting certain economic triggers to draw additional funds based upon high levels of state Maintenance-of-Effort spending. This program expired on September 30, 2010.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INDICATORS

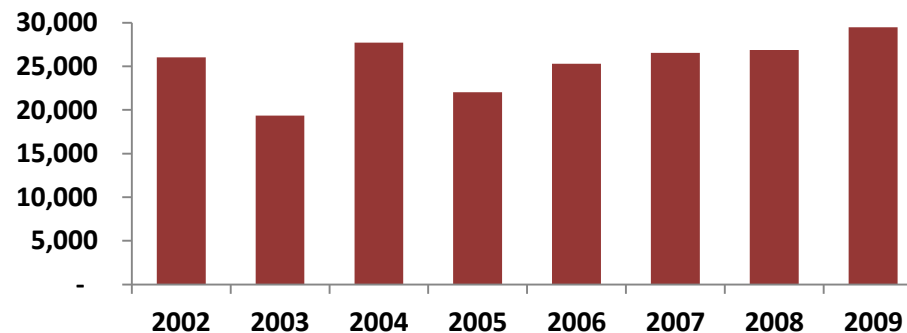
Preschool Enrollment

Research has demonstrated that supporting healthy early childhood development—from before birth through age 5—produces substantial educational, social and financial benefits for children and their communities. Children enrolled in high quality early childhood education programs are more likely to complete higher levels of education, have higher earnings, be in better health, form stable relationships, and are less likely to commit a crime or be incarcerated.^{xlvi}

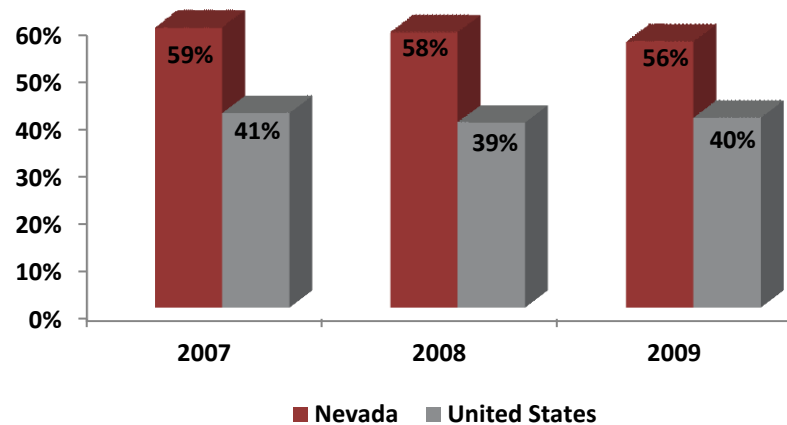
The short-term effects of preschool are undeniable – children enrolled in quality preschool programs experience larger cognitive gains during their time in preschool and are better prepared to enter kindergarten. While this holds true for all enrollees, English language learners benefit significantly from early childhood programs. This is an important characteristic for the state of Nevada, where 16.6 percent of students enrolled in Nevada school districts are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP).^{xlvi}

In Nevada, a mere 37 percent of three and four year old children are enrolled in nursery school or preschool.^{xlvi} While this rate has been increasing over the last several years, the majority of young Nevadans aged 3-5 are not enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten. Nursery school and preschool include any group or class of institution providing educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. Places where instruction is an integral part of the program are included, but private homes that primarily provide custodial care are not included. Children enrolled in programs sponsored by federal, state or local agencies to provide preschool education to young children—including Head Start programs—are considered as enrolled in nursery school or preschool.

