



**NEVADA
COUNTY**
CALIFORNIA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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July 22, 2025

The Honorable Judge Scott Thomsen
Presiding Judge of the Grand Jury
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

RE: County of Nevada Responses to Grand Jury 2024-2025 Report entitled A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

Honorable Judge Scott Thomsen,

Please find enclosed the County of Nevada's responses to the Grand Jury's 2023-2024 Report, *A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County*, as approved by the Board of Supervisors at their regularly scheduled meeting on July 22, 2025.

Sincerely,

Heidi Hall
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Encl.



County Executive Office

Eric Rood Administrative Center | 950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 220, Nevada City, CA 95959

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board Agenda Memo

DATE: July 22, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Board of Supervisor's response to the FY 2024-2025 Nevada County Grand Jury Report, entitled *A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County*

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Board of Supervisors' response to the FY 2024-2025 Nevada County Grand Jury Report, entitled, *A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County*.

FUNDING:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

As required by the California Penal Code section 933 (b), the Board of Supervisors must submit comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations included in the Civil Grand Jury Report pertaining to matters under the control of the Board.

Responses to the Grand Jury recommendations must indicate one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented.
2. The recommendation has not been implemented but will be by a certain date.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis to be completed within six months.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented for reasons as explained.

Staff have prepared draft responses to each of the findings and recommendations requiring a response for the Board's consideration. The responses in findings and recommendations are based on examination of official County records, review of the responses by the County Executive Officer, County Counsel and representatives or testimony of the Board of Supervisors and County staff.

Following approval of the responses, they will be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, as required by California Penal Code. These responses must be submitted to the Presiding Judge within 90 days after receipt of the Grand Jury Report, which is August 8, 2025.



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Item Initiated by: Patrick Eidman, Assistant CEO

Approved by: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer

Submittal Date: 7/3/2025

Revision Date:

A LONG AND WINDING ROAD FOR THE HOMELESS OF NEVADA COUNTY

2024-2025 Nevada County Civil Grand Jury

Report Date: May 8, 2025

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Summary

In response to the Supreme Court’s *Grants Pass* decision, increasing wildland fire risk, and ever-increasing homeless population, this report reconsiders and provides a progress report with respect to the Jury’s previous reports from 2015 (“Illegal Campfires”) and 2019 (“Investing in Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness in Nevada County”). The latter had 14 findings and 18 recommendations. In many instances, the Board of Supervisors (BoS) accepted the recommendations and is moving to complete or has completed the recommended changes. The Grand Jury lauds that work. The Board rejected Recommendation 13 from the 2019 report, which suggested establishing a designated homeless camping area to serve the unsheltered homeless population. Recent developments including *Grants Pass*, strongly suggest reversing the Board’s rejection.

Glossary

Ten-Year Plans	Nevada County Continuum of Care report “The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Nevada County 2009-2019” as amended
2015 Jury Report	2015 Nevada County Civil Grand Jury report “Illegal Campfires”
2019 Jury Report	2019 Nevada County Civil Grand Jury report “Housing for Homeless”
Homeless	The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a person as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
Housing First	A homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
Cities	Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee
Ninth Circuit	The United States Circuit Court for the Ninth Circuit, which hears appeals from federal district courts in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washing
Sierra Roots	A nonprofit organization that provides nighttime shelter opportunities for homeless

Background

In June 2024, the United States Supreme Court decided *City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson* (“*Grants Pass*”), reversing the 2018 Ninth Circuit decision in *Boise v. Martin* (“*Boise*”). *Boise* made it difficult for local government agencies to enforce anti-camping laws targeting homeless encampments unless certain burdensome preconditions were met. *Boise* basically held that it was unconstitutional, under the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, to fine or incarcerate homeless under the Boise’s anti-camping law, when there was an insufficient number of adequate shelter beds available in the city. (According to the Supreme Court, there was an ever evolving and elusive definition of “adequate” shelter beds.)

