

October 2025

DESERT BREEZE



Las Vegas (NV) Branch

American Association of University Women

October MEETING

Saturday, October 18, 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

Tracy Brown May

Chief Administrative Officer of

Opportunity Village

Nevada State Assembly Member



PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear AAUW Las Vegas Members,

Ladies, we had a fantastic September meeting together!

We were inspired by Patricia Dalpiaz, VP of Membership from the St. George, Utah branch, with her insights on membership and fundraising. Dr. Erin Rider of Nevada State University also moved us with her research on Women Refugees: Entrepreneurship as a Pathway of Necessity and Opportunity and the sobering impact of climate change on women refugees worldwide. For those who missed it—or who'd like to revisit the details—Dr. Rider's PowerPoint, along with the AAUW Las Vegas Branch September luncheon presentation, will be emailed soon.

As October begins, let's reflect on the importance of volunteer leadership—not just in our branch roles but also in how we live our lives every day. We are introducing Featured Member of the Month at our luncheons. Stay tuned for more details!

We also plan to introduce a new tradition at our monthly luncheons: member highlights! Do you—or someone you know—have a story, achievement, or life update to share? We'd love to feature it at a luncheon and later in newsletters, so we can celebrate and get to know each other better.

Our activities are expanding—happy hours, cultural events, bridge gatherings, and more. The Fundraising Committee is growing, and we still need a Secretary and a VP of Programming. Step in, get involved, and help shape the future of our branch!

Above all, remember: this is your Las Vegas Branch. Your voice, energy, and leadership make all the difference.

**With gratitude,
Afi & Evelyn
Co-Presidents, AAUW Las Vegas Branch**



Dr. Afi Bruce & Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert

**GUEST SPEAKER
TRACY BROWN MAY**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF
OPPORTUNITY VILLAGE
MEMBER OF THE NEVADA STATE ASSEMBLY**

Tracy Brown-May is the Chief Administrative Officer at Opportunity Village and a sitting member of the Nevada State Assembly representing Assembly District 42. She brings more than two decades of experience in nonprofit leadership and disability advocacy, with a strong record of public service in the Nevada Legislature. Since her appointment in 2021, Tracy has served on key legislative committees including Health and Human Services, Growth and Infrastructure, and Ways & Means championing bills that focus on the State budget, workforce development, inclusive housing, healthcare access, and the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her legislative work reflects a commitment to responsive, inclusive policy rooted in lived community needs.

As a systems advocate, Tracy has worked to bridge service delivery and public policy for more than 20 years. At Opportunity Village, she leads advocacy, communications, community engagement, human resources, and risk management, ensuring that organizational values translate into real-world outcomes for Nevadans with disabilities. She began her career in gaming and hospitality as a corporate training manager before transitioning into nonprofit leadership, where she played a critical role in expanding Opportunity Village's influence in local and state policy. Her professional and legislative efforts are united by a deep dedication to equity, accessibility, and long-term community investment.

In addition to her legislative and nonprofit leadership, Tracy is an active board member of Jobs for Nevada's Graduates and serves nationally as Secretary for Together For Choice. She volunteers at The Crossing Church and is a former member of CHIEF, a national network of executive women leaders. She holds degrees from the College of Southern Nevada and Northeastern University. Tracy is a wife, mother of three adult children, and passionate advocate for building strong, inclusive communities through policy, partnerships, and purpose.







AAUW 2025 LEVEL UP SALARY NEGOTIATION APPLICATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The AAUW Level Up: Salary Negotiation Program is an equity-centered workforce development initiative that empowers women to secure fair compensation and advance in their careers. Through targeted skills training, individualized coaching, financial support, and community-building, the program addresses persistent barriers to economic mobility and contributes to narrowing the gender and racial wage gap. In order to apply, you must be a recent college graduate (1-6 years out) looking for a new job, promotion or raise. This program is supported by a grant from the Coca-Cola Foundation.

Categories:

Early-career (0-5 years)

Mid-career (6-15 year)

Career Transition

Re-entering the workforce

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LM6RQ7B>



Public Policy



Dr. Margoth Tello, DPP

Dr. Esther Pla-Cazares, DPP

Defunding HSI and TRIO Programs

Significant developments in federal education funding have drawn attention across the higher education landscape. A proposed cut of \$350 million to **Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)**, along with reductions to **several federal TRIO programs**, has sparked concern among education advocates, institutional leaders, and policymakers.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions, defined as colleges and universities where at least 25% of full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic, have benefitted from federal grants to enhance educational opportunities for underserved students. These funds are often used to strengthen academic programs, improve student services, and support faculty development. The proposed \$350 million reduction represents a significant portion of current funding levels, prompting questions about the potential impact on student success and institutional capacity.

Simultaneously, multiple TRIO programs have reportedly faced cuts or elimination in recent weeks. **TRIO is a collection of federally funded programs—such as Upward Bound, Talent Search, McNair Scholars Program and Student Support Services**—designed to help low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities succeed academically. These programs provide tutoring, academic advising, mentoring, and other essential services to support students from middle school through college graduation. TRIO programs have long been recognized for their role in increasing college access and retention rates among vulnerable populations.

The mission of TRIO programs, as well as the support provided to HSIs, aligns closely with the AAUW's commitment to advancing equity in education and empowering individuals from underrepresented groups to pursue higher education and economic security.

In Nevada, the impact of these cuts is already being felt:

The College of Southern Nevada (CSN) has lost funding for a TRIO program that had been operating for 25 years. The program has supported countless students in achieving their academic and career goals through advising, tutoring, and other support services.

