

Diversity and Inclusion Liaison Report

2022

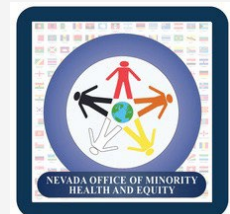


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Introduction

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light pink top and a pearl necklace, smiling as she shakes hands with another person whose arm is visible on the right. The background is bright and slightly blurred.

During the 81st Legislative Session, **SB 222 was passed and signed into law**. The bill, codified as NRS 232.0083 - NRS 232.0087, provisions that state agencies that interact with or offer programs and services affecting minority groups shall designate – to the extent practicable – a **Diversity and Inclusion Liaison (DIL)** within their state agencies.

Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) assist their respective agencies with four (4) functions :

- Assist their state agency with **promoting effective communication and cultural competency** in providing effective services to minority groups.
- Serve as a contact person who shall **maintain ongoing communication** between their state agency and members of minority groups.
- Provide **technical assistance** to the state agency on new programs and services offered by their state agency that are intended **to increase accessibility** for members of minority groups.
- **Collaborate with other Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons** from other agencies to increase accessibility and inclusivity for members of minority groups.

Introduction

The bill also provisions that the **Governor's Office for New Americans (ONA)**, **Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE)**, and the **Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs (NCMA)** collaborate for the implementation of this bill. These three organizations are required to convene an annual meeting for DILs and minority-serving organizations (MSOs) to develop recommendations regarding and addressing:

- Matters of mutual concern between state agencies and minority groups.
- Opportunities to collaborate and increase the accessibility and inclusivity of services delivered to minority groups.
- The need for state agencies to eliminate systemic racism and structures of racial discrimination within the State of Nevada.
- Strategies for ensuring that members of minority groups are able to access programs and services offered by Nevada's state agencies.

Finally, ONA, NOMHE, and NCMA must prepare an annual report that details the outcomes of the annual meeting. It must be submitted to the Governor of the State of Nevada and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the Legislative Commission by January 1 of each year.

The Minority Interagency Collaboration



The Minority Interagency Collaboration (MIC) is composed of the Governor's **Office for New Americans**, the Department of Health and Human Services' **Office of Minority Health and Equity**, and the Department of Business and Industry's **Commission on Minority Affairs**. This collaboration between the minority-serving agencies in the State of Nevada was formed to action out the implementation of Senate Bill 222, which named all three agencies in the legislation.

The Minority Interagency Collaboration

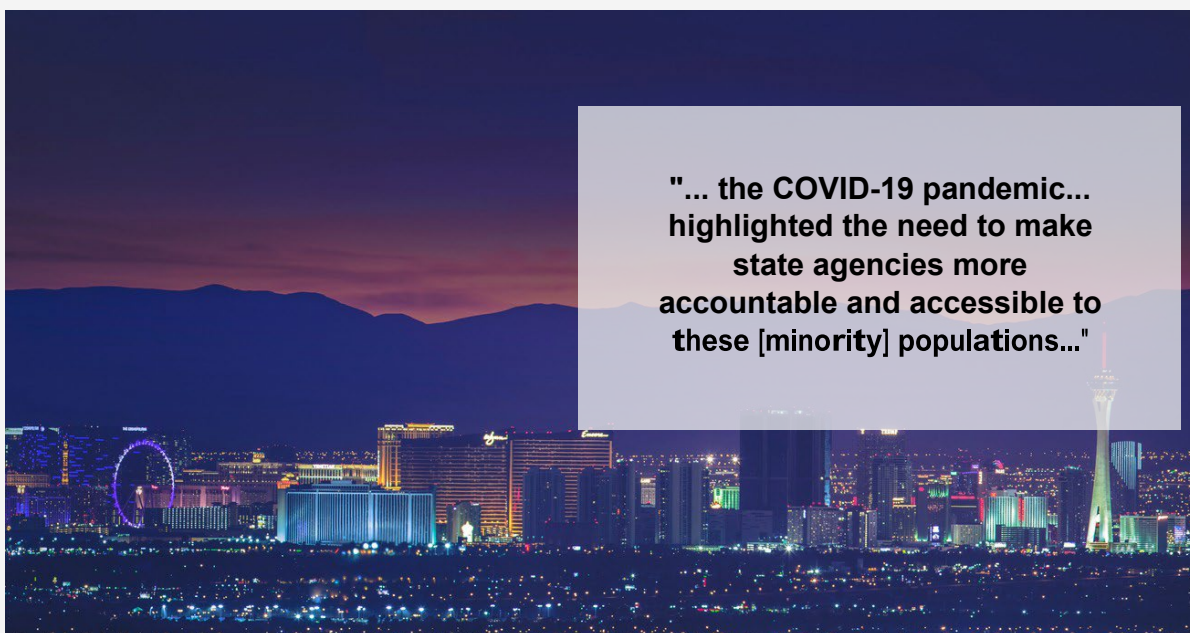
The formalization of this collaboration ensures that the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) are prepared and fully supported in an on-going manner. Not only has this measure effectively designed a sustainable 3-entity network to shepherd the provisions of this bill, but our collaboration has forged a resource capable of actioning other equity-focused initiatives – for example, the promotion of the Nevada Recovers Listening Tour hosted by the Governor and the State Treasurer.

