

PHASE I - OVERVIEW

Examination of the Costs of Homelessness and Issues

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Forward

This report presents results of a study of our homeless. Please note use of

Various programs exist that are specifically trained and oriented towards providing various first responder services in each of these individual first responder service providers. Three specific programs/partnerships were identified as the principal programs within law enforcement and across all

the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (profiled in the Detention Facility working paper of this study) was present to assist in linking individuals living in encampments along the Truckee River with additional supportive services.

In the example involving the recent tragic fire that consumed a weekly/28 day residential motel in the City of Reno's urban core, first responders worked closely with numerous agencies across the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area included Red Cross, the Un

Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program. Table 1-1 presents changes in the total number of individuals contacted by the Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program between 2000 and 2005 and Table 1-2 presents changes in the total number of individuals assisted by the Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program between 2000 and 2005.

Table 1-1
Total Number of Individuals Contacted – HELP
2000 – 2005

Y

HELP data on total number of clients contacted per year, demand for the types of first responder service provided by the Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program has remained fairly high.

Between 2000 and 2005, the Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program assisted, on average, 586 persistently homeless or “at-risk” of becoming persistently homeless individuals by either helping them return to supportive networks in their jurisdiction or origin or by referring them to other needed supportive networks and service providers in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area.

Between 2000 and 2005, the total number of individuals assisted by the HELP increased significantly, from 445 individuals assisted in 2000 to 712 individuals assisted in 2005, a net increase of 267 individuals assisted or 60.00%. Averaging 586 total individuals assisted per year, HELP officers and deputies assisted, on average, 1.60 persistently homeless or “at-risk” individuals *per day*. With demand for the types of services the HELP offers

hoe County area. Tc-5 TSS (2004) and Rivard (2005) Tuolo, K. (2005) The

calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net increase of 12 calls or 21.43%.

Growth in the total number of Unwanted Subject calls for RPD police service increased in all three studied areas but increased at the greatest rate in the S Virginia Street Region.

Table 1-4 presents the annual comparison of Drunk (DRUNK) 911 calls for RPD police service in each of the Downtown Reno Urban Core, S Virginia Street Region and University of Nevada, Reno areas for each year between 2002 and 2005. Data was provided by the Reno Police Department's Crime Statistics Unit.

Table 1-4
Drunk (DRUNK) – Downtown Reno Urban Core, S Virginia Street and
University of Nevada, Reno Areas
2002 – 2005



RPD police service in 2002 to 49 DRUNK calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net increase of 23 calls or 88.46%.

- € Between 2002 and 2005, the number of DRUNK calls for service in the University of Nevada, Reno area decreased from 19 DRUNK calls for RPD police service in 2002 to 12 DRUNK calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net decrease of 7 calls or 36.84%.

RPD police service in 2002 to 9 MENTAL calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net increase of just 3lls foror 50.00%.

statements, FY 2002 through FY 2005. This estimated \$1,000 per call includes all fixed and variable costs. The data provided to the authors of this study was insufficient to extract any estimate of fixed and variable costs.

The S Virginia Street Region had the second largest cost concentration related to responding to various “homeless-related” calls for RPD police service, costing the Reno Police Department an estimated \$222,000 per year. The University of Nevada, Reno area had the lowest cost concentration, costing the Reno Police Department just \$94,000 per year on average.

- € Between 2002 and 2005, the number of all “homeless-related” calls for service in the Downtown Reno Urban Core area increased from 565 calls for RPD police service in 2002 to 715 calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net increase of 150 calls or 26.55%. Total cost associated with responding to these “homeless-related” calls in the Downtown Reno Urban Core also increased between 2002 and 2005, increasing from \$565,000 in 2002 to \$715,000 in 2005.
- € Between 2002 and 2005, the number of all “homeless-related” calls for service in the S Virginia Street Region increased from 165 calls for RPD police service in 2002 to 254 calls for RPD police service in 2005, a net increase of 89 calls or 53.94%. Total cost associated with responding to these “homeless-related” calls in the S Virginia Street Region also increased between 2002 and 2005, increasing from \$165,000 in 2002 to \$254,000 in 2005.
- € Between 2002 and 2005, the number of all “homeless-related” calls in the University of Nevada, Reno area remained unchanged, with 89 calls for RPD police service in both 2002 and 2005. Total cost associated with responding to these “homeless-related” calls in the University of Nevada, Reno area also remained unchanged, at a total cost of \$89,000 in both 2002 and 2005.

Growth in the total number of all “homeless-related” calls for RPD police service combined increased in two of the three studied areas but increased at the greatest rate in the University of Nevada, Reno area in-terms of both frequency and total cost.

Table 1-8 presents the change in the annual number of all four “homeless-related” 911 calls for RPD police service – UNWANT, DRUNK, ONEDWN and MENTAL – for all three geographic areas studied – Downtown Reno Urban Core, S Virginia Street Region and the University of Nevada, Reno area – for each year between 2002 and 2005. Significant growth in the annual number of “homeless-related” calls for RPD police service was evident throughout the entire City of Reno, regardless of

3.

total calls and Loitering (LOIT) had the lowest frequency of calls, totaling only 17 total calls between January, 2001 and September, 2006.

medical service providers, both positive and negative. For example, a reduction in clinic medical services available could potentially lead to

Between 2001 and 2005, the average number of persistently homeless patients serviced by St. Mary's

and 2005. Note that Table 1-17 does not provide data on the total number of individuals assisted and treated by HAWC over the 1998 and 2005. Given the data provided by HAWC, it was not possible to determine the total number of individuals assisted by HAWC, only the total number of individual cases. Data was provided by the HAWC clinic.

