



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.

Thank you!