The Supreme Court found, among other things: (1) The Ninth Circuit has a much higher incidence of homelessness than other regions (suggesting that lax enforcement of anti-camping laws has contributed to the problem); (2) approximately 70% of homeless suffer from mental illness, drug, or alcohol addiction; (3) A majority of homeless resist treatment and housing opportunities; (4) no other courts have followed the perhaps well intended but off-base reasoning of *Boise*, and (5) anti-camping laws are a useful tool for law enforcement agencies and municipalities to address the homeless crisis.

As a result of *Grants Pass*, local governments are again free to enact and enforce anti-camping laws against homeless persons and encampments without fear of violating the Eighth Amendment's Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause. Many cities and counties have now reinstated enforcement of anti-camping laws; and some have begun to revise and strengthen their laws, and a few have enacted new laws.

Grants Pass's concluding paragraph invites cities and counties to find the best balance and policy response to the homeless crisis:

[T]hey may experiment with one set of approaches, only to find later that another set works better; they may find that certain responses are more appropriate for some communities than others. But in our democracy, that is their right. Nor can a handful of federal judges begin to “match” the collective wisdom the American people possess in deciding how best to handle a pressing social question like homelessness.

Given this change in the legal landscape surrounding homeless encampments and anti-camping laws, the 2024-2025 Jury decided to review and reconsider the 2015 and 2019 jury reports to provide additional findings and recommendations to the Board.

Approach

The jury reviewed its previous reports, local government plans and accomplishments addressing homelessness, reviewed anti-camping laws, interviewed local officials—including law enforcement and firefighters—and conducted extensive research.

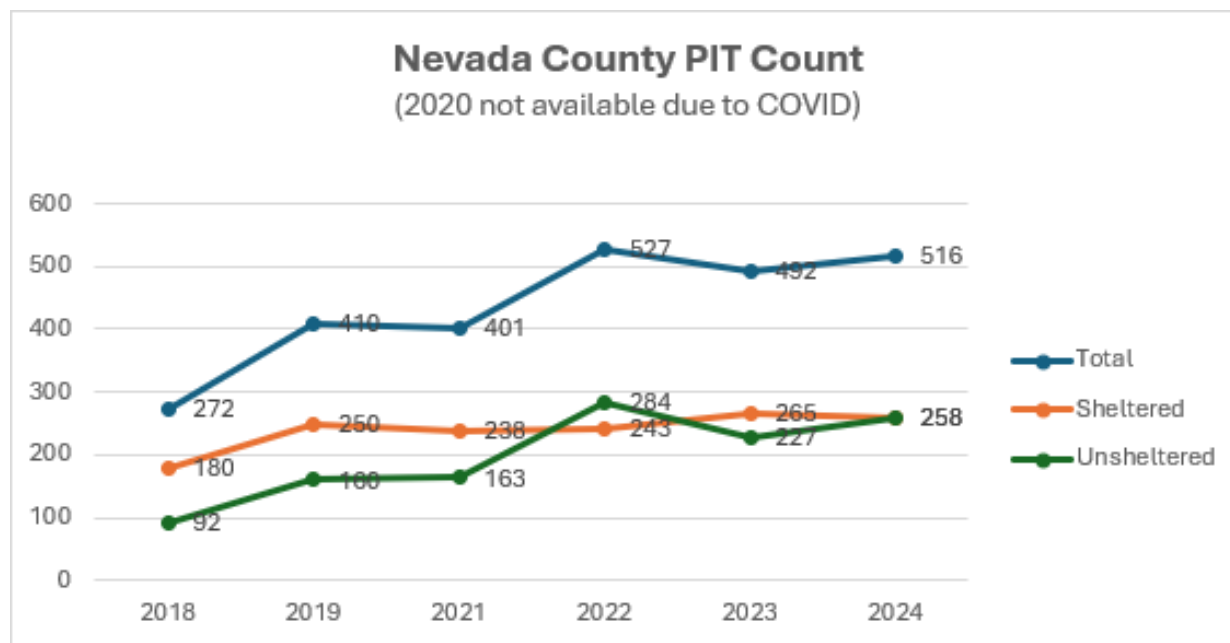
Discussion

Every January, HUD requires local [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC) to conduct a one-night “point-in-time” (PIT) count of its homeless population. The count is imperfect, but it is the most accepted measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Because of the difficulties involved, experts generally agree that the PIT count significantly underestimates the actual number of homeless.

