

**Working Together to Make Homelessness
Rare, Brief, and Non-recurrent
The State of Utah Strategic Plan on
Homelessness**

*A Draft Plan Prepared for the State Homeless
Coordinating Committee*

August 2019

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Executive Summary

As a result of amended Utah law, the Utah State Homeless Coordinating Committee was charged with developing and drafting a statewide strategic plan on homelessness. The strategic plan was to identify service gaps, review best practices, adopt performance measures and benchmarks, and make recommendations for improving service coordination.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services contracted Dr. Jesus N. Valero and Dr. Lina Svedin, professors in the Department of Political Science at the University of Utah, to lead the process of drafting the statewide plan¹. The research they conducted for the drafting of the strategic plan identified several service gaps:

- Service Gap 1: Affordable Housing, Other Types of Housing, & Shelter Space
- Service Gap 2: Case Management
- Service Gap 3: Data Systems that Capture More of the Full Story
- Service Gap 4: Available Transportation System
- Service Gap 5: Substance Use and Mental Health Services
- Service Gap 6: Diversion, Prevention, & Outreach Services

The statewide strategic plan on homelessness also offers several strategies, action steps along with benchmarks and performance measures to help Utah close the gaps in services and ultimately minimize the incidence of homelessness. In conclusion, several recommendations are made to the Utah Governor and Utah State Legislature to bring the statewide strategic plan to life:

- Recommendation 1: Adopt Mission Statement and Integrate into Government Fabric
- Recommendation 2: Restructure Composition of State Homeless Coordinating Committee to be Inclusive of all LHCCs
- Recommendation 3: Local Homeless Coordinating Committees Must Engage all Key Stakeholders
- Recommendation 4: Adopt Policies that Protect Landlords and Tenants
- Recommendation 5: Support the Further Development of a Utah Homeless Network
- Recommendation 6: Implement an Education Campaign on Homelessness in Utah
- Recommendation 7: Develop a Dashboard that Communicates Progress
- Recommendation 8: Review and Assess the Implementation and Impact of the Statewide Strategic Plan on Homelessness

¹ See Appendix 1 for the methods used to produce this strategic plan.

Introduction

The State of Utah has long been a leader and champion for minimizing homelessness, and is committed to a vision of working together to make homelessness in all parts of Utah rare, brief, and non-recurrent. The work to address Utah's homeless population requires the collaboration, coordination, and cooperation of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Homelessness across Utah is different, and communities are ready and committed to working together, to share best practices, and to grow capacity-building networks. Ultimately, a new wave of tested as well as innovative solutions are needed to meet the changing needs and challenges facing individuals and families in Utah who experience homelessness.

In 2019, the Utah Legislature saw an opportunity to address shortcomings as well as improve on the work and achievements of the past by passing legislation that required the State Homeless Coordinating Committee to develop a statewide strategic plan that addressed four elements:

1. Goals and benchmarks to measure progress
2. Identified service delivery gaps
3. Review of best practices for improving coordination of service delivery
4. Recommendations to the governor and legislature

This strategic plan is a 5-year roadmap of strategies and action steps to help Utah move together as a state system. It is the product of conversations across the State of Utah—among those engaged in the hard work of helping the homeless as well as policymakers, government managers, nonprofit leaders, currently or formerly homeless people, and concerned citizens. This is Utah's plan to align existing governance systems, promote innovation and collaboration, coordinate investments, and to hold all parties accountable for doing what is right.

Our Shared State Goals

Communities across Utah share one common goal: to end homelessness. To get there, we must work together to develop strategies, invest resources, and bring partners from across the sectors to ensure that systems and services are coordinated for individuals and families that become homeless.

This strategic plan sets statewide goals and benchmarks, but also recognizes that every community in Utah is different in their challenges, the resources available, and the type of needs of those who experience homelessness. This plan, therefore, values the need for local input, priority setting, and goals.

To achieve our state goals, we must also align our efforts with those of partners outside of Utah. This strategic plan has used the federal strategic plan², Home Together, as a road map as well as a wealth of additional data points and input, to identify existing and needed strategic goals, action steps, and efforts. This process has been collaborative based on systematic data collection, with diverse stakeholder participation and produced as a joint vision for all of Utah.

Therefore, this plan sets the following goals and strategies:

- **To work together to make homelessness in Utah rare, brief, and non-recurrent**
- **To work together collaboratively by making sure all those who touch the lives of homeless persons are connected and sharing information and resources**
- **To work together to address homelessness in all parts of Utah, as homelessness exists in all corners of our state, our communities, and neighborhoods**

² See Appendix 9 for analysis of how Utah's plan connects with the federal strategic plan.

Gaps in Service Delivery: What Communities Need but are Missing

Communities across Utah are working hard to minimize the number of individuals and families that experience homelessness and to provide an array of services to help those that have fallen into homelessness. While homelessness looks different from community to community, several common themes emerged in conversations with Local Homeless Coordinating Committees relating to serious gaps in service delivery that challenge and frustrate local efforts to address homelessness effectively. These service gaps are identified by LHCC in Table 1.