This proactive collaboration of the three offices allows for a coordinated and cooperative approach during the inaugural year of the implementation of Senate Bill 222 – which means not only pooling our agencies’ resources and time, but also adopting a shared vision and committing to a common goal – this common goal being: ensuring that minority communities in the State of Nevada have equal and accessible access to the services, resources, and information from the state government.

The State of Nevada's Commitment to DEI

The State of Nevada's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was cemented during the 2021 Legislative Session. Pieces of legislation that focuses on DEI passed and were signed into law, including Senate Bill 318 and Senate Bill 222. The former bill addresses language access for our limited English proficient (LEP) Nevadans; the latter is the bill for Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) for each state agency.

These two bills underscored the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to minority groups in our State and the need to make state government more accountable and more accessible to these populations. These bills makes it possible for state agencies to ensure they do everything possible to provide equal access to state government services, resources, and information to our minority populations no matter what language they speak, where they were born, their sexual orientation, their disabilities, or the color of their skin.



The State of Nevada's Commitment to DEI

To ensure state agencies and their Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) are fully supported during the inaugural year, a memorandum was sent out to all agency directors containing next actionable items. The memo included: what is expected of a liaison, who the ideal candidate should be, and the introduction of the Minority Interagency Collaboration as their key partners in this effort.

This is not the first time the State of Nevada has addressed the disparities present within the minority populations of the State. In August of 2020, Governor Steve Sisolak issued a Governor's Proclamation

Declaring Racism, As a Public Health Crisis. The proclamation notes that experts and studies have shown that negative social determinants of health, with racism being at the forefront, have adversely impacted the health of minority communities.

It is with this commitment, and collaboration, that fosters systemic change in our state government and make our state agencies more accessible to *all* Nevadans, including our minority communities.

Year in Review: Inaugural DIL Year

The Minority Interagency Collaboration (MIC) held three open meetings in the inaugural year of 2022 for the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons: **March 23, July 28, and November 16.**

March 23

1

The March meeting served as an orientation for the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons. The Minority Interagency Collaboration provided a general overview and purpose of Senate Bill 222 and described the role that every DIL has to undertake. The DILs received training materials to assist them in their new role which included: Immigration 101, Implicit Bias and Cultural Humility Training, Social Determinants of Health video, and information on the Nevada Environmental Justice Team.

The DILs were introduced to a 12-question survey (discussed in further detail in the subsequent sections of this report) that they have to complete.

July 28

2

The July meeting was a statutorily required meeting between the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons and minority-serving organizations (MSOs) within the State of Nevada. Invited organizations ranged from immigrant-serving organizations to organizations that focus on health education. The Minority Interagency Collaboration presented the results from the survey and facilitated a discussion between the DILs and MSOs regarding the aforementioned results.

The DILs were also informed about how to become involved with Justice40, a Federal initiative that commits 40% of federal spending to disadvantaged communities in certain Federal investments - like workforce development and affordable and sustainable housing.

November 16

3

The November meeting was the final meeting for the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons' inaugural year. The Minority Interagency Collaboration reviewed the work that the DILs have done throughout the calendar year and presented the draft of this report. Feedback and recommendations were also asked from the liaisons during this meeting.

The feedback and recommendations from the final meeting are included in the Recommendations section of this report.

Survey Questions and Methodology

In order to assess how accessible state agencies are to minority groups, we asked all Diversity and Inclusions Liaisons to answer a survey in regard to what programs, services, and initiatives their agencies offer. In the same survey, we also asked them what barriers to accessibility their agencies have observed when administering their programs, services, and initiatives to Nevadans. Each agency program is equivalent to one submitted survey.



Below is the copy of the survey.

Survey Questions and Methodology

Question 1

Please provide the Department responsible for this program, initiative, project, or service.

Question 2

Please provide the Division responsible for this program, initiative, project, or service.

Question 3

What program, initiative, or service is offered to the members of the public?

Question 4

Do you collaborate with other state agencies or divisions for this program, initiative, project, or service?

Question 5

Please identify any non-profit or other community-based entity that serves as a partner in delivering services or information to the population on the program.

Question 6

What are the funding sources for this program, initiative, project or service? (Check all that apply)

Question 7

Please identify the general focus and goals of the program, initiative, project, or service. (Check all that apply)

Question 8

Please identify which communities are the targets for this program.

Question 9

Which barriers exist that prevent minority communities from accessing the program? (Check all that apply)

Question 10

Does the program have an outreach plan?

Question 11

Does the outreach plan specifically target minority communities? (Please choose not applicable if question 10 was answered "no")

Question 12

Does your program have a citizenship and/or immigration status as an eligibility requirement?

Discussion of Survey Results

Q1 and Q2: Please provide the department and division responsible for the program, initiative, project, or service.

24 We received responses from 24 departments, boards, and commissions

58 We received responses from 58 divisions.

Q3: What program, initiative, or service is offered to members of the public?

161 responses for programs, initiatives, or services that are offered to the members of the public.

