



NOTICE OF MEETING AND AGENDA

WASHOE COUNTY COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD

March 16, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Members

Michael Clark, Chair, County Commissioner,
District 2, Washoe County

Alexis Hill, Vice Chair, County Commissioner,
District 1, Washoe County

Ed Lawson, Mayor, City of Sparks

Kathleen Taylor, Councilmember, Ward 1, City
of Reno

Dian VanderWell, Councilmember, Ward 2, City
of Sparks

Brandi Anderson, Councilmember, Ward 6, City
of Reno

WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION

CHAMBERS

1001 E. 9th Street, Reno, Nevada 89512

and via Zoom Teleconference

Community Homeless Advisory Board Goals:

- Permanent housing for emergency shelter residents and region
- Regional shared data in alignment with the Built for Zero model
- Engagement of community donations and volunteers
- Safety of shelter clients, employees, and visitors
- Community communication

This meeting will be held in the Washoe County Commission Chambers and via Zoom teleconference. To attend this meeting via Zoom teleconference, please log in to the Zoom webinar at the link below and enter the passcode: Homeless1!.

<https://washoecounty-gov.zoom.us/j/97204533501?pwd=X5WTIYxxpl6jSpbPkisXVW1t1VsZ4U.1>

You can also join the meeting by typing zoom.us into your computer browser, clicking “Join a Meeting” on the Zoom website, and entering this Webinar ID: 972 0453 3501.

NOTE: This option will require a computer with audio and video capabilities. Alternatively, you can join the meeting by telephone only by dialing +1 669 444 9171, entering the Meeting ID: 972 0453 3501, passcode: 0567110787 and pressing #.

NOTE:

Items on the agenda may be taken out of order; the Advisory Board may combine two or more agenda items for consideration; may remove an item from the agenda or may delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any item per NRS 241.020(2)(d)(6).

Accessibility:

The Washoe County Commission Chambers are accessible to the disabled. If you require special arrangements for the meeting, call the Office of the County Manager, (775) 328-2000, 24-hours prior to the meeting.

Public Transportation:

Public transportation is available to this meeting site: RTC Routes 2, 5 and 15 serve this location. For eligible RTC ACCESS reservations call (775) 348-5438 or visit the link below.

<https://www.rtcwashoe.com/public-transportation/>

Public Comment:

Public comments are welcomed during public comment periods and is limited to 3 minutes per person per public comment period. During the general public comment period at the beginning and end of the meeting, speakers may address any matter either on or off the agenda. Additionally, public comment of three minutes per person will be heard during individually numbered items on the agenda which are designated for possible action. Persons are invited to submit comments in writing on the agenda items and/or attend and make comment on that item at the Advisory Board meeting. Persons may not allocate unused time to other speakers. All comments are to be directed to the Advisory Board as a whole. Members of the public may submit public comment by either attending the meeting in person, attending the meeting via teleconference, or attending by telephone only. To provide public comment via Zoom teleconference, log in to the Zoom webinar at the above link and utilize the “Raise Hand” feature during any public comment period. To provide public comment via telephone only, press *9 to “Raise Hand” and *6 to mute/unmute.

Forum Restrictions and Orderly Conduct of Business:

The presiding officer may order the removal of any person whose statement or other conduct disrupts the orderly, efficient or safe conduct of the meeting. Warnings against disruptive comments or behavior may or may not be given prior to removal. The viewpoint of a speaker will not be restricted, but reasonable restrictions may be imposed upon the time, place and manner of speech. Irrelevant and unduly repetitious statements and personal attacks which antagonize or incite others are examples of speech that may be reasonably limited.

Pursuant to NRS 241.020, the Agenda for the Community Homelessness Advisory Board Meeting has been posted at the Washoe County Administration Building (1001 E. 9th Street, Bldg. A) and has been electronically posted at the following links:

<https://notice.nv.gov/>

<https://www.washoecounty.gov/homeless/chab>

Support documentation for the items on the agenda, provided to the Community Homelessness Advisory Board, is available to members of the public at the County Manager's Office (1001 E. 9th Street, Bldg. A 2nd Floor, Reno, Nevada), Washoe 311 (washoe311@washoecounty.gov), (775) 328-2000, and on Washoe County's website at:

www.washoecounty.gov/mgrsoff/board_committees/.

Effective as of September 2023, CHAB meetings will be held at the discretion of any member of the board, through the Chair, and will be noticed with at least thirteen (13) days written notice to each member of the CHAB.

9:00AM

1. Salute to the flag.
2. Roll call.
3. Public comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board agenda. The Board will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Board as a whole.

Approval of the minutes of the December 2, 2025, Community Homeless Advisory Board meeting. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION.

Attachments: [2025-12-02 W](#)

Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to each of the governing bodies, including the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, the Reno City Council, and the Sparks City Council, to dissolve the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB). FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to each of the governing bodies, including the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, the Reno City Council, and the Sparks City Council, to adopt new resolutions to modify respectively Resolution No. R18-017, Resolution No. 8499, and Resolution No. 3330, to:

- A. provide for additional members of the Community Homeless Advisory Board (CHAB); and/or
- B. Rename the Community Homeless Advisory Board to the Community Unhoused Advisory Board.

FOR POSSIBLE ACTION.

Presentation and overview of the Karma Box Project Street Outreach Program Update. Grant Denton, Karma Box Project. Non-Action Item.

Presentation and overview of the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality's (RISE) Outreach: Care, Cost, and Community Impact. Ben Castro, RISE. Non-Action Item.

Attachments: [RISE Outreach](#)

Presentation and of the City of Reno's Clean and Safe Team, including outreach, operations, and coordination. Cynthia Esparza, City of Reno. Non-Action Item.

Presentation and overview of street outreach efforts by the Washoe County Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team, including its successes and challenges. Washoe County Sheriff's Office Staff. Non-Action Item.

Attachments: [Spanish Springs W HOPE](#)

9. Board members announcements, reports, and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.
10. Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Board agenda. The Board will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Board as a whole.

Adjournment

Permanent Members

Pamela Roberts (1)
• (2nd Term Expires 11/30/29)

Patricia Gallimore (1)
• (1st Term Expires 11/30/28)

Thuy Tran (2)
• (2nd Term Expires 3/31/27)

Adolfo Correa (2)
• (1st Term Expires 9/1/27)

Denise Myer (3)
• (2nd Term Expires 9/30/27)

Charles Mark Neumann (3)
• (2nd Term Expires 9/30/27)

Edward Lamb (4)
• (2nd Term Expires 11/30/29)

Benecia Price (4)
• (1st Term Expires 12/31/28)

MaryAnn McCauley (5)
• (2nd Term Expire 11/30/29)

Monica Webb (5)
• (1st Term Expires 11/30/29)

Mac Rossi, At Large
• (2nd Term Expires 11/30/29)

Alternate Members

Ann Guinn, Alternate

Alan Di Stefano, Alternate

Associate Members (Advisors)

Sue Meuschke

Connie McMullen

Dr. Larry Weiss

Donna Clontz

Ex-Officio Members

Commissioner Michael Clark, BCC

Donald Abbott, Sparks City Council

Meeting can also be accessed by using the following Zoom webinar link:

<https://washoecounty-gov.zoom.us/j/93948355377>

Meeting ID: 939 4835 5377

Dial (669) 900-6833 US (San Jose)

Public Comment

Public Comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person. During the “Public Comment” items, anyone may speak pertaining to any matter either on or off the agenda. Anyone wishing to provide live public comment may do so in person, or by teleconference by logging onto the Zoom webinar by accessing the following link:

<https://washoecounty-gov.zoom.us/j/93948355377>

Note: This option will require a computer with audio and video capabilities and downloading the Zoom application.

Additionally, public comment can be submitted via email to the email listed below or by leaving a voice message at (775) 328-2575. For the remainder of the agenda, public comment will only be heard during items that are designated “for possible action”. Any public comment for items designated “for possible action” will be heard before action is taken on the item and must be about the specific item being considered by the Board. In order to speak during any public comment, each speaker may raise their hand, in person or via zoom, and may be asked to fill out a “Request to Speak” form and/or submit comments for the record to the Recording Secretary. Public comment is limited to three minutes for individual speakers.

hsa-srfrontdesk@washoecounty.gov

Response to Public Comment

The Board can deliberate or take action only if a matter has been listed on an agenda properly posted prior to the meeting. During the public comment periods, speakers may address matters listed or not listed on the published agenda. The Open Meeting Law does not expressly prohibit responses to public comments by the Board. However, responses from the Board members to unlisted public comment topics could become deliberation on a matter without notice to the public. On the advice of legal counsel and to ensure the public has notice of all matters the Board will consider, Board members may choose not to respond to public comments, except to correct factual inaccuracies, ask for Staff action or to ask that a matter be listed on a future agenda. The Board may do this either during the public comment item or during the following item: "Agenda Items for the next Board Meeting."

Special Accommodations

Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting should notify Senior Services Front Desk Staff at Washoe County Human Services Agency, 1155 E. Ninth Street, Reno, NV 89512, by calling (775) 328-2575 or via the email listed below, prior to the date of the meeting.

hsa-srfrontdesk@washoecounty.gov

Accessibility: Washoe County is utilizing an AI platform, Wordly.ai for all Senior Advisory Board (SAB) meetings, in order to increase language accessibility for those that may be limited English proficient, hard of hearing or visually impaired. Instructions to utilize the service are available by request and in person at all meetings.

