



# 2024 Community Health Assessment Executive Summary



**NEVADA  
COUNTY**  
CALIFORNIA

**Public  
Health**



***We Care*** about health.

# Introduction & Background



## Our Why

In April 2023, the Nevada County Public Health Department (NCPH) embarked on a process to enhance public health and well-being. This effort focused on developing a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Together these activities will support:

- The **identification of crucial health needs** through comprehensive data collection and analysis
- The **establishment of long-term goals, strategies, and activities** to address public health issues

The result will be a three-to-five-year plan that will serve as a road map for how Nevada County can increase healthy living and health equity.

## Our How

The process was spearheaded by the Community Health Improvement (CHI) Core Group and Steering Committee, collectively known as the CHI team. Through surveys, community forums, and focus groups, hundreds of individuals contributed to the development and evaluation of the health priorities outlined in the CHA. These priorities will be the building blocks of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

## Our Progress

This booklet summarizes the data collection and analysis conducted from July 2023 to April 2024. The following pages serve as a practical guide for planning and responding to the priority health needs of our community. The comprehensive CHA, including source information for all data in this booklet, can be accessed through the NCPH homepage: <https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/551/Public-Health>.

# Visibility Through Art

The California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) provided art selected by the Tribal Spokesperson for inclusion throughout the CHA. 'Visibility Through Art' (VTA) is a Tribal community art initiative inspired by the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe.

NCPH seeks to represent and integrate arts, culture, and nature into our local public health and social care systems, while elevating CHIRP's mission to preserve, protect, and perpetuate Nisenan Culture.

*"Today, Western statistics continue to be the mechanism that decides what is good and what is bad. This perpetuates the colonial harms of the past. If we look beyond the Western model of seeking a diagnosis or health problem, Indigenous rebalancing requires right-relationship with the land, animals, and water. To heal our Tribal community, we are revitalizing our Cultural, spiritual, and traditional practices, that were outlawed until 1978. These practices are the source of our well-being; our Culture is the medicine we need most."*

— CHIRP

# The Wash

CHIRP's VTA 2024 Collection

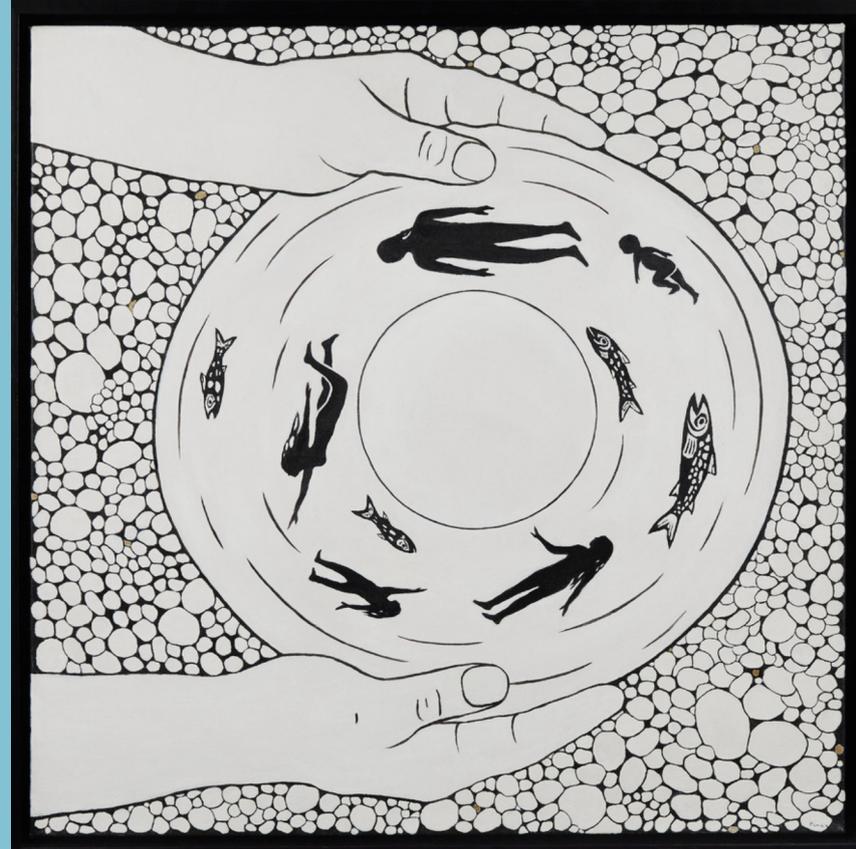
Cindy Buero (Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribal Member)

