



# 2024 Annual Report



# Closing the Gap

## Letter from President & CEO, Ila Friedenthal

2024 marked a year of transformational growth for Nevada Women's Fund. As an organization we took a moment to reflect on the remarkable achievements made over the past 42 years, and then set our sights on the future—a future we proudly declared to be bright.

With record-breaking events (page 7) and a historic half-million dollars awarded in scholarships (page 5), we've seen firsthand the power of our mission to do more and be more—both for the women we serve and the northern Nevada communities we call home. Through a facilitated strategic planning process, we came to a crucial realization: Nevada Women's Fund's role is not only to empower women through education, but to CLOSE THE GAP—the gap between educational attainment and economic equality.

The following pages showcase the foundation we built in 2024 to strengthen our scholarship program, including our Corporate Scholarship initiative (page 10), partnerships with the trades industries to highlight the value women bring to these fields (page 9), and a dedicated focus on supporting our vital rural communities (page 8).

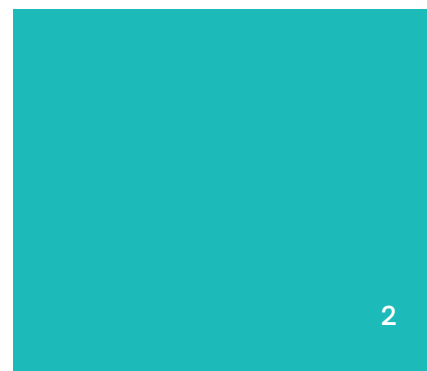
To truly CLOSE THE GAP, we must also confront the barriers women face in the workplace. We are excited to introduce the Summit Project (page 13), an initiative centered on supporting the professional development and career advancement of women, advocating for wage parity, and workplace equality—ultimately empowering women to achieve their full potential.

Join us as we come together in 2025 to Empower & Elevate women, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for all.



**Ila Friedenthal**

President & CEO





# 2025 Board of Directors

**Chair**  
Candy Borrego

**Vice Chair**  
Craig Wesner

**Treasurer**  
Ben Calingaert

**Recorder**  
Angela Bradley

**Immediate Past Chair**  
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- Sandhya Bhakta  
Cari Blomquist  
Randy Brown  
Katie Coleman  
Eleanor Corn  
Danielle Eaton  
Joey Ganser  
Valerie Hahn  
Kara Harris  
Lisa Harrison  
Kendra Jepsen  
Beth Macmillan  
Kara Martinezmoles  
Tiffany McMacken

Dr. Kristen McNeill  
Erica Mirich  
Nicola Neilon  
Laura Nelson  
Cynthia Osborn  
Kami Porterfield  
Gretchen Sawyer  
Norma Seltz  
Sarah Sommers  
Kristin Spracklin  
Kerry Sutherland  
Courtney Sweet  
Frankie Vigil  
Viki Windfeldt



# Nevada Women’s Fund Staff



**President & CEO**  
Ila Friedenthal

**Director of Operations & Events**  
Marge Millar

**Director of Development & Programs**  
Michele Montoya

**Marketing & Communications Manager**  
Morgan Gottier

# Nevada Women's Fund

Through a comprehensive strategic planning process, we updated and expanded our strategic orientation in 2024.