Service Gap 1: Affordable Housing, Other Types of Housing, & Shelter Space

Research and practice show strong evidence in support of *Housing First* as an approach to addressing the incidence of homelessness, which involves providing stable housing as an initial step and then followed by an appropriate continuum of supportive services. And while Utah has generally adhered to this philosophy and best practice, it is challenged by the lack of available housing inventory that is affordable and that responds to the distinct socioeconomic backgrounds of individuals and families facing homelessness. For example, in communities with limited housing and rising housing demands across Utah, landlords prefer to rent homes to individuals and families who can pay a higher rent as opposed to housing vouchers of less worth. Landlords are also less likely to rent to individuals and families with poor credit, an unfavorable renting history (i.e., eviction), and/or limited income.

There is also an increasing need for permanent supportive housing (PSH), particularly in rural communities. PSH is necessary for vulnerable homeless individuals who are also facing a chronic condition, and has been proven to be an effective solution³. PSH offers chronically homeless individuals housing and supportive services that help build independent living. Yet, the lack of housing structures dedicated to this type of housing service challenges communities in minimizing the number of chronically homeless.

Utah communities recount often having to use funds that may not be appropriate for those who are identified as needing psh, which may include using short term, low case management level projects such as rapid rehousing to house those individuals inappropriately. Many focus group participants identified that this practice is setting their clients up for failure, but have no other options to help the client resolve homelessness.

In rural communities, there is an increasing need for homeless shelters where emergency beds are nonexistent and a need for additional beds in those communities with small capacity shelters. The lack of available shelter beds contributes to the rising

³ <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/permanent-supportive-housing/>

number of transient homeless populations, or those that move from their home community to another in search for shelter. Utah communities share how homeless Utahns lose their network of social support (i.e., relatives, friends) in their transition, which further challenges their ability to step out of homelessness.

Service Gap 2: Case Management

Case management is a necessary service and common service component of health and human service organizations. In homeless services, case management focuses on assessing the individual needs of a client, develops treatment or service goals and plans, monitors those services and compliance, connects clients to homeless service system, and lastly and while not explicit in job descriptions, provides emotional support to those experiencing homelessness. While crucial members of service providers, there is a limited supply of case managers, and this is due to at least two factors identified candidly by community organizations in Utah.

First, case managers are often paid low wages that are not commensurate with their experience, the amount of work achieved, and the physical and psychological demands of their service to a vulnerable population. Second, the limited pool of case managers leads to overloads of assigned clients. Unreasonably high client loads then lead to staff burnout and high turnover rates. Service providers and more specifically, homeless individuals and families, experience additional challenges in navigating homeless service systems effectively when they are not consistently assigned to one case manager.

Service Gap 3: Data Systems that Capture More of the Full Story

There is wide agreement among Utah communities and service providers across the sectors that data is important and helps inform policymakers, funders, citizens, and others about the realities facing those who experience homelessness. However, existing data and the homeless management information system (HMIS) that records data on homeless services is inadequate and fails to capture the full story of the work done to support the needs and challenges of persons experiencing homelessness and the total numbers of those experiencing homelessness. This is because 1) not all service providers enter data into HMIS (i.e., domestic violence shelters, school districts); 2) quantitative measures are objective but do not capture narrative of people experiencing homelessness; 3) lack of integration among information systems creates duplication of efforts; 4) the Point-in-Time data collection occurs at a time (middle of winter) that is particularly disadvantageous for rural communities who are unable to locate and accurately count homeless people; and 5) data quality needs to be improved (i.e., some regions do not collect data).

Local homeless coordinating committees are largely supportive of making improvements to information system but are limited by a lack of financial resources to customize

existing software, manage information system, and hire additional and necessary HMIS staff to support LHCCs.

Service Gap 4: Available Transportation System

While public transportation systems are available in urban areas, suburban and rural communities in Utah identified the need for a transportation system that allows those experiencing homelessness to get to and between providers, employment, and housing arrangement. The lack of transportation impedes the ability of service providers to ensure the continuum of care of those experiencing homelessness by: 1) inability to connect with the client, 2) client is unable to keep with employment schedule, and 3) client failing to maintain treatment. While communities recognize that the investment of public transportation systems in rural areas is not immediately financially feasible, an investment in small-scale transportation arrangements (i.e., financial support for provider fleet vehicles) can be a realistic solution.

Service Gap 5: Substance Use and Mental Health Services

According to the 2018 Point-in-Time study in Utah, about one-third (32.3%) of the total homeless population was severely mentally ill and about one-fourth (24.2%) of the total homeless population faced chronic substance abuse. Despite these significant co-occurring individual challenges, communities identify a lack of specialized substance use services and mental health services for those experiencing homelessness. And this need is particularly acute in rural communities where service providers are few. There is an urgent need to create and/or expand existing services to meet the increasing demand for substance use and mental health services to help individuals and families step out of homelessness effectively.

Service Gap 6: Diversion, Prevention, & Outreach Services

Communities widely identify the increasing need to fund services that help divert individuals and families who are at the point of spending a night unsheltered or entering a shelter to housing options. There is also a need to engage in wider community efforts to prevent housing crises from occurring and specifically to prevent individuals with such crises from experiencing homelessness. A third distinct but related need to diversion and prevention is engaging in outreach work—finding and connecting with individuals experiencing homelessness and directing them to appropriate services.

However, the funding supply for these types of interventions has diminished significantly due to a need to focus on imminent needs. Utah communities highlight the strong connection between prevention, diversion and outreach services and minimizing homelessness, and specifically the need for financial resources to fund this type of service.