For 2024, California's PIT count reported 187,084 homeless living both in and out of homeless shelters in California, an increase of 3% from the previous year. Homelessness continues to grow despite state and local efforts to stem it. California's homeless population is the largest in the nation.

The PIT count distinguishes between sheltered and unsheltered homeless. In 2023, of the estimated 181,399 homeless in California, 117,424 were unsheltered. In 2024, this grew to 123,974, a 5.6% increase. Across the United States, the 2023 count of unsheltered homeless was 239,225, which grew to 274,224 in 2024, or a 14.6% increase. According to these statistics, California accounts for almost half of the unsheltered homeless population although it has slightly less than 12% of the United States' population.

The homeless population, especially those unsheltered, is growing. The PIT count for Nevada County in 2018 was 272 (180 sheltered and 92 unsheltered). In 2024, the count grew to 516 (258 sheltered and 258 unsheltered), a 90% growth rate, highest for the unsheltered.



In 2017, the Board of Supervisors made addressing homelessness a top priority, directing staff to develop initiatives and incorporate homelessness in fiscal planning and management of County operations. In December 2018, the Board adopted a ten-year strategic plan to address homelessness – 2018 (“2018 Ten Year Plan”). The Board updated the plan in 2020 and 2022. These updates took into account the 2019 Jury Report and input from local government officials and involved community organizations.

In conducting this investigation, the Jury found the County has made great strides in addressing many of the recommendations identified in the 2019 Jury Report.

- The County has taken a leadership role with CoC and community partners to develop and maintain a plan to continually address homelessness.
- The Board adopted the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recommendation that “a strategic plan implementation have an oversight body involving a broad spectrum of the community.” This became the CoC.
- In collaboration with Nevada City and Grass Valley, the County adopted measures to incentivize development of low-income housing, *e.g.*, changes to zoning codes and general plan policies.
- The County implemented the Housing First model of providing permanent housing to some homeless.
- The County renewed existing agreements for winter warming shelters with Sierra Roots. Current funding allows Sierra Roots to open the shelter when the county identifies extreme weather conditions (*i.e.* 3 or more overnight hours with temperatures below 32°, or a winter storm warning, or wind-chills of below 32°).

- The County is in the process of constructing the Day/Navigation center (Commons Resource Center) originally scheduled to open on April 1, 2025. The center will provide services to homeless and low-income residents including a place to stay during the day, laundry, and showers. The center will also serve as a day cooling center.
- Nevada and Placer counties signed a memorandum of understanding with the [Homeless Resource Council of the Sierras](#) (“HRCS”) to share Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding equitably based on each county’s homeless population.
- The County formed the HOME team, which identifies, engages, and provides case management and housing support to highly vulnerable homeless and at-risk individuals.

Despite these efforts, the Jury has identified deficiencies in the current version of the County’s homeless strategic plan.

Homeless Encampments and Fire Risk

The 2015 Jury Report focused on the risks of wildfires associated with homeless camps.

- The 49er fire, in 1988, was one of the largest fires in Nevada County history. A homeless person started it. The fire destroyed 312 structures and burned over 33,000 acres.
 - Perfect-storm fire conditions exist when the wind is high, the humidity is low, and fuel is abundant. Those conditions are often present in Nevada County during fire season.
 - Homeless persons often start fires to warm themselves and then fall asleep or pass out because of drugs or alcohol being consumed.
 - Fire officials reported that transient camps are often found deep in the woods, where access by firefighters is more difficult, allowing fires to burn longer and spread more rapidly. According to one fire official, “these homeless camps present a serious fire hazard to our community.”
 - The report continued, noting there had been a large increase in transient-related fires.

