



Dear WCRAS Advisory Board Members,

At Nevada Humane Society (NHS), we take our role as Northern Nevada's largest nonprofit animal welfare organization seriously. We are committed to transparency, collaboration, and delivering measurable outcomes for the animals and people who count on us. We want to directly address recent concerns regarding the spay/neuter program, the Public Services Agreement (PSA), collaboration with other shelters, and our transfer practices with Washoe County Regional Animal Services (WCRAS), raised in the recent email from Jill Vacchina Dobbs, Executive Director of SPCANN, to this Advisory Board.

We'd like to begin by addressing the assertion that NHS has failed to provide a plan or timeline for our county-funded spay/neuter program, a claim that is simply not accurate.

From the very beginning, NHS worked closely with the Washoe County Grants Office, clearly communicating that the success of the program depended on hiring a high-quality, high-volume veterinarian, a challenge given the national veterinary shortage. We were transparent that this process could potentially take 6–8 months.

Once the funding was awarded, NHS immediately recruited for this critical role, and we successfully hired Dr. Jennifer Fitzpatrick, who started at NHS on February 10, just 60 days after the funding was awarded. Since then, she has worked tirelessly to launch the program: repairing our mobile surgical van, hiring staff, and scheduling surgeries. As of April 30, NHS has performed **1,092 public spay/neuter surgeries, including 574 for Washoe County pets**. We are performing surgeries for members of the public 6 days a week, and new appointments open up daily.

It's important to note that this is a reimbursement-based grant, and NHS has not yet received a reimbursement. While we are grateful for the support, the grant does not cover the full cost of the program, which is approximately \$700,000 annually. NHS has already invested nearly \$100,000 of our own resources into launching and sustaining this vital service because we believe in it, and we're committed to delivering it for our community.

We're proud of the program's progress so far and look forward to continuing this work in partnership with the Washoe County Grants Office to expand access to affordable spay/neuter services for our region.



2825 Longley Lane, Suite B, Reno, Nevada 89502
hello@nevadahumanesociety.org
(775) 856-2000
www.nevadahumanesociety.org



It has also been suggested that there has been no update on the PSA between NHS and WCRAS or how the public would be included in the process. Again, that is not the case.

At the January 26, 2024, Animal Services Advisory Board (ASAB) meeting, NHS and WCRAS jointly presented the outcomes of multiple working sessions held specifically to evaluate the PSA. These sessions were collaborative and solutions-focused. Both organizations agreed that shared goals and measurable outcomes, rather than a formal PSA renegotiation, would better serve the community.

So far in 2025, NHS has transferred **90% of all unclaimed dogs and 98% of all unclaimed cats from WCRAS**, our highest transfer rate in the last four years. We are fulfilling and exceeding the spirit of the working agreements. NHS plays a central role in ensuring that the region's unclaimed and at-risk pets receive timely placement, compassionate care, and a second chance.

We also want to reiterate that the public is not being excluded from information. NHS publishes weekly operational updates — including intake, adoption, transfer, and surrender data — through our [Monday Metrics](#) report, available on our website and social media channels. We also provide updates through bi-weekly email newsletters, community stakeholder emails, and conversations with community partners. We remain fully committed to transparency and encourage all stakeholders to access and review this data at any time.

While we're proud of these outcomes, we recognize there's ongoing interest in NHS's role, including our participation in Advisory Board meetings. Nevada Humane Society is not contractually required to attend WCRAS Advisory Board meetings — and for good reason: NHS is an independent nonprofit organization, not governed by the Advisory Board or the County. This is explicitly outlined in the Public Services Agreement (PSA) between Washoe County and NHS. In the interest of collaborative animal welfare in Northern Nevada, we are happy to attend and provide updates as needed or requested.

Our contractual obligations under the PSA are clearly defined, and we not only meet them — we exceed them. These obligations are:

- **Accepting Public Surrenders:** In 2025 alone, NHS has received 2,673 public surrender requests — 15 of which cited the SPCA's recent closure & an inability to reach them as the reason for seeking help. We've taken in 1,302 animals through public surrender, including 15 previously adopted from SPCANN.
- **Providing Adoption Services:** NHS continues to lead regional adoption efforts, placing thousands of animals into loving homes each year, 2,341 so far in 2025.



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- **Paying 58% of the Shared Facility's Operational Costs:** At the co-located building at 2825 Longley Lane, NHS covers a majority of the shared costs, including utilities, maintenance, and common area services.

We also want to directly address a common misconception: **NHS does not occupy the Longley Campus “rent free.”** At the co-located facility, NHS pays 58% of the shared operational costs, including utilities, maintenance, insurance, janitorial services, and common-area upkeep. In 2024, **our payments to Washoe County totaled \$139,044.50**, a substantial investment made by our donors and loyal supporters, not taxpayers.

NHS is proud to operate independently, without operating support from Washoe County, the City of Reno, or the City of Sparks. Our Reno Campus is **88% donor-funded, sustained by the generosity of donors, not taxpayer dollars.** The remaining 12% of our Reno funding comes from programmatic revenue including adoption & clinic fees.