*Mission:*

**Empowering women to achievement through education  
& career advancement opportunities**

*Vision:*

**A strong community where women face no barriers to achievement**

*Values:*

**We trust women**

**We commit to  
transparency**

**We lead with  
gratitude**

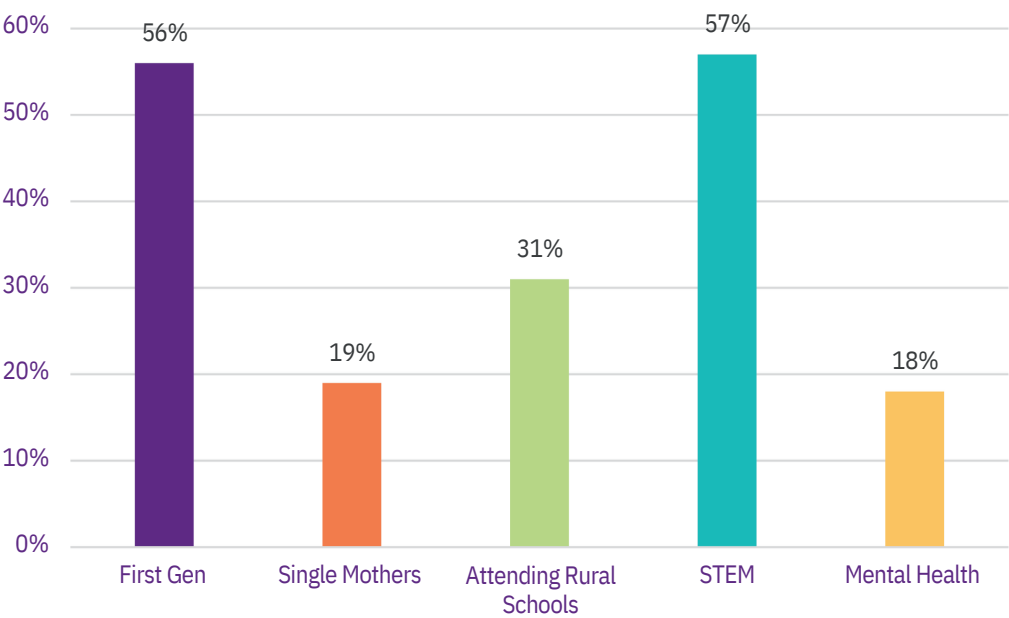
**We believe in the  
power of partnership**





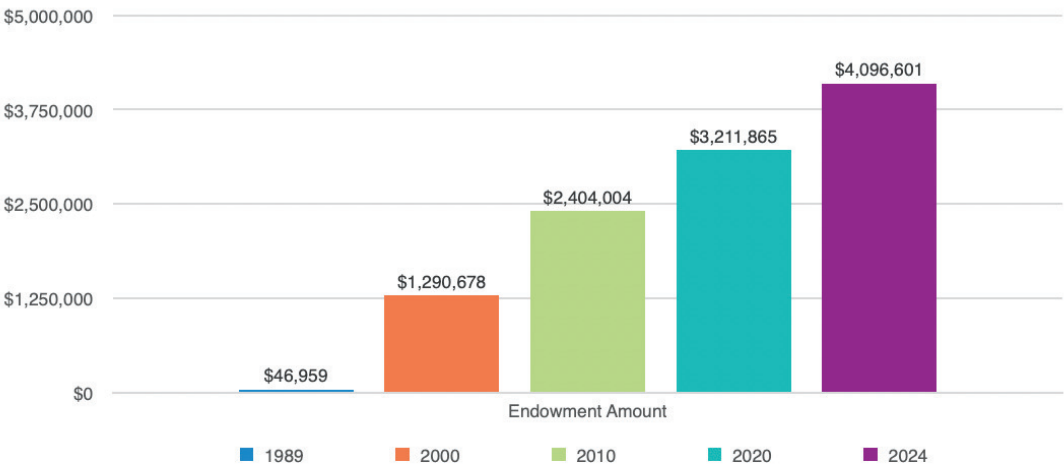
# 2024 Scholarship Funding

A record breaking \$500,000 was awarded in 2024!



# 2024 Endowment Update

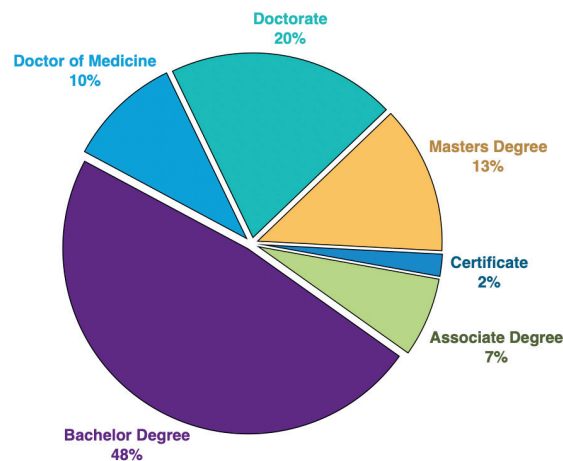
We welcomed eight new endowed scholarships and added over \$320,000 to the endowment in 2024.