Acrylic and Oil-based Paint on Canvas

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“The gold rush significantly influenced the history of California and the United States. For us, the Nisenan, it meant genocide. Before the gold rush, thousands of Nisenan people hunted, fished, and took care of each other here, right here. This was and still is our Homeland. What is now the Yuba River, was once ʔuḃa seo, and Nevada City was known as ʔustomah. Changes were being made. In certain areas, restrictions were put in place, to keep the Nisenan from hunting and fishing; so there was hunger. The uninvited brought diseases and weapons that had never been seen before. The uninvited brought death. This artwork is called, The Wash. In mining, the wash is when they separate the gold from the tailings. The good stuff from the bad. And so the story goes...” - Cindy Buero

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# Our Vision

An engaged, diverse, connected, healthy, and happy community.

One of the first activities completed by the Steering Committee, with support from local community members, was the establishment of vision and value statements. These statements formalize the intention of this Community Health Improvement project and core principles that guide activities and decision-making during the project.

# Our Values



Equity & Inclusion

Acceptance & Compassion



Respect

Collaboration



Trusted Relationships

Alignment



Accountability

Shared Environment



# Our Data

To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of community health, the Community Health Improvement Steering Committee implemented three key assessments.



1

## Community Context Assessment

This assessment engages community members, particularly those most affected by social systems, to gather their insights and experiences. The goal is to enhance the effectiveness and impact of these systems.

2

## Community Status Assessment

This assessment focuses on collecting quantitative data to understand the health status of the community. It examines social determinants of health and explores systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

3

## Community Partners Assessment

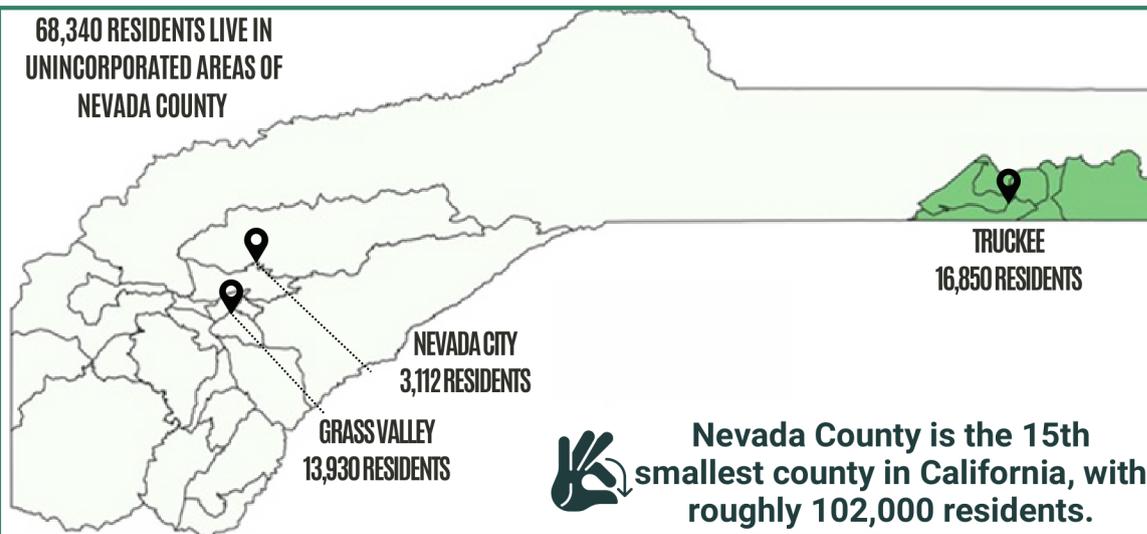
This assessment allows community partners involved in the Community Health Improvement process to critically evaluate systems and processes, and assess their collective capacity to address health inequities.