Nursery School and Preschool Enrollment¹

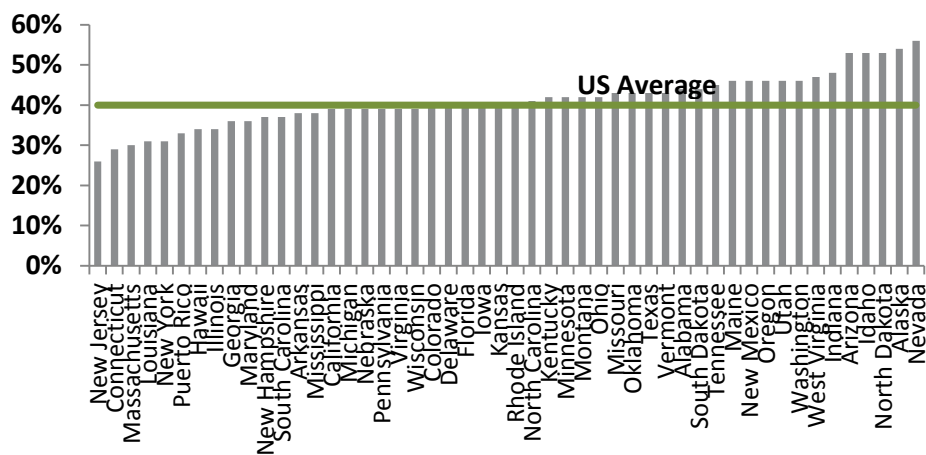


Children Age 3-5 Not Enrolled in Nursery School, Preschool or Kindergarten^{li}



The low percentage of Nevada children age 3-5 enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten ranks the state last in the country when compared to the rest of the nation.

Children Age 3-5 Not Enrolled in Nursery School, Preschool or Kindergarten, by State^{lii}



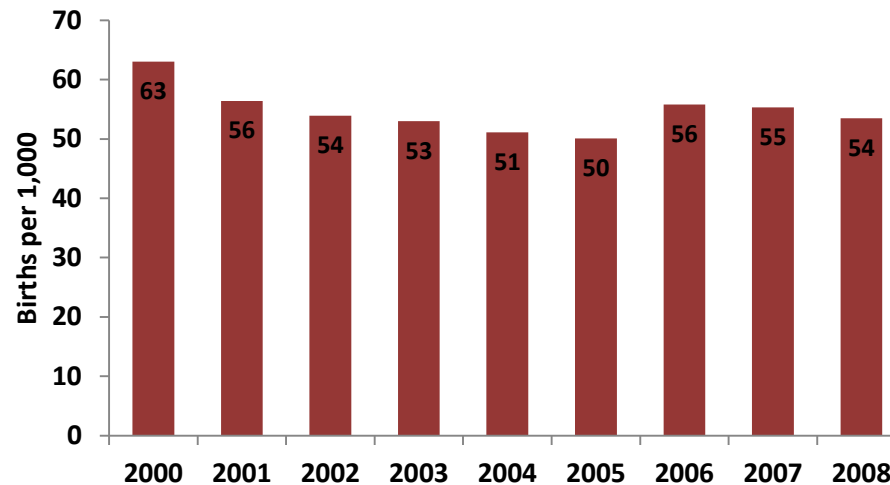
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INDICATORS

Teenage Pregnancy Rates

Parenthood is a leading cause of dropping out of school among teenage women—30 percent of teen girls cited pregnancy or parent-hood as a reason for dropping out of high school.^{liii} Moreover, only 51 percent of women who become mothers as a teenager eventually graduate from high school.^{liv} Children born to teen mothers fare even worse than their young mothers, these children are more likely to be born prematurely and at low birthrate, and do worse in school: they are 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade, less likely to complete high school, and have lower performance scores on standardized tests.^{lv}

It is estimated that 27 percent of Nevada females are at risk for becoming teen mothers. The risk is even higher for Hispanic and African American teenagers; while 37 percent of Nevada’s enrolled students are Hispanic, 54 percent of teenage births are born to Hispanic teenagers.^{lvi} The public costs to Nevada taxpayers associated with children born to teen parents exceeds \$53 million per year.^{lvii} Nevada has the 10th highest teenage birth rate in the country.