Table 1: Identified Service Gaps by LHCC

	Gap 1	Gap 2	Gap 3	Gap 4	Gap 5	Gap 6
BRAG	X	X	X		X	
Davis	X	X	X	X	X	X
Salt Lake	X	X	X		X	X
Grand	X	X	X			
Iron	X	X	X	X	X	
Carbon/Emery	X	X	X	X	X	
Weber	X	X	X	X		X
Uintah	X	X	X	X	X	
Washington	X	X	X	X	X	
Tooele	X	X	X	X	X	X
San Juan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mountainland	X	X	X		X	X

Source: Utah Strategic Plan Research Team, 2019

Specific Strategies for Utah

There is considerable support across all of Utah for making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The simple, clear, and succinct expression of this vision is a powerful basis from which to rally stakeholders from across the spectrum of homelessness and across the state around one common mission. The State of Utah's strategic plan on homelessness, therefore, adopts the following organizing vision statement to direct the priorities and efforts proposed in the plan:

"Working together to make homelessness in all parts of Utah rare, brief and non-recurrent."

The process of drafting this strategic plan identified the need to work together, collaboratively, within and among LHCC's, as well as between the LHCCs and the State Homeless Coordinating Committee and other stakeholders. Supporting collaborative practices will be key in increasing the state's overall effectiveness in minimizing homelessness.

The following are statewide strategies and action steps for the shared work of addressing homelessness.

Strategy 1: To work together to make homelessness in Utah rare, brief, and non-recurrent

Action Step 1.1: Continue the coordinated entry approach among service providers the way it is currently set up in Utah

While some LHCCs across Utah struggle to have enough providers to make this an effective practice, the coordinated entry model is working effectively in most LHCCs across Utah and is making needs assessments and prioritizations possible. The fact that so many high priority/high need homeless persons are identified through this practice, and through street outreach, further supports LHCC reports that the practice is effective.

Action Step 1.2: Transitioning each person experiencing homelessness and receiving services with 'a warm handoff'

The practice of a warm handoff has been successfully promoted in some LHCCs and increases the likelihood that homeless persons, particularly those identified as high priority/high need, actually get to their appointments, job interviews, follow-up appointments and check-ups from service providers, thereby safeguarding an effective investment of resources and improved outcomes. Successful warm handoff practices already exist in Utah, and this will be modeled and taught to other LHCCs.

Action Step 1.3: Increase investments in human resources

In order to achieve objective 3.2, additional case managers are needed to provide individualized care, attention, and support to those experiencing homelessness. Thus, a return focus on case management is warranted. LHCCs in Utah and other states are recognizing the need to provide more case management resources, specifically for identified high priority/high need homeless, and for persons entering substance use disorder treatment programs. The state will prioritize investing financial resources for the competitive hiring and retention of case managers who are necessary and crucial frontline agents that help achieve progress on minimizing homelessness.

Action Step 1.4: Increase investments in permanent supportive housing across all of Utah

Available housing resources need to be targeted and appropriate, based on the assessment of the homeless person's needs. While current needs are identified through a coordinated entry practice in most LHCCs, the appropriate resources needed to help each person according to need is woefully lacking. The relatively large number of high priority/high needs homeless persons in Utah, coupled with a real shortage in permanent supportive housing and the HUD defunding of transitional housing, has led essentially all LHCCs to provide rapid rehousing resources (frequently without any supportive services) to clients that have a higher service need. The result of the mismatch between needs and available resources set many of those most vulnerable up for failure; failure to stay housed, to not return to homelessness, and to address the direct causes of their homelessness. Simultaneously, the need to provide resources to those who are the highest priority is depriving those homeless individuals, families and other lower priority/lower need homeless persons, who frequently succeed with rapid rehousing. In order to prevent this ineffective use of resources in the system as a whole, more resources fit for high priority/high need homeless persons need to be developed, thereby increasing success rates for this group of homeless persons as well as for the lower prioritized/lower need homeless populations that would have more rapid rehousing resources available to them.

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work collaboratively with the State Commission on Housing Affordability to find joint solutions to the shortage of permanent supportive housing.

Action Step 1.5: Revise the estimate of what is "affordable housing" to fit the real income distribution in a community, particularly in larger metro areas

More affordable housing, based on a revised estimate that fits the real income distribution within a community needs to be developed. The need for more housing that is affordable is pressing across the State of Utah and the state can play a positive role in incentivizing and setting requirements for affordable housing development, to

alleviate the pressure on the housing market, and stave off increasing homelessness as Utah continues its economic boom.

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work collaboratively with the State Commission on Housing Affordability to find joint solutions to the shortage of affordable housing inventory and to revise the estimate of what is “affordable housing.”

Action Step 1.6: Support rapid rehousing efforts by buffering the relationship between rehoused tenants and landlords

The ability to rapidly rehouse families and individuals who face homelessness also relies on a shrinking pool of participating landlords. The costs to the landlords in tenant turn-over and damaged property, especially when persons who really need permanent supportive housing are placed in rental properties, is high. To support this relationship better and avoid a spiral of decreasing participation by private landlords in the rapid rehousing effort, protections for both tenants and landlords will be adopted. At the same time, LHCCS report that homeless individuals experience prejudice when landlords are critical of credit history, previous evictions, low income, and/or can find higher alternatives to rent price (when compared to housing voucher value).

