

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONSES TO**

**2025 Nevada County Civil Grand Jury Report**

**Report on Responses to the 2024-25 Grand Jury Report: *A Long and Winding Road for The Homeless of Nevada County***

**DATED July 22, 2025**

In accordance with California Penal Code § 933.05(b), the Nevada County Board of Supervisors is responding to the Nevada County Civil Grand Jury FY 2024/25 Report entitled “*A Long and Winding Road for The Homeless of Nevada County.*” The response to findings and recommendations are based on examination of official County records, review of responses by the County Executive Officer, County Counsel, and County staff.

**A. RESPONSES TO FINDINGS**

Finding 2: Homeless persons living in the WUI present a high risk of starting wildfires, endangering themselves, county residents, first responders and property.

Partially Disagree.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of wildfires related to unsheltered homelessness, as it is not a part of publicly available data reported by CAL FIRE. Wildfires have numerous causes, including escaped debris burning, equipment use, lightning strikes, and vehicle fires. This data shows 16 of the larger fires in Nevada County since 2020 attributable to the following causes:

<b>Cause</b>	<b>Acreage*</b>	<b>Number of Fires</b>
Debris	7.86	1
Equipment Use	66.57	3
Escaped Prescribed Burn	39.55	1
Lightning	705.54	1
Miscellaneous	40.58	2
Structure	920.89	1
Unknown/Unidentified	1,823.44	6
Vehicle	49.95	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,654.38</b>	<b>16</b>

\*For fires crossing county lines, this represents Nevada County acreage only

While the number and impact of fires directly caused by unsheltered people living in the WUI is not known, it is intuitive that the activities of daily life (cooking food and staying warm, as two examples) pose a higher wildfire risk for someone who is unsheltered versus someone who is sheltered. By actively working to house hundreds of people every night, the County and our partners are substantially reducing wildfire risk.

Finding 3: Nevada County, with its rural nature, very high fire risk designation, and, in many cases, single evacuation routes, needs to be extra vigilant regarding fire prevention.

Agree.

Finding 4: Homelessness continues to increase in the County.

Disagree.

As the Grand Jury notes, the Point in Time Count “is an imperfect measure, but it is the most accepted measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.” Additionally, the Point in Time Count is a federal requirement, which results in consistent data being collected across the country. According to the Point in Time Count, Nevada County saw a substantial reduction in homelessness from 516 in 2024, to 466 in 2025, a decrease that the Grand Jury’s report failed to reflect.

The County and Community-Based Organizations have made substantial progress in expanding housing, shelter, services and outreach following the 2019 report and since homelessness was designated as a priority objective by the Board of Supervisors in 2018.

Examining just shelter and housing metrics, the data below demonstrates the increase in nightly beds available due to the work of the County.

<b>Housing/Shelter Type</b>	<b>17/18 Beds</b>	<b>25/26 Projected</b>
Interim Housing/Shelter*	4	55
Recovery Residence (transitional)*	7	41
Respite	4	5
Permanent Supportive Housing	42	130
Mental Health Residential Treatment	10	16
Substance Use Residential Treatment*	7	35
Other (e.g. Board and Care)*	2	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>288</b>

\*These numbers represent beds funded and/or operated by the County.

There are more operated through Community-Based Organizations, such as Hospitality House, domestic violence shelters, and other providers.

In addition to housing and shelter of the types listed above, numerous affordable housing developments have been initiated and/or completed since the Board of Supervisors designated housing as a priority objective. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit projects below were developed by the Regional Housing Authority in partnership with the County and Cities/Town. Many of the listed units have multiple bedrooms, which serve more people and are better equipped for the needs of families.

Project	Apartments
<b>Completed Projects:</b>	
Cold Stream Commons (Truckee)	48
Truckee Artist’s Lofts (Truckee)	77
Brunswick Commons (Grass Valley)	41
Cashin’s Field (Nevada City)	54
<b>Awarded Projects Pending Construction:</b>	
Pacific Crest Commons (Truckee)	55
Lone Oak Phase II (Penn Valley)	32
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>307</b>

Deeper analysis in the Homeless Management Information System shows substantial progress in housing and sheltering people experiencing homelessness. Yet, at the same time that people are moving from homelessness to shelter and housing, others are newly losing their housing and becoming homeless. The fluidity of housing status for individuals can have the effect of masking both the successes of housing efforts as well as the ongoing challenges.

In the face of an ongoing inflow of people into homelessness, and cuts to critical funding at the State and Federal level, continued expansion of housing and shelter will require strong and steady partnerships between the State, County, Cities/Town, community-based organizations and more.