**These assessments are foundational in guiding the development of the Community Health Assessment and shaping effective health improvement planning in Nevada County.**

# Our Community Characteristics

The people of Nevada County are one of its greatest resources. Civic engagement is the backbone of our community and residents exhibit a strong appreciation for the outdoors. Due to the vastness and diversity of landscapes, each rural community also has its own unique character and sense of identity. This rural character means that driving is often required in order to access jobs, goods and services. Nevada County is home to two of 14 state-designated California Cultural Districts and is known as the “cultural heart of the Sierras”.

68,340 RESIDENTS LIVE IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF NEVADA COUNTY



Nevada County is the 15th smallest county in California, with roughly 102,000 residents.

958

square miles of total land



178

public trails



193

inches of average snowfall



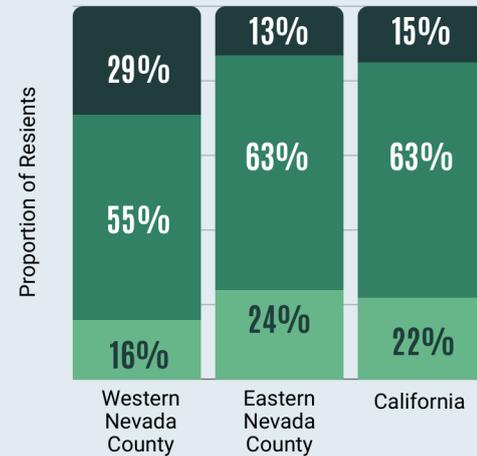
240

average days of sunshine



Proportion of Residents in Eastern/Western Nevada County by Age

0-17 18-64 65+



Proportion of Residents

\*Eastern County refers specifically to the area containing and directly surrounding the Town of Truckee, while Western County refers to the other 20 census tracts within Nevada County.

# Total Population

In 2022,  
Nevada County had roughly  
**102,000**  
residents.



