

NURSING WORKFORCE IN NEVADA

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Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025 is a publication from the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center in the Office of Statewide Initiatives at the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine.

The mission of the Office of Statewide Initiatives is to improve the health of Nevadans through statewide engagement, education, and research.

The vision of programs in the Office of Statewide Initiatives is to promote health and prevent disease, as well as provide technical assistance that increases access to high-quality health care for all Nevadans.

The purpose of the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center is to improve the collection and analysis of data on health workforce supply and demand to enhance health workforce planning and development in Nevada.

Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025

Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025 contains the most currently available data on the nursing workforce in Nevada. Drawing on data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and unpublished data collected by the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center, this report provides a snapshot of statewide and regional nurse workforce trends in Nevada. The report includes information on licensure, employment, and earnings for the following four nursing occupations: registered nurses (RNs), advance practice registered nurses (APRNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and certified nursing assistants (CNAs).

Key Findings

Key findings on nursing licensure and certification trends over the past decade contained in *Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025* include:

- The number of registered nurses in Nevada increased from 21,563 in 2014 to 33,875 in 2024 – an increase of 12,312 or 57.1% (Table 1).
- During the same time period, the number of RNs per 100,000 population in Nevada increased from 762.3 to 1,029.8 – an increase of 35.1% (Table 2).
- Figures 1 and 2 highlight the growth of the RN workforce across regions of the state – the greatest growth has taken place in Clark County where the number of RNs licensed by the State of Nevada has grown by 9,931 or 64.8% over the past decade.
- Over the past decade, the number of advanced practice registered nurses in Nevada increased from 901 in 2014 to 3,507 in 2024 – an increase of 2,606 or 289.2% (Table 3).
- During the same time period, the number of APRNs per 100,000 population in Nevada increased from 31.7 to 106.6 – an increase of 236.4% (Table 4).
- Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the growth of the APRN workforce across every region of the state over the past decade.
- The number of licensed practical nurses in Nevada increased from 2,977 in 2014 to 3,638 in 2024 – a modest increase of 661 or 22.2% (Table 5).

- However, during the same time period, the number of licensed practical nurses per 100,000 population in Nevada increased from 105.2 to 110.6 – an increase of only 5.1% (Table 6).
- Figures 5 and 6 highlight trends in the LPN workforce across regions of Nevada over the past decade. Over the past decade, both the numerical and per capita growth in the LPN workforce across the state has been relatively flat for the past six years.
- The number of certified nursing assistants in Nevada increased from 7,223 in 2014 to 9,475 in 2024 – an increase of 2,252 or 31.2% (Table 7).
- During the same time period, the number of CNAs per 100,000 population in Nevada increased from 262.7 to 288.0 – an increase of 9.6% (Table 8).
- Figures 7 and 8 illustrate regional trends in the CNA workforce since 2014 – these data reveal modest numerical growth in the CNA workforce across the state and negative per capita growth in northern Nevada.

Key findings on nursing workforce employment and earnings in this report include:

- Tables 9 through 12 provide the most current data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on the employed nursing workforce in Nevada by region of the state. These tables also provide estimates of the number of additional nurses needed to meet national per capita rates of employed nursing personnel.

In order to meet national per capita employment rates, Nevada would need an additional 4,913 registered nurses, an additional 717 advanced practice registered nurses, an additional 3,154 licensed practical nurses, and an additional 5,372 CNAs.

- Tables 13 and 14 summarize the most current data on the average hourly and annual wage of the employed nursing workforce in Nevada by region of the state.

The average annual salary of an employed RN in Nevada is \$97,700 and ranges from \$94,250 in rural counties to \$98,190 in Clark County.

The average annual salary of an employed APRN in Nevada is \$148,670 and ranges from \$138,730 in rural counties to \$154,720 in Carson City.

- Figure 9 summarizes registered nurse employment and earnings in Nevada and neighboring states. This figure highlights that each of the six states bordering Nevada possess shortfalls in the number of RNs that are needed to reach national per capita averages, ranging from 2,041 RNs needed in Oregon to 41,103 RNs needed in California. All seven Western states are experiencing nursing workforce shortages aggravated by above-average population growth and aging populations.

This report provides current information on registered nurse graduation and retention trends from nursing programs in the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and private nursing programs in Nevada. Highlights from *Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025* include:

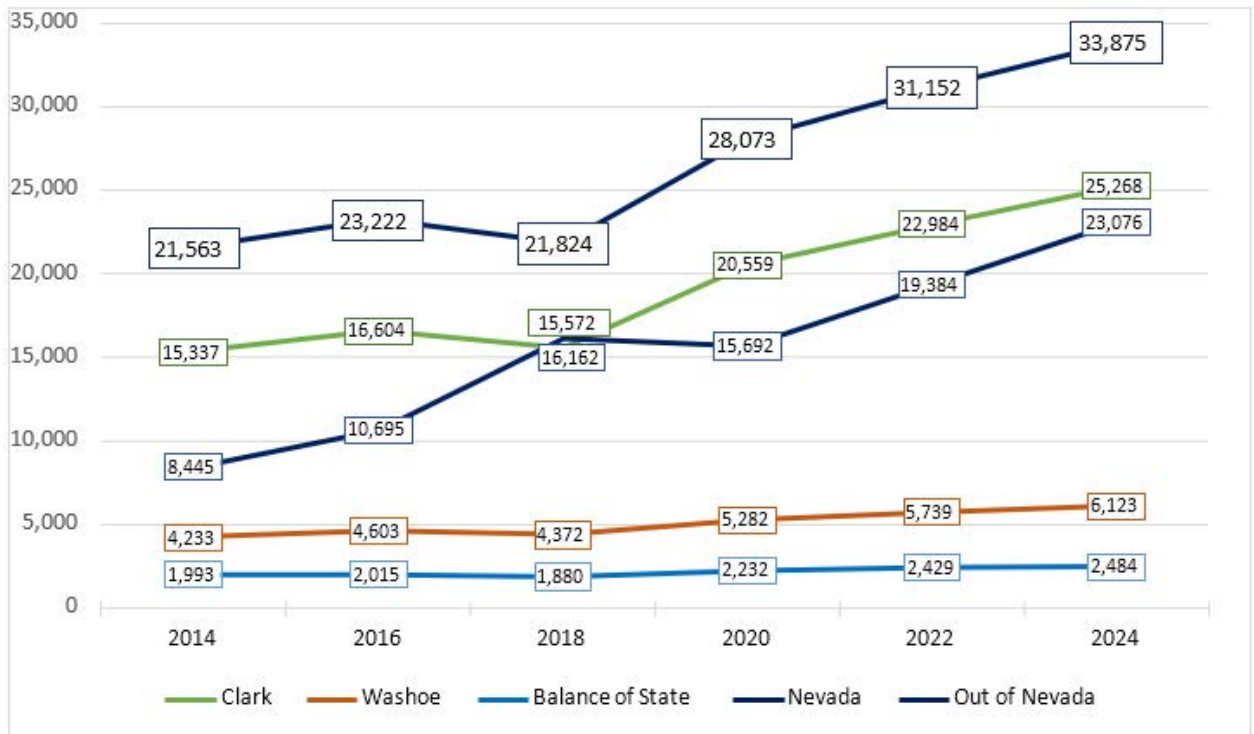
- From 2014 to 2023, the number of registered nurse program graduates in Nevada increased by 980 or 122.0% (Table 15).
- Figures 10 and 11 highlight graduation trends from, respectively, bachelor-degree and associate-degree programs in Nevada over the past decade. Despite pandemic-related disruptions from 2020 to 2023, both NSHE and private nursing programs across the state have experienced steady growth in the number of graduates prepared for licensure in Nevada over the past decade.
- Figures 12 and 13 provide unpublished data collected by the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center on nursing program graduates from, respectively, NSHE Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) and associate degree in nursing programs who plan to remain in Nevada upon graduation to begin their nursing careers. These data indicate consistently high levels of nursing graduate retention across the state over the course of the decade.
- Over the past decade, retention rates from NSHE BSN programs ranged from 73.2% to 98.3% (Figure 12) and retention rates from NSHE associate's degree in nursing programs have ranged from 73.3% to 97.4% (Figure 13).