Finding 5: Nevada County has substantially fewer shelter beds available than the PIT homeless count.

Agree.

Although Nevada County has consistently higher rates of sheltered versus unsheltered compared to other jurisdictions, a shortage of housing and shelter beds is the unfortunate reality for most or all jurisdictions in the state.

Finding 6: Law enforcement agencies often find it frustrating when dealing with the unhoused population, and lack of tools to remove homeless from fire-prone areas in WUI.

Agree.

Finding 7: Law enforcement agencies have difficulties removing homeless camps from private property.

Agree.

Finding 8: While Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee have adopted anti-camping laws, the County lacks a comprehensive anti-camping law.

Partially Disagree.

Many ordinances, including the State’s model ordinance, “*Model Ordinance: Addressing Encampments with Urgency and Dignity*”, apply to public property. Such an ordinance would not alleviate the difficulty expressed in Finding 7. Camping on private property where not permitted is already in violation of local laws/ordinances.

Anti-camping ordinances can be counterproductive to wildfire preparedness and prevention when enforced against unhoused people living in city and town centers. When these ordinances are

strictly enforced and shelter beds or housing are not available, they can force people into the WUI where they are less visible, where encampments are more difficult to address, and where wildfire danger is much higher.

## **B. RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendation 1: Local governments (cities, the county, and the BoS) should enact comprehensive and coordinated anti-camping laws; possibly consulting existing anti-camping laws in other counties and states.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

County staff will conduct further research into potential ordinances for Board consideration and make a recommendation that the Board of Supervisors consider including this topic as an item for discussion at the January 2026 Board Workshop. The County cannot commit to a strict timeline for consideration of an ordinance because that process would involve intentional community outreach and engagement, legal analysis, possible planning commission consideration, and public hearing(s).

Recommendation 2: Local governments should develop one or more designated low barrier “sanctioned” camping areas for the homeless, with facilities and access to support services, similar to those in other counties and states.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

By January 2026, County staff will conduct further research into possible managed camping models and funding sources. Managed camping would be a service, because it does not count as shelter or housing under the Federal and State rules to which the County and homeless service providers are held accountable. Every addition the County has made to the availability of shelter and housing has reduced fire danger, while also helping solve homelessness. If a successful managed campground can be implemented, it would provide a new place to be homeless and receive services, as opposed to housing solutions that both reduce homelessness and mitigate fire danger.

Managed campgrounds have mixed success at best, with many seeing low occupancy, neighborhood complaints, unsafe conditions and higher costs than other models. In neighboring Placer County, the managed campground in Auburn costs more than \$1.4 million to operate annually. This figure exceeds the entire Homeless Housing Assistance Program funding available to Nevada County and Community-Based Organizations, meaning existing programs would have to be terminated, or new flexible funding identified in order to develop and operate a site that, again, would not officially count as shelter.

Recommendation 3: Local governments should extend the duration of trespass letters obtained from private property owners to one-year or longer to enable law enforcement personnel to quickly remove encampments from private property.

The recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not legal under the California Penal Code. California Penal Code § 602(0) states in part that trespass letters endure for a “time period determined by local ordinance or 12 months, whichever is shorter.” This means the county can enact an ordinance that shortens this time period, not lengthens it. There are numerous specific scenarios outlined in the penal code that dictate the length of time a trespass letter may remain valid.

Recommendation 4: Local governments should provide additional shelter beds to close the gap between the number of unhoused people and the number of shelter beds.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The County will continue to increase shelter and housing as resources allow, including working with the cities, town, and Community-Based Organizations to address this need. It is important to note that even with an increase in supply, demand for shelter and beds may increase at a rate that does not result in a “close the gap” outcome.

Recommendation 5: Local governments should prioritize removing the homeless from the WUI.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The County will continue to prioritize the use of available resources to address homeless encampments in the WUI.

Recommendation 6: Local governments should expand the criteria currently used to determine warming shelter hours to be more realistic and better address the exposure risk that homeless face in colder months.

The recommendation has been implemented.

For the 24/25 season, both the Nevada City and North San Juan shelter contracts removed County criteria and authorized the shelter providers to open the shelters as often as the funding would permit.

Recommendation 7: The county should update the 2018 Ten-Year Plan to address this report’s findings and recommendations.

The recommendation will not be implemented.

The 2018 plan was incorporated into the Comprehensive plan to address homelessness adopted by the Board in 2020 and updated in 2022 with the adoption of the joint County/Continuum of Care Homeless Housing Assistance Program Plan, as required by the State. This plan is flexible enough to accommodate the recommendations of the Grand Jury without being updated and re-adopted.