Law enforcement participating in developing the County’s 2018 Ten-Year Homeless Plan stated, “The number one concern was the danger of warming and cooking fires among homeless individuals and families who camp outside.”

In August 2024, the Nevada City Police Department presented “Wildfire Risk Abatement Activities in Relation to Homeless Encampments” to the City of Nevada City City Council noting that “in several communities, homeless encampments have been responsible for as much as 80% of fires started and have resulted in loss of life and in millions in lost property and revenues.” The presentation specifically mentioned two reported vegetation fires in Nevada City on the weekend of June 14, 2024, that began near known homeless encampments.

Throughout California, cities and counties are seeing a remarkable increase in fires caused by homeless, including:

- The City of Los Angeles has seen yearly increases of fires connected to homeless encampments. KCAL reported that in 2024, there were 17,000 such fires.
- Sacramento County has seen a 77% increase in fire calls related to homelessness, with a reported 3,000 fires in 2023.

These fires strain firefighting resources and also place people and property at risk. To add fuel to the fire risk, California, including Nevada County, is experiencing climate change, which makes our environment increasingly subject to catastrophic fires. Climate change and forest management practices add to the fire risk, as do recurring droughts, and increases in tree mortality. Eight of the ten largest fires in California were in the last five years. Some recent and notable fires include Palisades, Eaton, Park, Dixie, Camp, Tubbs, and the list goes on.

Cal Fire's Fire Hazard Severity Zone map (FHSZ) shows most of Nevada County as very high fire risk. A large portion of the county is within the Wildland Urban Interface or Intermix (WUI), (residential developments adjacent to vegetation and fire risks) as defined by the [Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) identifies. Many rural areas in Nevada County have only one possible evacuation route. That emphasizes the need for extra caution in regard to fire prevention.

One local fire official told the jury that Nevada County is one of the few locations in California that has not experienced a devastating fire in a long time and may therefore be overdue because of decades-long accumulation of combustible vegetation.

The month after *Grants Pass*, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-1-24 mandating that all state agencies develop and implement plans to remove homeless camps from state property. The press release accompanying the Executive Order encouraged local governments to follow suit. Governor Newsom has said California may withhold homeless funding and grants to municipalities that do not comply. Within three months after *Grants Pass*, at least 15 California municipalities had passed new ordinances prohibiting camping or updated existing ordinances to make them more comprehensive and carry stiffer penalties. Another dozen are considering new bans, and at least four begun enforcing old camping bans.

Bridging the Gap

There are not as many shelter beds in Nevada County as there are homeless. The HOME team engages with individuals at homeless camps, issues remain regarding the County's reliance on the availability of homeless shelter beds and motel voucher availability when disbanding homeless camps. The availability of shelter beds in such programs is limited and is invariably less than the actual homeless population.

County law enforcement officers complain that they have insufficient power when it comes to homeless camps on private property. In such situations law enforcement agencies must expend extra effort to contact the property owner to deal with the situation. Standard operating procedure requires a letter from owners for law enforcement personnel to enter the property when they are absent. If the property owner authorizes the homeless encampment, then there is little law enforcement can do. Often the courts and the probation department release a homeless person arrested at an illegal encampment, who then relocates to another risky location.

A growing number of municipalities in California have responded to the homeless-encampment problems by creating homeless campgrounds, known as "safe-stay communities" or "managed encampments." These areas offer shelter and services—bathrooms, showers, laundry and access to social services?—in safe, sanitary environments, without the risk of arrest or citation and lower risk of wildfire. This also helps address the gap between the number of shelter beds available and the number of unsheltered. Auburn, San Rafael and San Diego have successful sanctioned camping programs. These campgrounds can also provide our unhoused community members with a shelter setting with fewer entry restrictions than approved sheltered locations.

Invariably, the issues surrounding the homeless population lead back to the Board of Supervisors. Though there has been considerable progress, the County needs to do much more.