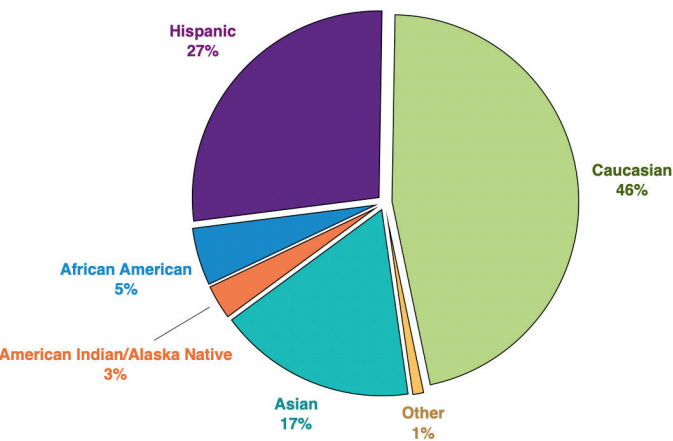


# 2024 Scholarship Statistics

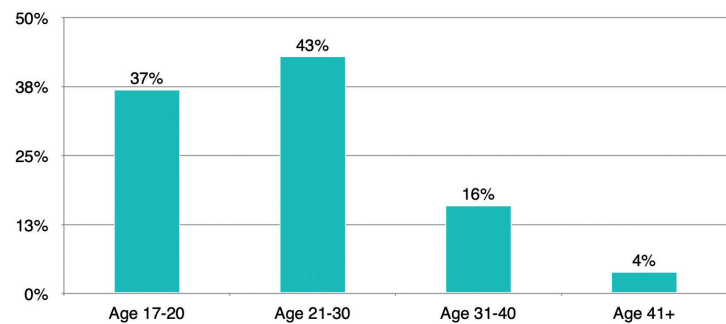
Scholarships Awarded by Degree



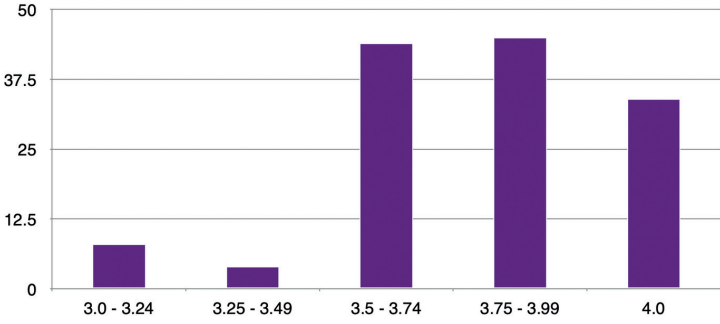
Scholarships Awarded by Race/Ethnicity



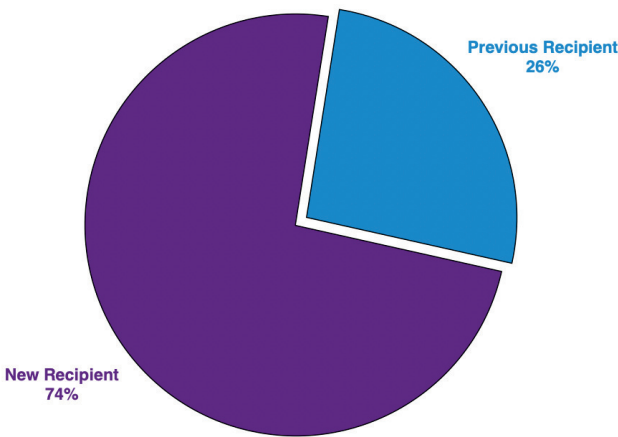
Age of Scholarship Recipients



Average GPA of Scholarship Recipients



Previous or New Scholarship Recipients



135 women  
received  
scholarships  
in 2024

# Event Highlights

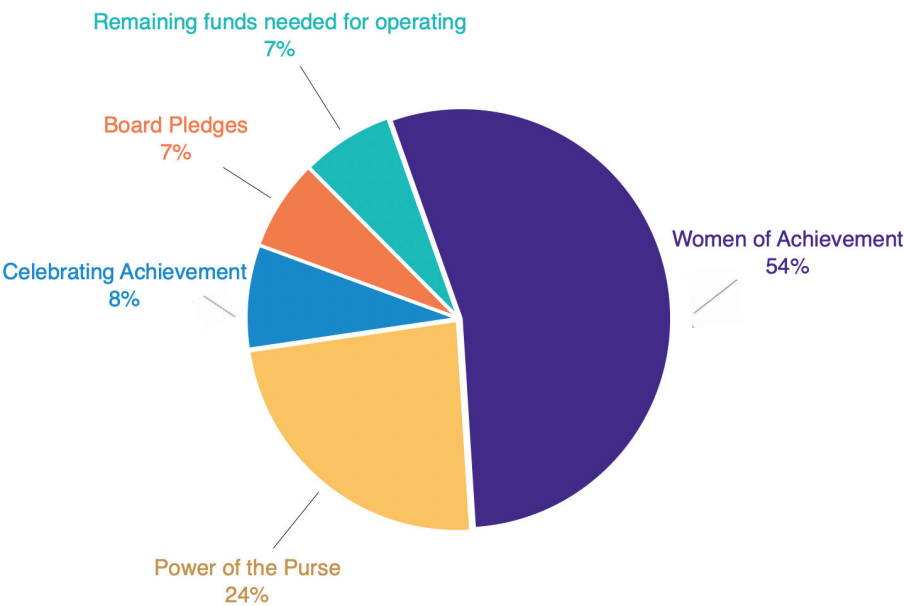
We are honored to host two of our community's most anticipated annual events. In 2024, we celebrated the 32nd Annual Salute to Women of Achievement, recognizing 75 extraordinary women who have made significant contributions to our community professionally, civically, and philanthropically. This prestigious recognition has become one of the area's most coveted professional honors and was held in a sold-out venue with over 1,400 guests in attendance.

2024 also marked the 17th Annual Power of the Purse, Thanks to the generosity of the Nevada Women’s Fund Board of Directors, who donated over \$32,000 worth of purses, the event was a record-breaking success and an unforgettable night.

These signature events, along with the annual contributions from our board, cover nearly 100% of Nevada Women’s Fund’s operating expenses, ensuring that every dollar donated can go directly toward our mission—empowering women to achieve their full potential through education and career advancement opportunities!

