

September 2025

DESERT BREEZE



Las Vegas (NV) Branch

American Association of University Women



September MEETING
Saturday, September 20, 2025
11:30 AM
THE SUMMIT
2215 Thomas Ryan Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89134

Come join us at The Summit. The cost is \$25.00 per person. The price includes the room fee, technical equipment, lunch from the menu, and a drink. Guests are welcome, so bring a friend. No reservations are needed.

Guest Speaker
Dr. Erin Rider



**Women Refugees: Entrepreneurship as a
Pathway of Necessity and Opportunity**





PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Dear AAUW Las Vegas Members,

As we begin to slowly cool down from the Las Vegas heat, we hope everyone had a safe and fun summer. We are ready for cooler weather and safe outdoor activities!

As we continue to navigate our leadership role for our AAUW Las Vegas Branch, we stress our commitment to making this branch a welcoming and inclusive community for all members, new and old. We are dedicated to increasing membership and holding activities that we can all collectively enjoy.

We encourage members to get involved in various committees to enrich our branch, bring forward ideas for activities, and volunteer for work that aligns with our mission. Or join a committee, these include Membership, Fundraising, and Communication, and we still need a Secretary. We all come from a background of knowledge and wisdom, so every idea is welcome.

We look forward to another successful fundraiser this year and to awarding even more scholarships, which is a crucial platform for us to shape the future of our branch collectively. We greatly appreciate your past and future contributions to our annual November fundraiser for scholarships. Save-the-Dates are going out soon! Your participation is instrumental in our ability to provide more deserving women with scholarships, especially during these challenging times when more women are leaving the workforce. Consider inviting friends and colleagues.

We hope to see you and a friend at our September meeting, Saturday the 20th!

**Dr. Afi Bruce & Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert
Co-Presidents, AAUW Las Vegas Branch**



GUEST SPEAKER DR. ERIN RIDER



Dr. Erin Rider is a sociologist who researches asylum seekers and the U.S. asylum system, women refugee entrepreneurs, Turkish immigrants in the U.S., and non-profit, faith-based organizations' refugee resettlement and disaster relief services. She also researches workload inequities in higher education experienced by women and BIPOC faculty. Currently, she is a Lecturer of Sociology and Interim Coordinator of Scholars Programs at Nevada State University. Previously, she was the Assistant Director of Faculty Development. Prior to Nevada State University, she was a tenured professor of Sociology and department head for Sociology and Political Science at Jacksonville State University.

Some notable experiences include:

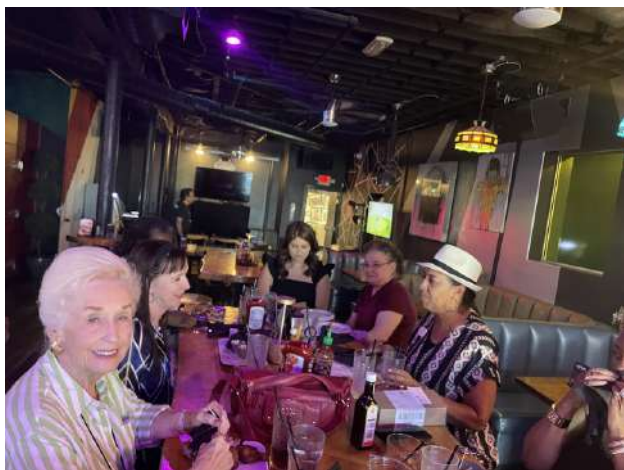
- She presented at the UN's 67th session on the Commission on the Status of Women, and is featured as a researcher in the documentary, Exiled Hopes, on the migration experiences of exiled Turkish immigrants.**
- In Alabama, she partnered with the Freedom Riders Park to help establish it as the Freedom Riders National Monument, and developed a Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation at JSU.**
- She fought to get governmental funding to establish a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program for the underserved region of Northeast Alabama.**



**Erin Rider, Ph.D. (she, her, hers)
Interim Coordinator of Scholar Programs and Summer Bridge |
NSU Scholars Programs
Office of the Provost
Nevada State University
Phone:
702.992.2502
Email: Erin.Rider@nevadastate.edu**

- Co-Author 2 chapters, Refugee Entrepreneurship: A Research Companion 2024 (Eds. Ranabahu, de Vries, Hamilton) Routledge**
- Contributed to research and narration, Documentary, Exiled Hopes Director Cihan Aydiner | Outstanding Excellence at Docs Without Borders Film Festival 2023 | Official selection at several international film festivals | Published on ResearchTV**
- Co-Author of Crime and Deviance: Understanding Problems, Constructing Solutions 2023**

Socializing at 18BIN





Dr. Margoth Tello, DPP

Public Policy



Dr. Esther Pla-Cazares, DPP

Federal Refugee and Immigration Policy Changes What They Mean for Nevada

In preparation for our September guest speaker, this month's Policy article explores refugee and immigrant policies. While these issues may seem far removed from AAUW's focus, they intersect closely with our mission to advance equity for women and girls through education, advocacy, and research.

