

Approved on 9.24.25

Motion: Mayor Jacobsen, Second: Council Member Troxell, Passed Unanimously

**BEAR RIVER REGION  
HUMAN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Wednesday, July 30, 2025 – 12:30**  
**Via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees 7.30.25**

Mayor Larry Jacobsen, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approve Community Needs Assessment**

Lucas Martin, BRAG Executive Director, noted the purpose of this additional Human Services meeting is to Accept or Reject and make any changes to the following documents.

[2025 Community Needs Assessment](#)  
[25-27 Community Action Plan Goals](#)

Martin began by going through the input gathered in the [2025 Community Needs Assessment](#) from the seven public forums in 2025. The following Executive summary taken from the Needs Assessment Document is a good synopsis:

Every three years the Bear River Association of Governments conducts a community needs assessment in an effort to identify the barriers faced by low income households in our community. The needs assessment helps program and outreach decisions. The assessment consisted of surveys, forum discussions, regional data, and supporting studies. The public survey utilized questions from the 2022 survey to allow for better comparison. The survey was supplemented by public forums, and additional research from the Bear River Health Department's (BRHD) Community Health Plan, Intermountain Healthcare's (IHC) Community Needs Assessment and the USU Transforming Communities Initiative's (USU TCI) Housing Attainability Study. Participants in the focus groups include representatives from community organizations, faith based organizations, the private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.

There were 122 responses to the public survey. 59% of responses were between the ages of 25-44, 84.3% were female, 8.2% are Hispanic, 13.9% veterans, and 29.5% of the households have someone with a disability. 13.1% have someone over the age of 65, and 43.4% have someone under the age of 10. 79.5% are households of three or more and 74.1% are employed full time. 61.5% live in single family homes and 38.5% are renters. 3.6% live in Rich County, 19% live in Box Elder County, and 77% live in Cache County.

**Key Findings:**

Housing continues to be the primary area of concern. Survey respondents, public forum participants, and data from other studies all point to Housing as a major concern. The following highlights how survey respondents ranked

overall concerns as High Need (a category combining Serious and Crisis rankings) as a percentage, listed in order of the highest responses. Housing 81.1%, Healthcare 43.4%, Childcare 34.4%, Food 29.5%, Transportation 19.7%, Other 17.2% and Employment at 13.1%. These findings differed a little from last year, with Housing decreasing by 10%, childcare by 6% and food by 10%. This could reflect changes in priorities over the last three years. However, it is important to note that this year's survey takers were older, had fewer children under the age of 10, and were more likely to own their homes. Those demographic differences could reasonably explain some of these significant shifts. The Other category had 9 responses tied to housing, 7 of which were directed at homelessness and transitional housing.

The focus groups tended to emphasize housing, general increase in expenses, and transportation. Housing was clearly the primary emphasis. The impact of high housing costs spills over into other areas, competing with household resources with expenses tied to food, utilities, healthcare and transportation.

The financial pinch is on full display in other areas of the survey. In the last 12 months, 40% of survey respondents received free meals, 27% didn't pay their full rent/mortgage, and 31% didn't pay their utilities in full. 29% strongly agreed that in the last 12 months they did not seek medical attention due to cost.

50% indicated they spent more than 30% of their income on their monthly rent/mortgage obligations with an additional 7.4% spending more than 30% of their income on utilities alone.

Unemployment for the region sits around 3%. 28% of those surveyed indicate dissatisfaction with their current employment and 48% feel it is difficult to find quality employment. 27% have to work more than 40 hours a week to make ends meet, with 12.2% working multiple jobs and 9% with a working teen who helps support the family. 40% felt their income was not enough to provide for the basic needs of their family. Significant barriers to employment included 29% said impacts to benefits, 25% listed child care, 25% caregiver responsibilities, 16% physical health, and 12% pointing to a disability impacting employment. In community forums many indicated the cost of goods is rising faster than their income.

Public forum discussions raised a variety of concerns tied to housing. In regards to the quantity of housing every group felt more was needed, a demand reflected by the housing data from our general statistics portion of the assessment. When looking at the number of units needed for the population making 60% or less of the area median income the Kem C. Gardner Institute shows the following shortages of housing units: Box Elder -1,217, Cache -4,043 and Rich -24.

Housing shortages contribute to high rent prices, rates of homelessness, substandard housing, doubling up of households, and less income to spend on other needs. The increased wages we saw during and post covid have not solved housing affordability as the unit shortage has worsened since 2022.

While housing is a crisis in all three counties, housing issues in Rich county continue to present unique challenges. Garden City has the highest home prices in the region and two out of every three units in Rich county is seasonally occupied. All three counties face challenges housing critical populations like police, firemen, teachers, and medical employees.

County and city zoning codes in all three counties largely dictate what new housing will look like. The severe housing unit deficits point to an increased need for more collaboration with municipalities to find housing solutions and stabilize our regional housing market.

Homeless and vulnerable populations are at a significant disadvantage in a housing shortage. They are more likely to have background and financial barriers that weaken their efforts to obtain housing. The annual homeless point in time count identified more than 150 homeless individuals in 2025. It is likely that as the housing supply continues to fall further behind the number of homeless individuals will rise.

Increasing access to certifications and qualifications can help low income households gain access to higher paying jobs, benefits, an increased capacity to provide for their families, and a wider selection of potential housing. The BRAG community action plan and strategic plans reflect these priorities.

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Mayor Larry Jacobsen inquired of the board whether they suggested any modifications to the [2025 Community Needs Assessment](#). No discussion followed. Mayor Holly Daines put forward a MOTION to approve the 2025 Community Needs Assessment. The motion was SECONDED by Karen Cronin. Mayor Jacobsen called for a vote from each attending member. All seven members voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mayor Jacobsen asked for a Motion to approve the recommended [25-27 Community Action Plan Goals](#). Dr. Jess Lucero made a MOTION to approve. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Holly Daines. Mayor Jacobsen called for a vote from each attending member. All seven members voted in favor and the motion passed.

Lucas Martin will follow up with the submission of the [25-27 Community Action Plan Goals](#) to the state.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Next meeting Wednesday, September 24 at 12 Noon at the USU Brigham City Campus  
Classroom D217, 989 S Main Street in Brigham City