We'd also like to address the comment about the 1st right of refusal being hurtful for animals in our community. The right-of-first-refusal clause in the PSA is not a barrier; it's a safeguard. NHS purchased (for \$4 million) this right because, as the largest animal welfare organization in Northern Nevada, we have the infrastructure, scale, and expertise to manage large volumes of animals, including those with complex medical or behavioral needs. This structure ensures that the vast majority of animals entering WCRAS custody have a streamlined, coordinated pathway to care (as evidenced by the transfer percentages), rather than being subjected to a fragmented, inconsistent process.

This right helps prevent duplication, improves efficiency, and ensures more animals are placed faster. We are not obligated to transfer a fixed number of animals — and yet, the data shows we're doing more than ever before.

We are aware of the concerns raised by SPCA of Northern Nevada around collaboration and planning, and we want to be transparent about our efforts to collaborate. NHS has made offers to work together with SPCANN, including most recently when they publicly requested help rehoming cats during their facility remodel. NHS immediately reached out to Jill, offering to take **every single cat** in their care. We never received a reply — not even an acknowledgment.

We remain willing to collaborate in good faith with any organization genuinely interested in working together to improve animal welfare. But collaboration requires two things: a shared commitment to transparency and open, timely communication, not public finger-pointing.



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In the spirit of that same transparency, we'd also like to clarify recent questions regarding our own remodel of the shared Reno Campus. We understand the importance of communication when it comes to shared spaces. However, the implication that Nevada Humane Society moved forward with a remodel without informing Washoe County is not accurate.

NHS worked directly with Washoe County Facilities Management throughout the planning and execution of our recent campus remodel, as is required in the lease agreement. As the leaseholder of the adoption wing of the facility, we followed the appropriate protocols and coordinated closely with County representatives on scope and logistical impacts. At every step, we prioritized transparency and compliance, just as we would with any project impacting the shared environment.

This remodel was entirely donor-funded and focused on improving the experience for adopters and visitors, addressing a well-documented concern that traditional shelter environments can feel emotionally difficult for the public. Our goal was to create a more welcoming, adoption-friendly space that encourages community engagement and ultimately helps more animals find homes.

Creating a space that welcomes adopters is just one example of how deeply we care about both animals and the people who love them. That's why we're especially disheartened by the claim that animals are "needlessly suffering" in Washoe County. We take the suggestion not just seriously, but personally. It is a heartbreaking accusation that dismisses the tireless work, compassion, and deep emotional investment of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who show up every single day to protect, heal, and advocate for the most vulnerable animals in our community. We categorically reject this claim as it relates to Nevada Humane Society's operations, because every decision we make is grounded in our mission to care for pets, find them homes, and save lives.

Every animal that enters our care receives individualized attention, medical treatment, behavioral support, and a pathway to the appropriate outcome. In 2024 alone, NHS & WCRAS both achieved a live release rate well above 90%. As Northern Nevada's largest animal welfare organization, NHS delivers community impact at a scale unmatched in Northern Nevada. In 2024, Nevada Humane Society **placed 8,546 pets** into loving homes, performed **11,763 spay/neuter surgeries**, and supported thousands of families through adoption, veterinary care, and community-based outreach. These are not abstract figures — they are lives changed, homes made whole, and suffering prevented every single day.



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If the concern is truly about supporting WCRAS and improving outcomes for homeless pets in our region, we believe there's a meaningful opportunity for all of us to contribute in impactful ways, especially through animal transfers.

Nevada Humane Society, transferred **4,182 animals from WCRAS in 2024 and 996 more so far in 2025 (as of April 30)**. By comparison, all other rescue partners combined transferred **454 animals in 2024 and 78 so far in 2025**. These numbers highlight the scope of what's needed — and the opportunity for more organizations to play a larger role.

The pets in our community count on us all, and we're hopeful that more partners will step up to meet that need.

As for the claim that taxpayers are being "taken advantage of," we want to be abundantly clear: **NHS does not receive operational funding from Washoe County, the City of Reno, or the City of Sparks, nor do we occupy the Longley Campus "rent free"**. We are independently funded through the generosity of our donors. Our services — including public surrender intake, adoption programs, and medical care — are provided as a public benefit, not at public expense.

We believe in accountability, and that begins with facts. NHS is meeting and exceeding every contractual obligation under the PSA, while also stepping up in moments when the community needs us most.

Our focus remains firmly on what matters most: delivering compassionate, high-quality care to animals and meaningful support to the people who love them. We welcome honest collaboration with any organization that shares our commitment to animal welfare. But progress doesn't come from casting blame or spreading misinformation — it comes from working together in good faith, with shared goals and mutual respect. That's the kind of partnership we believe in — and it's the kind we will always show up for.

Respectfully,



Jerleen Bryant
Chief Executive Officer
Nevada Humane Society



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