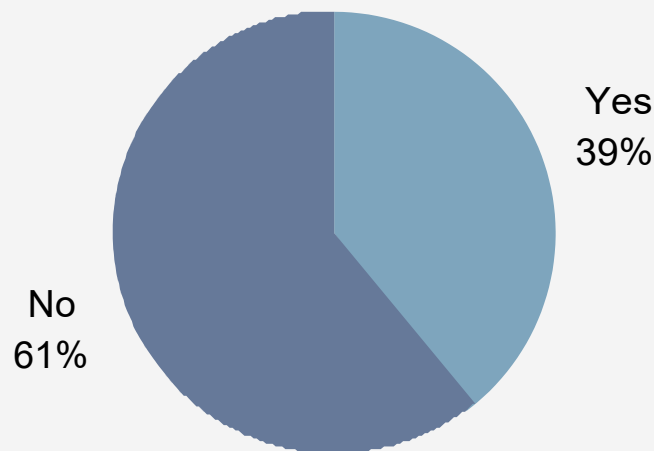
The answers to Question 3 highlighted the fact that the State offers a variety of programs, initiatives, or services to the public.

For example, one of the responses is the **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** by the Department of Agriculture that provides a coupon booklet to income-eligible seniors (60+ and over) for redemption with certified farmers and farmer stands. Another example is the Department of Business and Industry's **Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement (OSHA) Safety and Health Training**. This training is an OSHA 10-hour or 30-hour class and can be done in Spanish. The last example is from the Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Child and Family Services where the **Desert Willow Treatment Center**, a licensed 32-bed psychiatric hospital provides mental health treatment to children throughout the State.

From agriculture to work safety, Nevadans can access different programs from across all state agencies.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q4: Do you collaborate with other state agencies or divisions for this program, initiative, project or service?



Out of the 161 responses, there is a notable representation denoting limited to no collaboration - 61% or 99 of the respondents answered that they did not collaborate with other agencies or divisions to administer their programs.

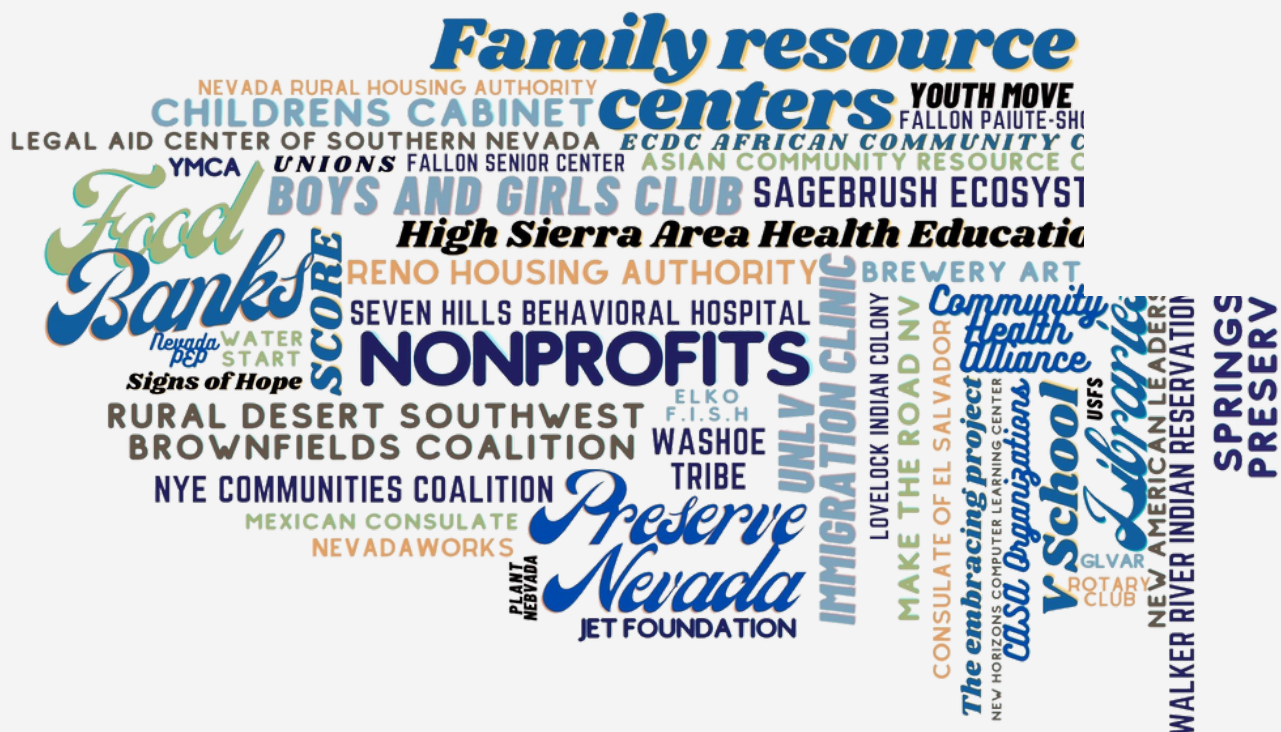
During the annual meeting, examples on how state agencies collaborate with one another were brought up. The role of **tribal liaisons** in state agencies was mentioned. One example of interagency collaboration through tribal liaisons is the **Tribal Food Taskforce** and the **Inner-Tribal Council of Nevada** during the State's COVID-19 response. These agencies worked together so they could collaborate on COVID-19 efforts with Nevada's tribal nations.

Another example of interagency collaboration is with **Language Access** and the state agencies' efforts to create their departmental and/or divisional **Language Access Plans (LAPs)**. Convened by the Office for New Americans, agency's language access coordinators have met regularly to discuss how to develop and implement their LAPs.

However, it is still *only* 39% of the 161 responses that do collaborate with other departments or divisions. This survey data represents the baseline of interagency collaboration, and it is anticipated as the work with the DILs continue, the percentage of interagency collaboration will increase.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q5: Please identify any non-profit or other community-based entity that serves as a partner in delivering services of information to the population of the program.