Nevada Teenage Birth Rate^{lviii}

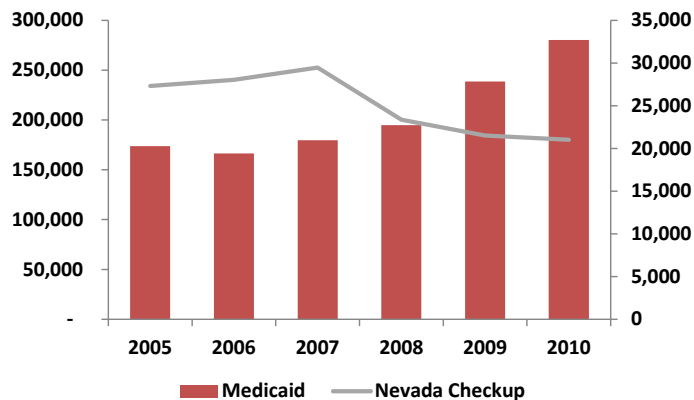


In a recent survey conducted by Ready for Life, Nevada government agencies and non-profit organizations serving pregnant and parenting teens expressed a strong desire to mobilize existing resources to better serve this population, but acknowledged a critical lack of infrastructure to do so.

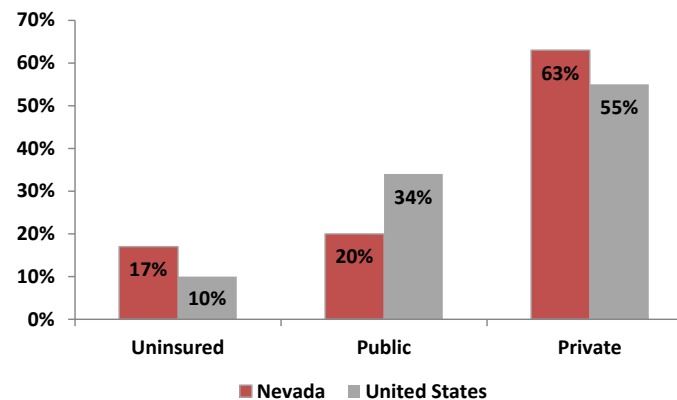
Enrollment in Medicaid / Nevada Checkup / Children without Health Insurance

Enrollment at Nevada Checkup (Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP) decreased by 2.4 percent from the prior year, and by 29 percent when compared to the start of the Great Recession. While at first glance this statistic may appear refreshing, it is underscored by the fact that many of the families traditionally served by this program have now experienced a job loss or other financial hardship, disqualifying them from one program only to be covered by another, in this case, Medicaid. Nevada Medicaid recipients increased 17.5 percent compared to the prior year and are up 56 percent since the start of the recession.

Enrollment in Medicaid and Nevada Checkup



Insurance Coverage of Children 0-18

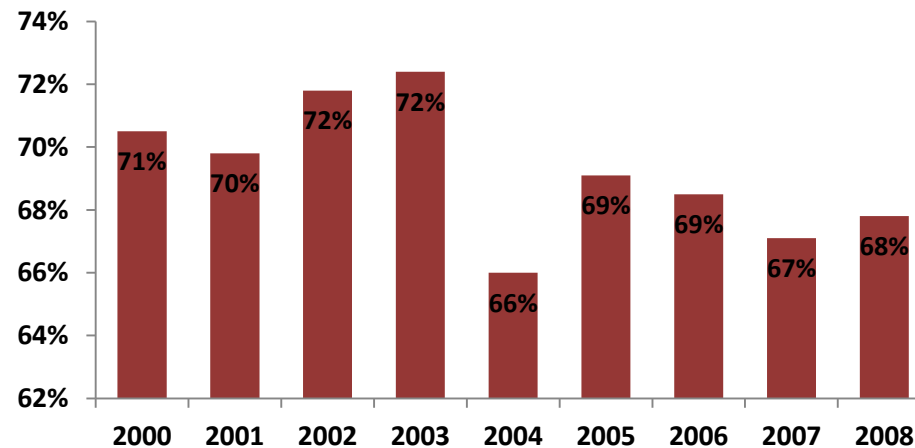


More than 17 percent of Nevada's children under the age of 18 are uninsured, a rate that is well above the national average. Children without health insurance are less likely to have a regular health care provider, less likely to have a regular dentist, or to have had a dental visit in the last year; and more likely to be in fair or poor health than low-income, privately-insured children. When comparing Nevada's statistics to the national average, it draws mention whether or not Nevada's larger uninsured population may in fact qualify for public health insurance programs, since Nevada's rate of public health insurance coverage is significantly lower than the national average. While nearly 82 percent of U.S. residents eligible for Medicaid or CHIP are enrolled, only 55.4 percent of eligible Nevada residents are enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP.^{lix} In fact, some studies estimate that more than 80 percent of the current uninsured population are indeed eligible for public health insurance coverage or live in families with incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).^{lx}