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) which operates one of the largest TRIO programs in the nation, has also experienced significant losses. Two key grants were not renewed: Veteran Upward Bound, which serves military veterans transitioning into higher education, and a TRIO staff training program, which provided professional development for TRIO personnel nationwide.

These losses highlight how changes in federal funding decisions are already affecting institutions that serve large numbers of low-income, first-generation, and minority students.

Different Perspectives

Supporters of the cuts argue the federal government must reevaluate and prioritize spending, suggesting that some programs may be duplicative or lack measurable outcomes. They point to broader fiscal challenges as the driver behind these difficult decisions.

Critics, however, caution that reducing support for HSIs and TRIO programs could roll back years of progress in educational equity. For institutions like CSN and UNLV, the funding enables them to serve populations that might otherwise lack access to college preparation, academic guidance, and financial aid navigation.

What's Next?

These proposed cuts remain part of ongoing federal budget negotiations and are not yet final. As Congress continues its deliberations, educational institutions, advocacy groups, and community stakeholders are closely watching and voicing their perspectives on the long-term implications for access and equity in higher education.



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



Please bring your baskets and auction items to the October meeting.
The committee will start filling them for the fundraiser in November!

Contact Marian Stanton, Scholarship Fundraiser Chair, at 951-529-1203, for details.

AAUW
Las Vegas (NV) Branch

AAUW MISSION

- Gender Equity & Economic Security
- Education
- Advocacy

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

RESERVATIONS NOT REQUIRED. BRING A FRIEND!

15 NOVEMBER, 2025

11:30 am - 1 pm

Summit Restaurant, Sun City Summerlin
2215 Thomas W Ryan Blvd, Las Vegas, NV
Luncheon & Speaker \$25/pp

SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Full-time student
- Must be a junior or senior
- Maintain GPA of 3.0 or better
- Have financial need
- Desire to help community
- More on application

SURPRISE GUEST SPEAKER!

GIFT BASKETS • CERTIFICATES • DOOR PRIZES
DONATIONS WELCOME!

AAUW LAS VEGAS BRANCH

- a 501(c)(4) non-profit
- contributions are NOT tax-deductible

<https://lasvegas-nv.aauw.net/>

TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Make tax deductible donations to the Public Education Fund

Mail Checks to:
The Public Education Foundation
PO Box 26243,
Oklahoma City, OK 73126-0243
Memo: AAUW Las Vegas Scholarships

Donate online:
www.thepef.org

Membership Corner



We are thrilled to welcome one of our newest members, Patricia Nicosia, to the Las Vegas Branch fundraising committee. We are delighted to have her join us and she has already brought her talents to share with us. Welcome, Patricia!

At last month's meeting we were delighted to have our guest speaker, Dr. Erin Rider, of Nevada State University, who presented on Women Refugees: Entrepreneurship : A Pathway of Necessity and Opportunity. It was a wonderful presentation with lively interaction and discussion.

In addition to our guest speaker, we were also joined by the Membership VP and Legacy Circle Chair of the AAUW St. George Utah Branch, Patricia Dalpaiz. She talked to the group about the fundraising efforts of the St. George Branch and the Legacy Circle, which is an AAUW program for planned giving. Patricia is also the fundraising chair for the St. George Branch and will be collaborating with our branch, in the future, for some of our upcoming projects. A special thank you to Pat Dalpaiz who was invited by yours truly.

If you haven't already taken a look, AAUW National is offering Grants and Scholarships. The deadline to apply is October 7th. Just visit AAUW.org for details and applications. You can also check out the recent Membership article : What Women Lose Without Education by Tremayne Parquet, Deputy Director Advancement. This is a very interesting and thought-provoking article.

I want to thank Margoth Tello, Co-Chair Public Policy, Anne Green, member and Afi Bruce , Co-President, for joining the Membership Committee. As we move forward in growth and presence in the Las Vegas Community, we will be collaborating with organizations that align with our mission to promote growth and sustainability. We will be engaging women in our mission through college days and nights, social events, community service projects and spotlighting new and current members, to not only increase our presence in the community at large but to engage our community as well.

Join the Membership Committee:

Consider joining the Membership Committee. Share your gifts and experiences with us, as we grow and serve our community and continue the mission of Gender Equity, Advocacy and Education for Women.

**Claudia Merrill, D.D.,M.Ed., QMHP
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.

INTEREST GROUPS

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

*You're Invited!
Join Us!*



OUT TO LUNCH

Thursday, October 23, 2025

at

1:00 PM

Fresh Kitchen PAYMON'S and Lounge

8380 W. Sahara Ave.

Las Vegas, NV 89117

Contact Janis Schoen

by Tuesday, October 21, 2025

516-376-9856 (call or text)

AAUWSCH@gmail.com (email)

Special Announcements

Birthdays

Brianna Wallace	10/1
Cynthia Maxwell	10/11
Margoth Tello	10/20
Janis Schoen	10/23
Nora Wieland	10/23
Leslie Menes	10/26
Claudia Merrill	10/27
Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert	10/28
Bojana Novakovic	10/30
Helen Bather	11/1
Jannet Benz	11/5
Kathleen Dupree	11/5
Judith VanCleef	11/17
Pamela Addie	11/25



Next AAUW Meeting

October 18	The Summit
November 15	The Summit

Board Meeting

October 24

Officers & Committee Chairs 2025 - 2027

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

Sunshine: Marian Stanton

Scholarship Fundraiser: Marian Stanton

Mission

Gender Equity
Economic Security

Values

Intersectional
Inclusive
Intergenerational
Empowering

Focus

Economic Security
Education
Advocacy