**Median Household  
Income**  
**\$79,395**



**Percent Living  
Below Poverty Line**  
**10.4%**

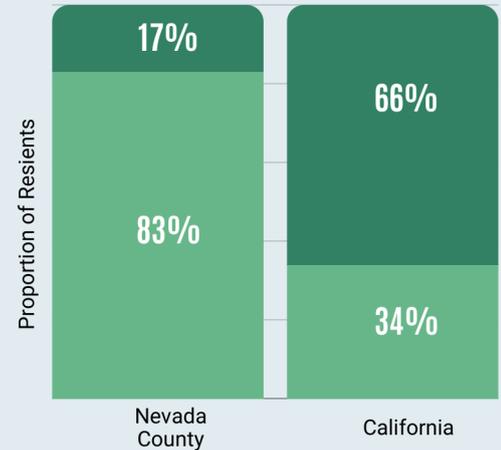


**Number of Residents  
Covered by Medi-Cal**  
**28,722**



## Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity

■ Non-Hispanic White ■ Hispanic or Non-White



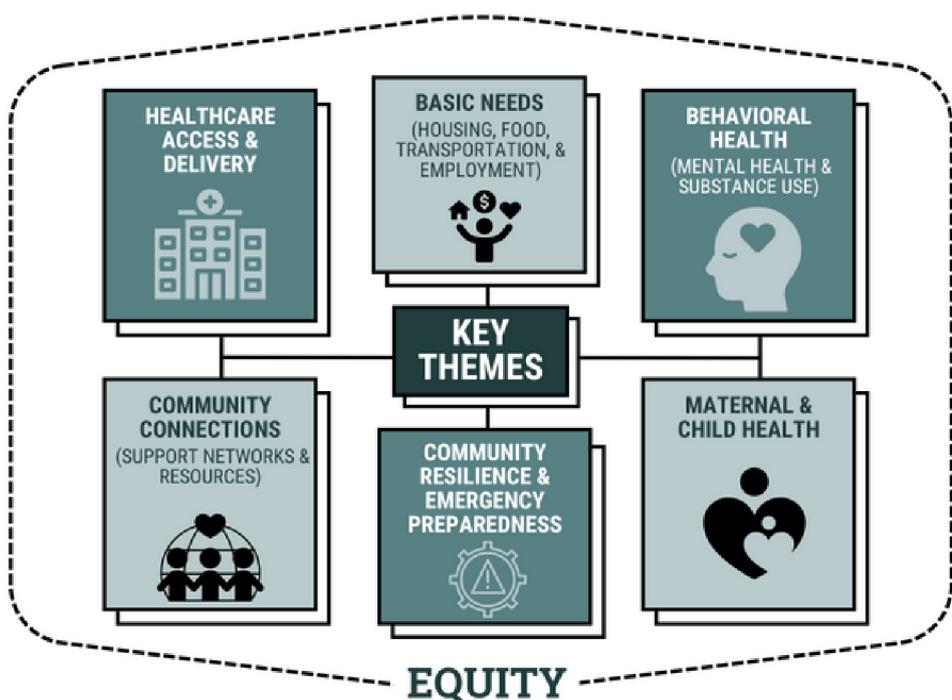
**2x**

Nevada County has nearly twice the proportion of individuals who are at least 65 years old (29.3%) compared to California (15.8%).

Compared to California, Nevada County has a notably higher proportion of non-Hispanic White individuals.

# Our Key Themes

A primary purpose for conducting CHA activities is to identify key health needs and issues that can inform the development of long-term goals, strategies, and activities to address health concerns in Nevada County.



The following pages summarize select data from the three CHA assessments that led to the development of these key themes.

The information included is not intended to be representative of all data related to each theme, but is offered as examples of how each theme impacts County residents.

***Equity has been called out as a foundational capability and component of all the work required to improve community health and achieve health equity.***

*Equity is defined as a fair and just opportunity for all to achieve good health and well-being. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty and discrimination and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and healthcare. It also requires attention to health inequities, which are differences in population health status and mortality rates that are systemic, patterned, unjust, and actionable, as opposed to random or caused by those who become ill.*

– The 10 Essential Public Health Services Framework



## Healthcare Access & Delivery

A robust healthcare system is essential for public health as it promotes equity, improves health outcomes, encourages preventive care, supports economic stability, and enhances public safety.

### Key Facts Regarding This Theme :

**17,000** people do not have a usual place to go when they are sick or need medical advice.



**1 in 2**

kindergartners are covered by Medi-Cal, yet there are no private dentists that accept Medi-Cal.



**67%** of residents live in unincorporated areas of Nevada County.

**North San Juan is Nevada County too.**

*San Juan Ridge Focus Group Participant*



## Basic Needs

Such as Housing, Food, Transportation, Employment, & Education

Meeting people's basic needs is crucial for public health as it ensures well-being, reduces disease risk, and enhances societal productivity and resilience.

### Key Facts Regarding This Theme :



In some areas of the County, **18.7%** of residents do not have access to a vehicle.

Unemployment rates are as high as **12.9%** in some areas of the County.



**“ I don't want to watch the world go by, I want to contribute. ”**

*Senior Focus Group Participant*

**17,000** residents qualify for food assistance.

**17%** of residents under the age of 18 are enrolled in the CalFresh food assistance program.



**1 in 3** households are burdened by housing costs.

In Truckee, the price of homes increased

**105%** from 2015-2021.



# Behavioral Health

Mental Health & Substance Use

When a community has a behavioral health system that provides accessible, timely, and quality support, it improves a community's overall well-being, reduces healthcare costs and enhances productivity and safety.

## Key Facts Regarding This Theme :

492

individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Point in Time count, over

40%

of whom suffer from serious mental illness.

2,578

individuals were provided with mental health, substance use, and crisis services from Nevada County Behavioral Health in FY 2022-23.



21.9

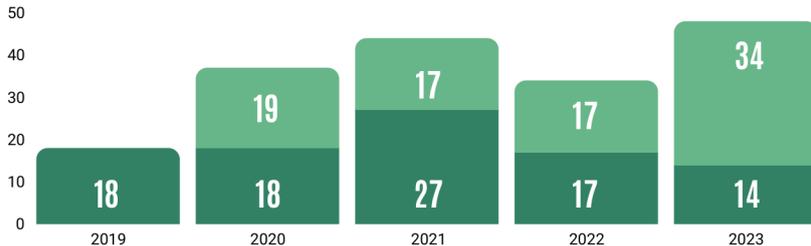
Nevada County's suicide rate has been double that of California's (10.7) for recent years.