Table 1: Registered Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Registered Nurses						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	518	538	470	531	558	578	60	11.6
Clark County	15,337	16,604	15,572	20,559	22,984	25,268	9,931	64.8
Washoe County	4,233	4,603	4,372	5,282	5,739	6,123	1,890	44.6
Rural & Frontier	1,475	1,477	1,410	1,701	1,871	1,906	431	29.2
Nevada – Total	21,563	23,222	21,824	28,073	31,152	33,875	12,312	57.1
Out of Nevada	8,445	10,695	16,162	15,692	19,384	23,076	14,631	173.3

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 1: Registered Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



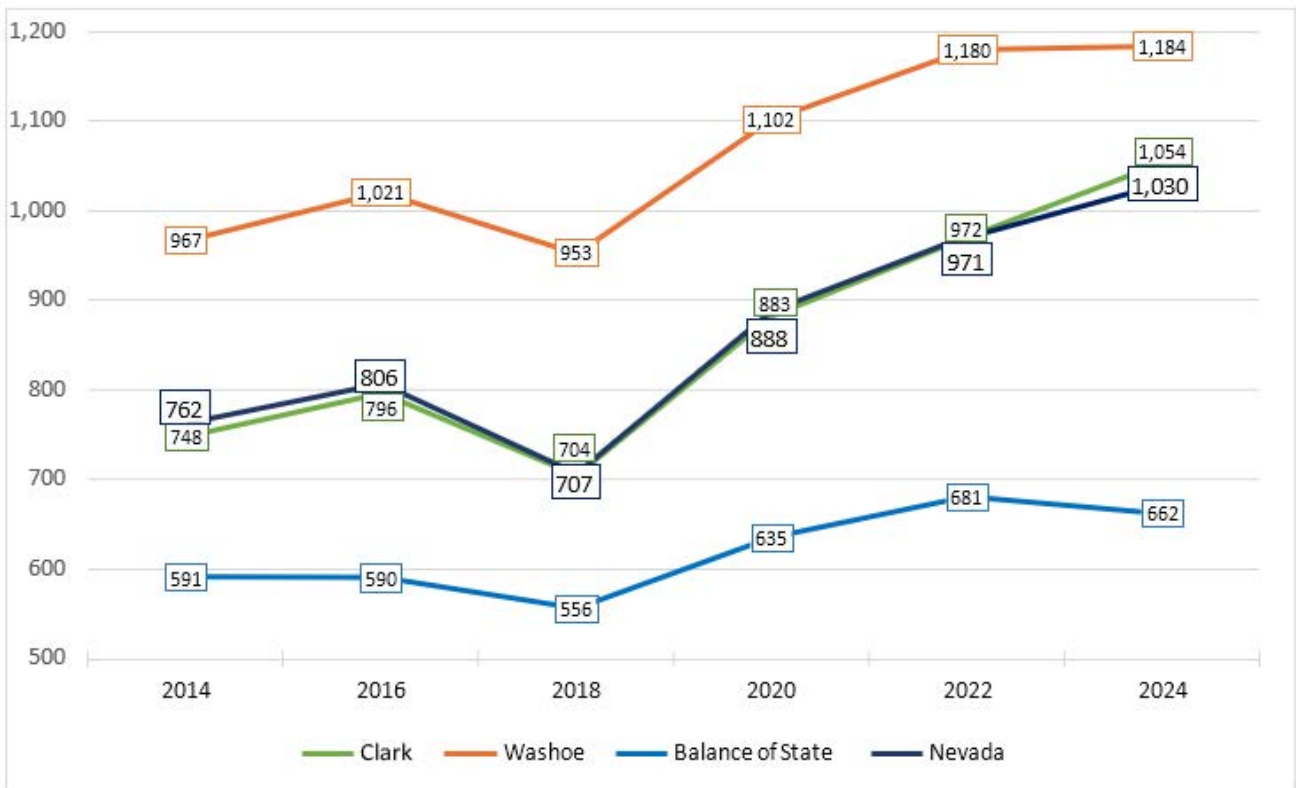
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 2: Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	945.7	975.2	841.0	941.9	978.8	972.0	26.3	2.8
Clark County	747.7	796.0	704.4	882.5	971.6	1,054.2	306.5	41.0
Washoe County	967.4	1,021.3	953.1	1,102.5	1,180.0	1,183.9	216.5	22.4
Rural & Frontier	518.5	512.9	490.4	574.8	625.2	603.3	84.8	16.4
Nevada – Total	762.3	806.4	706.6	888.1	971	1,029.8	267.5	35.1

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 2: Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



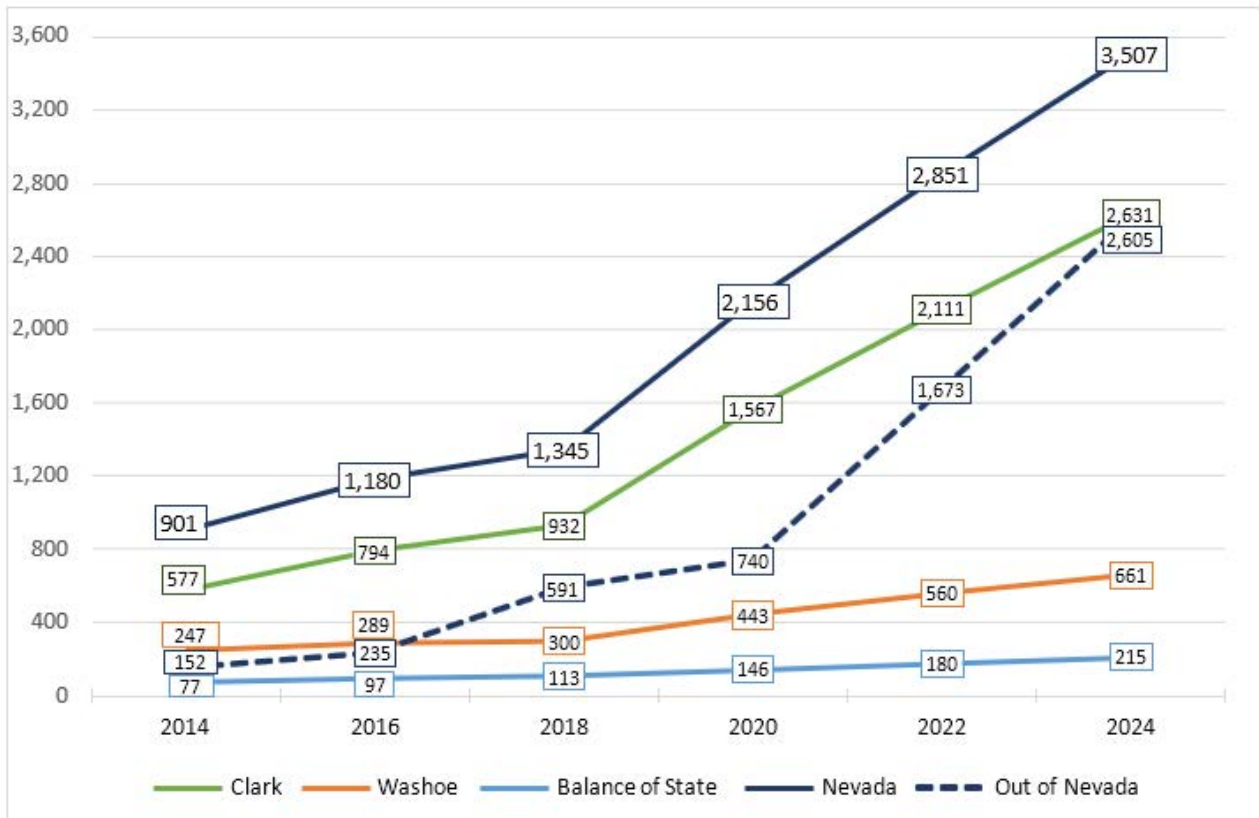
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 3: Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Advanced Practice Registered Nurses						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	21	25	35	40	49	60	39	185.7
Clark County	577	794	932	1,567	2,111	2,631	2,054	356.0
Washoe County	247	289	300	443	560	661	414	167.6
Rural & Frontier	56	72	78	106	131	155	99	176.8
Nevada – Total	901	1,180	1,349	2,156	2,851	3,507	2,606	289.2
Out of Nevada	152	235	591	740	1,673	2,605	2,453	1,612.8

