

Becoming a Workforce Data Hub for Nevada's Lithium Employers



JUNE 2025 Cohort Launch

THE REGIONAL CHALLENGE:

The Data Gap Behind Nevada's Lithium Loop

Northern Nevada's workforce board, Nevadaworks is responsible for developing skilled workers, filling in-demand talent pipelines, and aligning employer and education needs across the region. Mining has long been a staple of the economy with [global demand for lithium expected to increase fivefold by 2040](#).

To further develop the largest known lithium deposit in the United States, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded Nevada with a Regional Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub) grant to establish the [Nevada Lithium Batteries and Other EV Material Loop](#) (Nevada Tech Hub) in 2025. The \$21 million program, led by the University of Nevada, Reno, aims to align and coordinate innovation and economic development activities across established companies, startups, education, and workforce development organizations to enable this region to become [a global lithium product leader](#). Another investment by Department of Labor's (DOL's) Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant program is focused on developing and implementing a regional worker-centered sector strategy program as it relates to the development of Nevada's clean energy economy.

These new investments in Nevada's energy economy prompted Nevadaworks to track worker participation and outcomes across multiple energy training pathways. With lithium and battery workforce demand growing quickly in Northern Nevada, the region couldn't afford to keep operating with an incomplete picture of its own training pipeline. **The Nevadaworks team set an ambitious agenda: build a clearer, shared understanding with local education providers of what non-credit and short-term training is happening and connect that picture to real wage and employment outcomes.** Closing this gap would let Nevadaworks and its community college partners speak the same language on credential completions for the first time and position the region to anticipate industry needs rather than react to them.

AT A GLANCE

Organization	Nevadaworks
Organization Type	Local Workforce Development Board
Key Sector(s)	Lithium Loop
Geographic Context	Metro
Key Partner Organizations	Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)

Since the inception of the Good Jobs Northern Nevada initiative, Nevadaworks has sought to drive data-informed practice for investments through the public workforce systems. This project helped us enforce the need for broader data sets and identify those areas where we can increase coordination with partners to better surface activity within labor supply and pathway gap analysis."

—Alexandria M. Wright Ph.D., Chief Impact Officer, Nevadaworks

OCT. 2025 → NPWR Access Obtained

NOV. 2025 → NPWR Grant awarded

MARCH 2026 → Employment & Wage Data Sharing Agreement Signed

THE DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH:

Building the Infrastructure

The Nevadaworks team set out to develop a comprehensive data collection process in collaboration with local partners to answer the question: is training available for key jobs in the lithium loop? Answering that question required building the infrastructure to support it.

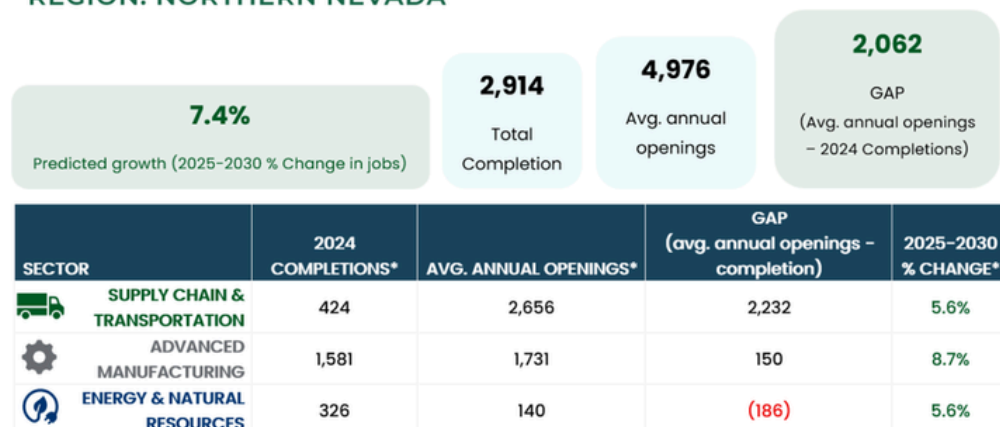
One of the team's first tasks was mapping their data ecosystem: identifying what data existed, where it lived, and what was missing. That exercise surfaced a gap. While Nevadaworks held strong participant-level data for their Good Jobs Northern Nevada grant participants, they lacked immediate access to wage, employment outcome, and training data for other workers. This gap prevented them from being able to tell a complete story about worker progress in the lithium loop.

Closing that gap became a sustained focus throughout the year. Nevadaworks pursued a data sharing agreement with the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) to obtain employment and wage data for program participants: a multi-month process of scoping the request, drafting language, and navigating the approval process. In parallel, the team was onboarded onto Nevada's P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR), which provided access to longitudinal education and workforce metrics previously unavailable to the organization. Nevadaworks also applied for and received an NPWR research grant in partnership with the University Center for Economic Development (UCED) at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). UNR is conducting a skills gap analysis while Nevadaworks is leading an institutional labor supply analysis. **Together, these workstreams are building the evidence base for understanding which populations in the region have the qualifications to fill lithium-focused jobs, and where are the gaps.**

Figure 1.

