



2023 County Accomplishments



2023

A year of laying the foundation for
generational change within our community



2023 Accomplishments

✓ Regionalization of Dispatch/EMS/Fire

- Executed regionalized computer aided dispatch (CAD) platform ILA with Reno/Sparks/REMSA in September
- CAD implementation underway for target 24-month timeline

✓ Improve Elections Administration/Execution

- Completed independent consultant review of ROV 2022 elections operations
- Implemented full staffing consistent with consultant recommendations
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) development underway for PPP

✓ Launched Climate Resilience Initiative

- Hired Sustainability Manager
- Award-Winning Green Recovery Plan
- Secured sustainability federal grant for Gerlach

✓ Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan Update

- Approved at the January Planning Commission meeting





2023 Accomplishments



- ✓ Initiated \$1.8 million in improvements to the Senior Center; work to be completed by end of summer of 2024
- ✓ Increased childcare capacity by 250 children for foster families and County employee families
- ✓ Perimeter emergency evacuation mapping tool
- ✓ Completed the implementation of Gerlach broadband enabling high speed internet for the community





Expanded Outreach Initiatives



Washoe County Leadership Academy – Inaugural class complete and 2nd year underway

- Received 267 applications in year two, up from 180 in year one
- Increased curriculum by one full day, from 8 to 9 days
- Nine first-year alumni applications to boards and committees, with five appointed; one new hire
- Two class projects successfully completed in year one, with a single project for year two focused on foster and adoption

Conducted 99 public meetings (including CABs)

Facilitated 44 proclamations and recognitions

Resolved 253 escalated constituent requests out of 281 total

Resolved 280 commissioner requests out of 305 total

Implemented SpeakUp with eComment and Sign In To Speak services to extend public outreach capabilities for BCC meetings

Developed and launched an online HUB documenting development activity and included development reviews at CAB meetings





New Leadership Hired

- ✓ **Government Affairs Liaison**
- ✓ **Public Defender**
- ✓ **Alternate Public Defender**
- ✓ **Director, Human Services Agency**
- ✓ **Sustainability Manager**
- ✓ **Registrar of Voters Staffing**
- ✓ **Conflict Counsel Administrator**





Strong Financial Management

Accounting and Budget Management

- Award-winning accounting, financial reporting and budgeting
- Clean independent financial statement audit and compliance
- Ended fiscal year 2023 with better-than-anticipated General Fund financial results
- Expenditures continue to be less than budget