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 3: Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 4: Advanced Practice Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Advance Practice Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	38.9	45.0	62.4	71.0	86.0	100.9	62.0	159.4
Clark County	20.0	36.7	41.4	67.0	89.2	109.8	89.8	448.8
Washoe County	56.4	64.5	65.2	92.6	115.2	127.8	71.4	126.4
Rural & Frontier	19.8	25.4	28.3	35.9	43.8	49.1	29.7	147.8
Nevada – Total	31.7	40.1	44.8	68.2	88.9	106.6	75.0	236.4

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 4: Advanced Practice Registered Nurses per 100,000 Population – 2014 to 2024



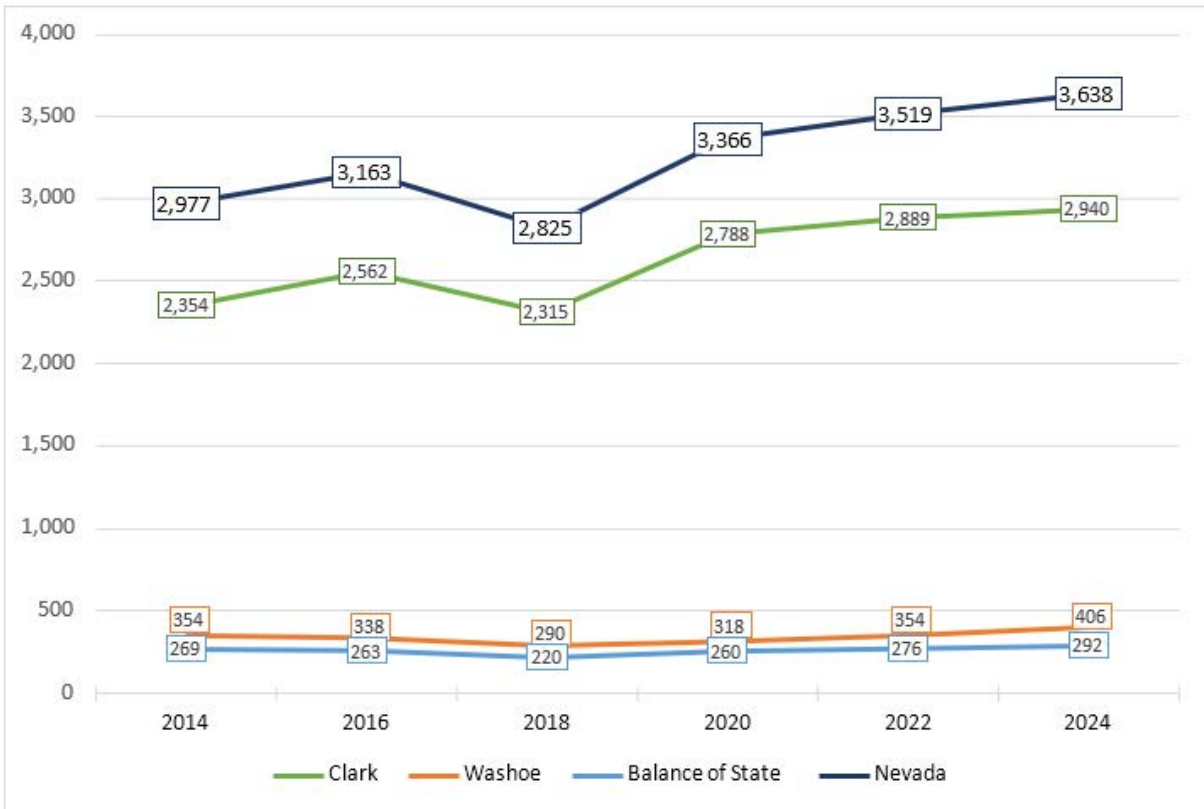
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 5: Licensed Practical Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Licensed Practical Nurses						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	50	46	32	38	43	42	-8	-16.0
Clark County	2,354	2,562	2,315	2,788	2,889	2,940	586	24.9
Washoe County	354	338	290	318	354	406	52	14.7
Rural & Frontier	219	217	188	222	233	250	31	14.2
Nevada – Total	2,977	3,163	2,825	3,366	3,519	3,638	661	22.2

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 5: Licensed Practical Nurses in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



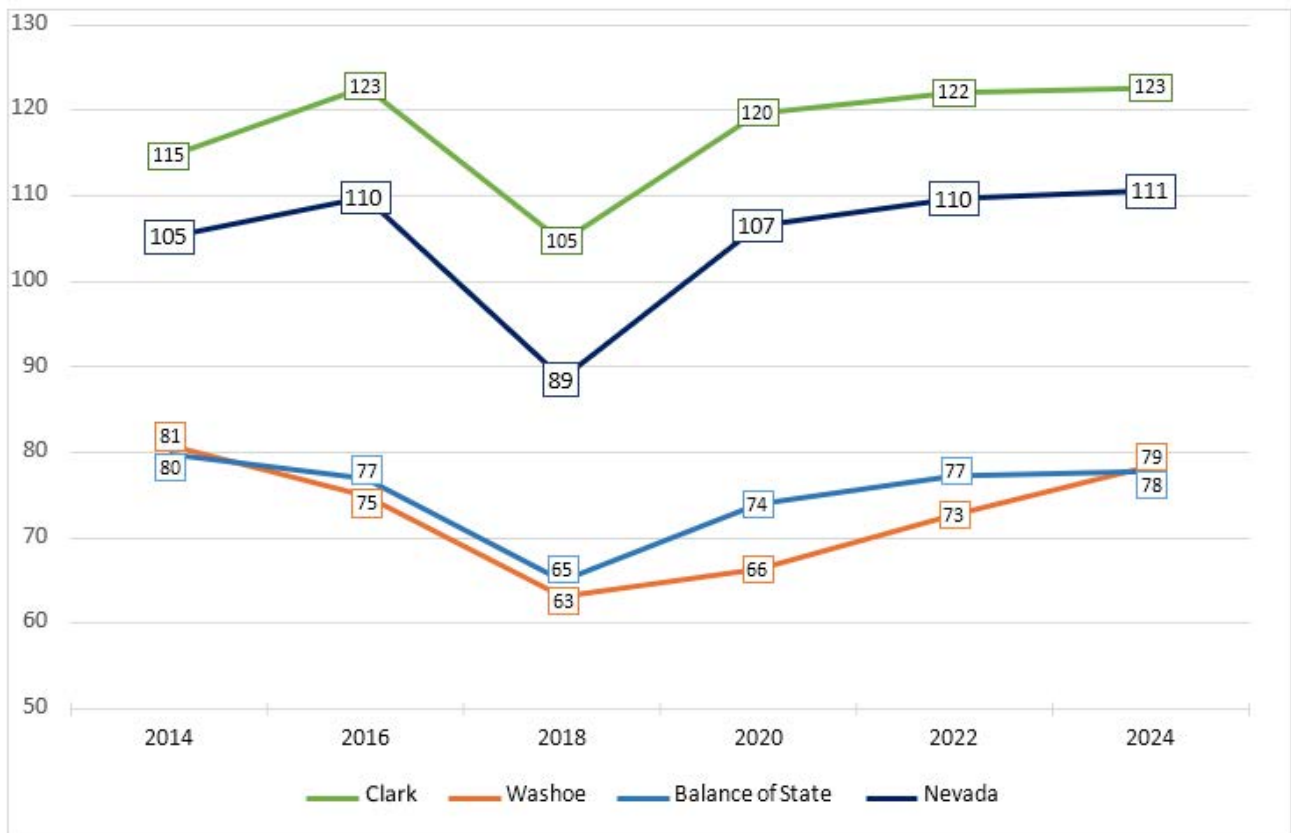
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 6: Licensed Practical Nurses per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Licensed Practical Nurses per 100,000 Population						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	91.3	83.4	57.3	67.4	75.5	70.6	-20.7	-22.7
Clark County	114.7	122.8	104.7	119.7	122.1	122.7	8.0	7.0
Washoe County	80.9	75.0	63.2	66.4	72.8	78.5	-2.4	-3.0
Rural & Frontier	77.0	75.4	65.4	75.0	77.9	79.1	2.1	2.7
Nevada – Total	105.2	109.8	88.6	106.5	109.7	110.6	5.4	5.1