Federal Policy Shifts

In early 2025, federal actions suspended new refugee admissions and introduced changes to Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which provides legal residence for individuals from countries facing conflict or disaster. Court challenges have reopened admissions in part, but disruptions in funding and staffing have slowed the system nationwide. Some TPS protections have been extended, while others are scheduled to end this year.

Nevada's Experience

- Resettlement Agencies:** Organizations such as Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada and the Northern Nevada International Center have scaled back programs after federal funding interruptions. Services like housing support, English language learning, and job placement are now limited.
- Private Support:** To bridge the gap, Nevada agencies are relying more heavily on private funds and community partners, though these resources cannot fully replace federal support.
- Community Impact:** More than 4,000 Nevadans with TPS—and hundreds of refugee families—contribute to our workforce, schools, and neighborhoods. Uncertainty in their status affects not only individuals but also local communities that benefit from their skills and participation.

Why This Matters to AAUW Members

AAUW's mission is rooted in education, equity, and opportunity. Refugee and immigrant women often face barriers to higher education, fair pay, and leadership—issues that directly connect to AAUW priorities. When resettlement slows or legal protections end, it limits access to these opportunities and creates additional challenges for women striving to succeed.

For AAUW members, being aware of these policies is important as they influence the broader landscape of equity. From classrooms where immigrant girls pursue education to workplaces where refugee women strive for economic security, these policies shape the environment in which women and girls can thrive.

Key Takeaway

Refugee and immigration policies are not only national issues—they have local effects here in Nevada. By understanding these connections, AAUW members can better situate our mission within the broader pursuit of equity and inclusion for all women and girls.



We are truly fortunate to have these dynamic leaders on board!

If you're interested in joining the Public Policy Committee or know someone who might be interested in joining AAUW and this committee, we'd love to hear from you. Let's continue to grow our community of equity-driven changemakers! Contact us at: aauwlasvegas@gmail.com

With gratitude and solidarity,

**Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, DPP
Nevada State Public Policy Chair
Co-President, AAUW Las Vegas Branch**



UPCOMING AAUW WEBINARS IN SEPTEMBER

Go to website to sign up for the information session that interests you.

AAUW Fellowships & Grants Info Sessions

- AAUW Fellowships: https://www.aauw.org/info_session_schedule/
- Grants Info Sessions: https://www.aauw.org/info_session_schedule/

AAUW Virtual Economic Empowerment Trainings

- AAUW Work Smart: Know Your Value and Get Paid
Tuesday, September 16, 2025 | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. ET
<https://my.aauw.org/event-information?id=a0lQr000001RANhIAO>
- AAUW Money Smart: Smart Foundations
Tuesday, September 30, 2025 | 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET
<https://my.aauw.org/event-information?id=a0lQr000001RBA5IAO>



SAVE ^{THE} DATE

**November 15, 2025
AAUW Scholarship Fundraiser**

Our Goal is to raise \$6,000 for scholarships by the end of January.

**We need items for the Auction:
Show Tickets, Dinners, Casino Stays
AND MORE**

**Bring your baskets to the September meeting
and we will fill them for the fundraiser in November!**

Look for further details in the next newsletter.



SUNSHINE

We send our condolences to Teddie Brewer for the loss of her husband, Dennis. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family, Teddie.

Rowena, healing thoughts are sent your way for a speedy recovery.



Congratulations on Las Vegas Branch's Five Star Achievement!

Dear Evelyn,

Thank you once again for taking part in the FY25 Annual Branch Survey. Your responses not only help AAUW understand and support the work happening at the branch level, but also ensure your efforts are recognized through the Five Star Program.

I'm delighted to share that the **Las Vegas (NV) Branch has earned a Public Policy & Advocacy and Programming Star in the Five Star Program for FY25!** This achievement reflects your branch's commitment to advancing gender equity and aligning your programs, advocacy, and sustainability efforts with AAUW's strategic priorities.

We are so grateful for the time and energy you and your fellow leaders devote to this work. **Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition** and we look forward to celebrating your success further in the months ahead, including through future highlights in Membership Matters and on the AAUW website.

With appreciation,

Tremayne A. Parquet (he/him/his)

Deputy Director of Advancement

AAUW, 1310 L St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005

p. 202.728.7611 | f. 202.463.7169

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Janai McFarland was honored by the NCAA with a \$4,000 Scholarship.

Pictured with Janai is Claudia Merrill.

AAUW Membership Report

August 2025

Greetings everyone,

I hope you all have had a wonderful summer and are getting ready for a productive Fall. As Membership Vice President, I am so happy to step into this role and get to work helping our branch to thrive and grow in membership.

Over the summer we had six new members join our branch. I have sent out welcome emails and the new members will be added to our roster. The invitation has been sent out as well for our September meeting at the Summit and I know all of us are looking forward to meeting them with a warm welcome.