In contrast to Question 4's indication of a seemingly lower dependence on collaboration between state agencies, our Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons identified **283 non-profit or community-based partners**.

Get Outdoors Nevada, a non-profit that connects Nevadans and visitors from all background and ages to the State's diverse outdoor places, indicated that they collaborate with the newly formed **Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation** under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Similarly, the **Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation** oversees the State's Workforce Board. It is the largest board of the state made up of 33 members. Most members are from the business and industry sector, labor, and community groups.

Discussion of Survey Results

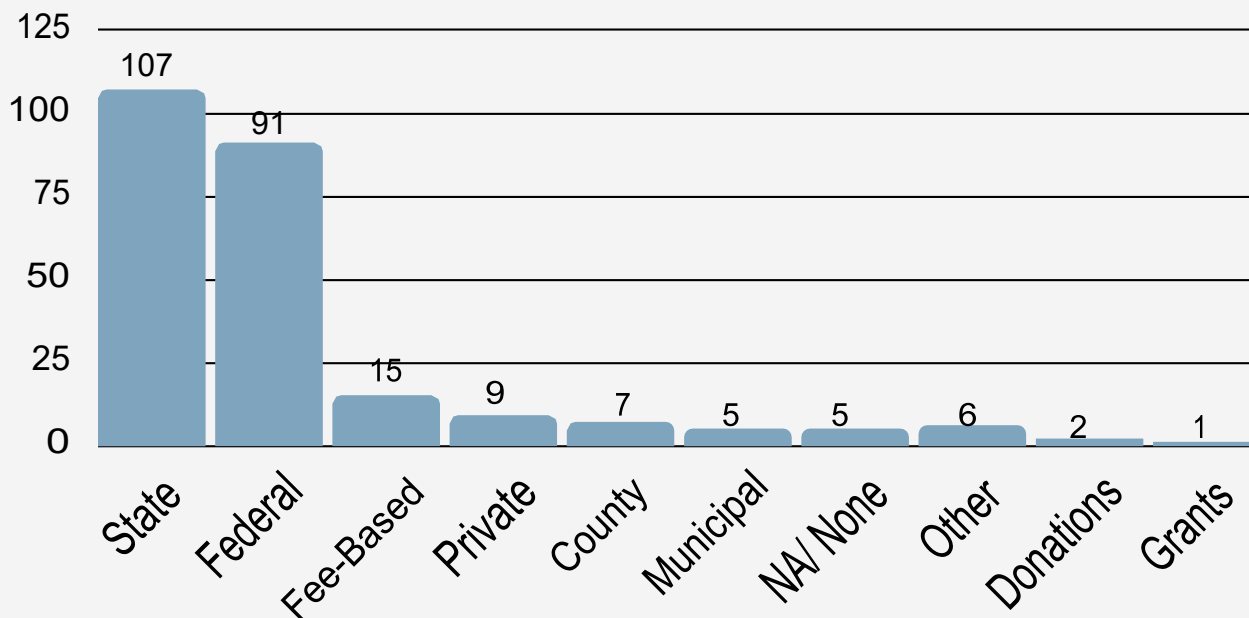
There was a consensus between state agencies that non-profit and community-based organizations are vital to their work. Without community partners to share information about programs and services available, it will be harder for the agencies to reach the populations that are in need of it.

There was also a consensus that focusing and putting resources into partnering with organizations only strengthens the community. For example, more interaction with agency staff and more available trainings and resources for the community will only enhance access to state agencies and their programs.



Discussion of Survey Results

Q6: What are the funding sources for this program, initiative, project, or service? (Check all that apply)



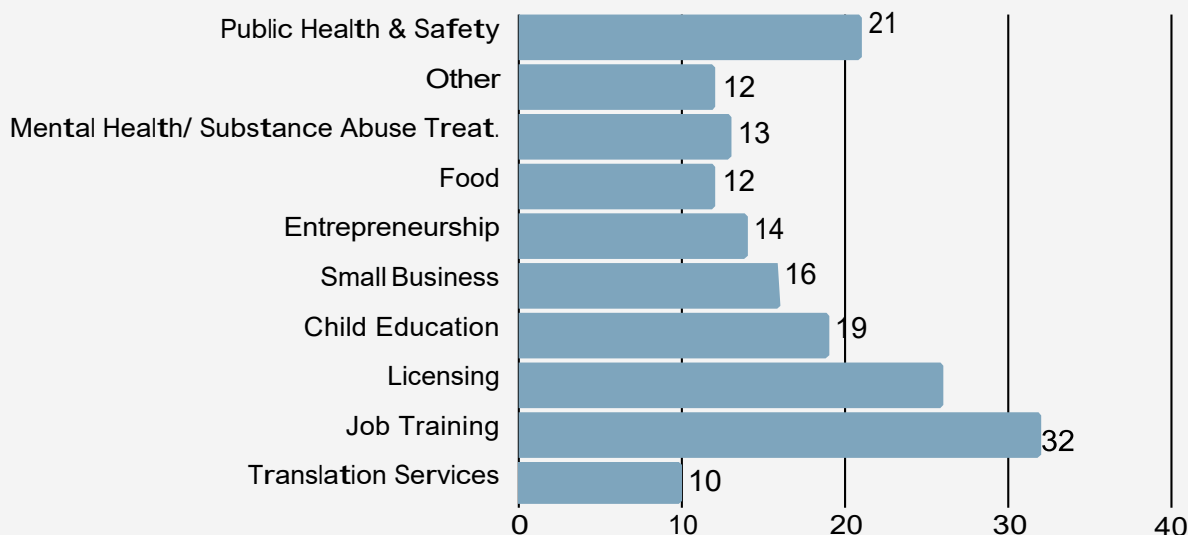
Question 6 received a total of 248 response, which indicates that the 161 programs offered to the community by our State agencies have multiple funding sources. Other sources of funding were between forfeiture and gaming entities.