Table 1-17
HAWC Outreach Clinic – Number of Cases/Clinic Visits per Year
1998 – 2005

Year	Total Cases Served	1998 - 2005 Annual Percentage Change	2001 - 2005 Annual Percentage Change
1998	900		
1999	1,685	87.22%	



2238.46%. Over the same FY 2002 and FY 2006, the total number of persistently homeless defendants before the Mental Health Court in Washoe County increased at an average annual rate of 48.31% per year, increasing

Another twist to this example is th

increased at an average annual rate of 33.33% per year, increasing from 443
total inmates
homeless inmates in 2006, a net increase of 290 inmates or 65.46%.

Between FY 2002 and FY 2005, the number of *all* cases filed in the Second Judicial Court of Washoe County decreased at an average annual rate of 1.96% per year but the number of persistently homeless-related cases filed increased at an average annual rate of 24.33% per year, increasing from 155 homeless-related cases filed in FY 2002 to 288 homeless-related cases filed in FY 2005, a net increase of 133 total cases or 85.81%. Between FY 2002 and FY 2005, homeless-related cases filed in the Second Judicial Court of Washoe County accounted for 6.66% of all cases filed per year on average. The percentage that homeless-related cases filed in the Second Judicial Court of Washoe County accounted for *all*

the persistently homeless or “at-risk” becoming homeless populations in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area. These service providers cross

several years accounted for only a statistically insignificant minority of all emergency room and inpatient services provided by the major medical providers located in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area.

The second major part of analysis in the housing working paper of this study examined three types of housing stocks in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area. Those three housing stocks included:

1. Weekly-Low Budget or 28-

group properties are located within the City of Reno. This concentration in the City of Reno made comparison of costs easier as additional effort to “control” for cost differences in police

conducted on permanent supportive housing programs in jurisdictions like Denver, CO, Philadelphia, PA and New York, NY found increased levels of demand for outpatient medical and mental health services amongst the population of these various permanent supportive housing programs.

the weekly motel housing category for example, shows that policy makers have a much larger concern than just single persistently homeless men who suffer from some form of severe mental illness. Instead, policy makers, service providers, public agencies, different entities, organizations and the public at large must begin to tackle the different and varied challenges of addressing the unique demands of many different population cohorts. The study of individual weekly motels throughout the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County are reveals that one weekly residential motel can generate 7.9(o).1 (tel, with) in each individual unit at just a single weekly residential motel can generate

Safe Embrace and the United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (both profiled in the Housing working paper as well). Both Safe Embrace and the United Way were identified as “housing service providers” but service providers profiled in the medical category, Renown Health Center for example, and in the mental health category, Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services for example, both showed the same tendency.

This observed “pattern of demand” for multiple supportive services by individuals who are either persistently homeless or

Then there is the other individual. This individual spends sometimes only a few days or just a few weeks or, maybe at the most, a few months at a time here in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area. This individual is not as well known by law enforcement, physicians, case managers and others but is

“at-risk” of becoming homeless. New law enforcement tools and approaches, like the Motel Interdiction Team and the Crisis Intervention Team, both elements of the Reno Police Department’s Downtown Enforcement Team are designed to seek out individuals who are in need of

2 – Review of Principal Policy

different identifiers (various forms of

escalated to a level so high that the provision of meaningful, rehabilitative services is cost prohibitive.

Unfortunately, due to the use of differing operational definitions for “homeless” and “homelessness” amongs

individual ended up receiving services from, the individual may or may not be designated homeless. This lack of consistency would lead to the same type of confusion and inconsistency in analysis and subsequent policy decisions. As a result, largely ineffective and inefficient policies would be developed that fail to provide a meaningful level of supportive services to the actual persistently homeless and/or “at-risk” population in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area.

Recommendation 3 – Better Cost Tracking, Recording and Analysis is Needed

Yet another surprising barrier to the research conducted for this study was the general lack of relatively reliable and straightforward cost data. Much of the available cost data was limited in costing the provision of services, with problems ranging from limited tracking of costs to tracking direct variable costs and to little or no allocation of fixed costs.

Take, for example, the estimated \$1,000 cost per 911 call for Reno Police Department emergency police services. This figure was largely developed from interviews with various City of Reno and Reno Police Department officials as well as review of the City of Reno’s annual financial statements regarding fund expenditures for the Reno Police Department over several

housing resulted in net savings between \$5,000 and \$8,000 per individual in just inpatient treatment service savings.

But are these figures realistic? Take, for example, the one-night stay in inpatient care for “routine” surgery such as the removal of gallstones that, barring any type of complication, would generally require only a one night stay in a hospital bed for observation and recovery. Being admitted to a hospital in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area may cost an individual around \$15,000 for a one night stay in inpatient care. This does not

supportive services than on administrative tasks that can often monopolize staff time. However, this observation does not change the need for better cost tracking across the larger “system” identified in this report. Some effort, across all service providers in all cost and service provider categories, to better estimate and track costs is needed if effective and appropriate policy is to be developed and tested.

Recommendation 4 – Better Tracking, Recording and Analysis of Individuals is Needed

In league with the barrier identified

of different services received by the individual. As mentioned earlier, poor financial and cost data made the effort to estimate total costs, direct fixed costs, indirect fixed costs, direct variable costs and indirect variable costs nearly impossible. One great advantage authors of other studies of existing permanent supportive housing programs in other jurisdictions like Denver, CO, Philadelphia, PA and New York, NY had was a vast database of cost information that identified fixed and variable costs of multiple services for numerous individuals over several years. Without this type of cost data, tracked at an individual level over multiple years, it will be very difficult to estimate the effectiveness of any type of permanent supportive housing developed in the Reno-Sparks-Washoe County area. Secondly, the data in the HMIS is limited in-terms of the numb