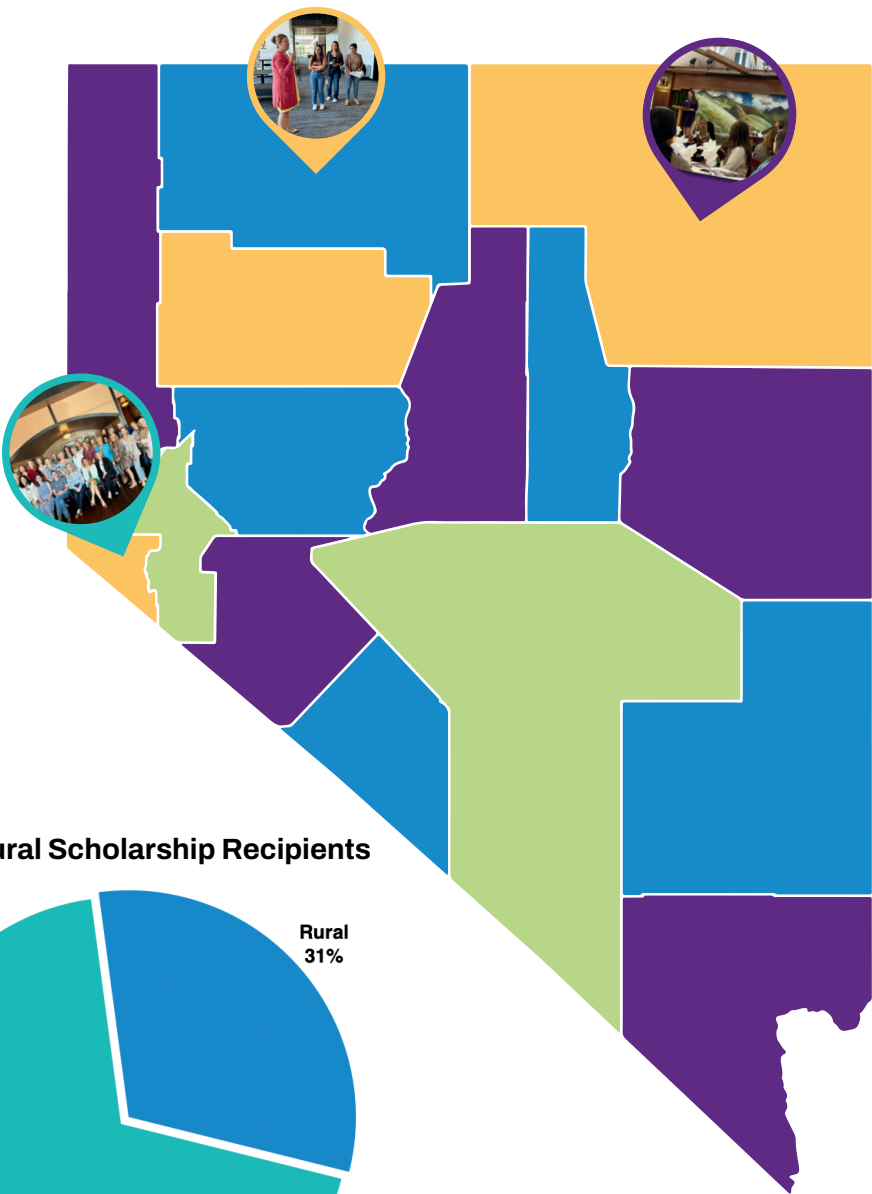


Nevada Women’s Fund 2024 Operating Income

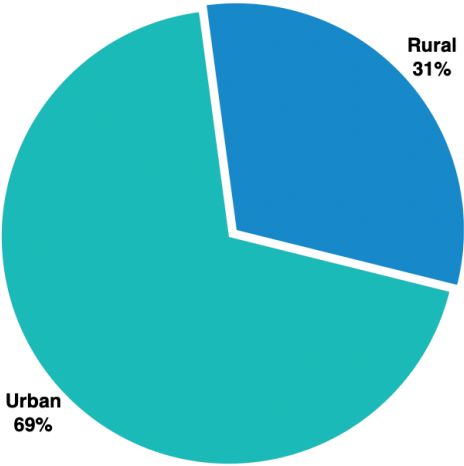




# Rural Impact



Urban/Rural Scholarship Recipients



Scan the QR Code to explore how Nevada Women's Fund is expanding its events, outreach, and impact in rural Nevada.



**\$155,000**

In Rural Scholarships Awarded

**11**

NV Counties

**41**

Rural Scholarships Recipients





# Women in the Trades

Nevada's leading industries: tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, and mining create a high demand for skilled trades in our state, compounding the need to empower women to pursue diverse career paths. It would be a disservice to future generations if we do not foster conversation and offer support that will allow women to envision and achieve professional success in ANY industry.

Nevada Women's Fund currently has four trade-specific scholarships to be awarded annually, supporting women in fields such as welding, construction, automotive technology, and culinary arts. By empowering women to enter traditionally male-dominated industries, we help them succeed and also enable them to become role models, inspiring others to explore non-traditional careers and defy gender stereotypes.



Pauline Helms  
Endowed Scholarship

# Corporate Scholarship Highlights

Nevada Women's Fund's Corporate Scholarship Program allows corporate partners to align their workforce development efforts and corporate giving goals with Nevada Women's Fund's Scholarship Program.

In 2024 we welcomed six new Corporate Scholarships to our donor list: Greater Nevada Credit Union, IGT, MicroMetl, NewDeantronics, Ezelle Images, and Nevada Builders Foundation.