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work collaboratively with the State Commission on Housing Affordability in order to find joint solutions to address tenant and landlord protections. There are several tools that can be copied and adapted for this purpose from other states. Oregon and Washington have adopted legislation that helps clarify how and when a person can be evicted, reducing the overall number of disputes between tenants and landlords, and simultaneously providing more protection for tenants. To offset the increased risk for landlords, other states have developed ‘community funds’ or ‘mitigation funds’ that offer additional protections to landlords who see tenants as high risk. Funds can be used to offset damage by high-risk tenants beyond what the security deposit will pay.

Action Step 1.7: Increase access to mental health service and substance use disorder treatment

Significant populations of homeless individuals in Utah experience mental health and/or substance use challenges. The state will fund resources and leverage federal resources to increase access to mental health and substance use treatment for individuals experiencing homelessness. Utah’s recent Medicaid expansion can help increase access to mental health services and substance use disorder treatment for those adults who qualify.

Action Step 1.8: Increase access to transportation service

The state will explore financially feasible solution to transportation needs, particularly in rural Utah. An investment in small-scale transportation arrangements such as provider fleet vehicles can be a solution to improving coordination between service providers and ensure that homeless individuals and families are accessing needed supports.

Strategy 2: To work together collaboratively by making sure all those who touch the lives of homeless persons are connected and sharing information and resources

Action Step 2.1: Taking inventory of available housing and collecting robust housing data

This information will reflect occupancy rates across LHCCs, the number of units available, type of housing, the average cost of housing available, and the average cost of living in the area. This data collection will inform and facilitate short and long-term affordable housing development across Utah as well as assessing the state of resources available to LHCCs as they pick strategic priorities. The current bed count does not adequately capture the housing need and misrepresents the relationship between the type of housing needed and resources available, particularly in rural Utah. LHCC's will take inventory of the availability of housing resources and report this data annually to the state. This data will also be used by the State Homeless Coordinating Committee and other statewide committees to inform policy that spurs development of affordable housing.

Action Step 2.2: Taking inventory of available supportive services

It is still not clear what exactly exists in the spectrum of services that homeless individuals and families may access and need across Utah communities. LHCCs will conduct a robust inventory of the variety of services that are available within their jurisdiction for homeless people, including the name of the provider, type of service rendered, cost of service, and other key details. This information will be made public and updated on at least a yearly basis to ensure that data is accurate and shared among members of the LHCC.

In addition to the inventory of existing services, LHCCs will engage in a gap analysis to understand the needs of the homeless that are currently unmet by existing service providers. This information will be used to prioritize state funding requests and to inform the community at large, such as policymakers, philanthropist, and others, about the need to close the gap in needed services.

Both types of data collected, needs and available inventories, will be reported to the state.

Action Step 2.3: Promote greater local prioritization and flexible funding use for LHCCs

Every Utah community is different and will need to adapt this state vision to different local conditions. The particular and specific characteristics and needs of the homeless populations in local areas in Utah vary considerably as do the service provider resources, which shapes the priorities of each LHCCs. LHCCs will, therefore, be empowered and encouraged to engage their community in identifying priorities, innovative programs and initiatives, and performance measures that will help this plan's goal of minimizing homelessness. Where possible by statute, state funding will remain flexible in the variety of LHCC programs funded as long as the proposed efforts are in alignment with this plan's strategies and identified system performance priorities.

Action Step 2.4: Supporting less-resourced communities, particularly in rural Utah

State originated or controlled resources will be used to strengthen and empower less-resourced communities and LHCCs. Available state funds will be directed primarily toward those LHCCs that do not qualify yet for competitive federal grant funding, to help them reach prioritized strategic goals including, but not limited to, becoming competitive federal grant applicants. These funds will seek to strengthen homeless servicing capacity in a way that the LHCCs themselves have identified as priorities and key strategic goals. Those LHCCs that do not have strong capacity need more financial support.

Along with increasing state funding of LHCCs, there are federal resources and tools targeted toward supporting rural communities that can be redirected toward addressing homelessness in rural Utah.

Action Step 2.5: Develop and support a Utah Homeless Network that fosters connections across and between LHCCs, CoCs and the State of Utah

There is a need and support from LHCCs for developing a statewide network that fosters connections across LHCCs and with the State to 1) share best practices, 2) learn from experts and others doing innovative work, 3) understand changing trends in homeless populations, and 4) build a social network of professional support. Efforts to build a statewide community on homeless policy exist, including the annual Homeless Summit organized by the Housing and Community Development Division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the gathering of leaders from the three Continuums of Care periodically, and the existence of the State Homeless Coordinating Committee—among others.

The state will lead and support the development of a statewide network, called the Utah Homeless Network, that builds on these efforts by continuing to host and funding

an annual gathering of homeless service experts, advocates, and concerned citizens, and hosting the gathering in different parts of Utah every year. The network will facilitate CoCs, LHCCs, and others drawing on and sharing best practices that are already successful in parts of our state. This learning exchange and capacity building can also include LHCCs coordinating and collaborating on strategies, solutions, ideas, and resources to learn from each other. The Utah Homeless Network could also support best practices dissemination and collaboration among LHCCs in web or video conferencing learning-exchange forums. The Utah Homeless Network can also function as a statewide advocacy organization for homeless issues and as an entity that can educate the broader citizenry about the needs, challenges, and opportunities in serving Utahns experiencing homelessness (see appendix 3 for a statewide network example).