How to Get Copies of Agenda and Supporting Materials

Supporting materials for this meeting may be requested by contacting William Maritnez or Senior Services Front Desk Staff at Washoe County Human Services Agency, 1155 E. Ninth Street, Reno, NV 89512, by calling (775) 328-2575 or via the email listed below.

hsa-srfrontdesk@washoecounty.gov

The notice of meeting and agenda as well as supporting materials are also posted online at the following websites:

https://www.washoecounty.gov/seniorsrv/senior_services_advisory_board/index.php

<https://notice.nv.gov>

Possible Changes to Agenda and Timing

Items on the agenda may be taken out of order; combined with other items; removed from the agenda; or moved to the agenda of another meeting. Items with a specific time designation, if any, will not be heard prior to the stated time, but may be heard later.

Forum Restrictions and Orderly Conduct of Business

The Senior Advisory Board conducts the business of Washoe County and its citizens during its meetings. The Chair may order the removal of any person whose statement or other conduct disrupts the orderly, efficient, or safe conduct of the meeting. Warnings against disruptive comments or behavior may or may not be given prior to removal. The viewpoint of a speaker will not be restricted, but reasonable restrictions may be imposed upon the time, place, and manner of speech. Irrelevant and unduly repetitious statements and personal attacks, which antagonize or incite are examples of speech that may be reasonably limited.

1. CALL TO ORDER [Non-Action Item]
2. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM [Non-Action Item]
3. Public Comment [Non-Action Item] - Comment heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Advisory Board agenda. The Advisory Board will also hear public comments during individual action items, in which comments will be limited to the specific agenda item. Comments are to be made to the Advisory Board as a whole.
5. Update on Sparks current activities for seniors [Non-Action Item] – Donald Abbott, Sparks City Council Ward 1 (5 min)
6. Update on Reno Senior Citizen Advisory Committee regarding their current activities [Non-Action Item] – Izabella Baumann, City of Reno Activities Coordinator (5 min)
7. Update on Northern Nevada Legal Services [Non-Action Item] – Sarah Molleck, Northern Nevada Legal Aid Supervising Attorney (5 min)
8. Updates from Washoe County Senior Services [Non-Action Item] – Cara Paoli, Human Services Division Director, Adult and Senior Services; Abby Badolato, Human Services Agency Senior Services Coordinator (15 min)
9. Advisory Board Members' announcements, reports, and updates to include requests for information or topics for future agendas [Non-Action Item]. (No discussion among Advisory Board Members will take place on this item.) (5 min)
10. Public comment [Non-Action Item] - Comments heard under this item will be limited to three minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Advisory Board agenda. Comments are to be made to the Advisory Board as a whole.
11. ADJOURNMENT [Non-Action Item]

Notice of this meeting and the agenda have been posted at the following locations:

Washoe County Administration Building

Washoe County Health Department

Gerlach Senior Center

Incline Village Recreation Center

Washoe County Senior Services

Sparks Senior Center

Sun Valley Senior Center

Incline Village Library

In compliance with NRS 241.020(4)(b), this agenda has been posted on the Senior Advisory Board's website at:

https://www.washoecounty.gov/seniorsrv/senior_services_advisory_board/index.php

<https://notice.nv.gov>.

**COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

TUESDAY

1:00 P.M.

DECEMBER 2, 2025

PRESENT:

Alexis Hill, Chair
Kathleen Taylor, Vice Chair
Brandi Anderson, Member
Michael Clark, Member
Ed Lawson, Member
Dian VanderWell, Member

Janis Galassini, County Clerk
Michael Large, Chief Deputy District Attorney

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 1:00 p.m. in the Washoe County Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll, and the Board conducted the following business:

25-003C AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Pam Darr questioned whether the Nevada Cares Campus reduced homelessness, how that was measured, and how much was being spent on homelessness in the community. She suggested opening an organization like Goodwill or the Salvation Army, where people could donate things to be sold for profit. She believed that, along with work programs, would take the burden off taxpayers and give unhoused individuals a purpose. She wondered how many Cares Campus residents were from out of State. She expressed concern about health and safety, citing Nationwide cases where homeless individuals killed other citizens. She was unsure whether something similar had happened locally and wanted more information. She expressed concern about drug use in the homeless community and asked the Board to keep constituents safe.

Teddie Craig provided a document to the Clerk, copies of which were distributed to the Board. He spoke about the 22 years he spent in prison and his work with the Catfish Kickstart Program, which helped inmates when they left prison. He proposed installing a scanner as well as *no panhandling* and *no loitering* signs near Hubbard Way, with violators receiving a warning the first time, a \$250 ticket the second time, and six months of jail time for the third violation. He stated that homeless people did not want to lose their belongings. He indicated he was the whistleblower for the Washoe County Library, as well as for an incident in which two busloads of people were dropped off from California. He told a story of a woman who was frightened by a homeless individual and was in a car accident shortly after. Implementing his suggestion, he continued, would ensure that people wanted for crimes in other states would not end up in the area.

Emma Doty spoke about the cost-of-living crisis on the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) campus, which was driving homelessness. She cited an engagement survey where 25 percent of UNR students indicated some form of housing insecurity during the previous six months, with 4 percent being homeless. She feared that work would remain stagnant if failed efforts were reattempted. She stated 98 percent of shelter beds in Washoe County were full, yet decisions were made based on the assumption that homeless individuals were refusing services. Jailing the unhoused did not work, she contested, because criminal records presented another barrier to employment, and hiding the homelessness problem also did not work. She said it could only be fixed by rejecting the idea that homeless people deserved their situation. She stated that housed individuals were not better than the unhoused, and no one was immune to economic instability, physical and mental illness, and a lack of support.

C. McCombs, a UNR student, remarked that he was over 50 percent rent-burdened and at risk of homelessness, and that other Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students at UNR were living in their cars. He said homelessness was not an abstract issue; it was an economic one, and it was not necessarily the result of poor decisions. He spoke about a petition to unionize signed by 90 percent of all graduate students at UNR and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) that was denied, which he believed meant that his making more money while studying was not an option. He discussed an initiative some students undertook to collect donations and feed the homeless, one done without any support from the Board, which, in his opinion, was acting as a roadblock to success. Housing was the solution, he opined, and a discussion was needed about reigning in developers and rent prices. He pointed out that the jurisdictions approved contracts for luxury apartments that had remained vacant while programs like theirs were actively helping unhoused individuals.

Garrett Delp believed unhoused individuals were one job or opportunity away from being on their feet, but the County pushed them away or jailed them for petty crimes, resulting in continued homelessness when they were released. He spoke about a County-funded behavior change program that allowed him to redirect his life, but it had only 70 beds. He believed that additional similar programs would help with the homelessness situation. He brought up an unhoused friend that he could not locate after a series of homeless sweeps, adding that current actions affected more people than just the intended target population. More programs and resources were the solution, he stated, not pushing people away.

Emile Elyse, a former Washoe County Homeless Services Analyst, said they were in charge of the County's Point in Time (PIT) Count in 2023 and 2024. They spoke about their educational and professional history, noting that they currently focused on reentry for the adult population. They stated they left the County because of bullying tactics by the Homeless Services Coordinator, who they said was still supported by the Board. They remarked that abusive people needed to be dealt with, even if they were women. They believed homelessness would not be solved through sweeps or by funding emergency services through police departments. They felt the Board was responsible for the County's failure to have a federally funded homelessness response system; instead,

homeless individuals were blamed for their situation. They expressed frustration with the Board's action and requested longitudinal data, from which they felt all analysis and policy decisions should be made.

Trista Gomez displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She acknowledged the complexity of the homeless issue and the importance of keeping common, open spaces safe for all. She stated that according to the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), anyone spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing was considered rent-burdened. She stated the standard debt-to-income ratio for people looking to buy a home was between 36 and 45 percent, but that figure did not include additional expenses such as power and water. She felt the 30 percent number was unreasonable and noted it was being reconsidered. She said that was important because otherwise more money would be spent, burdening young and old people, as well as middle- and low-income earners. She stated that more targeted services were needed.

Pat Cashell mentioned his time working in the Community Assistance Center (CAC) and the early development of the Cares Campus. He reviewed the history of homeless services in the County, from a soup kitchen that offered one meal to the CAC. He praised his father, Bob Cashell, and the Board for its efforts to address homelessness. He noted that some CAC employees had been there for 10 to 20 years. He discussed his experience with homelessness, meth addiction, depression, and anxiety, pointing out that he survived it. He opined that the Cares Campus provided cleanliness, safety, three meals a day, warm beds, hot showers, behavioral health services, and a separate women's shelter. He thought it should be a source of pride in the community. He contested comments that the campus was dangerous, unclean, and unhealthy, saying it offered stability, dignity, and support. He recognized it was not perfect, but it was way ahead of where the effort began. He asked everyone to celebrate the progress and stay committed to helping fellow humans.

Tara Tran expressed frustration that the Board met only once a year and that the City of Reno representatives on the Board, whom she felt allocated resources from a limited pool to fund the police and increase the profits of potential developers. She believed homeless individuals should not be considered a blight but as people experiencing something horrible. She expressed concern about police chiefs with criminal charges sending officers to people who were already traumatized and destroying their things, including wheelchairs and sleeping bags. She noted the Cares Campus was full. She felt permanent supportive housing (PSH) was the solution; pushing people away was not. She reminded the Board that those people were their constituents.