Percentage of Pregnant Women Receiving Prenatal Care in the First Trimester

All children need a healthy start in life. A child's health at birth can impact educational outcomes, and compromised health can have far-reaching effects well into adulthood.^{lxi} Prenatal visits during the first trimester, which include clinical evaluation and treatment, are highly recommended. Dating the baby and identifying risk factors are important to achieve in an early visit with a healthcare professional. Risk factors such as illicit drug use, teen pregnancy, chronic medical health, being overweight, tobacco or substance use of mothers-to-be, and lack of prenatal care contribute to poor birth outcomes.^{lxii} Current data indicates the percentage of mothers who begin prenatal care in the first trimester is 67.8 percent, while the national average is 78 percent.^{lxiii} When race and ethnicity are taken into account the percentage shows additional disparities; only 58 percent of Hispanic women and 62 percent of African American women began prenatal care in the first trimester in 2008.^{lxiv} The statistics are even worse for teenage women; 54.5 percent of pregnant teenagers receive prenatal care in the first trimester.^{lxv} This is a disturbing trend as they are also more likely to give birth to very low birth weight infants who are at-risk for lifelong health complications.

Percentage of Nevada Pregnant Women Receiving Prenatal Care in the First Trimester^{lxvi}



Thirty-two percent of Nevada's pregnant women received inadequate or no prenatal care in 2007, resulting in costly pregnancy complications and poor birth outcomes for many infants. There has been a downward trend in the number of Nevada women receiving prenatal care in the first trimester since 1995. Inadequate numbers of eligibility counselors are available to assist women getting emergency Medicaid in a timely manner.



Nevada Public Education Foundation

REAL NEVADA IMPACT

REAL NEVADA NEEDS

Ready for Life and NPEF Response

Navigation through
Segmented & Disjointed
Systems

Opened dialogue between a local school district and
United Way that resulted in a national grant award for
family engagement.

Education & Workforce
Development Alignment

Aligned goals and prioritized funding between Governor's
Workforce Investment Board, workforceCONNECTIONS,
education needs and goal to increase graduation rates.

Workforce Development

Aligned youth job training with academic credits and
employment opportunities with summer school.

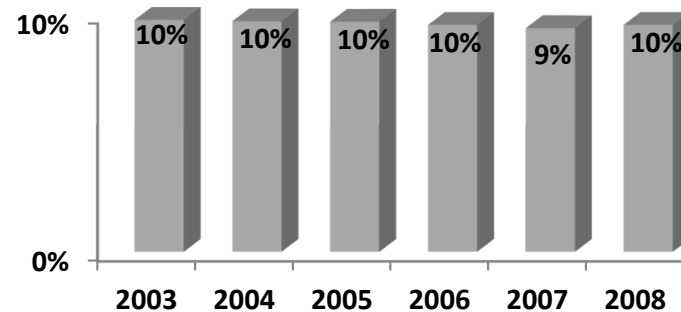
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INDICATORS

When children have multiple risk factors in their home and family environment, they are more likely to perform poorly in school.^{lxvii} Environmental factors such as family, peer group, school, and community characteristics also contribute to the challenges that adolescents face.

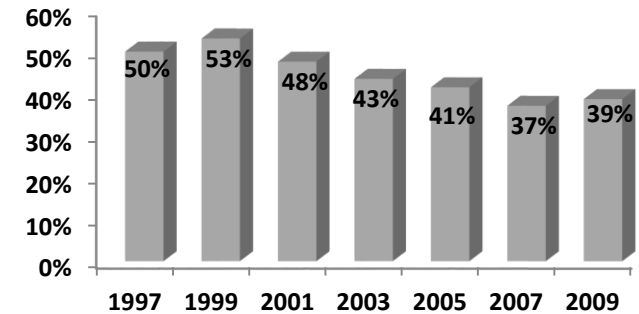
Substance Abuse

Parental substance dependence and abuse can have profound effects on children, including child abuse and neglect, injuries and deaths related to motor vehicle accidents, and increased odds that the children will become substance dependent or abusers themselves.