Data from 2021

## Nevada County Accidental Overdose Deaths

■ accidental overdose deaths not involving fentanyl ■ accidental overdose deaths involving fentanyl



Drug overdose is ranked as the **3rd leading cause** of age-adjusted death.



# Community Connections

Access to resources and support networks bolster public health by enhancing mental and physical well-being, promoting health literacy, facilitating timely access to care, and fostering resilience and empowerment.

## Key Facts Regarding This Theme :

The community is interested in supporting community members who feel unsafe or unwelcome as a result of racism and discrimination.

Findings from the Community Partner Assessment

“ A monthly or quarterly space for people of color that is curated to get needs met, that is trauma informed and has a racial equity practice lens.

I think that would be incredible for the Black, Brown, and Indigenous people here.

Focus Group Participant ”

51%

of 11th graders report feelings of chronic sadness or hopelessness.

Loneliness and social isolation across the lifespan were noted as issues, as well as root causes for problems across the County.



## Community Resilience & Emergency Preparedness

Community resilience and emergency preparedness are factors that are crucial for minimizing the impact of crises on population health. In Nevada County, this is especially true for the most vulnerable populations.

### Key Facts Regarding This Theme :

**26.7%**

of adults report their mental health has been affected by extreme weather events.



Climate change impacts residents at different times and in different ways. The following list summarizes the number of individuals within Nevada County that may be particularly sensitive to climate change.

4,209 Children (under age 5)

29,045 Older Adults (age 65+)

15,605 People with a Disability

1,282 Housing Units without Access to a Vehicle

25,435 People Living Below 200% of Poverty Level

5,667 People without Health Insurance

**92%**

of Nevada County residents live in high to very high fire severity zones.



## Maternal & Child Health

Maternal and child health ensures the well-being of the next generation, reduces infant and maternal mortality, and establishes a trajectory for lifelong health and developmental outcomes.

### Key Facts Regarding This Theme :



The current supply of child care providers only meets

**42%**

of the need for children aged 0-5.



39.4% of birthing individuals were covered by Medi-Cal, and of those,

**29%**

had delayed prenatal care.



**10.9%**

of babies are born outside of a hospital, the highest rate in California.



**9.9%**

of children ages 0-5 are living at or below the poverty level.

### Percentage of Kindergarten Students Who Received all Required Vaccines

Nevada County

**82.4%**

California

**94.0%**

## saw' saw

CHIRP's VTA 2022 Collection  
Indigo Donaldson

Acrylic Paint, Pencil, Charcoal Pencil, Natural Materials on Canvas

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Indigenous homelands provided for and nourished all living beings. Before the gold rush, there was reciprocity where the land cared for the people and the people cared for the land. The Nisenan people had doctors, healers, and herbalists among their people. They also had various Cultural practices and medicine spots on the land that supported them when out-of balance with wellness. One of the lesser-known amazing healing plants is moss. In the Nisenan language, it is known as *saw' saw*. This painting brings to life a depiction of Minerva (a Nisenan/Miwok Elder), the moss, the creek, the rocks, and the trees where she gathered the healing *saw' saw* right here in *'ustomah* (Nevada City). Today, weaving together Western practices of wellness and Indigenous practices of wellness with discernment and care can provide support for healing.

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# Slipping Away

CHIRP's VTA 2022 Collection

Debra McBrien (Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribal Member)

Collage on Paper with Colored Pencil

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“The hourglass represents what has happened throughout time. The top of the hourglass represents the Nisenan world as they lived it. The bottom of the hourglass represents what is occurring now. The Indian falling and trying to catch his child represents the Nisenan trying to save their lives, their Culture, and their identity, as wildfires are continuing the destruction of Nature and wildlife. The hands that hold an Indian's face represent hope to hold the Nisenan through community help and recognition.” - Debra McBrien

For Indigenous communities, Cultural connectedness is a social determinant of health. Rather than ignoring historical trauma and its impact on the community, the Nisenan are engaging with it and teaching Tribal members about the harm that occurred, what was lost, and how that shows up today. From this lens, the reclamation of Culture and identity is an empowering practice that guides them in their wellness journeys.

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# Care Across the Lifespan

Our community health improvement planning considers the unique changes in physiology, psychology and behavior that occur at different stages of the lifespan and how these are influenced by other factors including life experience, social norms, culture, health status and the environment.