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 6: Licensed Practical Nurses per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2012 to 2022



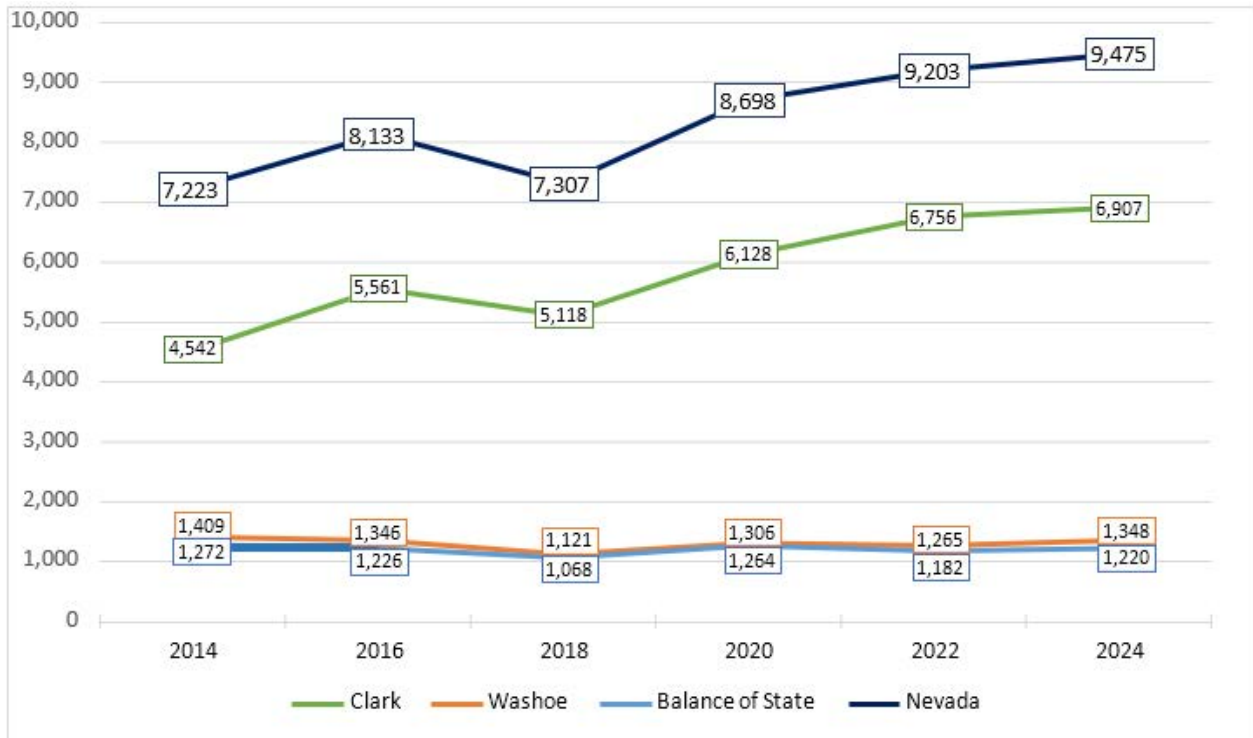
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 7: Certified Nursing Assistants in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	301	283	257	295	282	262	-39	-13.0
Clark County	4,542	5,561	5,118	6,128	6,756	6,907	2,385	52.1
Washoe County	1,409	1,346	1,121	1,306	1,265	1,348	-61	-4.3
Rural & Frontier	971	943	811	969	900	958	-13	-1.3
Nevada – Total	7,223	8,133	7,307	8,698	9,203	9,475	2,252	31.2

Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 7: Certified Nursing Assistants in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



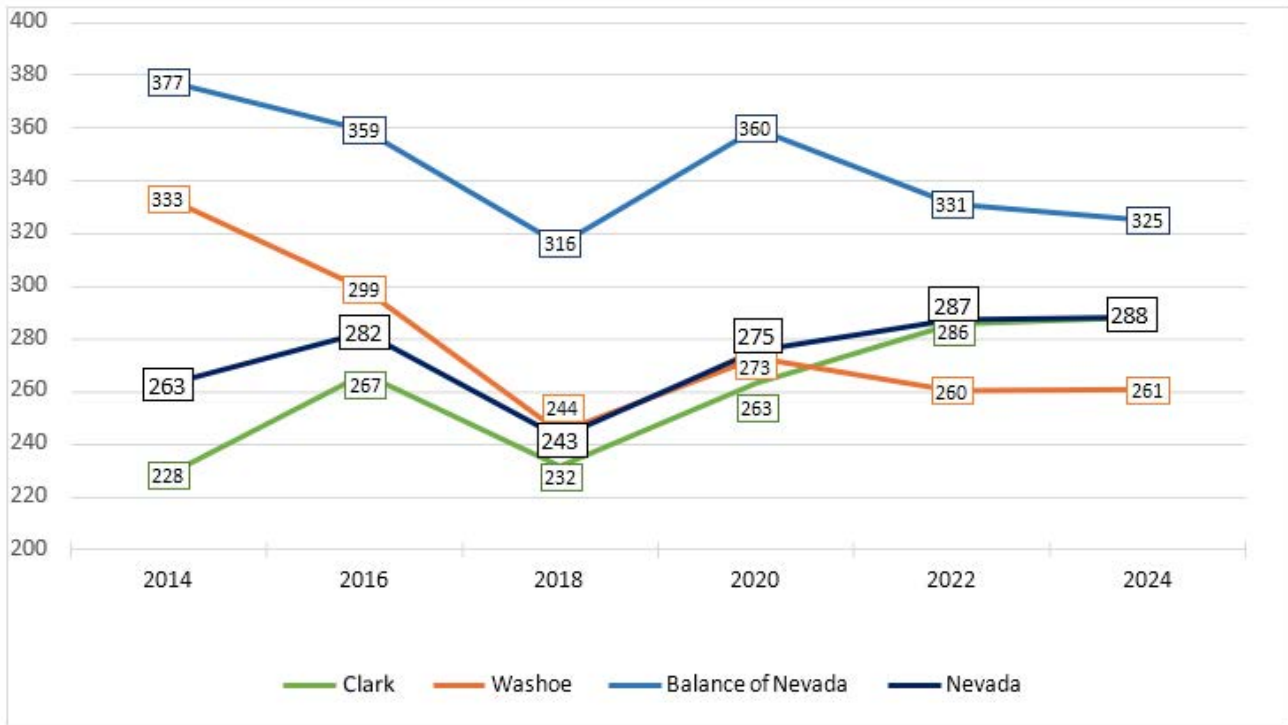
Source: Unpublished licensure data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 8: Certified Nursing Assistants per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