The survey results showed that State funding surpassed Federal funding, which coincides with Nevada's historical underperformance in federal grants receipts. The State of Nevada set a goal of increasing federal grants by \$100 million over the next two years and by \$500 million annually by 2026 and would be assisted by the newly created **Governor's Office of Federal Assistance**.

There was no further discussion between DILs and MSOs for the results of this question.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q7: Please identify the general focus and goals of the program, initiative, project, or service. (Check all that apply)

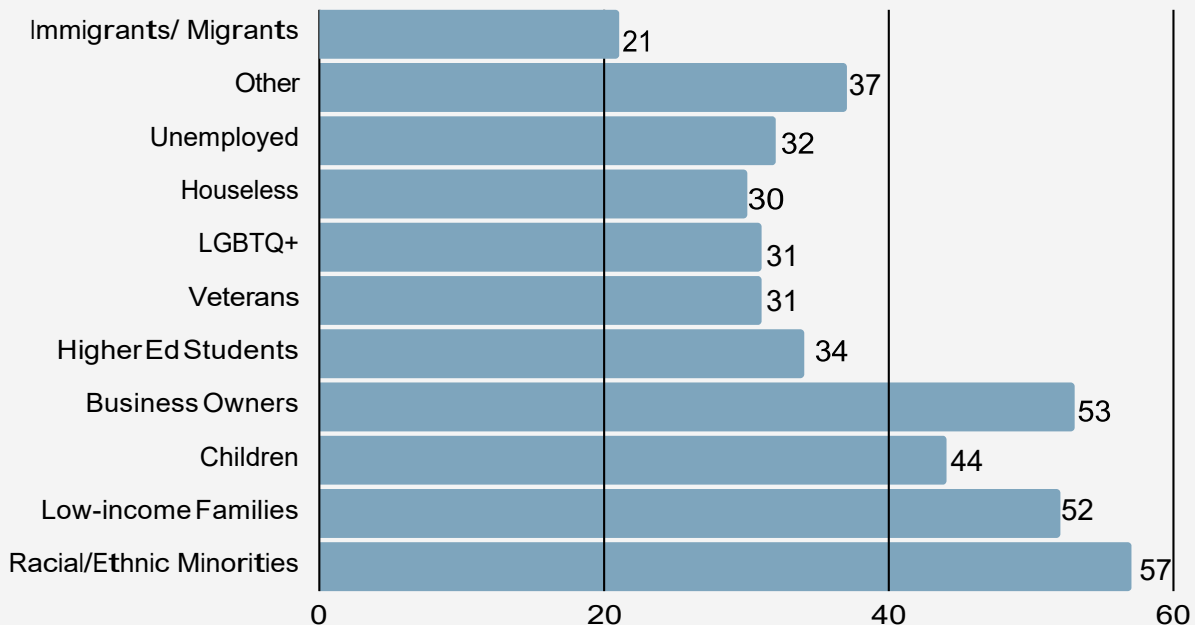


Question 7 received 303 responses under 40 different categories. The above chart shows that the top 5 categories are: **job training, licensing, public health and safety, child education, and small business services**. The survey garnered specific replies, as well, like: insurance education, outdoor recreation, invasive pest information, mineral industry data collection, and historic preservation.

The answers to this question cement the fact that state agencies and their programs and services has the potential to touch every facet of Nevadans' lives. During the discussion between DILs and MSOs, **the more access Nevadans have to state agencies, the better it is for our community.**

Discussion of Survey Results

Q8: Please identify which communities are the targets for this program. (Check all that apply)