Action Step 2.6: Working together also means an equitable representation of LHCCs in the State Homeless Coordinating Committee

As the strategic hub for the work on homelessness in the state and approver of state funding allocations, all LHCCs will be represented on the committee, and all committee members will have voting rights. The current committee and distribution of voting rights represent the larger LHCCs but significantly underrepresents rural communities.

The state will also leverage existing committee membership of state department leadership from health, human services, education, criminal justice, and workforce services to find joint solutions to homelessness, including exploring statewide data integration on service systems.

Action Step 2.7: Working together also means active involvement of stakeholders from across the service sectors within each LHCC

Effective collaboration and coordination to minimize homelessness occurs when there is buy-in and involvement of stakeholders from the public, nonprofit, and private sectors in the work and leadership of the LHCC. LHCCs will engage local elected officials, members of government agencies, leaders of nonprofit service providers, citizens, and individuals currently or formerly homeless. Housing authorities, housing service providers, and housing developers will also be actively engaged and a part of LHCC's collaboration process. It is recognized that not all communities have representation of key service providers existing in their community, and these will be noted in gap analysis (as noted in objective 1.2). The state will assist LHCCs in identifying strategies and collaborative management tools to activate stakeholder involvement in the LHCC's work.

Strategy 3: To work together to address homelessness in all parts of Utah, as homelessness exists in all corners of our state, our communities, and neighborhoods

Action Step 3.1: Capturing the extent of homelessness in rural Utah

Rural communities have been at a disadvantage logistically with the annual Point-in-Time count when they frequently do not have shelters, for which a winter PIT was designed. This timing makes finding and counting homeless persons in rural areas a greater challenge. By extension, rural communities have received inadequate funding to meet the homeless population needs that increase in the warmer seasons. To achieve a more accurate count of homeless people, a state-led effort to count homeless individuals and families in the summer will be instituted.

This summer count is in addition to the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count required by HUD. Only PIT data can be submitted to HUD (as per HUD regulations). Thus, summertime data gathered by Utah communities can only be used to understand changing trends in populations, for supporting grant applications for state funding, and for other purposes that the LHCC may see as advantageous.

Action Step 3.2: Understand Emerging Populations That May Experience Homelessness

In some parts of the state, it is far common for 2 or more families to live in a single-family home and for significant numbers of youth to be sleeping in a friend's couch. Other sister states have begun tracking this population of other homeless individuals and families to keep up with emerging and new waves of potential individuals stepping into unsheltered homelessness. The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work with stakeholders including the Utah State Board of Education and other state agencies to understand the incidence of these growing populations and to develop strategies to address service needs.

Action Step 3.3: Increase efforts to connect service systems through data integration

There will be an increased effort to connect statewide service systems, and there are two levels of data integration: between individual service providers across communities (i.e., case management data sharing system) and at the system level across major statewide service systems.

People who are exiting the criminal justice system and at risk of homelessness, will be connected to the homeless service system. People discharged from a hospital system will not step into homelessness. Key state service systems include criminal justice, education, health, and foster care. The state will leverage being the central warehouse of the Homeless Management Information System for all three Continuums of Care in Utah to find ways of connecting data to other state housed data from other service systems. This will help build a deeper and data-informed understanding of the degree

to which homelessness is connected to criminal justice, education, healthcare, child protective services, and others.

There is strong support from LHCCs in strengthening local ties and networks through data sharing. While there are clear obstacles such as legal and ethical considerations, service providers are interested in finding innovative data sharing solutions to serve clients better, improve coordination, increase understanding of the causes of homelessness, and reduce duplication of services and overall costs. The state will support and fund the piloting of a software solution that responds to this case management data sharing need within at least one community in the state and to later replicate and model successes with the rest of the state. The state will leverage existing interest and ongoing discussion about case management data integration in Salt Lake County as the first community to pilot this state-funded and supported software solution.

Action Step 3.4: Explore improvements to homeless management information system

The current HMIS system fits well with the HUD reporting requirements but is not maximizing utility in other ways—thus, improvements to the current system will be explored. There are strong advantages to having current HMIS system housed at the state level and having a single provider of the software consistent across all three Continuums of Care. As noted in the preceding objective 2.3, this central housing of data will be leveraged to identify ways of integrating data systems across other statewide service systems. In addition, funding for this type of important information technology is limited, and additional state investment is needed for 1) expanding uses and improvements; 2) administration of the information system; and 3) staffing for data collection, analysis, and training of statewide users. See appendix 4 for list of possible HMIS providers.

Measuring & Benchmarking Outcomes Locally

Utah’s System Performance Measures

Utah compares well on HUD System Performance Measures (SPM) to averages in other Western states with similar size Continuums of Care⁴ (see Table 2 and 3). Specifically, Utah as a whole fare well in the average days that an individual is homeless (SPM 1) and in the percent of individuals who gain earned income (SPM 7). While service providers and communities will be commended for these positive outcomes, Utah must continue to improve in the number of days that an individual is homeless (SPM 1) and do better in three system performance measures: individuals that return to homelessness in 12 months (SPM 2), number of first-time homeless (SPM 5), and number of individuals with successful retention or exit to permanent housing (SP 7).