I wanted to pass on some great feedback from our HR Director. She said all the scholarship recipients were engaged and the event was better than any recruitment event she has attended. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity.

**-Megan Duggan, Director of Marketing, Community Health Alliance**



In 2024 we also hosted our inaugural Professional Networking Reception, inviting our corporate scholarship partners to meet with our 100+ scholarship recipients seeking employment.

The Networking Scholarship reception was incredible. From our standpoint, we were all surprised at the number scholarship recipients that came to the table and engaged with us. Our General Manager spoke to someone interested in Sales. There was a recipient that brought her resume that she dropped off to them. We even grabbed some information for potential interns. Our team had such a long line of recipients waiting to speak with them that recipients would leave the line to come back later.

**-Sandhya Bakta – Controller, 2 NEWS NEVADA**





# Donor Highlights

## Mae Sagawa Shelton

Mae Sagawa Shelton was a lifelong advocate for women, children, and underserved communities in Nevada. As Director of Washoe County Social Services for 20 years, she shaped policies that improved the lives of vulnerable populations. She led efforts to secure stable funding for child protective services, reduce child abuse reports, and expand healthcare access for indigent families. Even after retiring in 2000, Mae continued her advocacy as a lobbyist and volunteer. She served on numerous nonprofit boards, including the Nevada Women's Fund, where she chaired the Board in 1991 and remained involved for decades.