New members:

- **Kathleen Dupree**
- **Yessenia Henriquez (Scholarship Recipient)**
- **Lisa Michelle Martin**
- **Leslie Menes (Scholarship Recipient)**
- **Bojana Novakovic (Scholarship Recipient)**
- **Dana Roseman**

Over the summer we had an event at the 18Bin Restaurant in the Arts District, on July 31, 2025, from 5 pm - 8 pm. The event was well attended and as a result we had an opportunity to speak with perspective members. We will have more of these events to get acquainted with new and perspective members.

Thanks to our branch member and Public Policy Co-Chair, Margoth Tello, for putting this event together.

I also attended, on Saturday, August 16, 2025, the NAACP Las Vegas Branch meeting, where our member Janai McFarland was awarded a \$4,000.00 Scholarship. Congratulations to Janai and we wish her all the success in furthering her education.

Claudia Merrill
Vice President Membership

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals now occur throughout the year. While most of our branch members have June 30 membership expiration dates, our newer members may have a membership renewal date that occurs in a different month. The Membership Directory included each member's renewal dates this year.

You should receive an email notice from AAUW regarding renewing your membership. There will be a link to renew, using a credit card, or you may still send a check to our treasurer, Letti Dowell (see Letti's address below).

Members will begin receiving renewal notices approximately one month prior to their renewal date and will continue to receive them through the grace period, which is three months after the renewal date or until the member renews their membership. After the three-month grace period, members that have not renewed their membership are dropped from the membership.

All members with May – September renewal dates should be sure to renew their membership no later than August 31, to ensure that your membership does not lapse and so we can be sure to include you in our membership directory for 2025-2026.

Membership dues remain at \$100 for branch members, \$18.81 for student affiliate members and \$17 for Honorary Life Members.

Honorary Life Members should send their membership dues of \$17 to Letti Dowell, Treasurer. Renewing members may also send a check to Letti to renew their membership. Letti's address is: 9633 Gavin Stone Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89145.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



**KATHLEEN DUPREE
YESSENIA HENDRIQUEZ
LISA MICHELLE MARTIN
LESLIE MENES
BOJANA NOVAKOVIC
DANA ROSEMAN**



INTEREST GROUPS

- **Bridge:** Marian Stanton (951-529-1203)
- **Book Club:** Kathryn Robinson (702-458-1747)
- **Out to Lunch Bunch:** Janis Schoen (516-376-9856)

Would you like to add a new interest group? Start a group? Be a group contact? Host a group? Join an existing group? Let us know. All ideas are welcome. We would love to expand our group opportunities.

Contact Evelyn or Afi.



*You're Invited!
Join Us!*

OUT TO LUNCH

Thursday, September 25, 2025

at

1:00 PM

Loaded Empanadas

750 S Rampart Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89145

(Boca Park, Next to Cheesecake Factory)

Contact Janis Schoen

by Tuesday, September 23, 2025

516-376-9856 (call or text)

AAUWSCH@gmail.com (email)

SUFFS

October 9, 2025

Thursday Evening Performance

7:30 PM



BEHIND EVERY POWERFUL WOMAN... ARE MORE POWERFUL WOMEN.

Direct from Broadway, comes the acclaimed Tony Award®-winning musical Suffrags about the brilliant, passionate, and funny American women who fought tirelessly for the right to vote.

Join us for a fun evening at the Smith Center for SUFFS, The Musical, at 7:30 PM, on Thursday, October 9.

A pre-performance talk, at 6:30 PM, will feature the League of Women Voters and a couple of the Suffrags actors.

We have one ticket still available for the SUFFS performance. If you are interested in joining us for this event, please email Marilyn Zimmerman at marilynz0812@gmail.com.

The ticket is \$98. The first person who indicates interest will be the lucky person to join us. If additional requests are received, a waiting list will be created and we will contact The Smith Center to see if we can obtain additional tickets.

Since the program is an evening performance, we will be car pooling.

**Marilyn Zimmerman
marilynz0812@gmail.com**

Special Announcements



Birthdays

Janai McFarland	9/1
Cynthia Smith	9/30
Brianna Wallace	10/1
Cynthia Maxwell	10/11
Lisa Hahn	10/15
Carol Lommen	10/25
Claudia Merrill	10/27
Janis Schoen	10/23
Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert	10/28
Nora Wieland	10/23

Next AAUW Meeting

September 20	The Summit
October 18	The Summit

Board Meeting

September 26

Officers & Committee Chairs 2023 - 2025

Co-Presidents: Afi Bruce & Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert

Vice President Membership: Claudia Merrill

Vice President Programs: Shared Board Leadership

Secretary: Shared Board Leadership

Treasurer: Letti Dowell

Immediate Past Co-Presidents: Janis Schoen & Marilyn Zimmerman

Public Policy: Esther Pla-Cazares & Margoth Tello

Newsletter: Judy Ingham

Scholarships: Shirley Hills & Marilyn Zimmerman

Mission

Gender Equity
Economic Security

Values

Intersectional
Inclusive
Intergenerational
Empowering

Focus

Economic Security
Education
Advocacy