Matthew Wilkie thought it was unacceptable that the first Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) meeting in 19 months was held just in time for campaign season and press coverage. During that time, he continued, encampments were swept, people criminalized, and lives disrupted. He said some members advocated a zero-tolerance policy towards homeless sweeps. The Cares Campus was overcrowded and dangerous, he believed, and not a safe place for single women. He noted one of his friends was about to face charges for sleeping by the river after her husband died. He requested that the Board update its bylaws, add members with lived experience, meet monthly for the

next six months to a year, and never go more than a quarter without holding a meeting. He wanted the County's website about the Cares Campus updated, providing real-time data about the number of available beds, like hotels did. He felt unhoused individuals deserved urgency.

Kessa Lee, Community Engagement Director for Eddy House, discussed the organization's mission statement, the services it provided, and the age range it targeted. She noted 556 individuals were served so far in 2025, and there was a 70 percent increase in bed nights in September compared to the same month in 2024, as well as a 95 percent increase in meals provided. She said the main reason for homelessness was violence in the home, but housing someone before the age of 25 resulted in an 80 percent increase in success. She spoke about the opening of a transitional living center, adding that 12 of the 36 units were already occupied. She noted that other successes included the PSH at the Cares Campus and warming centers. She thanked everyone involved in caring for neighbors in need of housing.

Marissa Grimsley brought up her husband, Matthew, the program manager at Karma Box Project, who was arrested for assaulting her for a third time. She reached out to Karma Box Founder and Executive Director, Grant Denton, about the situation, but he dismissed her and informed her husband that she reached out to him, causing more turmoil at home. She expressed frustration about what she described as the mishandling of a situation in which she needed access to her husband's phone to change the controls on her and her children's phones. She spoke about Mr. Denton's and her husband's histories of abusing women, saying they should not be in powerful positions over vulnerable individuals. She mentioned her husband had an active warrant when he was hired to work at Karma Box, and she did not think people with violent criminal records should be disguised as trustworthy. She thought those employees needed to be held to higher standards, and she wondered why the program still received taxpayer grants.

Kimberly Koschmann discussed the consequences she faced after providing public comment at the last CHAB meeting. She stated she was present with another woman who was put in danger by a man about whom she had warned the Board. She spoke about a cease-and-desist letter provided by Mr. Denton's attorney, which she said was an attempt to silence her, and her attempts to report him to the Reno Police Department (RPD). She believed the deputy district attorney present at the May meeting did not listen to her, and she pointed out that Mr. Denton received \$1.3 to \$1.8 million in grants. She thought that victims had not been included in the investigation, but that its scope was narrowed by Mr. Denton and the County to exclude the dangerous issues provided to investigators via email. She said six allegations of battery were made against Mr. Denton and the Safe Camp supervisor. She felt that repeat domestic violence offenders should not work with vulnerable populations.

Evelyn Grosenick, Washoe County Public Defender, discussed her professional history in the Public Defender's Office and how jail had become the typical response when services were not provided to people who were homeless. The issues behind homelessness, she continued, were social and economic, not criminal. She mentioned some

of the challenges faced by homeless individuals in trying to attend court hearings, adding that many were in and out of emergency rooms. She believed that locking people up did not make the community safer, and it cost the County the same to hospitalize someone for eight days as it did to put them in jail for four months or to provide one year of supportive housing. She spoke about the positive benefits of the City of Miami's initiative to implement the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). Despite having a population six times that of Washoe County, Miami-Dade's homeless population was 3,800, compared to 1,760 in Washoe County. She thought both the Cares Campus and the community's increased services brought significant improvements to the unhoused population. She stated that the Cares Campus provided a safe, warm, and dry place to live and to lock up belongings, as well as access to food, clean water, and showers. Any solution to homelessness would need to be multifaceted, she concluded.

Candy Greene, editor of *Senior ResQ Magazine*, brought up the serious problem of senior abuse in the Country. Seniors were being harmed by caregivers, she said, because people did not want to care for their elderly relatives. She expressed concern that the County was looking the other way regarding abuses at the Karma Box Project, the Cares Campus, and the Safe Camp, rather than finding new providers. She thought it was time to do the right thing.

Hawkeye Bufkin Plank, speaking on behalf of the Reno Sparks Tenants Union, said they encountered many people who were under threat of becoming homeless. The way to solve homelessness, he argued, was through a housing-first agenda. Ways to address homelessness included rent controls, reducing the number of rental properties owned by out-of-state investors, and developing affordable new properties. He stated police sweeps of homeless encampments were not a real solution to homelessness. He noted that money needed to be diverted into resources, outreach, and social services, along with rent subsidies for unhoused individuals and rent controls.

Todd Bailey displayed a document. No copy was submitted for the public record. He cited data from the Nevada Housing Coalition. 31 percent of Nevada's population could not afford housing, he remarked, and 29 percent of the overall population were seniors. He said that none of the governments that the Board members represented controlled the factors that impacted the County, such as fair market value, the types of industries in the area, or wage levels. He opined that the only thing the agencies controlled was the rate of government inflation. He did not think a single government employee with kids could afford housing. He wanted there to be control on the total cost of government in Washoe County, because that affected rents and mortgages. He wondered why UNR charged so much for student housing. New tech, growth, and education spending worked to some degree, he continued, but more scrutiny would be needed over the following year.

George Postrozy believed the County had a community housing trust, but there was no stable, legally active basis for funding it. He stated that, as a result, none of the proposed housing solutions could meet the extremely low-income housing standards set by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He believed that the trust needed to be funded to provide public housing, because private

developers could only address affordable housing to a limited extent with public subsidies. He requested that the Board make a strong recommendation to their entities to permanently fund a stable source of income through the Reno Housing Authority (RHA) to provide public housing for low-income people. He said that if the County did not have the ability to do that, it should work with elected representatives at the State level to submit a bill draft request (BDR) authorizing it to do so. He believed voters would agree if the case were made that it would provide value for the money spent.

Precious, no last name given, indicated that her public defender admitted to violating her rights in defending her. She stated she and her child were now homeless due to those actions, and a different public defender made threatening statements about her suing them. She wondered what she could do to address the bullying. She confirmed she was homeless. Chair Hill said staff were present who could speak with her. Precious spoke about a YouTuber who accused the District Attorney's (DA) Office of fraud. She stated she was denied meetings with Alternate Public Defender (APD) Kate Hickman and Public Defender Grosenick. Chair Hill responded that staff could assist her in filing a complaint. Precious asked the Board to explore issues with the Public Defender's Office, adding that her public defender told her he would lose his job if he took her case to trial. She listed the names of several attorneys and judges with whom she had grievances.

Jay Kolbet-Clausell stated that he completed his Master's degree in social work since his last appearance before the Board. He requested that the Board increase capacity to hire community health workers (CHWs) and allow greater Medicaid billing for the work. He stated that community health workers could spend more time with clients than nurses or social workers, and their work was billable for up to 12 hours per month without prior authorization, though more could be billed with authorization. He talked about stepping away from Reno because he thought he was wasting his time, but he offered a special remote CHW session in January or February that would count toward State certification. He noted details could be found at caseplan.org. He stressed the need for that day's meeting, urging Board members to overlook all the frustrations and get things done.

Doralee Martinez hoped that the Board would be more active because she believed homelessness was present and people needed help. She said she was scared to walk her dog because of encounters with homeless individuals. She discussed a woman with a health issue who reported urine and human feces on the floor where she lived at West 3rd Street and Washington Street, noting it had not yet been cleaned. She asked the Health Department to help the elderly people at that complex.

25-004C **AGENDA ITEM 4** Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Community Homelessness Advisory Board per Article IV of the Community Homelessness Advisory Board bylaws.

Member Lawson opined that, since the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) was only an advisory board, the Chair and Vice Chair should remain with Washoe County. In response to the Chair's follow-up query, Member Clark indicated he would like to be the Chair.

On the call for public comment, Matthew Wilkie was called but did not speak.

On motion by Member Lawson, seconded by Vice Chair Taylor, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that Member Clark be elected as Chair of the Community Homelessness Advisory Board.

On motion by Member VanderWell, seconded by Member Anderson, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that Member Hill be elected as Vice Chair of the Community Homelessness Advisory Board.

Chair Clark and Vice Chair Hill assumed their new roles and positions on the dais.

Chair Clark inquired how to make the meeting run more like the Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) meetings. County Clerk Jan Galassini replied that the meeting was not set up through the Granicus platform, but she proposed working with the Office of the County Manager (OCM) to address the issue. She offered to provide the Chair with the names of all the speakers.

Chair Clark thought that not only did the homeless population need to be considered, but the community as a whole did as well, since everyone was affected by homelessness. He spoke about the County's sizeable investment in the Nevada Cares Campus, which was only a part of the efforts surrounding homelessness. Many unhoused individuals were living elsewhere or in their cars. He said he saw around 60 people on his way to the meeting that day who needed help, and the Board had to figure out a way to achieve that. The court system and law enforcement agencies were also affected by homelessness. He said he wanted to see individuals with lived experience on the Board.

Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large cautioned the Board to stay on the agenda and reminded Chair Clark that there would be an opportunity for Board member comments at the end of the meeting.

Chair Clark responded that he wanted to make an opening statement showing a new direction for the Board, which he felt had been lackluster so far.

25-005C **AGENDA ITEM 5** Approval of the minutes of the May 13, 2024, Community Homeless Advisory Board meeting.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Vice Chair Hill, seconded by Member Anderson, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that the minutes of the May 13, 2024, Community Homelessness Advisory Board be approved.

25-006C **AGENDA ITEM 6** Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada presentation on the potential impact of federal funding cuts. Marie Baxter, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada.