County / Region	Certified Nursing Assistants per 100,000 Population						Change – 2014 to 2024	
	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	Number	Percent
Carson City	542.5	513.0	459.9	523.3	495.1	440.6	-101.9	-18.8
Clark County	228.4	266.6	231.5	263.1	285.6	288.2	59.8	26.2
Washoe County	333.1	298.7	244.4	272.6	260.1	260.6	-72.5	-21.8
Rural & Frontier	343.7	327.4	282.0	327.5	300.7	303.2	-40.5	-11.8
Nevada – Total	262.7	282.4	242.5	275.5	286.9	288.0	25.3	9.6

Source: Unpublished data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Figure 8: Certified Nursing Assistants per 100,000 Population in Nevada – 2014 to 2024



Source: Unpublished data from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024).

Table 9: Registered Nurse Employment in Nevada – 2023

County / Region	Employed Registered Nurses		
	Number	Location Quotient	Additional Number Needed to Meet National Average
Carson City	730	1.13	(84)
Clark County	19,460	0.86	3,168
Washoe County	4,600	0.87	688
Rural & Frontier	940	0.45	1,149
Nevada – Total	25,890	0.84	4,913

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Note: A location quotient (LQ) for an occupation in Nevada is a measure of the occupation’s concentration within the state or a region of the state compared to the national average. An LQ greater than 1.0 indicates a higher concentration of an occupation than the national average. An LQ below 1.0 represents a lower concentration of an occupation in the state or a region of the state than the national average. Registered nurses and most health care occupations in Nevada have LQs below the national average (1.0).

Table 10: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Employment in Nevada – 2023

County / Region	Employed Advanced Practice Registered Nurses		
	Number	Location Quotient (LQs)	Additional Number Needed to Meet National Average
Carson City	70	1.19	(11)
Clark County	1,450	0.72	564
Washoe County	370	0.80	93
Rural & Frontier	130	0.71	53
Nevada – Total	2,040	0.74	717

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Note: A location quotient (LQ) for an occupation in Nevada is a measure of the occupation’s concentration within the state or a region of the state compared to the national average. An LQ greater than 1.0 indicates a higher concentration of an occupation than the national average. An LQ below 1.0 represents a lower concentration of an occupation in the state or a region of the state than the national average. Advanced Practical Register nurses and most health care occupations in Nevada have LQs below the national average (1.0).

Table 11: Licensed Practical Nurse Employment in Nevada – 2023

County / Region	Employed Licensed Practical Nurses		
	Employment	Location Quotient (LQs)	Additional Number Needed to Meet National Average
Carson City	90	0.69	40
Clark County	2,290	0.51	2,200
Washoe County	480	0.45	587
Rural & Frontier	160	0.39	250
Nevada – Total	3,030	0.49	3,154

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Note: A location quotient (LQ) for an occupation in Nevada is a measure of the occupation’s concentration within the state or a region of the state compared to the national average. An LQ greater than 1.0 indicates a higher concentration of an occupation than the national average. An LQ below 1.0 represents a lower concentration of an occupation in the state or a region of the state than the national average. Licensed Practical nurses and most health care occupations in Nevada have LQs below the national average (1.0).

Table 12: Certified Nursing Assistant Employment in Nevada –2023

County / Region	Employed Certified Nursing Assistants		
	Employment	Location Quotient (LQs)	Additional Number Needed to Meet National Average
Carson City	260	0.93	20
Clark County	5,890	0.61	3,766
Washoe County	1,190	0.53	1,055
Rural & Frontier	370	0.42	511
Nevada – Total	7,730	0.59	5,372

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Note: A location quotient (LQ) for an occupation in Nevada is a measure of the occupation’s concentration within the state or a region of the state compared to the national average. An LQ greater than 1.0 indicates a higher concentration of an occupation than the national average. An LQ below 1.0 represents a lower concentration of an occupation in the state or a region of the state than the national average. Certified Nursing Assistant and most health care occupations in Nevada have LQs below the national average (1.0).

Table 13: Average Hourly Wage of the Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2023

County / Region	Mean Hourly Wage (Dollars)			
	Registered Nurses	Advanced Practice Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses	Certified Nursing Assistants
Carson City	\$45.36	\$74.39	\$32.82	\$21.41
Clark County	\$41.21	\$72.10	\$31.67	\$20.91
Washoe County	\$46.71	\$70.55	\$33.46	\$21.00
Balance of State	\$45.31	\$66.70	\$32.12	\$19.26
Nevada – Total	\$46.97	\$71.84	\$32.01	\$20.87

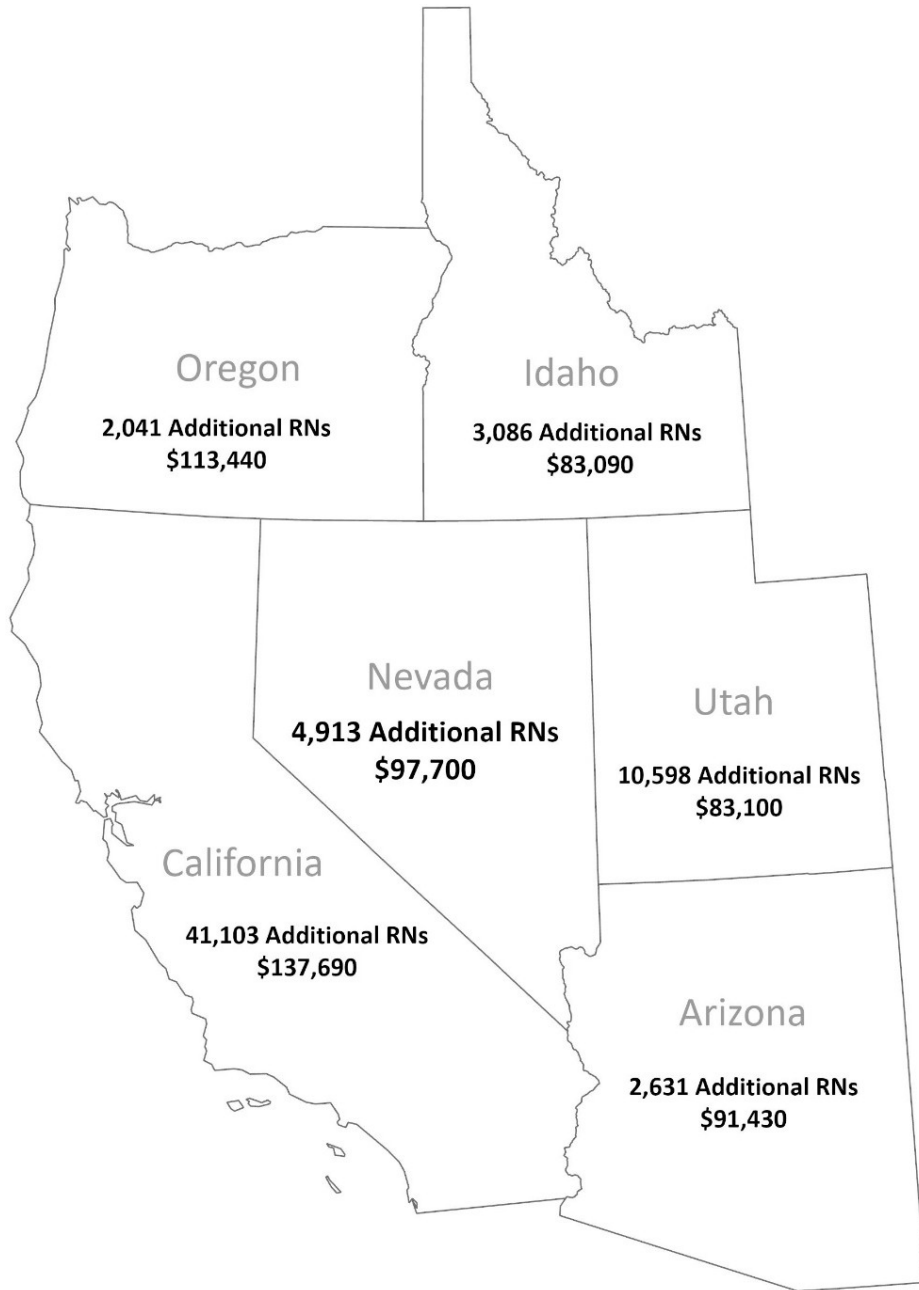
Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Table 14: Average Annual Wage of the Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2023