Dependence on or Abuse of Illicit Drugs or Alcohol in the Past Year, Age 12 and over^{lxviii}



Youth Reporting Alcohol Use in the Past 30 Days^{lxix}



SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) reports indicate that nationally, 11.9 percent of children live with at least one parent who was dependent on or abused alcohol or an illicit drug during the past year. Of these, the majority of youth lived with a parent who was dependent on or abused alcohol.^{lxx}

The Nevada mean and the national mean do not differ significantly over the years considered and this is reflected in the stability of Nevada's ranking among the states. Nevadans between 18 and 34 and those between 55 and 64 reported heavy drinking more frequently than those in the U.S. in general. Binge drinking is by far most common in people 18 to 25 in Nevada, the U.S. and the Western states.

Emotional Disorders

A Major Depressive Episode is defined using the diagnostic criteria set forth by the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), which specifies a period of 2 weeks or longer during which

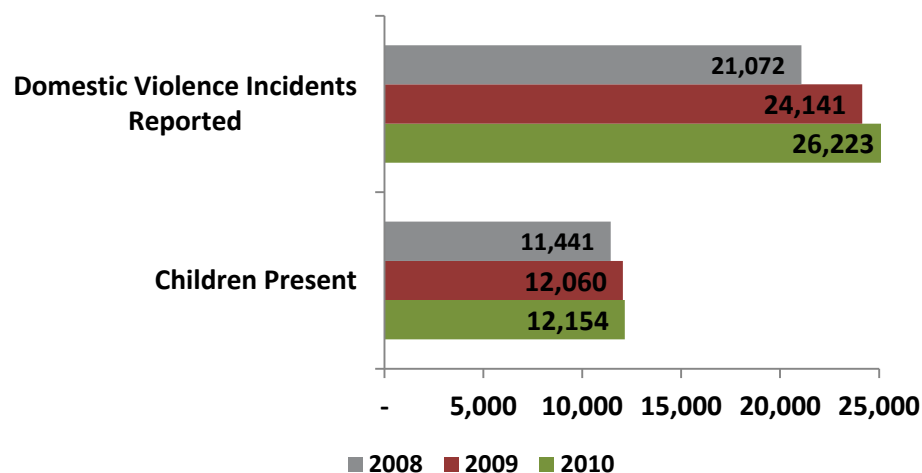
there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure and at least four other symptoms that reflect a change in functioning, such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and self-image.

Among youth, rates of depression in Nevada are consistent with national rankings, with 8.14% of youth aged 12 to 17 reporting a major depressive episode within the past year.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence rates in Nevada have been steadily increasing for the last three years, and have increased 24.4 percent from 2008 to 2010. Nevada children are present during 46 percent of domestic violence incidents reported. The weapon of choice in 82 percent of incidents includes physical bodily contact, using the hands, fist, or feet.

Domestic Violence Incidents and the Number of Children Present^{lxxi}





READY FOR LIFE NEVADA OUR SHARED YOUTH VISION

Ready for Life is anchored on best practice programs and seminal research from leading institutions across the country, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Intermediary Network, the Institute for Youth, Education and Families, Urban Institute, and Youth Transition Funders Group. The framework is based on Connected by 25, a report by Michael Wald and Tia Martinez of Stanford University, produced by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which has guided the efforts of many of the groups above, and is generally accepted as identifying the drivers for change in communities that are required to improve the outcomes of disconnected or at risk youth.

The goal of Ready for Life is to connect youth to education or productive employment by age 25. Ready for Life seeks to “graduate all,” including increasing the graduation rate 10 percent by 2013, while helping to ensure that youth have access to the post-secondary education or training and employment they need to successfully transition to life on their own.

Ready for Life was launched in 2005 by the Nevada Public Education Foundation (NPEF) in partnership with dozens of public and private organizations, as a collaborative cross-agency effort to improve Nevada's success at engaging and graduating ‘ready for life’ students and re-engaging those who prematurely left school. The working definition of cross-system collaboration for disconnected youth we are using is when two or more public agencies commit and follow through on exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing each other's capacity for common or overlapping groups of young adults. Ready for Life partners believe that as they work together, students will be more likely to complete high school and gain appropriate post-secondary education or training to become productive, contributing members of society.