Marie Baxter, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN), stated that the organization was founded over 80 years ago, and it was the largest humanitarian service organization to have various relationships with the three jurisdictions over the years. CCNN offered programs to assist those who were homeless or at very high risk of becoming homeless. Some of those programs included St. Vincent's Kitchen, which served almost 1,600 meals per day. While the County provided a small grant to offset some of the program's costs, it was mostly funded by CCNN. She mentioned Battle Born Recovery Residences, another CCNN program that housed 84 residents and was the only National Alliance of Recovery Residence-certified program in Nevada. Most residents of that program, she continued, were post-incarceration or came from shelters. She remarked that most of the program's success was due to a partnership with St. Vincent's Thrift Store, which provided employment opportunities for residents. That encouraged great long-term outcomes for people who did not think they would ever have employment, benefits, and sobriety. Many residents also worked in the food pantry and the dining room, she added.

Ms. Baxter described St. Marguerite Support Services as the largest and only walk-in social work case management service in the community, seeing up to 200 people a day who were facing imminent homelessness or food insecurity. She said they also provided services to people on parole and probation, including a career-coaching program. She said that the program's workers listened to people's individual circumstances, helping them navigate systems and remove barriers. The largest part of what CCNN did was food distribution through the St. Vincent's Food Pantry and the Essentials Closet. Among the non-food items distributed to people were blankets, clothing, apartment starter kits, diapers, and baby formula. She said they also worked with people needing to fulfill community service hours.

Ms. Baxter indicated that House Resolution 1 would accelerate the timeline for removing waivers for able-bodied adults without dependents. Previously, individuals had waivers that allowed them to continue receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and they could lose those benefits if they did not volunteer, work, or enroll in a qualified education program for at least 80 hours a month. They were also only entitled to SNAP benefits for 90 days within a three-year period. This would make many more people, including all homeless people, much more food insecure. She remarked that veterans and foster youth aged 18 to 24 no longer had waivers, and that the age range for dependents was lowered from 17 and under to 13 and under. Additionally, waivers were previously given to people aged 54 and younger; now, they were given to people aged 63 and younger. After Hour Resolution 1, waiver applicants now needed to prove eligibility every six months, which added another barrier to benefits. She said CCNN was having individuals meet with the Department of Social Services to determine how they would be impacted. The goal was to ensure that all eligible individuals could continue to

receive SNAP benefits. Given the changes to many safety net programs, CCNN was trying to refer people to agencies that could help them navigate difficult situations.

25-007C **AGENDA ITEM 7** City of Sparks housing programs presentation. Amy Jones, City of Sparks.

City of Sparks Housing Specialist Amy Jones conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: City of Sparks Housing Programs; Home Means Nevada Initiative; Emergency Rental Assistance; Community Development Block Grant; Private Activity Bond Cap; and What's Next.

Ms. Jones stated the City of Sparks was awarded \$2.8 million in funding from the Home Means Nevada Initiative, with the requirement that it be used for the development of affordable housing for households earning at or below 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). Each unit would come with a project-based voucher, allowing residents to secure stable housing regardless of their initial income level. Construction on both the 10th Street and I Street properties was expected to begin in the third or fourth quarter of 2026.

Ms. Jones said Assembly Bill (AB) 396 allocated \$3 million to the City of Sparks for rental assistance to individuals who were elderly, those with disabilities, or those facing unanticipated emergencies. Residents received up to three months of rental assistance through the Eviction Prevention program, including past rent, late fees, and future rent. Through the Short-Term Senior Rental Assistance Program, she explained, seniors received up to six months of assistance to allow them to locate more affordable units or to stabilize their financial situation. She discussed the program eligibility requirements for these programs with respect to AMI and the seniors' city of residence, among other things. The average amount of assistance provided was \$4,542 per household.

Ms. Jones described the functions of the recipients of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding: The Eddy House provided support services to youth experiencing homelessness; the Silver State Fair Housing Council provided advocacy and training on fair housing rights; and the homeowner rehabilitation programs provide funds to repair or replace heaters, plumbing, electrical systems, roofs, windows, or the installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) needs. Deferred loans through these programs were up to \$25,000, secured by deeds of trust and repaid when the homes were sold, or the owners no longer resided in them. Emergency repair grants were up to \$10,000 and did not need to be repaid.

Ms. Jones noted that recommendations were made for the City of Sparks to advance income-restricted housing and increase overall housing production as a result of an audit conducted by Eco Northwest. The final report was expected to be presented to the Sparks City Council in early 2026, and staff was also working with the Nevada Housing Division (NHD) on potential opportunities for funding matching to further support affordable housing development.

25-008C **AGENDA ITEM 8** City of Reno housing programs presentation. Monica Kirch, City of Reno.

Elaine Wiseman, Housing Manager for City of Reno Housing and Development, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) Meeting; Background & Context; Regional Roles as of September 2021; City of Reno Homeless Fiscal Impacts; City of Reno Affordable Housing Development Incentives; City of Reno Affordable Housing Support FY21-25; Washoe County HOME Consortium Impact: FY21-25; City of Reno Rental Assistance Allocations FY 21-25; Strengthening Housing Stability; and Continuing the Momentum.

Ms. Wiseman noted that from 2004 to 2020, the City of Reno was the lead agency for all shelter operations and Continuum of Care (CoC) funding. Around 2020, Washoe County's role as the regional provider of social services guided the decision that the County should take over as the lead agency for homelessness services. An interlocal agreement was signed in November of 2020, transferring shelter operations and homeless services to the County, including CoC funding, and this was extended indefinitely in 2021.

Ms. Wiseman said the City of Reno continued to address a wide range of homelessness-related impacts across Reno in 2025, including responding to nearly 6,000 service requests, conducting 148 cleanup operations, and removing more than 4,000 yards of debris. Funds were also spent on responding to fires, security contracts, equipment, and contributions to supportive programs such as Reno Works and the Rapid Rehousing Program (RRP). She reported that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were also used to fund contracts with the Karma Box Project and the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE), as well as to mitigate impacts along the Truckee River. She added that the City of Reno's street outreach contracts had concluded and would not be renewed due to a lack of a dedicated funding source, affecting citywide service delivery.

Ms. Wiseman indicated that the Washoe County HOME Consortium (WCHC) Impact was founded in 1994 as a regional partnership to receive and administer federal HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds. The City of Reno operated the program for the entire region. She described how loans were issued, with some at low interest rates or with deferred payments, and that the City of Reno's portfolio currently included more than 100 properties and thousands of units. To accomplish this, the City of Reno had dedicated underwriting, loan servicing, and compliance teams to ensure the properties were monitored for affordability and habitability. Most of the individuals served with HOME Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP) funds were victims of domestic violence.

Ms. Wiseman pointed out that 51 percent of households receiving rental assistance from the City of Reno were at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), and would have been at risk of homelessness without it. The Eviction Prevention Court, she explained, was offered through a partnership with the Reno Justice Court, which diverted qualified individuals who met certain income requirements to a specialty court.

There, the City of Reno would pay past-due amounts and fees, and partner individuals with financial navigators through Opportunity Alliance of Nevada to help them with budgeting and financial planning. That program was only just over a year old.

Ms. Wiseman stated that the RRP was a year-old pilot program partnering with Volunteers of America (VOA) and the Reno Housing Authority (RHA) to identify homeless individuals who earned some form of income but were on a waiting list for permanent housing. Those participants were then housed at the VOA facility on Sage Street, where they received wraparound services and paid 30 percent of their income toward rent. The City of Reno then paid the remainder of that rent until those individuals received their housing vouchers. She explained that both Reno Works programs had been in existence for more than a decade, and that homeless participants worked alongside City of Reno departments on beautification projects and received intensive training in financial literacy and interviewing skills. At the end of the Reno Works program, most participants were employed and had housing.

Ms. Wiseman said the Housing Needs Assessment survey provided the City of Reno with a data-driven understanding of the community's needs and priorities. The data were broken down by income and housing type, illustrating how many permanent supportive housing units would be needed within 10 years and the types of homeownership opportunities available to people with 60 percent AMI. She remarked that better decisions could be made based on that data. She played a brief video about the interactive dashboard created from these data.

Member Taylor inquired about the financial impacts of homelessness on the City of Reno. Ms. Wiseman confirmed that the City of Reno spent almost \$7.5 million on homelessness, though none of the \$5.1 million from the City of Reno's General Fund would be reimbursed. She explained that the ARPA funding was a one-time grant and would not be repeated. Citing a projected \$24 million shortfall in the City of Reno's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 to 2027 budget, Member Taylor wondered about potential grant opportunities. Ms. Wiseman replied that staff was always exploring grant opportunities, and she mentioned a notice of funding opportunity that was released about CoC funding.

Chair Clark requested additional information about rental assistance for seniors. Ms. Wiseman indicated that funding came through Assembly Bill (AB) 396, but even with that funding, many seniors were in challenging financial situations. She explained that the pilot program was a short-term opportunity for seniors until they could stabilize their situation, but it halted when funding from AB 396 ended.

25-009C **AGENDA ITEM 9** Presentation and overview of the Reno Housing Authority, its housing and service programs, and potential impacts of federal funding cuts. Heidi McKendree, Reno Housing Authority.

Heidi McKendree, Deputy Executive Director of the Reno Housing Authority (RHA), conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Community Homelessness Advisory Board Presentation; Who We Are;

RHA Affordable Housing Overview; Affordable Housing Development; Funding Overview and Challenges; RHA Partnerships; RHA Impact; and Questions.