## Childhood

Ages 0-17



There are 17,040 children aged 0-17, nearly half of which are covered by Medi-Cal.



9.9% of children ages 0-5 live at or below the poverty level.



The number of children ages 0-5 receiving behavioral health services increased 23% between FY 2021/22 and 2022/23.



Over 2/3 of teachers report students with depression, mental health, alcohol and drug use to be a moderate to severe problem.

## Transition Aged Youth

Ages 15-25



10.9% of 16-19 year olds are neither working nor in school.



Road injury is the leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds.



Mood disorders are the leading cause of hospitalization for 15-24 year olds.



Providers identify this population as difficult to reach in order to provide specialized intervention services, preventive screenings, and well-care.

# Care Across the Lifespan

The cumulative effect of events that happen early in life may also affect a person's health over time. These underpin the need to explore health through a life course approach, focused on understanding and promoting health and well-being across the life continuum through public health approaches.

## Adulthood

Ages 25-64



There are 4,617 families on the regional waitlist for subsidized housing.



Men aged 55-64 are the largest demographic of individuals living in poverty.



Alcohol related disorders is the 2nd leading cause of hospitalizations for 45-54 year olds.



Drug overdose is the leading cause of death for 25-54 year olds.

## Aging Adults

Ages 65+



There are 29,045 aging adults, of which 9.3% are covered by Medi-Cal.



Females aged 65-74 are the second largest demographic of individuals living in poverty.



Nevada County is home to nearly twice the percentage of seniors in a population when compared to California.



Alzheimer's disease is ranked as the 2nd leading cause of death in Nevada County.

# Community Health Improvement Plan

The Community Health Improvement Steering Committee, in collaboration with key stakeholders and partner organizations across the local public health system will develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP is a 3-5 year plan that serves as a road map for how we can increase healthy living and health equity throughout Nevada County.

**The CHIP looks at where the community is, where we want to go, and how we will get there.**



## The CHIP Process will Focus on:

- »»» Strategic Partnerships
- »»» Sustainable Impact
- »»» Innovative Strategies for Health Equity
- »»» Continuous Quality Improvement

## Getting Involved

The CHI process is a collaborative process and each of us has a role in working to improve health and the quality of life in Nevada County.

To address the key health issues identified by our community partners based on quantitative and qualitative data, we must include the voices of Nevada County's diverse communities and individuals.

There are many opportunities for you to be involved as we develop and implement the CHIP, for questions or to learn more about how to get involved, email [publichealth@nevadacountyca.gov](mailto:publichealth@nevadacountyca.gov) or call 530-265-1450.



Nevada County Public Health wishes to thank our Steering Committee and staff for their contributions to the 2024 Community Health Assessment. Furthermore, Nevada County Public Health and the Steering Committee would also like to thank each and every Nevada County provider and community member who provided their time and feedback during the development of this Community Health Assessment.

Your contributions provided invaluable insight and are sincerely appreciated.

## Our Steering Committee

The following individuals provided project direction and oversight through their participation on the Community Health Improvement Steering Committee.

**Brian Stoltey**

Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital

**Callum Hancock**

Community Beyond Violence  
Nevada City United Methodist Church

**Carly Pacheco**

FREED Center for Independent Living

**Clayton Thomas**

Penn Valley Fire District

**Courtney Platt**

Nevada County Public Health

**Dena Malakian**

Bright Futures for Youth

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**Erin Mettler**

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Partnership HealthPlan of California

**Heather Vance**

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**Jennifer Singer**

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**Jennifer Winders**

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Common Goals

**Jonathan Harvey**

Chapa-De Indian Health

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**Leslie Lovejoy**

Gold Country Senior Services

**Lizzy Henasey**

Tahoe Forest Health System

**Pamela Rasada**

San Juan Ridge Community Coalition

**Sydney Day**

Hospitality House

**Rachelle Tuck**

CHIRP

**Rosnina Dort**

Nevada County Superintendent of Schools

**Ryan Gruver**

Nevada County Health and Human Services

**William Buss**

Hospitality House

Project administration and oversight led by the Nevada County Public Health Core Group:

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***We Care*** about you.

