

# Utah Homeless Network (UHN)

## Executive Summary

### Purpose:

- Decision
  - Informational
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**Meeting Date:** April 24, 2024

**Subject:** 2024 H.B. 298 Summary for Local Homeless Councils

**Submitted by:** Office of Homeless Services (OHS)

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### 2024 House Bill 298

The bill requires the Utah Homeless Services Board to define:

- "Exit destination" means:
  - a homeless situation;
  - an institutional situation;
  - a temporary housing situation;
  - a permanent housing situation; or
  - other.
- "Type of homelessness" means:
  - chronic homelessness;
  - episodic homelessness;
  - situational homelessness; or
  - family homelessness.

The coordinator, in cooperation with the board and taking into account the metrics established and data reported in accordance with Section 35A-16-208, shall ensure that the strategic plan described in Subsection (1)(c):

- outlines specific goals and measurable benchmarks for minimizing homelessness in the state and for coordinating services for individuals experiencing homelessness among all service providers in the state;
- identifies best practices and recommends improvements to the provision of services to individuals experiencing homelessness in the state to ensure the services are provided in a safe, cost-effective, and efficient manner;

- identifies best practices and recommends improvements in coordinating the delivery of services to the variety of populations experiencing homelessness in the state, including through the use of electronic databases and improved data sharing among all service providers in the state; and
- identifies gaps and recommends solutions in the delivery of services to the variety of populations experiencing homelessness in the state.

In overseeing funding for the provision of homeless services the coordinator:

- shall prioritize the funding of programs and providers that have a documented history of successfully reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, reducing the time individuals spend experiencing homelessness, moving individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing, or reducing the number of individuals who return to experiencing homelessness.

#### **Duties of the Utah Homeless Services Board**

- shall review **local and regional plans** for providing services to individuals experiencing homelessness;
- shall cooperate with **local homeless councils** to:
  - develop a common agenda and vision for reducing homelessness in each local oversight body's respective region;
  - as part of the homeless services budget, develop a spending plan that coordinates the funding supplied to local stakeholders; and
  - align local funding to projects that improve outcomes and target specific needs in each community;
- shall coordinate gap funding with private entities for providing services to individuals experiencing homelessness;
- shall recommend performance and accountability measures for service providers, including the support of collecting consistent and transparent data; and
- when reviewing and giving final approval for funding requests:
  - may only recommend funding if the proposed recipient has a policy to share client-level service information with other entities in accordance with state and federal law to enhance the coordination of services for individuals who are experiencing homelessness; and
- shall identify specific targets and benchmarks that align with the strategic plan for each recommended award;
- shall regularly update the state strategic plan on homelessness to reflect proven strategies to reduce homelessness among:
  - the unsheltered;

- the chronically or episodically homeless; and
  - the situationally homeless;
- shall develop annual **state and local goals** for reducing homelessness among the target subpopulations identified by the board;
- shall work with the **local homeless councils** to carry out the requirements of Subsection 35A-16-208(3) [*The board and the **local homeless councils** shall jointly establish quarterly goals for each project type*];
- shall develop metrics for measuring the effectiveness of providers in assisting clients to successfully progress through the services coordinated by a **continuum of care**;
- shall create best practices for a service provider to administer services to an individual experiencing homelessness, including promotion of:
  - a recognition of the human dignity of clients served;
  - a need to develop self-reliance;
  - the value of work;
  - personal accountability; and
  - personal progress toward greater personal independence;
- shall make recommendations for uniform standards for enforcing pedestrian safety and camping laws and ordinances;
- shall identify best practices for responding to unsheltered individuals experiencing mental health disorder and substance use disorder;
- shall make recommendations for strategies to reduce illegal drug use within homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing;
- shall facilitate client connection to alternative support systems, including behavioral health services, addiction recovery, and residential services;
- shall facilitate participation in HMIS, where appropriate and in alignment with established HMIS policies, and data sharing agreements among all participants in a client support network, including homeless services, physical health systems, mental health systems, and the criminal justice system;
- shall make recommendations to the office for defining "successful exit," "unsuccessful exit," and "neutral exit";
- shall evaluate additional opportunities for the office to become a collaborative applicant;
- shall coordinate with the **continuums of care** to provide for cooperative distribution of available funding; and
- shall work in conjunction with the executive directors of the Department of Workforce Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Corrections to create best practices for helping individuals exiting from incarceration or an institution to avoid homelessness.

## Reporting requirements -- Outcome measures

The office shall report, for the state and for each **local homeless council**:

- the state's year-to-date progress toward reaching a functional zero level of homelessness for each type of homelessness and subpopulation, including:
  - the number of individuals who are homeless for the first time;
  - the number of individuals who returned to homelessness after having exited homelessness within the two previous years;
  - the number of individuals who remained homeless since the last report;
  - the number of individuals experiencing homelessness since the last report by household type;
  - the number of individuals who exited by exit destination; and
  - the number of individuals who are experiencing homelessness for the first time plus the number of individuals who are returning to homelessness minus the number of individuals who are exiting homelessness;
- the percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness who:
  - have a mental health disorder;
  - have a substance use disorder;
  - have a chronic health condition;
  - have a physical disability;
  - have a developmental disability;
  - have HIV/AIDS;
  - are survivors of domestic violence;
  - are veterans; and
  - are unaccompanied youth 24 years old or younger;
- the number of individuals who exited homeless services since the last report by:
  - type of homelessness;
  - subpopulation; and
  - exit destination; and
  - progress, by project type, on each goal established
- The reports described in this Subsection shall contain aggregated, de-identified information. The office shall report the data described in the annual report required by Section 35A-16-203;
  - on or before October 1 of each year, through an oral presentation to the Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee; and
  - on a data dashboard for the public with specific additional data points recommended by the board.
- The board and the **local homeless councils** shall jointly establish quarterly goals for each project type.

- The board and the **local homeless councils** shall jointly make annual progress reports identifying:
  - the percentage of clients screened for social needs;
  - the percentage of clients subsequently referred to community-based providers who can:
    - address the client's needs;
    - follow-up on status of addressing the client's needs; and
    - report back to the referring entity;
    - the number of youth receiving parent or guardian bereavement support services; and
    - the number of clients with:
      - a successful exit;
      - an unsuccessful exit;
      - a neutral exit; and
      - continued enrollment in the project.

### **Cost measures**

The office shall report annually for each **local homeless council** the following:

- the cost of construction per bed for each new shelter, transitional housing, or permanent
- supportive housing compared to the average cost of a similar facility during the past three years; and
- annual operating cost per bed of a homeless resource center or emergency shelter, including utilities, staff, and maintenance.