Ms. McKendree stated that the RHA was a designated Moving to Work (MTW) agency, which meant the RHA could use federal funds more like block grants, giving the organization greater flexibility. That also allowed the RHA to review the United States (US) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and request waivers for things that did not work for the community.

Ms. McKendree said the 920 units of other affordable housing offered by the RHA did not receive federal subsidies and were part of other programs that set rent prices so that residents with limited income could afford them. She stressed the importance of preserving existing affordable units, though she acknowledged that some had been repositioned due to age. She reported that additional funding from the Home Means Nevada Initiative was used to rehabilitate other public housing sites. She noted that the upcoming Carville Court Redevelopment project would provide permanent supportive housing (PSH) for the community.

Ms. McKendree explained that the majority of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program was funded annually through HUD housing assistance payments (HAP) subsidies. That budget authority dictated how many vouchers the RHA could provide. Because HUD funding for the 137 emergency housing vouchers could run out in 2026, the RHA planned to transition those clients to the regular HCV program to prevent them from becoming homeless again, which would affect both the HCV program itself and the waitlist to get on it. She stated that HUD funding alone did not cover the cost associated with the prorated administrative fees for the HCV program, so the RHA needed to offset the shortfall in the public housing program using funds from its other affordable housing initiatives. She said the annual HUD operating subsidy had been significantly underfunded since the late 1990s, and the HUD Capital Fund had been underfunded since the early 2000s. Because of that underfunding, housing authorities were strongly encouraged to transition public housing units to their voucher programs.

Ms. McKendree noted that the \$70,000 provided to the City of Reno was used to help offset the cost of a Service Coordinator position. She hoped the Welcome Home Washoe program would help identify available housing units in real time to help shelter homeless clients. The funds the RHA provided to Eddy House were originally used to subsidize 40 beds, but that number increased to 80 over the previous year. She said motel assistance was provided to people who had a future unit assigned to them but needed to be sheltered for a short period before they could move into that unit.

Regarding housing partnerships, Ms. McKendree stated that the Nevada Youth Empowerment Program's project, Gen Den, provided housing units and support to both seniors and youth aging out of the foster system. The Ready to Rent program featured classes on becoming better tenants and was aimed at clients who were transitioning off the housing waitlist. The RHA hoped to use its support, through its flexibility as an MTW agency, to offset Continuum of Care (CoC) funding losses. She opined that PSH was the

type of housing most needed in the community. She summarized that the RHA was always seeking partnerships and ways to leverage its MTW demonstration capacity to meet community needs.

Member Lawson asked about the impact of the reduction in public supportive housing. Ms. McKendree said the RHA would not be impacted because the organization was not CoC-funded, but the community would be affected. The RHA planned to hold meetings to determine ways to offset that loss of housing. She encouraged the Board to watch the video linked at the end of the presentation.

Ms. McKendree acknowledged a lack of clarity about the level of HUD funding. The RHA had flat funding through the end of January, she noted, and three very different proposals for HUD funding were presented prior to the government shutdown. The US Senate's budget proposal was the closest to how funding had looked in the past, and the RHA hoped it would be the option that was ultimately chosen.

Vice Chair Hill thanked the RHA for being a great partner for Washoe County, which wanted to support the RHA in any way it could. She mentioned that one method to raise additional funding for housing was through a voter initiative to increase sales tax, and another was for the County to enact a government service sales tax. She thought the three agencies should work together to demand more support from the State.

25-010C **AGENDA ITEM 10** Presentation and update on the Good Neighbors Warming Center program. Ben Castro, The Reno Initiative for Shelter Equality (R.I.S.E.).

Benjamin Castro, Executive Director of the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE), Lily Baran of Hampton House Garden and the Harm Reduction Coordinator of RISE, and Ilya Arbatman of Laundry for the People conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Good Neighbors Warming Center; Introduction; Partnerships; Background; Methodology; Project Structure; Guest Data; Volunteer Data; Volunteer Testimony; Finance Breakdown; Price Per Bed Comparison; Analysis; Conclusion; Thank You.

Mr. Castro began the PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the *Good Neighbors Warming Center* and *Introduction* slides.

Ms. Baran stated that the presentation for Item 10 represented the only one during the meeting that was not from a government agency, noting that it was operated by community members. She said that her organization had appeared before the Board 18 months earlier and requested a winter preparedness plan. She cited the use of Reno's recreational centers in the aftermath of the Caughlin Ranch fire as an example of what a preparedness plan could provide, but they never received one. She emphasized that citizens, many of whom had experienced housing and food insecurity, were delivering food to unhoused neighbors and did not have the option of removing themselves from those neighborhoods. She thought these meetings were great opportunities for their organizations

to share their evidence-based information and for the Board to use its partnerships to help people get off the streets more quickly. Because of the volunteers' work, those organizations were able to double the time the Good Neighbors Warming Center was open. She opined that the operation conducted by volunteers proved that the Good Neighbors Warming Center, as a concept, worked and that people who were not responsive to other options were reached.

Ms. Baran stated that the Good Neighbors Warming Center was a much cheaper strategy than the costs incurred by governmental bodies for fencing, anti-homeless infrastructure, and police sweeps. Other health authorities, including the United States (US) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), determined that those strategies were not effective uses of funds and did not result in people becoming housed. In New York, an audit revealed that 90 out of 2,308 people who were forcibly removed remained in an area for only one day, and only three obtained housing. She thought serious conversations about the problems and how everyone planned to fix them were necessary, rather than removing the unhoused. She thought the strategies that were employed by the jurisdictions compromised personal safety and eroded public trust, leading to multiple calls for service. Displacement also resulted in damaged autonomy and a failure to treat chronic illnesses, and she said criminal records impacted people's chances of employment. She wanted decisions made based on evidence of which methods actually worked, not on displacement or law enforcement involvement.

Ms. Baran continued the presentation by reviewing the slide entitled *Partnerships*. She listed some of RISE's faith-based partners: Reno First United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, and St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral. She argued that RISE's efforts would have been more successful with government intervention. She noted that her organization, Hampton House Garden, had fed many people by focusing on food waste and food recovery.

Mr. Arbatman acknowledged that some County funding helped keep his program going. He reported that the program currently operated out of Champion Laundry Center in Reno and Megawash Laundromat in Sparks. He discussed the work done separately by Family Soup Mutual Aid, Northern Nevada Harm Reduction Alliance, and Reno Hearts You. He estimated 700 volunteers were involved in different capacities, and The Holland Project lent them their van for transport.

Mr. Arbatman reviewed the *Background* slide and noted that some of the statistics in the presentation had not been updated since the previous year's presentation. He said women, especially those fleeing domestic violence situations or sexual assault, typically felt more unsafe around large groups of people. Misconceptions about the unhoused sometimes resulted in the involvement of law enforcement, and he hoped relationships could be established with homeless individuals to dispel some of those misconceptions. He pointed out that none of the presenters for Agenda Item 10 had been attacked or injured. Building these relationships, he continued, could help convince people to get the services they needed. He felt law enforcement tended to destroy any trust built up with unhoused individuals.

Ms. Baran added that some users of the Good Neighbors Warming Center had previously rejected any assistance and wanted to be left alone by government agencies, but they caused no issues at the center. She thought low- and no-barrier aid was critical. She reminded the Board that those people were their constituents, and they were supposed to serve them with dignity. She thought it constituted a breakdown in service when she had to contact the Reno City Manager to get one person the services they needed.

Ms. Baran continued the presentation by reviewing the following slides: *Methodology*; *Project Structure*; *Guest Data*; and *Volunteer Data*. She said it only took 10 days to put together the Good Neighbors Warming Center program for 2024 and 2025, which provided 80 days of consistent shelter for women and families. She reported that \$12,000 was raised and that 700 people volunteered to help through an online crowdfunding campaign. She encouraged Board members to attend a distribution event at 5:00 p.m. to engage with their food-insecure constituents.

Ms. Baran noted government buildings such as the Evelyn Mount Northeast Community Center and the Moana Springs Community Aquatics and Fitness Center offered showers and would function better as warming centers than the partner churches, which did not offer showers. Additionally, a doctor from the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd offered weekly free healthcare checkups, and other doctors had contacted RISE to donate their services because the Good Neighbors Warming Center program was working. She said community-sourced blankets were being used instead of sleeping bags to reduce laundry costs.

Ms. Baran noted that 23 guests had never accessed homeless services and were therefore not included in the Point in Time (PIT) count. She stated that HUD estimated that black people comprised only 12 percent of the population but represented 30 percent of those experiencing homelessness, which she noted was similar to the Good Neighbors Warming Center, whose population was made up of 40 percent black women and children. She thought the problem could be solved that day, but not all the necessary steps were being taken. Despite being operational for only three weeks, the Good Neighbors Warming Center had already referred people to Our Place, the Cares Campus, and Reno Behavioral Health.

Mr. Castro continued the presentation by reviewing the *Finance Breakdown* and *Price Per Bed Comparison* slides. He noted a correction that the cost per bed at Our Place was closer to that of the Cares Campus than shown in the presentation. Ms. Baran added that the \$23,000 cost to operate the Good Neighbors Warming Center for 84 days was roughly half the cost of one police sweep. She felt that using Evelyn Mount and other facilities to house the homeless population would result in maybe five people on the streets. She argued that RISE volunteers would manage the facilities if the agencies expanded services to include similar types of overnight housing.

