



C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: January 15, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

FROM: Noemi Gomez Martinez, Community Relationships Manager
Cynthia Esparza, Chief Equity & Community Relations Officer

DEPT: Equity & Community Relations

SUBJECT: 2024 Reno CommUNITY Connect Programming

In 2024, the Community Relationships team launched and reintroduced a series of community events in partnership with local non-profits, community groups, and staff. Branded *Reno CommUNITY Connect*. These free, public events, hosted at City facilities, featured inaugural celebrations and enhancements to established programs.

Reno CommUNITY Connect engaged approximately 6000 plus community members, strengthened connections with local community groups, and brought unity.

The following is an overview of last year's programs:

Cultural Heritage Celebrations

Four events were established to honor multiple cultural heritages in our community. Due to the program's success and positive outcome, coordination is underway for 2025 events.

February - Black History Month Celebrations

In partnership with the Northern Nevada Black Cultural Awareness Society (NNBCAS), Our Story Inc., the Northern Nevada African American Firefighters Museum, Reno Fire Department, Reno Police Department, and local community leaders.

The celebration included the following highlights:

- **BELIEVE Sign Lighting:** A symbolic display of the City’s commitment to honoring Black history.
- **Unity Walk to City Hall:** A citywide walk celebrating Black history and unity.
- **Community Leaders and Reception:** A tribute to local Black leaders and community contributions, followed by a community reception for further engagement.
- This event welcomed approximately 100 community members to City Hall.

May - Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month

In partnership with the Asian Community Development Council (ACDC), India Association of Northern Nevada (IANN), and the Korean-American Association of Reno, the first-ever AANHPI Heritage celebration in Reno was hosted at Wingfield Park.

AANHPI-owned businesses, non-profits, performing arts, and traditional foods, contributing to greater community understanding and appreciation of AANHPI cultures. This event welcomed approximately 900 community members to the celebration.

September - Hispanic Heritage Month

In partnership with Latino Arte & Culture, Hispanic Heritage Month was celebrated during Fiesta on Wells with performances, traditional foods, and cultural experiences. The event was enhanced by the sponsorship of Latin dance classes from High Sierra Entertainment, a Baile Folklorico group dance performance, and a proclamation dedication. Reno Fire Department and the Reno Police Department were in attendance. This celebration welcomed approximately 200 community members.

November - Native American Heritage Month

We concluded the year with a celebration of Native American Heritage in partnership with Sawabe Muhano at Locomotion Plaza. The event featured traditional Native American dance performances, storytelling, prayer ceremonies, a market with Native American artisans, traditional foods, and promoted cultural understanding and cross-community connections. This celebration welcomed approximately 100 community members.

Community Engagement Partnership

Focused on increasing community participation through collaborative programming with local partners to enhance engagement, safety, and provide essential resources to the community. These efforts strengthen connections and support active involvement across the city.

October - 3rd Annual Trunk or Treat

The City of Reno, in partnership with Dean’s Future Scholars at the University of Nevada, Reno hosted the third annual Trunk or Treat event at the northeast parking lot of Teglia’s Paradise Park.

This family-friendly event welcomed over 4,200 members of the public, offering a safe and festive evening filled with decorated trunks and tables from the Reno Fire and Police

Department, Parks and Recreation, community members, and 50 plus community partners.

Educational Programming

The educational programming efforts in 2024 focused to increase awareness of City functions and services both for constituents and internal staff. For the public, the initiatives provided insights into local government processes to better understanding of how the City operates. Internally, training and development sessions empowered staff with the knowledge and tools to effectively serve the community, promoting greater transparency, collaboration, and efficiency across all City departments.

August – October, 2024: Reno Constituents Institute (RCI) Cohort

The 2024 Reno Constituents Institute (RCI) program graduated 37 community members. Over the course of the eleven-week program, participants gained in-depth knowledge of the City of Reno's government structure, departments, programs, services, and the community at large.

RCI is dedicated to strengthening communities by creating access, transparency, inclusivity, and empowerment through education and the development of meaningful relationships. The 2025 cohort is scheduled from February 1st – May 1st.

January – December, 2024: Reno Emerging Leaders Institute (RELI)

An inaugural 12-session program spanning a calendar year launched in January for City of Reno staff members. Mirrored after the Reno Constituents Institute, this program emphasizes the significance of interdisciplinary collaboration efforts, organizational understanding, insight on citywide community needs through the lens of various departments.

A total of 40 staff members participated and completed the 36-hour program. RELI has transitioned to Human Resources as a professional development program for City staff.

- **Attached:** Event Photos

Cultural Heritage Celebrations



*Unity Walk to City Hall Lead by NNBCAS
February 2024*



*AANHPI Event – Traditional Hawaiian Dance
May 2024*



*Folkloric Dance Performer during Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration
September 2024*



*2024 Native American Heritage Month Celebration Attendees and Participants
November 2024*

Community Engagement Partnership



*Trunk or Treat at Teglia's Paradise Park
October 2024*

Educational Programming



*2024 Reno Constituents Institute participants recognition celebration
August – October 2024*



*Reno Emerging Leaders Institute participants recognition celebration
January – December 2024*