Table 2: Comparing System Performance Measures (Percent Scores⁵), 2017⁶

	Utah ⁷	Western States
SPM 1	39	65
SPM 2	26%	12%
SPM 3	4748	2,773
SPM 4	5%	7%
SPM 5	3378	2510
SPM 7	89%	89%

Source: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

SP1: Emergency Shelter/Safe Haven average days

SP2: Percent person returns to homelessness in 12 months

SP3: Total number of homeless persons

SP4: Percent stayers increased earned income⁸

SP5: Total first time homeless [Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing]

SP7: Percent with successful retention or exit to permanent housing

⁴ HUD categorizes the jurisdiction of Continuums of Care as: 1) Major Cities, 2) Smaller Cities, Counties, and Regional CoCs, and 3) Balance of State and Statewide CoCs. All Utah CoCs fall under category 2 and 3. Thus, Similar Western CoCs are those CoCs that are either category 2 or 3. Averages were calculated by Western state by including all category 2 and 3 CoCs within each state. See Appendices 6, 7, and 8.

⁵ Not all system performance measures are reported and data available by HUD in percentage form; thus, raw score is included in Table 2.

⁶ 2017 data consists of numbers reported between fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)

⁷ Utah score is based on the average of all three Continuums of Care: Salt Lake County, Mountainland, and Balance of State.

⁸ Score to be revised to include total leavers/stayers with increased total income.

Table 3: Comparing System Performance Measures (Raw Score), 2017

	Utah	Western States
SPM 1	39	65
SPM 2	420	140
SPM 3	4748	2,773
SPM 4	11	14
SPM 5	3378	2510
SPM 7	817	499

Source: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

SPM 1: Emergency Shelter/Safe Haven average days

SPM 2: Total person returns to homelessness in 12 months

SPM 3: Total number of homeless persons

SPM 4: Total stayers increased earned income

SPM 5: Total first time homeless [Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing]

SPM 7: Total with successful retention in permanent housing for 6+ months or exit permanent housing to a permanent destination

Priority System Performance Measures

Based on a comparison of Utah’s performance on HUD System Performance Measures to other similar Western states, and realizing limited community and financial resources, the state will prioritize making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent in Utah by focusing on the following system performance indicators:

SPM 1: Emergency Shelter/Safe Haven average days

SPM 2: Returns to homelessness in 12 months

SPM 5: First time homeless

SPM 7: Total with successful retention

A focus on these three areas does not signal a disregard for the remaining system performance measures. Rather, this plan communicates the strategic decision to address and mobilize resources towards areas where Utah can make significant improvements to meet or exceed the performance of other similar size cities and statewide Continuums of Care in Western states. Utah communities will, therefore, prioritize their efforts and strategy to tackling these three priority areas while continuing to make strides in other system performance measures.

Statewide Benchmarks

How Benchmarks Were Identified

The State of Utah will benchmark its performance and specifically the performance of its Continuums of Care and by extension the LHCCs across the state, to Continuums of Care in other states that are most similar in at least two dimensions: 1) size of the jurisdiction of CoC, and 2) region of the U.S.

First, Utah's Salt Lake County and Mountainland CoCs are categorized by HUD as smaller cities, counties, and regional CoCs. Additionally, Utah's Balance of State falls under the HUD category of Balances of State or statewide CoCs. Thus, Utah's benchmarking will incorporate CoCs of similar HUD categorization: smaller cities and Balances of State.

Second, Utah's geographic location automatically places the state in comparison with neighboring states. For example, Utah is a member of the US Western Census region, and HUD's and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness regions places Utah in a region comprising Western states as well. Thus, Utah's benchmarking will incorporate CoCs found in Western states, including: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Washington, and Wyoming

Both of these qualifiers taken together resulted in a total of 58 Continuums of Care within the 12 Western states, and this list of Continuums of Care is found in appendix 8. The system performance measures for each Continuum of Care found in each state was utilized to calculate the state average in terms of percent and total raw numbers of how those states are overall are performing on the various HUD system performance measures as included in tables 2 and 3. Appendix 6 provides details on the performance of these Western states when compared to Utah.

Utah's 5-Year Performance Goals

Utah will improve its performance by one of the following metrics: 1) achieving or exceeding the same score as the average for similar Western states, OR by 2) improving the score by at least 10%⁹ by the end of the 5-year period of this strategic plan. Table 4 outlines the current performance of Utah on the priority measures and the targets to be achieved within 5 years.

⁹ System performance measures 1, 2, & 5 will be reduced by 10%, while performance measure 7 will be increased by 10%.

Table 4: System Performance Goals for Utah (Raw Scores)

	Utah Current	10% Goal	Western Goal
SPM 1	39	35	65
SPM 2	420	378	140
SPM 5	3378	3040	2510
SPM 7	817	899	-

Table 4.1: System Performance Goals for Utah (Percent Scores)

	Utah Current	10% Goal	Western Goal
SPM 1	-	-	-
SPM 2	26%	23%	12%
SPM 5	-	-	-
SPM 7	89%	80%	89%

Accountability Process

Overall, the state’s goal is to reduce system performance measures 1, 2, and 5, and to increase measure 7. The state is responsible for overseeing yearly progress by assessing whether LHCCs are moving in the right direction. Specifically, at the end of the first year of this plan’s implementation and every year thereafter, the state will conduct performance reviews of each LHCC to evaluate whether state funded programs and others are proving effective interventions to achieve priority goals. Where necessary, the state will work collaboratively with each LHCC to develop performance improvement plans that at a minimum include: 1) performance areas needing improvement, 2) collaborative strategies for improving performance, 3) stakeholders involved and responsible, 4) reporting requirements, and 5) timeline for achieving results.