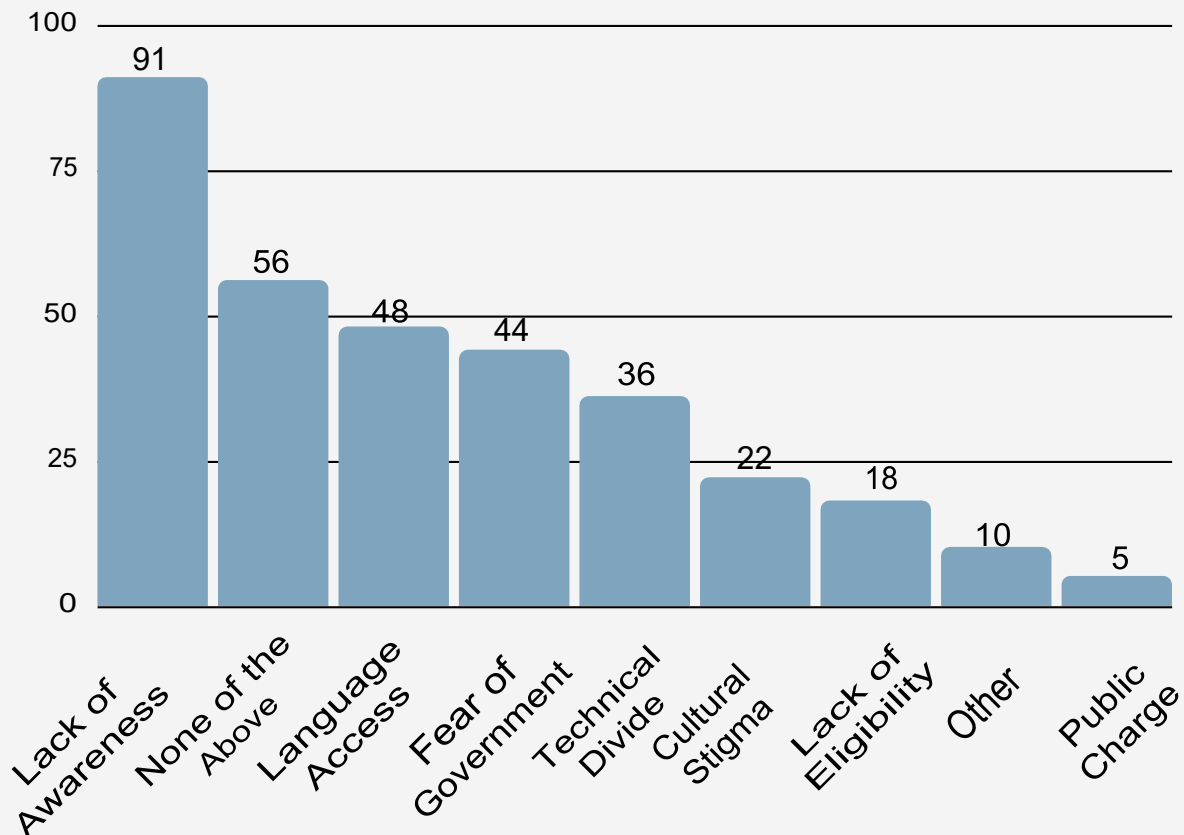
Question 8 received 761 responses for the communities listed in the survey. **Racial and ethnic minorities, low-income families, and business owners** top the list of targeted communities for our state agencies' programs and services.

There is a clear indication, based on the survey results, that our State agencies' programs and services target many different communities across Nevada. A number of specific replies to this question included: **rural communities, single parent households, career and technical education teachers, etc.**

There was no further discussion between DILs and MSOs for the results of this question.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q9: Which barriers exist that prevent minority communities from accessing the program? (Check all that apply)



The highest barrier that agencies perceive that prevents minority communities from accessing their programs is **lack of awareness**. This most likely goes hand-in-hand with the 3rd highest answer: **language access**. It is to be deduced that one cannot know about a program, service, or initiative if the information is in a language that one cannot understand or comprehend.

Fear of government is also listed as a big barrier that prevents minority communities from accessing State programs and services. This coincides with **public charge**, which is a barrier prevalent in immigrant and refugee communities. Under the new Public Charge Rule, a public charge is defined as a

Discussion of Survey Results

non-citizen who has received one or more public benefits, as defined in the rule. While immigration status defines what social benefits one is eligible for, the fear of public charge usually affects those in mixed-status families (i.e. non-citizen parents with US citizen children.)

Barriers like **technical divide**, **cultural stigma**, and **lack of eligibility** were also noted by state agencies.

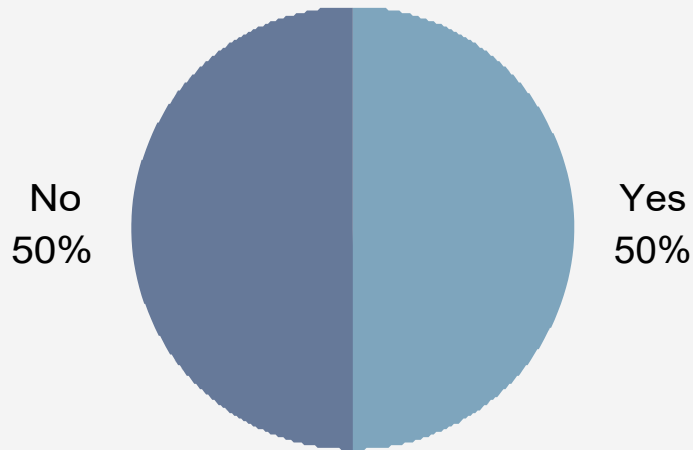
During the discussion, state agencies noted that they are doing the best that they can to break down barriers to accessibility, but most of them are understaffed which lessens this capability. One suggestion that was brought up is how agencies might address this issue of capacity through situational awareness. State agencies might want to consider **(1) where people get their information**, **(2) what is the general comprehension level of their constituency**, and **(3) how engaged is their constituency**.

For example, one data point that stands out is that there are 56 responses in Question 9 indicating that there are **no barriers** to prevent minority communities from accessing their agencies' programs. While this may be true from the perception of state agencies, they should actively engage with Nevada's minority communities and minority serving organizations to ensure that they have the same perception, as well.

Another suggestion brought up during the discussion is for agencies to make their programs, and information pertaining to the programs, accessible through social media.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q10: Does the program have an outreach plan?