In memory of Mae Sagawa Shelton  
May 22, 1934 - November 17, 2024

Mae's commitment to Nevada Women's Fund was transformative. She worked tirelessly to raise funds for scholarships and programs, helping women in Northern Nevada pursue academic and professional goals. Her contributions earned numerous awards, including the NWF Chairman's Award (1994), induction into the NWF Hall of Fame (2001) and the NWF Honorary Council (2004).



Nevada Women's Fund Hall of Fame 2013

In a final act of generosity, Mae helped establish the Jan Evans Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of her friend Jan Evans, a passionate advocate for domestic violence survivors and education. The fund, administered by Nevada Women's Fund, supports single mothers studying education at the University of Nevada, continuing Mae's legacy of empowering women.



# Donor Highlights

## Ezell Images

Amber and Scotti Ezell-Bisiaux, the dynamic duo behind Ezell Images and Bijou Photo have made significant contributions to the Reno, Sparks, and Lake Tahoe communities through their specialized women's photography. Their mission is to celebrate empowerment, beauty, self-confidence, and individuality, focusing on capturing the essence of women over 40. Discover their work at: [EZELLIMAGES.COM](https://EZELLIMAGES.COM)

In 2024, Amber and Scotti launched the 40 Over 40 Project, aiming to showcase the stories and beauty of 40 women in their 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and beyond. Participants enjoy a full makeover experience, a 45-minute studio portrait session, and inclusion in a digital book celebrating their journeys. The project not only empowers the women involved but also inspires others to embrace their individuality and strength.

Demonstrating their commitment to the community, Amber and Scotti partnered with Nevada Women's Fund to create the Ezell Images Empowering Women Over 40 Scholarship. They are donating 100% of the proceeds from the 40 Over 40 Book to this scholarship, which supports women over 40 seeking to return to school, particularly those who have faced financial challenges. This initiative reflects their dedication to uplifting women and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Amber and Scotti also generously provide photography at Nevada Women's Fund special events and Amber serves as a Community Member for the organization. Through both their artistry and philanthropy, Amber and Scotti have become influential figures in the community, using their talents to make a meaningful impact and inspire others to embrace their own potential.



Amber & Scotti Ezell-Bisiaux with their 2024 Ezell Images Empowering Women Over 40 Scholarship recipient Tawna Fayette





In 2024, Nevada Women's Fund broadened our mission to support the advancement of women beyond their educational years. Our focus is on closing the gap between educational attainment and economic equality, empowering women to reach their full potential and participate in the workforce on equal footing with their male counterparts. We are deeply committed to advancing wage parity and promoting workplace equality.

Each year, the Nevada Women's Fund Board of Directors will dedicate significant resources to initiatives that foster career development, professional growth, and equitable workforce participation for women. By prioritizing these areas, we aim to create lasting change and open new opportunities for women in the workforce.

## 2025 Summit Project Initiatives

# BEST PLACES FOR WOMEN TO WORK IN NORTHERN NEVADA



Scan the QR  
Code to find  
out more info

In 2025 Nevada Women's Fund will recognize the best places for women to work in Northern Nevada. As part of this effort, we are conducting a survey to better understand how companies of all sizes are supporting women, addressing the unique challenges they face in the workplace, and fostering healthy work environments for all employees.

## International Women's Day

# March 8, 2025

Inaugural Day-long, Community-Wide Event



Nevada Women's Fund invites you to join us for International Women's Day 2025! This daylong celebration is an opportunity to recognize the significant contributions of women in our community.

Whether you're an individual, local business, organization, or community group, there's a way for everyone to get involved. Don't miss this chance to be part of meaningful change!

Scan the QR Code to the left for more info

[www.nevadawomensfund.org/international-women-s-day](https://www.nevadawomensfund.org/international-women-s-day)

#AccelerateAction



To support the initiatives mentioned in this report, donate here or donations can be mailed to Nevada Women's Fund at the address listed below:



775-786-2335



770 Smithridge Drive, Suite 300, Reno, NV 89502



[www.nevadawomensfund.org](http://www.nevadawomensfund.org)