Housing and Homeless Services





Serving Our Vulnerable Populations



Housing and Homeless Services

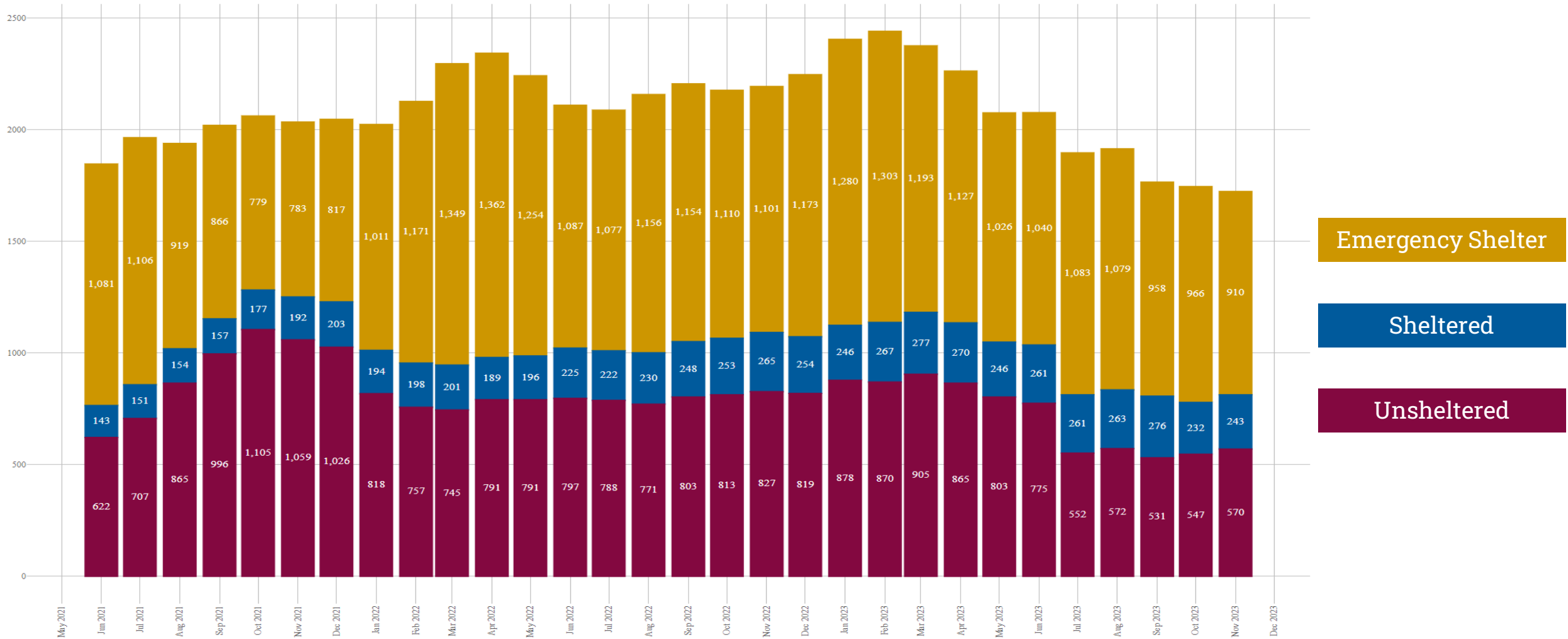
- Over the past year, the Nevada Cares Campus and Our Place permanently housed 486 single adults and 35 families
- Launched a regional dashboard on washoecounty.gov to display current data and available shelter bed counts
- Completed the Cares Campus Safe Camp pilot program and opened the permanent site
- Completed and opened the Cares Campus Resource Center and Emergency Overflow Center (84 beds)
- Secured \$21.9 million to build Supportive Housing on the Cares Campus through Home Means Nevada and broke ground on the project
- Community generated \$6.5 million in private investment in Cares Campus
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**
 - 50-unit project under construction on Cares Campus
 - December BCC presentation on affordable housing incentives
 - Lease agreement with ASI for 120 units
 - \$2 million in Affordable Housing Trust Fund



Regional Dashboard – Sheltered / Unsheltered

Program

Sheltered/Unsheltered





National Media Attention

Reno Halves Homeless Living on Its Streets

New campus with a big tent and sleeping pods provides shelter and services

By Joe Cascone

RENO, Nev.—The “Biggest Little City in the World” is earning a new distinction: one of the few cities in the West to get large numbers of homeless off its streets.

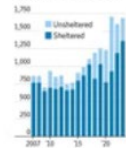
Reno teamed with Sparks, a neighboring city, and surrounding Washoe County to build a Nevada Carex Campus in 2023 that could accommodate more than 600 people in a giant tent and satellite sleeping pods. Since that year, the number of homeless living on the street has plummeted to 320 this year from 765, according to annual point-in-time counts. The 58% drop is striking when compared with most other Western cities which have seen their unsheltered homeless populations grow or stagnate since the pandemic, and soaring drug addiction and a federal appeals-court order that prevents cities in the region from clearing streets without providing enough beds.

Once people are off the street, the other part of Reno’s approach kicks in: helping them find a job, access other services and move them into permanent housing.

Other cities are taking notice. “The Reno model is a good model,” said Mayor Dan Brown of Anchorage, Alaska, which is struggling to get hundreds of people out of the streets following a deluge of snowstorms. The Republican mayor tried to get such a tent in 2022 but it was shot down by the Democratic assembly on concerns such as it would be too expensive.

In 2024, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit found removing anyone camping in a public space in its Western U.S. jurisdiction when there isn’t a shelter bed for them constitutes cruel and unusual punishment. That has made it difficult for cities such

Reno, Sparks and Washoe County homeless population



Source: Department of Health and the Development Center for the Washoe Area

as Los Angeles and San Francisco to clear their streets.