The statewide Ready for Life Nevada movement is facilitated by Nevada Public Education Foundation. In 2009, Ready for Life Nevada united with the federal Shared Youth Vision partnership overseen by the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation. In so doing, NPEF and Ready for Life work closely with the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board Youth Council, further solidifying the alliance among leaders in both public and private sectors of education, workforce and youth development to strengthen Nevada’s capacity to help our young people become “ready for life.”

READY FOR LIFE NEVADA: OUR SHARED YOUTH VISION STATEWIDE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sue Chambers, Churchill Ready for Life | Churchill County School District

Diane Comeaux/ Jill Marano, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Ken Dugan, Nevadaworks Youth Council | Sierra Nevada Job Corps

Ardell Galbreth, workforceCONNECTIONS

Terri Janison, Office of the Governor, Brian Sandoval

Dr. Lauren Kohut-Rost, Clark County School District, Retired

Kenneth LoBene, workforceCONNECTIONS Youth Council | U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Dr. Magdalena Martinez, Nevada System of Higher Education

Dr. Karlene McCormick Lee, Nevada Public Education Foundation | Clark County School District, Retired

Dennis Perea, Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation

Christy McGill, Lyon and Storey Counties Ready for Life | Healthy Communities Coalition

Mike Pomi, Children's Cabinet | Washoe County Ready for Life

Fritz Reese, Ready for Life Southern Nevada – Committee on Youth | Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice

Superintendent Keith Rheault, Nevada Department of Education

Eric James, Governor's Workforce Investment Board Youth Council

Victor-Hugo Schulze II, Senior Deputy Attorney General

Stacy Smith, Nye and Esmeralda Counties Ready for Life | Nye Communities Coalition

Karen Stanley, Clark County School District

Craig Stevens, Nevada State Education Association

Assemblyman Lynn Stewart, Nevada Legislature

Denise Tanata Ashby, J.D., The Lincy Institute | Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy

Frank Woodbeck, Nevada Commission on Economic Development

Joyce Woodhouse, Community Volunteer

Juanita Ydiando, Washoe County Ready for Life | Washoe County School District, Retired



NEVADA PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Our Mission - To secure and sustain resources that will assist, support and promote excellence in public education programs in Nevada.

Our Vision and Ready for Life Values

- All youth are educated and ready to learn.
- All youth are experienced and ready for careers.
- All youth are connected to adults, peers, and educational services.
- All youth are confident and ready for life.
- A connected, operational infrastructure supports youth success.

The Nevada Public Education Foundation (NPEF) was created in state statute in 1991 and, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees and funded by grants and donations. In 2003, NPEF gained traction on the high school dropout issue in Nevada. When a statewide education needs assessment was conducted by NPEF in 2004 to determine where to focus efforts, it became clear that too many youth were leaving high school without graduating. In response, the NPEF Board of Trustees committed to focusing on helping youth become “ready for life” through successful transitions at each developmental stage during their educational careers in Nevada and beyond.

After more research and in collaboration with a steering committee of community leaders and stakeholders, NPEF launched Ready for Life™ in 2005, which quickly became a viable movement under NPEF’s visionary leadership. Established first in Southern Nevada, Ready for Life (RFL) expanded statewide in 2007, with the first statewide Ready for Life Nevada Dropout Prevention Summit in 2008. Convened and facilitated by NPEF, Ready for Life now includes the leadership of a broad-based Statewide Council, with local collaboratives active in seven Nevada counties.

As a statewide intermediary organization, Nevada Public Education Foundation:

- Connects schools, communities, government agencies, workplace partners, non-profits and youth organizations to improve outcomes for youth.
- Convenes local, regional and statewide organizations doing similar work to maximize resources and impact.
- Measures and improves programs and services.
- Sustains work by organizing public and private support and ensuring young people receive the education and resources they need to become productive, contributing members of society.

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE NEVADA
WORKFORCE SYSTEM**



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