LITHIUM LOOP Postsecondary Labor Supply

REGION: NORTHERN NEVADA



*Numbers are weighted based on CIP, SOC, and Career Clusters. Count only represents occupation titles that matches with a CIP code with a completion number.

Nevadaworks Lithium Loop Labor Supply Analysis, June 2026

EARLY RESULTS & MILESTONES:

Turning Data into Conversation

An early output of this work was an occupational gap analysis for key lithium loop jobs, comparing average annual openings against 2024 program completions. The analysis revealed significant gaps in several high-demand occupations, including Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Welders, and Industrial/Electrical Engineers. **For several other occupations, completion data was either unavailable or incomplete, underscoring the challenge of capturing the full picture of local labor supply when noncredit, corporate training, and apprenticeship completions are not systematically tracked.** On the operational side, Nevadaworks' Data Architect made meaningful progress in building an internal tracking system to monitor participant journeys and begin linking that data to DETR's wage records.

Key Takeaway #1

Employer engagement needs more than one format. In a sector moving as fast as the lithium loop, one in-person meeting a year wasn't enough to stay current on what employers need. The evolution of the ISP model from quarterly hybrid (online and in-person) meetings to 2 all-day in person convenings plus bimonthly industry pulse meeting check-ins responded to the real employer and educator need for alignment.

Employer engagement emerged as a parallel and equally important data-building effort. In early 2025, Nevadaworks convened an Industry Sector Partnership (ISP) meeting focused on lithium loop industries. Employers signed letters committing to ongoing engagement and shared initial feedback on the types of roles they need filled and their associated training requirements. Building on this momentum, Nevadaworks redesigned the ISP quarterly hybrid meetings model into three distinct engagement structures: an in-person ISP convening twice per year, a bimonthly virtual industry pulse meeting for rapid intelligence-gathering, and a partner retrospective for workforce ecosystem coordination and rapid response. This restructured approach reflects a recognition that **employer intelligence in the fast-moving sectors of the lithium loop requires more frequent and differentiated touchpoints.**

Through Nevadaworks' Industry Sector Partnership meeting, the team brought these threads together, presenting the case for data to community college partners and employer stakeholders and opening a conversation about what cross-system data sharing could look like in the region. Participants across sectors affirmed that data was central to their work but that outcome data and program success stories were often not widely shared or understood; there was difficulty tracking non-credit and employer-sponsored training; and there was a need for clearer definitions across credential types. The session marked a first step in building a more coordinated relationship between Nevadaworks and its community college partners, setting the agenda for the work ahead.

LESSONS LEARNED & WHAT'S NEXT:

A Foundation to Build On

Nevadaworks made important progress on data sharing this year. The team formalized a DETR wage data sharing agreement; gained access to NPWR; and secured a research grant. Like many workforce boards, Nevadaworks carries a broad, cross-program mandate. **What moved this work forward was narrowing in on one specific sector, the lithium loop, and one grant, Good Jobs Northern Nevada, whose programs had a concrete, immediate need for better data.** That focus helped drive the tangible agreements and infrastructure that was produced as a part of this project. What's still ahead is putting that infrastructure to work, analyzing the data now in hand, and continuing to establish Nevadaworks' coordinating role across the partners.

Key Takeaway #2

Non-credit data is often hard to obtain and is a shared challenge among partners. Capturing short-term certificates, non-credit training, and employer-sponsored learning in a consistent, usable way came up repeatedly throughout the year. The occupational gap analysis made this concrete: for several high-demand lithium loop occupations, completion data simply didn't exist in any accessible system. Consolidating this information will require more intentional coordination across employers, educators, and learners.

Nevadaworks is continuing to build on the foundation established during this project. Near-term priorities include analyzing the data from the DETR data sharing agreement, completing the NPWR-funded research with UNR, and releasing findings on the lithium loop labor supply and skills gap. The occupational gap analysis presented at the C2ER conference will continue to be refined as completion data becomes more comprehensive, particularly as noncredit, corporate training, and apprenticeship pathways are more systematically captured. The team is continuing to develop internal participant tracking to support more longitudinal analysis over time.

The conversations opened at the May 2026 ISP convening, particularly around credential visibility and community college alignment, are expected to continue through the restructured ISP model and through direct engagement with community colleges and employers. The DETR data sharing agreement, now formalized, opens the door to an economic contribution analysis of WIOA funding and expanded support for rural and Tribal business attraction, expansion, and retention efforts. **The longer-term goal remains what it was at the start: for Nevadaworks to serve as the leading data hub for the region's lithium loop workforce.**

Learn more about Nevadaworks [here](#).