Reno has begun enforcing no-camping rules now that it has sufficient beds. As a result, the downtown casino district that used to be overrun with homeless people has far fewer. “They are really cleaning it up,” nearby resident Victoria Badtke said.

Joe Ramirez-More had been on the street for a year before he moved into the county tent. There, he said, staff workers helped him find a job as a production operator. “It’s like having someone on your side helping you in the most difficult time of your life,” said Ramirez-More.

After 15 months of living in the tent, Ramirez-More, 62, rented an 8-by-8-foot room in a side view of several modular buildings in a low-income housing complex nearby. The rooms cost for \$25 a month. Reno opened into action in 2020 after its number of unsheltered homeless more than tripled amid pandemic-related job losses and soaring housing costs. Its existing shelter could hold 150 people.

“We as a community felt like if we didn’t get ahead of this, we would lose the San Francisco,” said Pat Tabin, a local real-estate developer and business leader. “To us on the public and private side put our heads together on what we could do about it.”

In early 2023, Reno, Sparks and Washoe County went in on a building a horseshoe-shaped fabric structure around the size of a football field. They acquired 35 acres a mile east of downtown Reno to put the 400-person capacity campus in place as part of a homeless camp that also included rows of

as well as donations and other money. The campus will eventually include an adjacent healthcare clinic and other ancillary homeless-care buildings at a total cost of \$80 million in other federal funds, donations and local public funding. “It feels like a prison sometimes,” said Tracy Whitmore, a 47-year-old victim of domestic abuse who moved off the streets into the campus in February. “But we’re safe and no one can harm me.”

Police and advocates for the homeless are trying to get other people still living on the streets to come in out of the cold. “You may have to ask them eight or nine times until they say yes,” said Grant Denton, a formerly homeless man who does more than temporarily get people off the street. “I think they are just searching for people,” said Clark.

The initial cost for acquisition and development was about \$17 million, mostly in federal COVID emergency funds



Tracy Whitmore, left, earlier this year moved off the streets into the Nevada Carex Campus east of downtown Reno.

with no demonstrated ability to do more than temporarily get people off the street. “I think they are just searching for people,” said Clark. “The initial cost for acquisition and development was about \$17 million, mostly in federal COVID emergency funds

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

“New campus with a big tent and sleeping pods provides shelter and services”

“the city is enforcing no-camping rules now that has sufficient beds.”

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MOST RECENT EPISODES

DECEMBER 5, 2023

AirTalk Episode Tuesday November 5, 2023

Today on AirTalk, L.A. Times investigation finds Animal shelters are overwhelmed. Also on the show, sleeping pods in Reno Nevada are combating homelessness; using hypnosis to treat PTSD and other ailments; share with us the most embarrassing object you're emotionally attached to and more Animal Shelters Across U.S. Get Overcrowded As Adoptions Rates See Slight Decrease (00:17) Could Sleeping Pods Be Part Of The Solution For Homelessness? Here's How It's Working In Reno (13:33) Hypnosis Has Been Used To Treat Many Ailments, But It Still Has A Reputation To Battle (33:43) Teens Might Be Getting More Help With Mental Health. But What's The Right Approach? (51:20) An NBA In-Season Tournament Quarterfinals Tip Off: The League's Gamble On The Midseason Competition Shows Signs It's Paying Off (1:08:44) What's The Most Embarrassing Object You're Emotionally Attached To And Never Parting With? (1:20:08)

LISTEN 1:29:10 PLAYLIST

“Reno Nevada has undertaken a model which is getting praise and in fact, getting notice from other western cities.”

