

## Goal: Mitigate homelessness in the Jordan River Parkway

The Jordan River has been a place of refuge and sustenance for humans since pre-colonial times. People, especially those who are otherwise unsheltered, still look to the River as a place to fulfil their physical needs. Uses including unpermitted camping can sometimes threaten water quality and conservation goals within scarce riparian ecosystems if steps are not taken to mitigate impacts. Since the conditions leading to homelessness are a statewide challenge, supporting efforts to prevent Utahns from falling into homelessness and to uplift those currently experiencing homelessness may reduce their need to camp along the Jordan River. Cross-agency collaboration and response to unpermitted camping can help connect people experiencing homelessness with services and shelters.

### STRATEGIES:

- Advocate for and support regional and statewide efforts to make homelessness in Utah rare, brief, and non-recurring. According to the State of Utah Strategic Plan on Homelessness, the availability of affordable housing, supportive housing, emergency beds, mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, and case management are areas of unmet community needs.
  - i. Coordinate with the Utah Homelessness Council and state homeless coordinator to develop more effective models for helping those experiencing homelessness get back on their feet. As of 2021, local governments including Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, South Salt Lake, and Midvale are members of the Homelessness Council as well as the Jordan River Commission and can represent the needs of the Jordan River Parkway in statewide discussions about homelessness.
  - ii. Participate in and support initiatives like the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness.
- Connect people experiencing homelessness with shelters and services to reduce their need to camp in the Parkway.
  - i. Develop outreach teams with expertise in homeless response, mental health, and substance abuse to operate throughout the Parkway.
  - ii. Provide signage and online information on which social service providers to contact regarding unsheltered individuals in different locations. Combining the functionality of the homeless reporting maintained by the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands with the MyJordanRiver.org site is a potential opportunity for universal reporting.
  - iii. Explore opportunities to establish or identify appropriate areas for people experiencing homelessness to stay if they are unwilling to stay in homeless resource shelters.
- Identify opportunities to partner with the unsheltered community on stewardship through education, incentives, and resource provision. Encourage service providers to incorporate waste removal and clean-ups into their outreach plans so that discarded items don't accumulate in the Parkway.



Undeveloped pockets of land in urban areas like the Jordan River Parkway are desirable locations for people to camp if they don't have access to safe and affordable housing or shelter nearby. The "kayak court" effort helps people in encampments clear their court cases — and cleans up the River along the way.

## IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

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| • Homeless service providers                      | • Utah Department of Transportation |
| • Outreach organizations                          | • Habitat restoration organizations |
| • Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands | • Public safety departments         |