County / Region	Mean Annual Wage (Dollars)			
	Registered Nurses	Advanced Practice Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses	Certified Nursing Assistants
Carson City	\$94,350	\$154,720	\$68,260	\$44,530
Clark County	\$98,190	\$149,960	\$65,880	\$43,500
Washoe County	\$97,160	\$146,740	\$69,600	\$43,680
Balance of State	\$94,250	\$138,730	\$66,810	\$40,050
Nevada – Total	\$97,700	\$148,670	\$66,580	\$43,420

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Figure 9: Average Annual Wage and Number of Additional Registered Nurses Needed to Meet the National Average in Nevada and Neighboring States



Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov). Data Retrieved on March 1, 2025.

Table 15: Graduates from Registered Nurse Degree Programs in Nevada – AY 2014/2015 to AY 2023/2024

NSHE BSN Degree Program

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Nevada State University	81	78	99	177	176	176	201	254	236	188	107	132.1
University of Nevada, Las Vegas	119	128	132	126	136	146	196	240	252	242	123	103.4
University of Nevada, Reno	106	125	126	125	123	125	159	143	128	179	73	68.9
<i>Subtotal – NSHE BSN Programs</i>	<i>306</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>428</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>447</i>	<i>556</i>	<i>637</i>	<i>616</i>	<i>609</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>99.0</i>

Private BSN Degree Program

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Arizona College	0	0	0	3	35	61	83	135	185	248	248	0.0
Chamberlain University	0	0	0	91	97	81	115	170	170	173	173	0.0
Galen College of Nursing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Grand Canyon University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	15	0.0
Roseman University	116	166	163	218	214	214	160	166	177	176	60	51.7
Unitek College	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	62	0.0
<i>Subtotal – Private BSN Degree Programs</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>346</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>358</i>	<i>471</i>	<i>532</i>	<i>674</i>	<i>558</i>	<i>481.0</i>

BSN Degree Programs Total Summary

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Total – BSN Degree Programs in Nevada	422	497	520	740	781	803	914	1,108	1,148	1,283	861	204.0

NSHE Associate Degree Program

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Great Basin College (AAS)	19	16	26	26	30	26	38	30	27	26	7	36.8
College of Southern Nevada (AAS)	175	174	195	195	209	209	192	109	97	169	-6	-3.4
Western Nevada College (AAS)	39	43	45	41	52	52	50	48	44	54	15	38.5
Truckee Meadows Community College (ASN)	47	43	57	52	55	55	71	69	58	55	8	17.0
<i>Subtotal – NSHE Associate Degree Programs</i>	280	276	323	314	346	342	351	256	226	304	24	8.6

Private Associate Degree Program

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Carrington College, Las Vegas (ADN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	13	0.0
Carrington College, Reno (ADN)	101	94	124	101	79	79	164	126	141	183	82	81.2
Galen College of Nursing (ADN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Nevada Career Institute (ADN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
<i>Subtotal – Private Associate Degree Programs</i>	101	94	124	101	79	79	164	126	141	196	95	94.1

Associate Degree Programs Total Summary

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Total – Associate Degree Programs in Nevada	381	370	447	415	425	421	515	382	367	500	119	31.2

RN Degree Programs Grand Total Summary

Program/Institution	Number of Graduates by Academic Year (AY)										Change – AY14/15 to AY23/24	
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Number	Percent
Grant Total – RN Degree Programs in Nevada	803	867	967	1,155	1,206	1,224	1,429	1,490	1,515	1,783	980	122.0

Source: Annual Reports from the Nevada State Board of Nursing (2014 to 2024)

Figure 10: Graduates from BSN Degree Programs in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