“Reno is beating the odds in solving homelessness”

The Year Ahead

2024





2024 Key Goals



- Implement regionalized dispatch/EMS/fire services
- Complete West Hills refurbishment and open the facility for mental health services
- Take leadership role in Behavioral Health Administration for the region
- Expand and improve senior services and facilities
- Conduct secure elections (Presidential Preference Primary, Primary, General)
- Engage in Fiscal Equity analysis with Cities of Reno and Sparks
- Expand broadband availability utilizing state and federal funds
- Establish sustainability plan priorities to achieve 2025 and 2035 milestones
- Continue Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives focusing on Language Access and ADA compliance
- Identify A New Courthouse Solution
- Develop Funding Plan for WCSO Infirmary

Citizen Advisory Board Summary

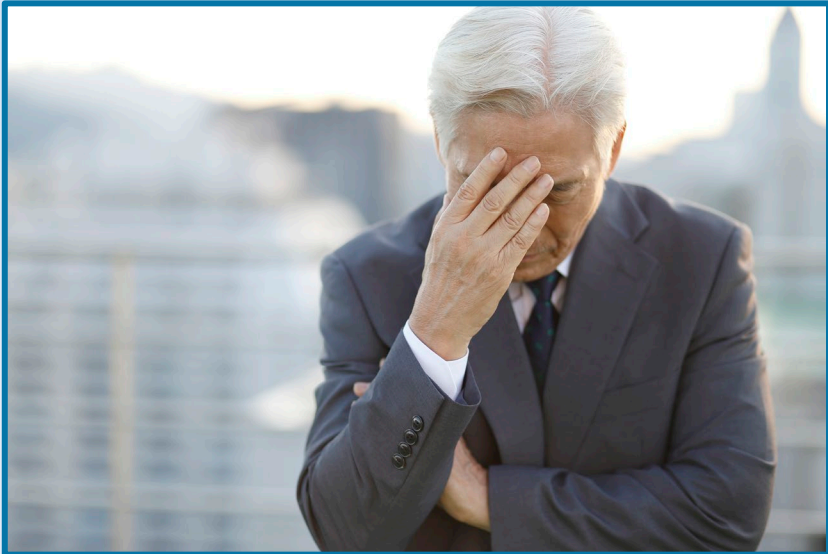




CABs – Statistics & Promotion



- **CAB Stats 2023 (not unique individuals)**
 - 733 total staff/presenter/board participation in 2023 (hereafter called “staff”)
 - 561 in-person participants from the community and 277 online, for a total of 838
 - Warm Springs CAB had 4x as many staff than public participants
 - West Truckee Meadows/Verdi had twice as many staff than participants
 - North Valleys: 122 staff versus 78 participants
 - A few CABs had approximately equal numbers of staff to participants for a 1:1 ratio
 - One of the more successful CABs, in terms of attendance, is Incline Village/Crystal Bay with 212 public participants and 103 staff, a nearly 2:1 proportion
- **Topic-based meetings are well-attended**
 - One Gerlach meeting had nearly half of the entire year’s attendees in one meeting
 - More than half of the Spanish Springs CAB public attendees participated in 2 hot topic meetings: Lands Bill, Secretary of State
- **Promotion of the CAB**
 - Each CAB meeting is promoted to the district list(s) it falls within, posted on Nextdoor, and is placed on the Washoe County webpage – equaling thousands of people notified
 - The full list of annual scheduled meetings is available online
 - Postcards sent in 2022 proved to be ineffective at increasing attendance



- **CAB members have expressed frustration with:**
 1. **Lack of action items**
 2. **Not providing true advice to the county**
 3. **Loss of development topics being brought in front of the CAB**

- **Strengthen Staffing for Development Meeting/CAB Communication**
 - **Timing – earlier in the process**
 - **Specific to the development**
 - **No restrictive Open Meeting Law requirements – public comment**
 - **Record meetings and promises made are to be implemented into the planning process, well ahead of the final approval by the County**
 - **Everyone in the community will have an equal voice at Development Meeting versus a handful of appointed CAB members**



Community Survey

- From June through September, Washoe County surveyed the community to ask about engagement
 - How do you want to hear *from* the County?
 - How do you want to communicate *to* the County?
- Nearly 2,000 people took the survey

How Survey Respondents Prefer to Communicate With The County:

- More than half of respondents prefer to visit the Washoe County webpage, followed by news sources.
- Only 9% responded that in-person meetings were their first choice for hearing from the County
- 41% of people said in-person meetings are *not* useful
- 21% of people said in-person meetings are useful



**What Are Your Thoughts For
CAB Improvement?**

**Community
Outreach Based
on Advisement
in 2024**

Thank you!

