

As the cold weather and snow approach, I can't help but worry about the nearly 2,000 women, children, and men (often veterans), in our community experiencing homelessness. This year is different from any other year in our history because we are nearing a solution to this never-ending challenge. After several years of working together, our local governments made tremendous progress in understanding the scope of this problem and committing to solving it. We are on a path to not only shelter and provide food for our homeless, but to also engage them with the services they need to become self-sufficient. We are not there yet, but the potential for zero functional homeless in our region, is very possible with your help!

Zero homelessness is possible: A collaborative methodology was first pioneered in the healthcare sector to combat the spread of deadly infections. The only program that has proven to reduce or eliminate homelessness is a similar collaborative methodology. According to the New York Times, "twelve communities in the United States have reached a rigorous standard known as "functional zero" for chronic homelessness — a standard that indicates homelessness is rare."

Significant progress already made: There are things we are already doing to prevent long-term homelessness. A great example of this is the relocation and expansion of the Eddy house, which now focuses on training homeless youth so they can acquire the skills they need to get a job and escape a life of homelessness. The Our Place campus (the former Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services site (NNAMHS) now provides homeless women and children wrap-around services in a safe environment as they engage in programs that move them on a path to self-sufficiency. Finally, the Nevada Cares Campus which is the most visible evidence of our progress. It now houses over 600 homeless in a secure environment where shelter, feeding, and security are available.

The Final Step – Cares Campus Phase II: To do more than shelter and feed those experiencing homelessness, we must expand the wrap-around services and programs needed to help the homeless address and cope with the root causes of chronic homelessness. We identified the infrastructure and services required for Phase II by implementing the Built for Zero program recommendations with input from other homelessness experts. ***Phase II consists of*** completing the infrastructure on the Cares Campus site, including adding laundry facilities, a cafeteria, pet facilities, indoor showers, restrooms, etc. More importantly, Phase II will add a Day Center to provide support and services to divert many from falling into homelessness. Additionally, Phase II will expand case management and provide medical and training facilities for the homeless.

The Cost of the impossible = \$38.9M. To achieve what many think is impossible, zero functional homeless in our community, we need \$38.9M. Of that, \$30M will be funded by our local governments with some help from the American Rescue Plan and other federal programs. ***That leaves \$8.9M for us, the community,*** businesses, and foundations to make a real difference. If you think that sounds like a lot, that is just \$15 from each person in our region. Or, if you consider what a homeless person costs our local governments annually, about \$40,000. That is 2,000 homeless, times \$40,000, totaling \$800M in just ten years, funding that could be used instead to address other essential community needs. Dollars and cents aside, think about the lives you will help to save—the mothers and daughters, fathers and sons that desperately need our help.

So, let's step up and do our part! Our local governments are more committed than ever to addressing this challenge. However, they need our help as we move from "accepting" or "managing" homelessness to "believing" we can end it. It will take the support of the entire community, community leaders, businesses, and citizens ***to raise the remaining \$8.9M.*** But what better gift can we give to each other and our kids and grandkids than to be the next community to achieve "zero functional homeless"? The "Seattle is Dying" video illustrates where we are heading - Let's do this before it's too late!

Go to Community Foundation (Link) or contact Blueprint Collaborative (E-mail) for more information and to support this important initiative.

[Seattle is Dying | A KOMO News Documentary - Bing video](#)

<https://nevadafund.org/nevada-cares-campus-fund>

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