Ms. Baran concluded the presentation by reviewing the *Analysis* and *Conclusion* slides. She advocated adding a person with lived experience of homelessness to the Board to better understand what people were experiencing. Though the County

offered \$10,000 for this project, she believed it would not be difficult to raise \$50,000 from the community to avoid straining government budgets. She said the results of the Good Neighbors Warming Center program from the previous year proved that there was community will, though she thought that political will was now needed as well. The Good Neighbors Warming Center demonstrated what an emergency preparedness plan for winter could look like. She wanted the governmental agencies to expand these services, save money in the process, and provide a dignified life for the unhoused.

Citing requests by police departments for more money and personnel, Mr. Arbatman said consideration needed to be given to whether that was the right solution. He did not think results around homelessness would change if law enforcement budgets were increased, and having one law enforcement officer per capita would not be the kind of world anyone was trying to build. He opined that providing services and increasing law enforcement were contradictory. He spoke about one unhoused individual who repeatedly traveled between two areas, which he thought was not only detrimental to the individual but also a ridiculous outcome. That person was also taken to jail, but was never booked due to the time and paperwork involved. He wondered whether any statistics existed showing that the most recent anti-homeless ordinances had helped, adding that they were not being enforced regularly. He stressed that people did not need to be coerced into accessing services, but rather that services must be provided that homeless people would voluntarily seek out.

Ms. Baran discussed the different approaches RISE had originally tried, including a motel program, street outreach, partnering with various government entities, and protesting. She explained that they had continued to adjust their approach until they found something that worked, and she encouraged lawmakers to do the same. She did not think criticism of the agencies partnering with the jurisdictions should be ignored, and that something new needed to be tried. She offered to send Board members data about the ineffectiveness of displacement. She no longer wanted to rely on misconceptions about approaches that should work, but rather to utilize methods that did work, such as those proven by the Good Neighbors Warming Center.

Chair Clark indicated he would try to meet with the presenters individually and encouraged Board members to do the same. He recognized there were many non-governmental ways to help the community.

25-011C **AGENDA ITEM 11** Presentation and overview of the Washoe County Human Services Agency's homelessness programs. Topics may include, but are not limited to, communications, shelter programming, client engagement expectations, data updates, and the Permanent Supportive Housing building at the Nevada Cares Campus. Ryan Gustafson, Washoe County.

Ryan Gustafson, Director of the Washoe County Human Services Agency (HSA), provided a brief synopsis of his professional history. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: FY 25 Shelter Demographics – Our Place Family (two slides); FY 25 Shelter Demographics – Our Place Women's (two

slides); FY 25 Shelter Demographics – Nevada Cares Campus (two slides); FY 25 Shelter Demographics – Safe Camp (two slides); Shelter Length of Stay – FY 2025; Emergency Shelter Expectations; Partners and Resources – Onsite; Outcomes and Exits – FY 2025; Clients Homeless Upon Arrival in Washoe County; Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Building Update; Point in Time (PIT) Count – Methodology; Point in Time (PIT) Count – 2019 through 2025; Total Point in Time Count (PIT) Count– 1/22/2025; Housing Inventory Count (HIC) Bed Utilization – 1/22/2025; Conclusions – 2025 PIT/HIC; Total Point in Time Count (PIT) Count – 2026; Actively Homeless Count – Inflow/Outflow; Shelter Census; Challenges; HHS Communications; and What’s to Come; Thank you.

Mr. Gustafson clarified that the information pertaining to disabilities, mental health and substance abuse disorders, and chronic homelessness was gathered from self-reported data. He noted that HSA staff were actively considering adding work programming to the Cares Campus, addressing what participants would and would not be allowed to do while on campus. Cares Campus staff encouraged people to take advantage of housing opportunities when they arose. He said that work of that kind required partnerships between government agencies and community members who wanted to serve vulnerable populations. The HSA’s list of partners and resources changed regularly, he noted.

Mr. Gustafson anticipated conducting a more in-depth analysis of the origins of the unhoused population, whether they were native to Washoe County or had come from elsewhere. He stated that such action would also contemplate the causes of homelessness among people who either came to Washoe County homeless or became homeless once arriving. He hoped to share that information with the Board soon. He noted the permanent supportive housing (PSH) units were filling up quickly, and some staff were still being onboarded.

Mr. Gustafson mentioned that the Continuum of Care (CoC) voted not to perform the Point in Time (PIT) count in 2025, but it would be done in January of 2026. Most available beds and facilities were full in 2025, he noted, though a small number of overflow beds would be made available for men and women in December. Updated data about bed availability could be found on the HSA’s website, broken down by specific program locations. He indicated those statistics were refreshed once a day.

Mr. Gustafson stated that the HSA had not historically billed Medicaid for services on the Cares Campus or at Our Place, resulting in a significant loss of potential revenue. He reported that those services were currently being billed out, and more than \$2 million was recouped each year. In response to concerns about the inability to obtain data, he noted that the number of campus tours had tripled over the last three months and staff intended to continue offering tours as often as necessary. He said more than 600 OnMed CareStation visits had occurred in four months at the Senior Center, so he expected it to be a good resource at the Cares Campus. The Washoe County Pilot Safe Parking Program was designed in response to feedback demonstrating a need for that resource, particularly among college-aged individuals. He explained that the pilot program would provide access to meals and showers for people living in their cars. He mentioned retooling the current

work program to lay out expectations for participants, helping ensure that Campus residents were more active.

Member Taylor inquired about how the number of homeless individuals was calculated. Mr. Gustafson acknowledged that the previous year's count of unhoused individuals was based on sheltered homeless people; unsheltered people were not counted because no PIT count was conducted. He believed the count for 2026 would provide a more accurate total. He confirmed there were eight fewer homeless people in 2025 than in 2024.

Vice Chair Hill asked when the second phase of PSH would open on the Cares Campus. Mr. Gustafson responded that it should happen in the spring. Staff planned to have a list of people who were ready to move in once the facility was ready, and he did not anticipate many delays. He recognized the need for many more PSH units. Vice Chair Hill wondered whether the increase in the need for PSH was due to reduced federal support, which led to fewer available Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs). Mr. Gustafson agreed that such occurrences seemed to be the trend and could impact the community. He explained that a national trend showed more people fighting for fewer resources, so staff needed to either make concessions or implement creative solutions. Solving the issue, he remarked, required the work of many entities and passionate members of the community. Vice Chair Hill thought it was the government's role to support the capital housing piece, but they lacked the authority to enact any taxes to do so. She believed that PSH was primarily for seniors and people with disabilities. Mr. Gustafson pointed to data that showed that a disproportionate number of unhoused individuals were older, and that both housing and services were issues. He noted that people with mental health challenges and veterans also needed services, and Washoe County was not a cheap county in which to live.

Regarding the website, Member Anderson asked why it did not yet capture real-time data and what Mr. Gustafson considered the purpose of that data to be. Mr. Gustafson thought some of the delays were due to staff wanting to ensure the data was accurate. They also experienced challenges with data not auto-filling properly when it was uploaded, but that had been addressed. He wanted the data on open beds to be available for both personal use and for providers and law enforcement agencies. Given the expense of the process, Member Anderson wanted clear, actionable expectations for the website. Mr. Gustafson acknowledged the challenges in the beginning, though much of the process had since been automated. He hoped to include additional metrics in the online data, such as age and substance-use factors. Member Anderson said demographics were useless unless the data were used for a purpose. She suggested creating a strategy based on the data.

Member Anderson inquired about the factors that triggered the opening of the Warming Center as well as the differences between the Good Neighbors Warming Center at the Cares Campus and RISE's center. Mr. Gustafson replied that the County had approximately 80 overflow beds available for men. The Warming Center opened when temperatures began to drop, usually around December 1. He described the location of the Good Neighbors Warming Center, adding that the County worked with several regional partners to operate it. The Good Neighbors Warming Center had availability for 120

people. The official opening of the center could happen earlier or later, depending on the temperature.

Member Anderson asked about the initiative to expand workforce development at the Cares Campus. Mr. Gustafson indicated staff were in the early stages of that process and were working with the Department of Education and Ann Silver, Chief Executive Officer of the Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce. He expected there to be an educational component. The Cares Campus housed nearly 600 people with different needs and abilities, so staff was trying to develop assessment tools to determine expectations. The program was expected to be multifaceted, with people working with mental health counselors or drug counselors. He hoped to form workforce groups whose members received vouchers for completing work. He also planned to work with the State to seek Medicaid reimbursement for some of the work to defray the County's costs.

Chair Clark wondered why staff had only recently begun billing for Medicaid and where the money collected from that went. Mr. Gustafson said he would find out where the money went and provide that information to the Chair. Staff consistently sought ways to fund the programs in place, but the funds would not be available until the campus was open and case management was actively in place. There were administrative dollars that could be billed to Medicaid by assigning active case managers to clients. Additionally, those reimbursements would take a while to go through the State's process.

Chair Clark stated he would be more excited once the staff's actions and words coincided. He mentioned that it took two years for Ms. Silver to secure a desk on campus to help people gain employment or obtain their general educational development certificates. The County was previously reluctant to let her do so, but now that she was, it would soon become clear who was able and willing to hold a job.

Since there was no PIT count in 2025, Chair Clark emphasized the need for a census, as he believed that without it, all the data provided would be inaccurate. Mr. Gustafson pointed out that he had not omitted the data; the CoC had voted not to collect data on unsheltered persons. Chair Clark felt that because it was not done, the remaining data should be questioned. He expressed support for using the collected reimbursement money for education, which he felt would help people get out of their situations. He mentioned that more people needed beds and services than could be accommodated, partly because people were coming here from out of State. He said the County needed an understanding of where they were coming from so it could focus on a solution. He mentioned that other counties admitted to busing people to the Cares Campus.