LHCCs funded by the state that fail to make improvements as outlined on performance improvement plans may lose funding for programs or initiatives proven to be ineffective interventions.

Local Priority Setting

Based on LHCC input, there is a strong consensus among local service providers that progress will be measured by comparing the localities’ performance to itself (year to year) rather than comparing it to another locale’s performance or to another state’s performance. Because conditions vary greatly across localities, stakeholders feel that meaningful progress can and will be measured against what the community feels are priorities with regard to the community’s homeless needs.

Looking at other states that have statewide strategic plans on homelessness, none of them have chosen to pick specific target numbers—rather they are emphasizing which direction they are trying to drive the numbers and the resulting experiences for persons in their communities that face homelessness. Local homeless coordinating committees in some states have reported that their efforts to reach specific target numbers turned out to be a mistake that quickly warranted revisions of their plans.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has also not set specific numbers or benchmarks by which communities will assess their performance. Like existing statewide plans, HUD has encourage communities to think about either increasing or decreasing system performance measures as a way of assessing performance and minimizing homelessness in their community. Most recently, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released its new strategic plan on homelessness, *Home Together*, and it also does not prescribe specific targets.

Letting LHCCs themselves select priorities and programs that will address this plan's system performance priorities is a more effective way forward. Each LHCC will link their strategic priorities in homeless services to Utah's priority system performance measures and targets.

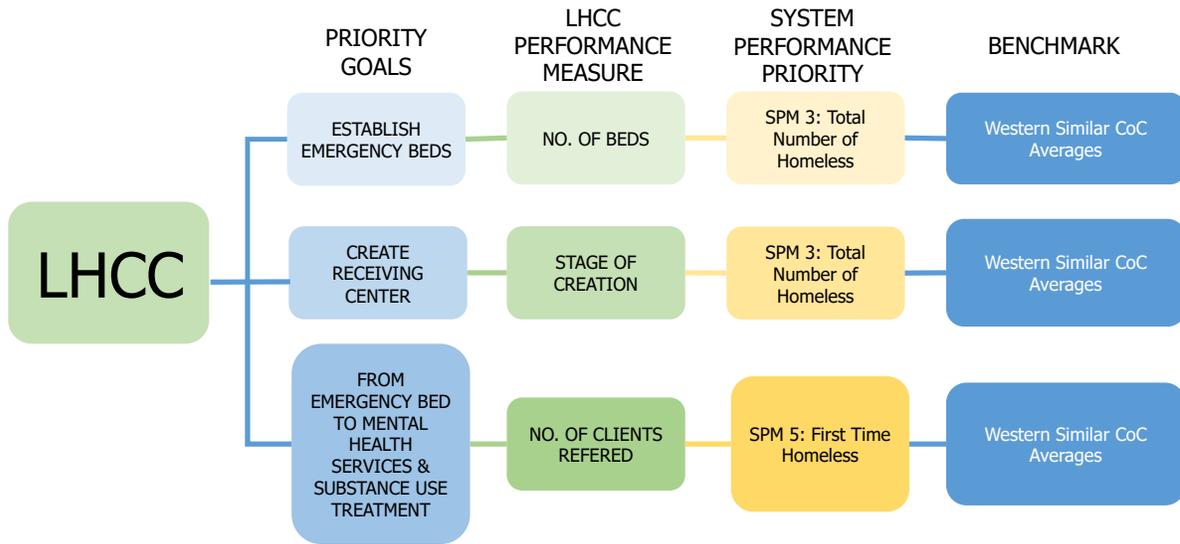
This brings local priority setting in line with the recommended increase in local control and responsibility concerning strategically prioritizing efforts to address homelessness in each community. This will allow for targeted efforts even with limited resources, and progress will be measured on the effects the community cares about most.

The first year of this strategic plan will serve as the benchmark year for the LHCCs performance on its selected priority goals. The strength in trends that the LHCCs see over time will indicate whether the work is sufficiently impactful or if the LHCC will revisit how it seeks to address its strategic priorities. At this point it will be important to determine whether more effective measures are needed or if additional resources are needed to fully implement measures that are deemed effective but for other reasons have fallen short. A review of the trends on the 2-3 strategic priorities and their outcomes, linked to system priority areas, will take place yearly into this new benchmarking and evaluation process. For this process to work, LHCC must commit to collecting accurate data, identifying reasonable targets, and conducting analysis of this data. In addition, the state will collaborate with LHCCs to develop performance improvement plans to identify strategies and solutions to improve next year's performance as noted above.

The strategic work and the performance of LHCCs across Utah and the progress towards addressing the priority system performance measures will be reported to the State Homeless Coordinating Committee. See Figure 1 for an example of how an LHCC

identifies priorities, measures of performance, and connects priorities to key HUD system performance measures.

Figure 1: Example of LHCC and Identification of Priorities, Measures, & Connection to HUD System Performance Measures & Benchmarks



Source: Utah Strategic Plan Research Team, 2019

Table 5. Summarizing Table and Implementation Map for Strategic Plan

In order to implement the objectives and strategies outlined in this strategic plan to improve the statewide system performance measures, the state will utilize the following table as a map for specific measures and the leading agents responsible for each action step.