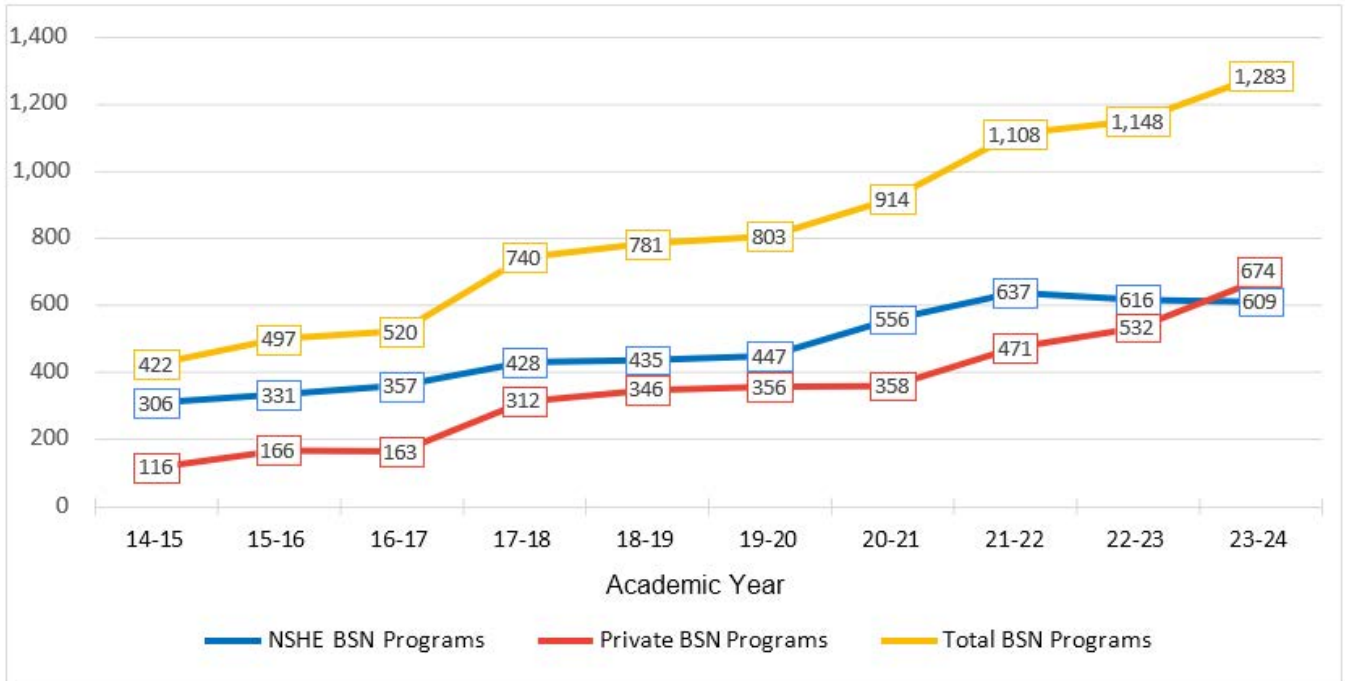


Figure 11: Graduates from Associate Degree RN Programs in Nevada – 2014 to 2024

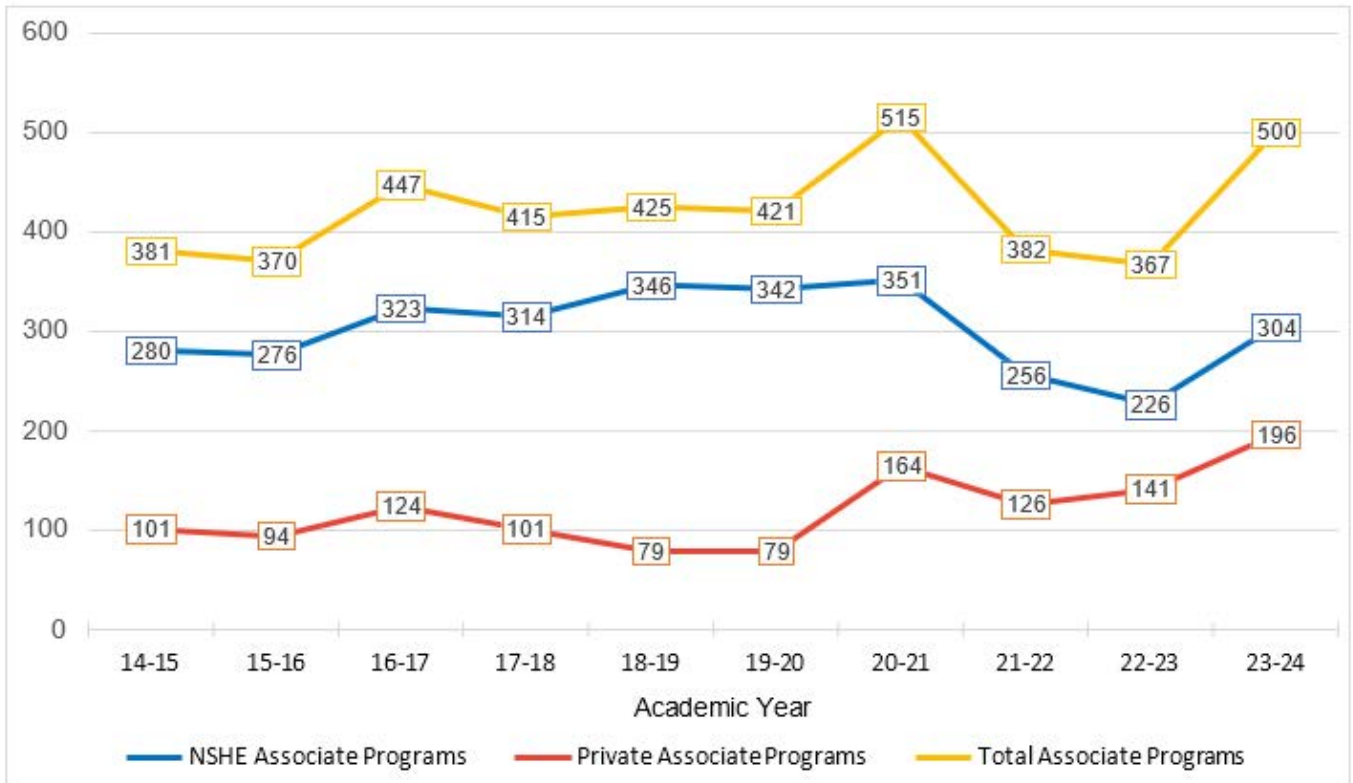


Figure 12: Retention Rates from NSHE BSN Degree Programs – 2014 to 2024

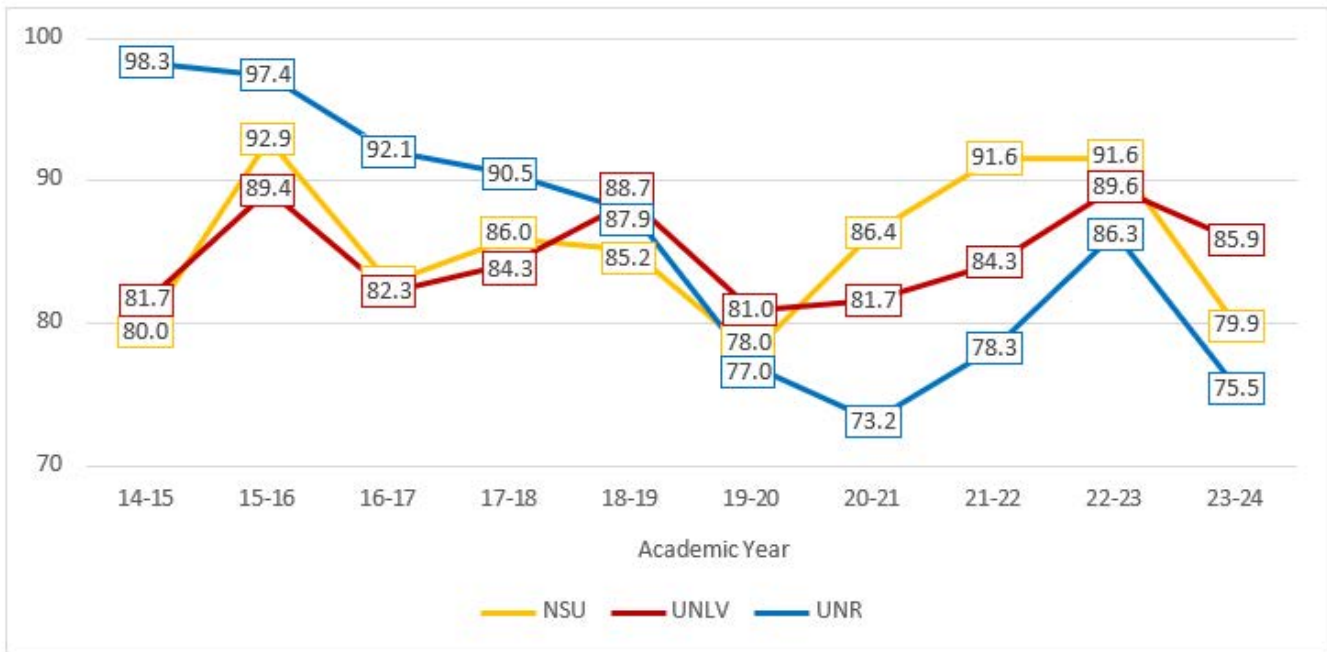
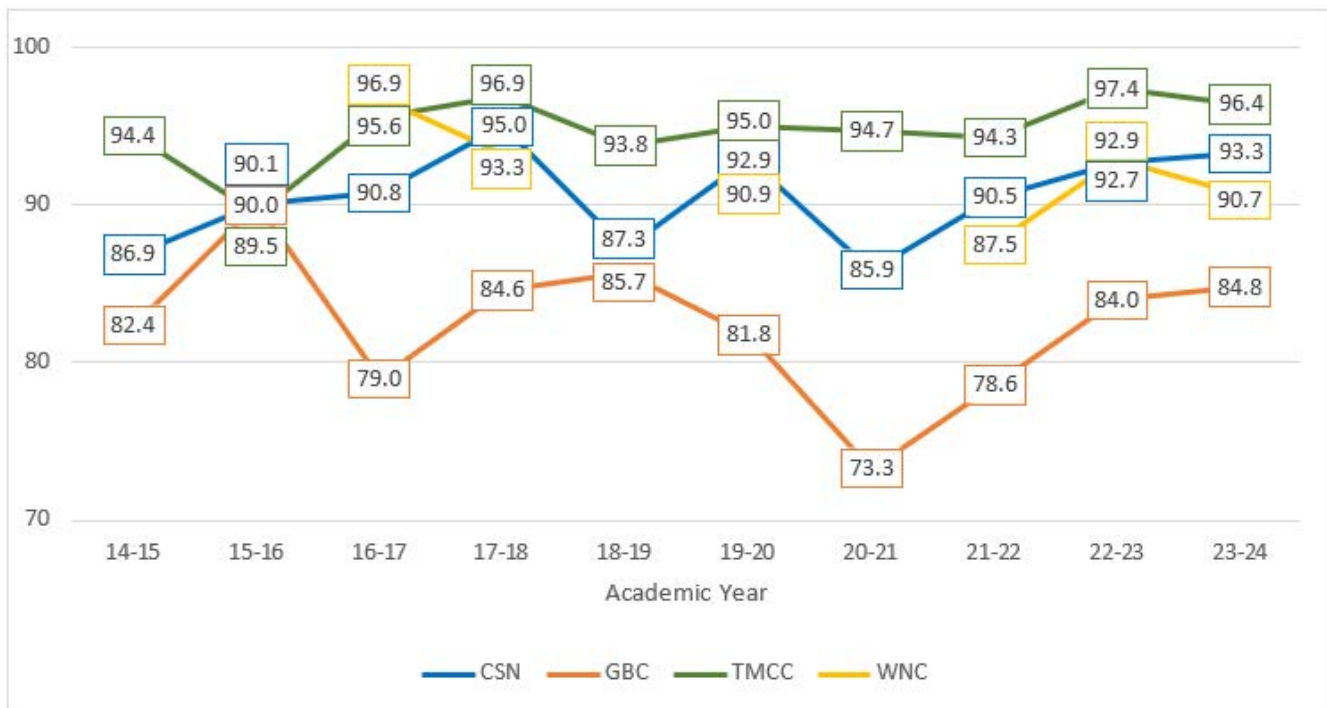