25-012C **AGENDA ITEM 12** Board member announcements, reports, and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Chair Clark asked for clarification about how future meeting dates were chosen and about the term length of the Chair. Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large replied that, pursuant to the Board's bylaws, the Chair was in place for one year. Any member of the Board could request a meeting through the Chair, and they could

be scheduled at any time. Ultimately, scheduling was at the Chair's discretion. If the next Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) meeting did not take place for 14 months, he clarified, a new Chair would need to be selected.

Member Taylor stated she was unsure of the current purpose of the CHAB, as she understood that it was originally intended to facilitate the formation and operation of the Nevada Cares Campus. She requested clarification about the City of Reno's role at the next meeting.

Member Lawson expressed appreciation for the Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team, which was present at the meeting.

Chair Clark requested that additional CHAB meetings be held in January, March, and May.

25-013C AGENDA ITEM 13 Public Comment.

Trista Gomez displayed documents, copies of which were placed on file with the Clerk. She mentioned a chasm in the variety of ways people discussed homelessness, with some people thinking unhoused people should be able to go anywhere and be in public spaces, while others thought there should be no unhoused people at all. She commended the community for taking action. She stated that 164 locations implemented homeless programs throughout the Country, but they were all in high-tax jurisdictions. She was glad that County staff was exploring different community resources; otherwise, funds would need to be diverted from other Cities of Reno and Sparks and County areas. She stated that the County's budget had increased by 40 percent over the last five years, with 78 percent of that increase going to pay employees. Additionally, a large portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was used for the Cares Campus rather than for infrastructure. She opined that community members wanted greater accountability and progress. She felt that homelessness issues were keeping people from visiting some jurisdictions. A significant amount had been spent on this issue, including capital costs, and she felt that collaboration with longstanding community resources was needed.

Sky, no last name given, provided documents to the Clerk, copies of which were distributed to the Board. He reminded the Board that every individual was part of a larger whole. He believed the purpose of the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) was for each Board member to learn from the community, and that the meetings provided a mechanism for people to share their perspectives with the Board. He said there were people in the community with short-term answers and long-term vision, and he encouraged Board members to talk to them. He advocated for a younger perspective and more diversity on the Board. He stated that some people were being paid to be invested in other people's lives.

Emile Elyse discussed being pushed out of their role at Washoe County due to bullying by their supervisor. Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael Large noted that, pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 241.031, the comment constituted a personal

attack and was inappropriate. Emile felt that it was inappropriate to have abusers run County programs, and that dignity housing should be run by people who did not hurt others.

Lily Baran stated that the Point in Time (PIT) count used to be community-wide, and it produced the most accurate results. However, that generated negative press because it showed an 800 percent increase in homelessness. Once the PIT count was turned over to government agencies, civic trust was damaged. She believed community members who knew the locations of unhoused individuals would gladly volunteer to help with the PIT count to get an accurate number, which would be vital in determining what was working to reduce homelessness. She did not believe that people earning \$300,000 were incentivized to end homelessness and that salaries should be reconsidered. If ARPA funds were used for homelessness, \$23,000 could have been given to each person experiencing homelessness. Additionally, she said the County spent \$2 million on a consultant who repeated what volunteers in the community had already been saying. She spoke about using Siegel Suites accommodations instead of public housing, which cost \$1,600 a month, and urged the Board to investigate unfair housing practices at Siegel Suites.

Jay Kolbet-Clausell encouraged people to learn more about community health worker (CHW) training at caseplan.org. He described that training as a 40-hour course that normally cost \$1,000, but people could complete the class by attending eight remote sessions and earning their certifications as CHWs in Nevada, where they would support individuals and families in accessing health services, making healthy lifestyle choices, and following through on care recommended by experts. He explained that CHWs also engaged with providers on making their services more easily accessible. National standards were followed, and no previous healthcare experience was required. CHWs were recognized by Medicare and Medicaid, so those services were reimbursable. He discussed the history of the CHAB, noting that meeting hosts used to rotate between jurisdictions. He thought restructuring could address the unreliable posting of meetings. He expressed frustration with the accessibility of the meeting that day and wanted the Board to adopt a certain level of professionalism.

Matthew Wilkie noted that the CHAB meeting was not being streamed on Washoe County's YouTube channel, and he wondered how people could watch it later. He expressed concern about the lack of preparation regarding this meeting. He thanked the Board for being present through a very long meeting.

Doralee Martinez pointed out that the online dashboard of available beds was not currently accessible to people with visual impairments or American Sign Language (ASL) users, in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She noted that some people who were reluctant to go to government officials came to her for help, since she was visually impaired. She requested that the Board make those statistics available to everybody so she could direct peers to the proper resources.

* * * * *

4:58 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

ALEXIS HILL, Chair
Community Homelessness Advisory Board

ATTEST:

JANIS GALASSINI, County Clerk

*Minutes Prepared by:
Derek Sonderfan, Independent Contractor*



The Reno Initiative

FOR SHELTER & EQUALITY

RISE Clean and Safe

March 2022 - November 2025

Benjamin Castro: Executive Director

Mary Charles: CrossRoads Expansion Program Manager

Who We Are

Founded in Reno in 2012, The Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE) is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals and families experiencing homelessness through **peer-led, person-first, relationship-focused services**.

RISE operates outreach not as enforcement support or crisis management, but as a **stabilization and navigation function** within the broader Washoe County and City of Reno homeless response system.

Core beliefs that guide this work

Relationship is the primary intervention

Dignity and accountability are not opposites

Predictability creates safety

Participants are the experts in their own lives

Community is the method

Why RISE's Model Works

Culture Is the Intervention

RISE's outcomes are driven by:

- Peer leadership and lived experience
- Clear expectations paired with dignity
- Consistent presence, even when progress is slow
- Refusal to treat people as problems to be managed

This culture creates trust. Trust creates engagement. Engagement creates outcomes.

What Was Invested

Outreach as Infrastructure, Not a Temporary Fix

RISE outreach funding supported:

- Peer-led outreach teams with lived experience
- Consistent field presence across years, not episodic deployment
- Trauma-informed, de-escalation-centered engagement
- Administrative and data systems that ensure accountability

This investment funded capacity, not one-time actions — allowing RISE to show up reliably, build trust over time, and translate engagement into measurable outcomes.

Scale of Engagement

Consistent Presence Builds Trust

From 2022–2025, RISE conducted **867 initial engagements** with unsheltered individuals.

RISE defines engagement as more than contact. An engagement occurs when a person experiences:

- Being seen and addressed by name
- Clear, honest communication
- Follow-through on commitments
- Respect for autonomy and self-determination

This consistency is what allows outcomes to compound year over year.

Housing Outcomes

Housing as a Process, Not a Single Moment

RISE outreach resulted in **260 direct housing and shelter placements**, including:

- 152 Emergency shelter and Safe Camp placements
- 45 Transitional housing connections
- 63 Permanent housing placements

RISE understands housing placement as the result of **earned trust**, document readiness, benefits access, and sustained engagement — not a single referral.

Permanent housing outcomes represent the highest-value return on outreach investment.

Stabilization Outcomes

Removing Barriers That Keep People Homeless

RISE outreach teams supported hundreds of stabilization milestones, including:

- 363 Identification replacement
- 108 Social Security and benefits recovery
- 123 SNAP and Medicaid enrollment
- 207 Mental health and substance use treatment access

These outcomes are foundational. Without them, housing, employment, and recovery are structurally inaccessible.

RISE treats these steps not as side tasks, but as **core homelessness resolution work.**

Family, Community, and Long-Term Stability

Whole-Person Outcomes Matter

RISE outreach supported:

- 51 family reunifications
- 27 Ongoing aftercare connections
- 36 Animal services coordination
- 19 Support for seniors, veterans, and survivors of violence

These outcomes reduce returns to homelessness and interrupt intergenerational instability — outcomes that rarely appear in enforcement-focused models but carry significant long-term system value.

Expenses

**Total Outreach Program Expenses
(2022–2025): \$1,097,340.02**

Includes:

- Outreach staff wages, fringe, and payroll taxes
- Outreach supervision and field leadership
- Transportation and vehicle costs
- Program supplies and direct operating costs

Cost Comparison: Outreach vs Crisis

To understand the value of outreach investment, it is helpful to compare outreach costs to commonly incurred crisis-response costs when outreach and stabilization are unavailable.

RISE outreach actuals (for comparison):

- \$1,266 per engagement
- \$4,407 per housing placement
- \$17,418 per permanent housing exit

Typical public-sector costs (conservative ranges):

- Emergency room visit: \$2,000–\$4,000 per visit
- Short jail stay or law enforcement booking: \$1,500–\$3,000+
- Hospitalization related to homelessness: \$10,000–\$30,000+ per episode
- Repeated encampment cleanups: High recurring cost with no lasting outcome

Why this matters:

Outreach shifts public dollars from recurring crises to permanent solutions.

The Bottom Line

Return on Investment

RISE outreach demonstrates that:

- Relationship-driven work produces measurable, verifiable outcomes
- Exact expenditures translate directly into housing, stabilization, and reunification results
- Permanent housing placements are achievable through outreach when trust and consistency are present
- Culture and accountability reinforce — not undermine — fiscal discipline

Outreach works when it is grounded in dignity, consistency, and trust.