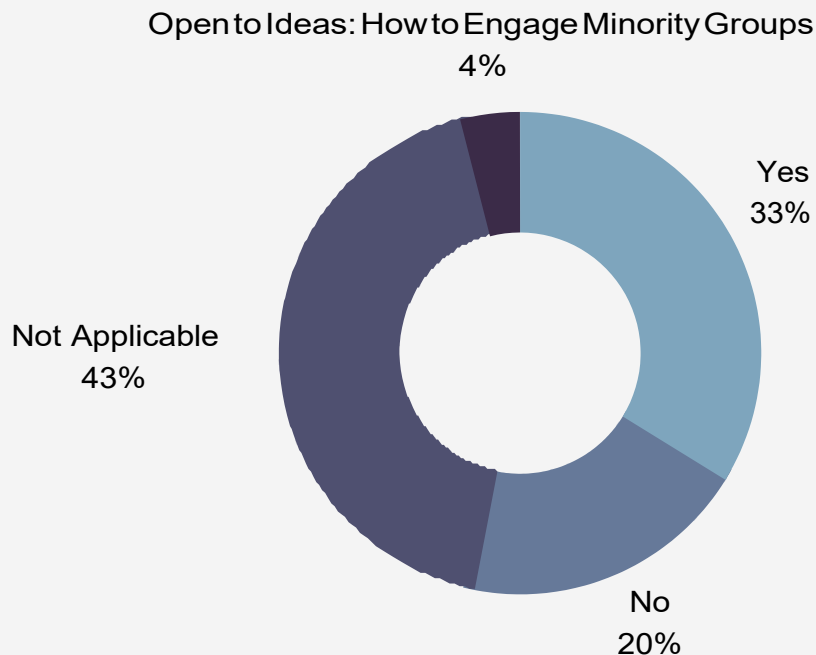


There is an equal split for Question 10. **50% of the state agencies' programs have an outreach plan while the other 50% does not.** There was no further discussion for this question.



Discussion of Survey Results

Q11: Does the outreach plan specifically target minority communities? Please choose "not applicable" if Question 10 was answered "no".



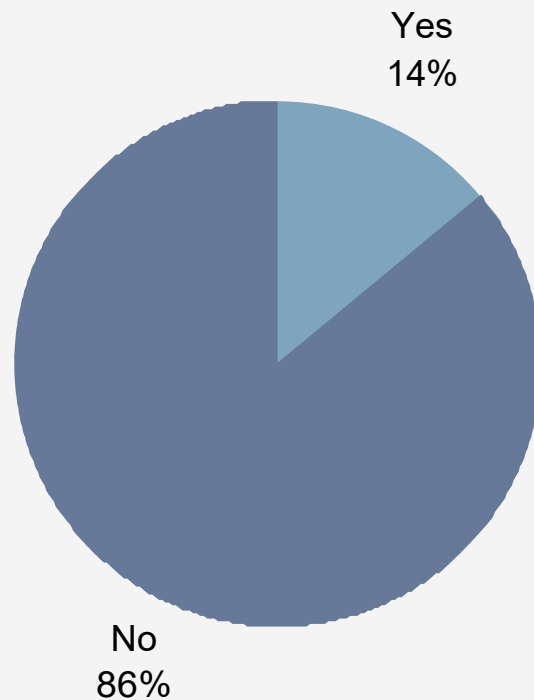
In Question 11, **43% of the responses indicated "not applicable"**, which is because agencies answered "no" to Question 10 when asked if their program has an outreach plan. In the same question, **33% said "yes", 20% said "no", and 4% said that their agency is open to learn how to engage minority groups.**

During the discussion between DILs and MSOs, the Governor's Office for New Americans shared that their office makes it a point to attend immigrant and refugee community events. This engagement is usually at a community level, often in person, and can be a tool to reach populations that can't be reached through traditional media.

A point was also brought up that even if state agencies do not have a written outreach plan for every program, it does not stop them for starting to engage minority communities moving forward.

Discussion of Survey Results

Q12: Does your program have a citizenship and/or immigration status as an eligibility requirement?



In Question 12, **only 14% of the responses said "yes, their program has a citizenship and/or immigration status requirement", while 86% of the responses said "no".**

This is an interesting data point for the immigrant and refugee families in Nevada who might not know that a program does not need any specific immigration status for them to be able to access it.

A suggestion of incorporating eligibility requirements based on immigration status in state agencies' outreach plans was discussed.

Recommendations

Below is the list of recommendations developed by the Minority Interagency Collaboration, which were shaped and determined by the statutorily required annual meeting by the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) and minority serving organizations (MSOs).

Fund Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons

It is not uncommon for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work to be under-prioritized. For example, per the provisions of SB 222, state agencies designating a Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DIL) is ultimately optional. Staff hold these roles voluntarily, on top of their main job assignment. State employees in order to fulfill the DIL role, on occasion, might find themselves overextended.

Furthermore, State Departments are still catching up with activities that were put off for two years as a result of the pandemic. The state has lost 25 – 30 % of its workforce resulting on a 26% shortage of staff. These staffing shortages are felt by the public that seek to access state services and programs. However, more often than not, any negative experience is felt disproportionately by Nevadans that identify as part of a minority group.

Therefore the recommendation is to: **identify other DEI related functions performed on the department level and to roll the DIL function into a larger DEI position funded within departments.**

We do not put forth this recommendation lightly. However, for a state government committed to the equitable delivery of its services, the cost to not have trained and dedicated personnel operating in this capacity may, in fact, be the greater expense.