Figure 13: Retention Rates from NSHE Associate Degree Nursing Programs – 2014 to 2024



Discussion and Policy Considerations

Data contained in *Nursing Workforce in Nevada – 2025* highlight the considerable progress made over the past decade in increasing the number of registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses licensed by the Nevada State Board of Nursing and practicing in the state. The report also documents progress made by public and private education programs that prepare students for licensure as registered nurses in Nevada. Even more encouraging, growth in the number of registered nurses licensed and employed in patient care settings in Nevada have begun to outpace population growth for the first time in decades.

Nonetheless, the report's analysis of employment data indicates that employment rates for all nursing occupations are well below national averages. Indeed, the report's conclusions on the number of additional nursing personnel needed to meet national per capita rates are sobering. To meet national employment rates or averages, Nevada would need an additional:

- 4,913 registered nurses
- 717 advanced practice registered nurses
- 3,154 licensed practical nurses
- 5,372 certified nursing assistants

In short, like many other segments of the health workforce in Nevada, the nursing workforce remains underdeveloped by regional and national standards.

Nevada policymakers and nursing stakeholders must continue to pursue strategies that expand the nursing workforce supply in order to meet the evolving health care needs of Nevada residents and the growing demand for registered nurses in our state across a wide range of health care settings. The nursing shortage threatens access to health care in Nevada when available hospital beds and service lines are reduced or, worse, closed due to inadequate staffing.

The nursing shortage also results in added costs borne by Nevada citizens and health care employers, including productivity losses due to instability in the existing workforce, added labor costs associated with traveling nurses and extended overtime for existing nursing staff, additional recruitment costs, training and onboarding costs for new hires, and patient safety failures and medical errors when facilities are understaffed.

In the simplest terms, the nursing shortage refers to a demand for registered nurses by employers in Nevada in excess of the available supply registered nurses. Population growth and aging, continued insurance coverage expansion, and a recovering economy will drive steady demand for health care services and, thus, the need for additional registered nurses in Nevada over the next decade.

As noted, Nevada has recently made steady progress in expanding the supply of licensed health professionals across the state, including the nursing workforce, over the past decade. However, hospitals and other employers of nurses in Nevada continue to report high vacancy rates and turnover for registered nurses, as well as ongoing reliance on expensive travel nurses to meet hospital and long-term care staffing needs. Nevada’s nursing workforce shortage is compounded by an aging nursing workforce beginning to exit the workforce and continued labor market volatility in the wake of the pandemic.

Analysis by the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center reveals persistent, widespread health professional shortages in Nevada. Currently, there are approximately 2.2 million Nevadans or 64.9% of the state’s population reside in a federally-designated primary medical care health professional shortage area (HPSA) – 12 of 17 counties in Nevada are single-county primary medical care HPSAs. Worse, an estimated 3.0 million Nevadans or 91.3% of the state’s population reside in a federally designated mental health professional shortage area – 15 of 17 counties in Nevada are single-county mental HPSAs. Efforts to address the nursing shortage thus have added urgency given competing health workforce development challenges and enduring unmet population health needs in Nevada. As such, addressing the current nursing shortage is critical to improving population health and reducing health disparities in Nevada.

Nursing workforce shortages will require the pursuit of policy measures and strategies to increase the supply of registered nurses, improve the diversity of the nursing workforce, and address the geographic maldistribution of the state’s nursing and health workforce. Above all, increasing the supply of nurses will require expanded and targeted investments in public nursing degree programs to increase the number of graduates at all degree levels across all regions of Nevada.

The Nevada State Legislature plays a critical role in ensuring that Nevada’s health, education, and workforce policies address access barriers, control health care costs, and meet the health care needs of its residents. In the broadest terms, state policy measures and actions to address nursing and other health workforce shortages fall into three general categories or “buckets”:

- 1) *“Grow your own” strategies and policy measures that expand existing Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) nursing and health care education programs and capacity in Nevada.* These measures also include education-industry collaboration such as nurse apprenticeship programs and the ongoing development of nursing career ladders within larger hospitals and health systems.
- 2) *Strategies and policy measures that “stretch” the existing nursing and health workforce in Nevada.* These measures include the utilization and reimbursement of telehealth

technologies and team-based models of care that maximize the use of nurses and other health support staff practicing at the top of their scope of practice and licensure.

- 3) *“Recruitment and retention” strategies and policy measures that tap the available nursing workforce in other states and countries.* These strategies include the participation in inter-state licensure compacts and reciprocity agreements. These measures also include state and federal programs that provide loan repayment funds to nurses and other eligible practitioners in exchange for their service in rural and medically underserved communities in the state.

Addressing current and projected nursing workforce shortages will require state policymakers to prioritize and implement proven policy measures and strategies from all three buckets. Some measures will require new or expanded general fund support from the state legislature for NSHE nursing programs, while other measures will require policy changes to existing state law, or administrative and licensing regulations for nursing education and health facilities.

All successful strategies and policy measures will require greater collaboration and coordination among state policymakers, the health care industry, higher education, and an increasingly diverse set of nursing workforce stakeholders in Nevada during the current legislative biennium and beyond. Eliminating the current nursing shortage is an essential component of our state’s strategy to improve access to care, contain health care costs and spending, and improve population health in the coming decade.



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