This is the value RISE brings to the system — and why these outcomes are sustainable, not incidental.

The background is dark grey with several light grey gears of different sizes and orientations scattered in the top-left and top-right corners. In the bottom-right corner, there is a detailed line drawing of a rose.

Thank you!

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Washoe County Sheriff's Office
Homeless Outreach Proactive
Engagement (HOPE) Team 2025
Accomplishments & 2026 Vision

Sergeant Kellie Wright | HOPE Team
Leader, Deputy Kourtney Lusby and
Deputy Levi Smith | Spanish Springs
CAB | January 2026



Who We Are: The HOPE Team

- Established 2021 - only team serving unincorporated Washoe County
- 1 Sergeant, 2 Deputies, 2 Washoe County Human Services Agency case managers
- Daily proactive outreach in Sun Valley, Spanish Springs, Cold Springs, Spanish Springs, Washoe Valley, Verdi, Incline Village, and all rural areas
- Mission: Build trust, connect to services, resolve homelessness with compassion and accountability



2025 By the Numbers

Metric	2025	Change from 2024
Contacts	2,930	+34%
Resources Accepted	2,728	+94%
Individuals Housed (permanent)	194	+35%
Clean-ups Conducted	34	116.5 yards removed
Citations (all types)	5	-67% vs 2024
Arrests	4	(mostly warrants)

- 93% service acceptance rate – people want help when it's offered with respect

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Amazing Partnerships



- Washoe County Human Services Agency - our two embedded case managers are the backbone of every housing placement
- Northern Nevada HOPES - on-site behavioral health & MAT
- Sparks Police Department HOPE (Sergeant Butler) - weekly coordination, joint operations, shared intel - true regional teamwork
- BLM, Union Pacific, Reno Housing Authority, faith-based organizations

2026 Goals

• House 220+ individuals in permanent supportive housing

• Expand prevention & re-entry referrals (jail, hospitals, schools)

• Launch Clean Path Initiative (next slides)

• Strengthen transportation access (new JTNN/Uber Health partnership)

• Continue 85-90% housing retention through tenancy support

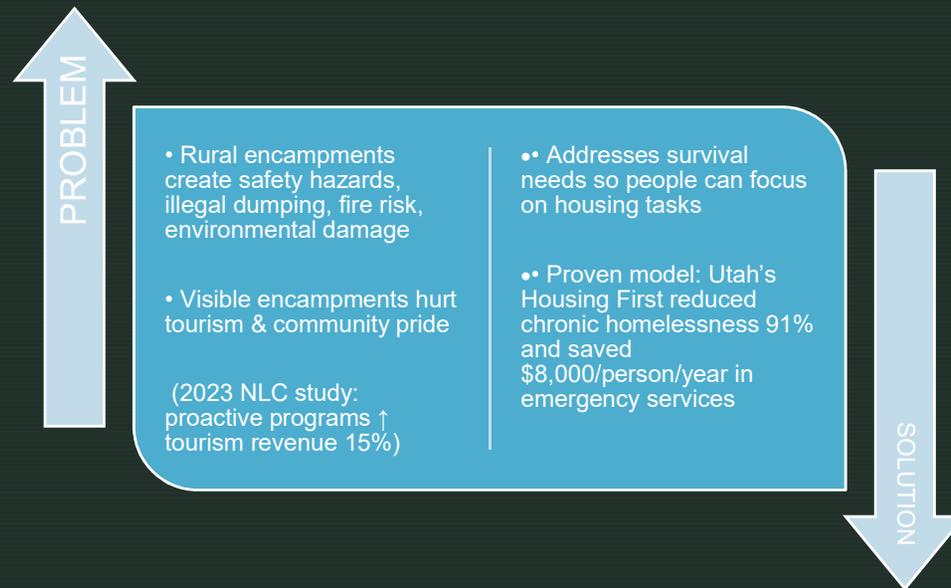


H.O.P.E. Clean Path Initiative

Core idea: Provide food, water, trash service, and intensive case management in exchange for clean sites and active work toward permanent housing

Launching February/March 2026 “A hand-up for rural encampments – turning survival into stability”

Why Clean Path? The Problem We're Solving



What Participants Receive

Weekly, at no cost:

-
- 5-gallon potable water refill
-
- 7-day nutritionally balanced food box
-
- Heavy-duty trash bags + weekly pickup
-
- Intensive case management (IDs, benefits, housing apps)
-
- On-site behavioral health therapist & peer support
-
- Move-in help & Welcome Home packages when housed

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Participant Expectations (Simple & Fair)

- Keep site free of visible trash (we provide bags & pickup)
- Actively work toward permanent housing with case manager
- Weekly check-in with the team
- No new illegal activity or trespassing

“Participation is 100% voluntary - but commitment is required for continued support”

Accountability with Compassion

• Verbal warning →
7-day notice with
final supplies → only
if needed, citation for
current violations.



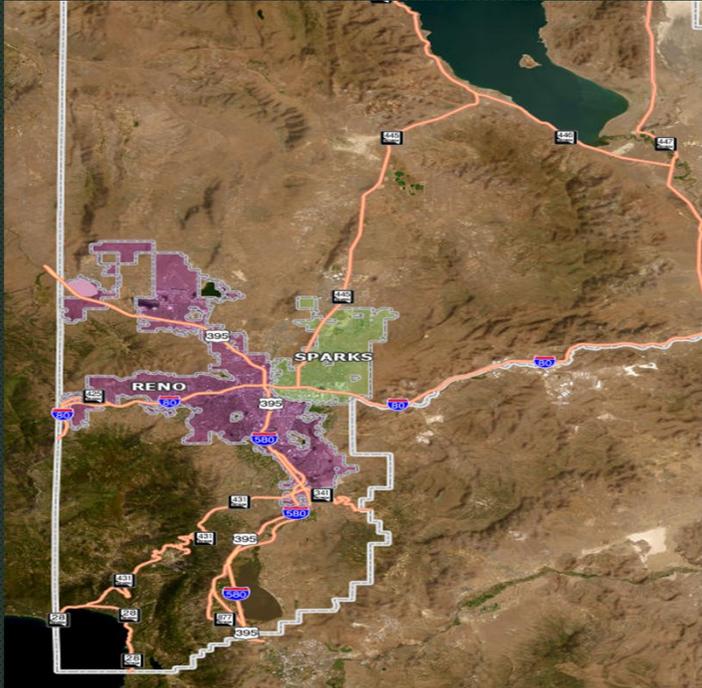
• Re-enrollment
always possible with
renewed commitment



• Goal is compliance
and housing – not
punishment

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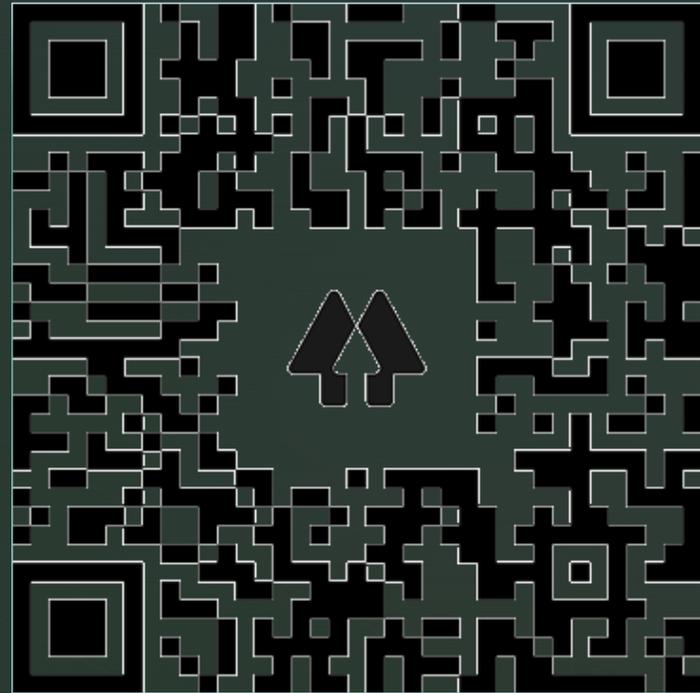
Rollout Plan



- Weekly dedicated route with HOPE vehicles
 - Goal: 100-120 housed per year
 - Quarterly metrics shared with commissioners & CAB
- “Scalable, low-cost, high-impact - using existing team & donations”

How the Public Can Report & Stay Informed

- Soon: Report encampments or individuals needing help directly through the WCSO App or washoesheriff.com
- All reports come straight to HOPE Team for immediate compassionate response
- No more guessing who to call - one easy system





How YOU Can Help (the ask)

“The question we get most: ‘How can I help?’”

- Best way: Donate to our proven partners who help supply our Welcome Home packages - Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada - St. Vincent’s Food Pantry & Programs - Salvation Army, Reno Sparks Gospel Mission, KT Grace Foundation, Incline Pet Foundation
- Your donations = furniture, household items, hygiene kits that make a house a home
- Our Welcome Home packages wouldn’t exist without our amazing community - thank you!

Contact Us

WCSO App

Download links:

Apple App Store:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/washoe-county-sheriff/id610715775>

Google Play Store:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=wcso.washoecounty.us>

Coming soon: Homeless Encampment / HOPE
Support submissions and refreshed imagery

Sheriff-HOPETeam@washoecounty.gov

"We're here for our community - let's keep working together"



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Questions?

"Thank you for your support - together we're making a real difference"