Recommendations



Strengthened engagement with minority serving organizations in Nevada

In some instances, as demonstrated by the survey results and the discussions between Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs) and minority serving organizations (MSOs), there are opportunities for improvement of service delivery from state agencies. One of the recommendations to be able to improve the aforementioned delivery is to develop and/or strengthen relationships with MSOs. This will effectively amplify state agencies' reach within minority groups in the State.

The recommendation, therefore, is to: **approach larger numbers of MSOs in services to more stratified populations, to make them aware of the role of DILs, and to establish commitment from MSOs to participate in the upcoming year's annual meeting.**

Recommendations

Intentional engagement from state agencies to minority communities in Nevada

The survey findings indicated what state agencies perceive as the biggest barriers to access their programs and services. Acknowledging and educating about possible reasons why minority communities do not show up at public meetings, do not seek agency services, nor utilize programs is a key step to be able to rectify these issues.

Intentional and meaningful engagement can take shape in a variety of ways. Examples of intentional engagement include: (1) meeting minority communities where they are at, in spaces that they feel safe and gather, and a time that is convenient for them, (2) engaging in ethnic media, and (3) having a robust language access plan. These examples will be a step forward to ensuring accessibility and cultural competency for minority communities as they procure state services.

The third recommendation is: **building a trusting relationship with Nevada's minority communities and finding a variety of ways to enable their connection to a project, a process, or a group of people through intentional engagement.** This intentional engagement requires time, flexibility, understanding, and a sustained effort.

Recommendations

Increase in interagency collaboration

The survey findings also indicated that only 39% of the responses said they collaborated with other state agencies or divisions to administer programs, initiatives, projects, or services. 61% said they do not collaborate with other state agencies or divisions.

There is a clear absence of state administrative structures and processes that would enable interagency communication and collaboration. However, the work that the Diversity and Inclusion liaisons are doing steps away from that and into a more or less fragmented and isolated state government. For example, the three DIL meetings in this inaugural year introduced state agencies to one another, breaking agency silos.

The last recommendation therefore is to: **promote a more holistic approach to delivering services to Nevadans through an increase in interagency collaboration.** This has the potential to: reduce duplication and fill in gaps in services, support minority communities in navigating complicated systems and accessing services, and leverage funding to pay for existing and potentially additional services.

Conclusion

The passage of Senate Bill 222 during the 81st Legislative Session has instructed state agencies within the Executive Branch to designate a Diversity and Inclusion Liaison (DIL). This initiative has been a step forward in ensuring that programs and services are accessible and inclusive for minority communities in the State of Nevada.

In order to establish a baseline level of how truly accessible state agencies are to minority communities, DILs were asked to answer a survey regarding the accessibility of their programs, projects, services, and initiatives. The survey results were presented to the DILs and minority-serving organizations (MSOs) during the statutorily-required annual meeting.

This open line of communication led to the four recommendations discussed in this report. These recommendations are what was determined between the DILs and MSOs to be the next actionable items to continue with efforts to increase accessibility and inclusivity for services delivered to minority groups.

All four recommendations center around fostering an increase in communication with minority communities in the State of Nevada. Communication has to be intentional and proactive. Both DILs and MSOs agree that collaboration can only propel the accessibility of state programs and services.

While it is to be understood that this work does not end here, this year's collaboration between the Diversity Inclusions Liaisons, the minority-serving organizations, and the Minority Interagency Collaboration is certainly a strong jumping-off point for making state agencies more inclusive.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to all of our **Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs)** who took this role on top of your existing duties. Your contributions and participation are key to the continued success of this initiative.

Thank you to:

- **Senator Melanie Scheible** for sponsoring SB 222 during the 81st Legislative Session. Your efforts will make a huge difference for the minority communities in Nevada.
- **Erik Jimenez** for being instrumental to the passage of SB 222. We commend your active involvement in the development and presentation of the bill. You have been instrumental in this work.
- The **Commissioners of the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs** who participated and supported the inaugural year of the Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons. Your passion and enthusiasm knows no bounds.
- To everyone who testified in support of the bill.



Appendix

*A copy of the trainings are available up request

I. List of Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons

II. List of minority-serving organizations

- CDC foundation
- Immunize Nevada
- Nevada PEP
- R.E.A.C.H
- Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center
- Henderson Equality Center
- LGBTQ Center of Southern Nevada

III. Training Materials

- Immigration 101

The Governor's Office for New Americans created an Immigration 101 which documents the history of immigration in the United States (including categories of New Americans and ways to obtain immigration status). Not only does the document include information on the Nevadan immigrant and refugee population and its role in shaping Nevada, but also the barriers to immigrant and refugee access when it comes to engaging with state government's services, resources, and information. This document can be read in under 15 minutes.

- Social Determinants of Health

This is a training video that describes the symbiotic relationship between societal factors and health so that individuals responsible for advocacy or service delivery recognize the "individualized root causes" for negative circumstances and can then more effectively respond. This resource can be viewed in under 10 minutes.

- Implicit Bias and Cultural Humility

People often expect to learn about Cultural Competency. However, this resource developed by Nevada Office for Minority Health and Equity describes the difference between cultural competency and cultural humility. Cultural competency represents standards about how we can engage with others and cultural humility focuses on adapting our behavior.

The training features voice over narration and illustrates how implicit bias and cultural humility shapes our worldview and in turn impacts how we engage with the communities in which we live or serve. This resource was designed to be reviewed in less than 15 minutes.