Findings

Finding 1: The county has addressed nearly all of the agreed to recommendations from the 2019 report.

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

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.

Finding 4: Homelessness continues to increase in the County.

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

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

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 established by other municipalities.

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.

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.

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

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

Request for Responses

PENAL CODE §§ 933 and 933.05, the Nevada County Civil Grand Jury requires the agencies below, within 90 days of receiving the report at the agency, to respond to the following:

- Nevada County Board of Supervisors:
 - Findings 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

- Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7
- Grass Valley City Council:
 - Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5
- Nevada City Council:
 - Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5
- Truckee Town Council:
 - Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5

Pursuant to PENAL CODE § 933.05, the Nevada County Civil Grand Jury requests that Sierra Roots, within 90 days of receiving this report, respond to the following:

- Sierra Roots:
 - Recommendation 6

Responses go to the Presiding Judge of the Nevada County Superior Court in accord with the provisions of CAL. PENAL CODE § 933.05. Responses must include the information that § 933.05 requires.

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:

Cause	Acreage*	Number of Fires
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
Grand Total	3,654.38	16

*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.

Housing/Shelter Type	17/18 Beds	25/26 Projected
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
Grand Total	76	288

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

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.

2024-2025 Nevada County Civil Grand Jury Responses

Presented by:

Patrick Eidman, Assistant County Executive Officer
Ryan Gruver, Health & Human Services Director

Board of Supervisors Meeting
July 22, 2025



Grand Jury Report

*A Long and Winding Road for The
Homeless of Nevada County*

Grand Jury Purpose & Overview

- Investigate the operations of all county agencies, special districts, schools, and other entities that receive public money.
- Issues are chosen by the jurors based on citizen-initiated complaints and/or based on juror initiative.
- The jury is required to annually inspect all public prisons in the county.
- The jury may investigate the efficiency of all local government activity, audit financial records, and review all public records.
- The deliberations are conducted in secrecy and jurors are sworn to maintain confidentiality for life.

Purpose & Overview

- Grand Jury Issues Reports include Findings and Recommendations
- Identified public agencies are required to respond to the findings per Penal Code Section 933.05 within 90 days
- Responses incorporate:
 - Examination of County records
 - Interviews
 - Review of CEO and County Counsel
 - Incorporate any requested department responses

2024/25 Civil Grand Jury Report

1. *A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County* (Published May 8, 2025)

Requested Responses:

Findings 2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

2024/25 Civil Grand Jury Report

For each finding, the County must indicate one of the following:

- Agrees
- Disagrees (with explanation)
- Partially Disagrees (with explanation)

For each recommendation, the County must indicate one of the following:

- The recommendation has been implemented (with summary)
- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented (with timeline)
- The recommendation requires further analysis (with explanation)
- The recommendation will not be implemented (with explanation)

A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

F2: Homeless persons living in the WUI present a high risk of starting wildfires, endangering themselves, county residents, first responders, and property.

Response: Partially Disagree

F3: 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.

Response: Agree

A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

F4: Homelessness continues to increase in the County.

Response: Disagree

F5: Nevada County has substantially fewer shelter beds available than the PIT homeless count.

Response: Agree

A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

F6: Law enforcement agencies often find it frustrating when dealing with the unhoused population, and lack tools to remove homeless from fire-prone areas in the WUI.

Response: Agree

F7: Law enforcement agencies have difficulties removing homeless camps from private property.

Response: Agree

A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

F8: While Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee have adopted anti-camping laws, the County lacks a comprehensive anti-camping law.

Response: Partially Disagree

A Long and Winding Road for the Homeless of Nevada County

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

Response: The Recommendation Requires Further Analysis

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 established by other municipalities.

Response: The Recommendation Requires Further Analysis

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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.

Response: The Recommendation will not be Implemented

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.

Response: The Recommendation Has Been Implemented

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

Response: The Recommendation Has Been Implemented

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.

Response: The Recommendation Has Been Implemented

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

Response: This Recommendation will not be Implemented

Questions?