



State Anniversary: Nevada

On May 23, Nevada celebrated its fourth year since its official incorporation.

NYAP team members are often confused by the anniversaries of states, mainly because the process for getting a new one up and running starts long before most people are aware. The process to becoming a licensed provider in each state can be a tedious journey, even in the best of times. Largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other issues, Nevada's journey to becoming an officially licensed care provider was a long one.

After overcoming these complications, the Nevada team was able to begin providing services to local residents. Now the state has a single location within a Regis co-working space on Rainbow Boulevard in Las Vegas. Currently the only program offered is Therapeutic Foster Care but the team is working hard to kickstart Behavioral Health services as well. This license is pending with Medicaid and as soon as it goes through the organization will have yet another state serving youth and families in need of counseling and therapy. The team has already forged connections with local entities for support and is the first organization on many nearby school call lists for when they get the green light.

For the past year Nevada has been led by Tarsha Turner who first came to NYAP in the fall of 2011 after working with the state's Department of Children Services (DCS). She started out in Indiana as a Treatment Coordinator and worked alongside Senior Vice President and Executive Director Michelle Corry. Later Tarsha became a Regional Manager, explaining that once she was promoted she "just took Merrillville and ran with it." Working her way up the NYAP ladder, she ended up supervising several regions in Indiana and has worked with Ohio and Illinois as well. Due to her success and great relationship with what she refers to as her work family, Tarsha jumped at the opportunity to step into her current Nevada role, officially moving and spending her first summer there in 2021.

Following some exciting new life changes, Tarsha will soon be stepping away from the organization. Luckily, Kristin Tordoff has already stepped in to continue leading the progress in the state. NYAP has been fortunate enough to have Kristin on the team before as she helped the Louisiana program get off the ground. Originally from Nevada, she left the organization to pursue her law degree and, with immaculate timing, has returned to be the state's new Executive Director. Kristin and Tarsha are presently working closely together to ensure the smoothest transition.



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Other pivotal members of the team include Foster Parent Growth and Retention Coordinators Elizabeth Lance and Cathy De Los Santos, Family Service Supervisor Pamela Walker Kurcz, Clinical Supervisor Valerie Tines Braggs and Licensing Coordinator Sherrie Smith. Elizabeth, Pam and Val were all some of the first hires in the state who were already in Nevada at the start of 2021. Cathy is a recent addition who brings lots of energy to the team, which is exactly what Tarsha says they need to sustain current progress. Tarsha talks about her team being extremely resilient as foster parent recruitment can be a challenge given the state's uniqueness when it comes to available activities and entertainment. She expands on this sentiment:

"It takes thinking bigger and being creative. We have overcome many barriers through stepping outside of the box and utilizing lots of trial and error. Although it is small, this team is so important and appreciated."

At the beginning of May the state had two licensed homes and more in pre-service. The area is up-and-coming and the population is growing, which provides great recruitment opportunities for the region. The current goal is to gain name recognition and familiarity within the community. Progress is consistently being made in this area as the team has connected with the local YMCA, libraries, Girl Scouts of America, LGBT Center, Clark County School Board and the Chamber of Commerce. Nevada is excited to continue networking with these community partners and establish themselves as the premier social services agency in the area. Now that the groundwork is laid, NYAP hopes to expand programming and offices within the state soon.

Congratulations to each member of the Nevada team for the progress you have made. We are all eager to see the state's expansion in the years to come!