



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 17, 2025

DATE: May 5, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Ryan Gustafson, Agency Director, Human Services Agency
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THROUGH: Kate Thomas, Assistant County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve the Homeless Programs Data Policy in order to standardize data collection for all programs in Washoe County serving people experiencing homelessness, ensure data is centralized and apply common outcome metrics to best assess program outcomes. The proposed policy will require centralization of the following kinds of data: client demographics, number of clients served, number of beds available, and program outcomes. (All Commission Districts.) **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

SUMMARY

This policy aims to standardize data collection for all programs in Washoe County serving people experiencing homelessness, ensure data is centralized and apply common outcome metrics to best assess program outcomes. This policy applies to all Washoe County operated programs, or programs receiving Washoe County funding, where the majority (50% or more) of people served are currently experiencing homelessness, including, but not limited to, all emergency shelter, transitional housing or other residential programs for people experiencing homelessness. This policy does not apply to departments of elected officials.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Vulnerable Populations

PREVIOUS ACTION

On August 30, 2021, at a concurrent meeting of the City of Reno, Washoe County and the City of Sparks, Amendment No. 2 and Extension of Interlocal Cooperative Agreement was approved. The Amended Interlocal revised the roles and responsibilities of the government entities, including transferring the administrative and financial responsibility for the operation of homeless shelters from City of Reno to Washoe County.

On January 13, 2021, Board of County Commissioners directed staff to pursue an expanded role in addressing the regional issue of homelessness in accordance with its Strategic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

On November 18, 2020, at a concurrent meeting of the Sparks City Council, Reno City Council, and Washoe County Board of Commissioners, the three entities (Parties) entered into an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement for Shelter Operation and Other Homeless Services (Interlocal).

BACKGROUND

As the Regional lead for Homelessness in Washoe County, and in alignment with the Built for Zero initiative, Washoe County seeks to standardize and centralize data related to homeless services and operate programs according to evidence-based practices whenever possible and utilize promising practices when evidence-based practices are unavailable. Ideally, data collection should be standardized across programs and a minimum data set collected for all programs, which allows for comparative analysis to be conducted across Washoe County funded programs. To further support comparative analysis, program outcomes must be standardized and align with national standards such as those set by the United States Department for Housing and Urban Development and centralized.

The proposed Homeless Services Data Policy will standardize data collection for all programs in Washoe County serving people experiencing homelessness, ensure data is centralized and apply common outcome metrics to best assess program outcomes.

This policy applies to all Washoe County operated programs, or program receiving Washoe County funding, where the majority (50% or more) of people served are currently experiencing homelessness, including, but not limited to, all emergency shelter, transitional housing or other residential programs for people experiencing homelessness. This policy does not apply to departments of elected officials.

The policy proposes:

All applicable programs funded by Washoe County must enter all program data directly into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) per HUD data standards and the Nevada HMIS Data Quality Management plan. All programs operated by Washoe County may enter data directly into HMIS or provide a nightly upload into HMIS. If data is uploaded nightly, it is the responsibility of Washoe County program staff providing the data to ensure that all data uploaded into HMIS is correct. Any data corrections needed are the responsibility of program staff for the program that data is uploaded into HMIS.

All programs that meet the criteria utilize a standard set of process measures at a minimum to include:

- Number of unique clients served
- Number of beds available
- Bed utilization rate

All programs that meet the criteria utilize a standard set of outcome measures at a minimum to include:

- Number of total exits
- Number of exits to permanent housing (per HUD definition of permanent housing)

- Number of exits to institutions, transitional housing, and other non-permanent housing types (per HUD definition of these exit types)
- Length of time in program prior to exit for both successful exits to permanent housing and all other exit types
- Return rate as measured by returning to homeless as indicated in HMIS across the Washoe County CoC at 6 and 12 months after exit
- Changes in income and benefit status

The policy also outlines a specific process for the review and approval of any new software or database systems for Washoe County operated programs primarily serving people experiencing homelessness, for the purposes of case management, collecting or storing client data, or other program data.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is anticipated at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners approve the Homeless Programs Data Policy in order to standardize data collection for all programs in Washoe County serving people experiencing homelessness, ensure data is centralized and apply common outcome metrics to best assess program outcomes. The proposed policy will require centralization of the following kinds of data: client demographics, number of clients served, number of beds available, and program outcomes.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: *"Move to approve the Homeless Programs Data Policy in order to standardize data collection for all programs in Washoe County serving people experiencing homelessness, ensure data is centralized and apply common outcome metrics to best assess program outcomes. The proposed policy will require centralization of the following kinds of data: client demographics, number of clients served, number of beds available, and program outcomes."*