Strategy	Action Step	Proposed Measures	Leading Agent
<p>Strategy 1: Make homelessness rare, brief, & non-recurrent</p>	Action Step 1.1: Continue Coordinated Entry	Number of LHCCs utilizing coordinated entry	LHCCs
	Action Step 1.2: Transition homeless people with a warm handoff	Client satisfaction survey	LHCCs with service providers, CoCs for surveys
	Action Step 1.3: Increase investments in case management	Amount of funding allocated to case management Number of new case managers funded	Utah Legislature, State Homeless Coordinating Committee, and LHCCs
	Action Step 1.4: Increase investment in permanent supportive housing	Amount of funding allocated to PSH Number of new units added	Utah Legislature, Commission on Housing Affordability, State Homeless Coordinating Committee
	Action Step 1.5: Revise what is affordable housing	Revised estimates	State Commission on Housing Affordability & State Homeless Coordinating Committee
	Action Step 1.6: Support rapid rehousing efforts through improved landlord-tenant relationship	Adoption of state policies Creation & amount of local mitigation funds	State Commission on Housing Affordability & State Homeless Coordinating Committee

	Action Step 1.7: Increase access to mental health & substance use services	Number of homeless persons with diagnoses receiving services	Utah Department of Health, LHCCs, State Homeless Coordinating Committee
	Action Step 1.8: Increase access to transportation service	Number of LHCCs with fleet vehicle service for homeless population	State Homeless Coordinating Committee & LHCCs
Strategy 2: Working together collaboratively	Action Step 2.1: Taking inventory of available housing	Number of LHCCs that collect housing data	LHCCs with DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
	Action Step 2.2: Taking inventory of available supportive services	Number of LHCCs that collect data on supportive services Number of LHCCs with service gap analysis	LHCCs with DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
	Action Step 2.3: Greater flexibility and local control of funds to LHCCs	Amount of funding that is allocated to LHCCs yearly	State Homeless Coordinating Committee
	Action Step 2.4: Supporting less-resources communities	Amount of funding dedicated to less-resources or rural communities	State Homeless Coordinating Committee
	Action Step 2.5: Develop a Utah Homeless Network	Development of a network Amount of funding that is allocated to network	DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
	Action Step 2.6: Equitable representation in State Homeless Committee	All LHCCs represented as voting members of SHCC State departments working collaboratively on homeless services	State Homeless Coordinating Committee with the Utah State Legislature

	Action Step 2.7: Increase stakeholder involvement in LHCC	Number & diversity of LHCC membership Involvement of elected official in LHCC	LHCC with DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
Strategy 3: Including all parts of Utah	Action Step 3.1: Capturing extent of homelessness in rural Utah	Instituting Point-in-Time count in summer time	LHCCs and data specialists with DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
	Action Step 3.2: Understand emerging populations that may experience homelessness	State departments working collaboratively to share data and identify numbers of people doubling up	State Homeless Coordinating Committee and other state agencies
	Action Step 3.3: Increase efforts to connect service systems	Number of state departments that adopt housing first approach & plans to connect to homeless service system Integration of statewide data service systems Piloting of case management software in Salt Lake County	State Homeless Coordinating Committee, Utah Governor, Utah Legislature, DWS Division of Housing and Community Development
	Action Step 3.4: Explore improvements to HMIS	Amount of funding allocated by state to improve system & hire additional HMIS staff Adoption and installation of improvements to HMIS	State Homeless Coordinating Committee and DWS Division of Housing and Community Development

Recommendations for the State of Utah

Recommendation 1: Adopt Mission Statement and Integrate into Government Fabric

As part of the first Statewide Strategic Plan on Homelessness, the State of Utah will adopt as its mission to make homelessness in all of Utah rare, brief, and non-recurring and direct resources and support to this mission. The state will allocate state funding to implementing and advancing the strategic goals of this plan. All state agencies and departments will adhere to and embrace a Housing First approach and develop plans to alleviate homelessness in Utah.

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work with other state agencies and departments to connect statewide service systems including health, human services, corrections, education, and workforce services through data sharing and integration to better understand the magnitude, needs, and challenges of individuals experiencing homelessness in Utah.

Recommendation 2: Restructure Composition of State Homeless Coordinating Committee to be Inclusive of all LHCCs

The Utah State Legislature will amend Utah Code 35A-8-601 Creation of Homeless Coordinating Committee to be inclusive of additional and explicit committee members under section 2(a) that represent each of the Local Homeless Coordinating Committees in the State (see appendix 2 for LHCCs currently represented in state committee).

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee will leverage its composition of community leaders as well as key statewide department leadership to increase collaboration and coordination to connect state service systems and integrate statewide data systems. The committee will also work collaboratively with other existing committees working to address key aspects of the needs of Utah's homeless population, including the Commission on Housing Affordability.

Recommendation 3: Local Homeless Coordinating Committees Must Engage all Key Stakeholders

The increased strategic responsibility along with funding opportunities directed at LHCCs to fulfill the state mission on homelessness warrant a more concerted effort at the local level. LHCCs will be led or co-led by an elected local representative and have representation from key area service providers, policy-makers and key community partners, including domestic violence shelters/service providers, local health care providers, substance use treatment service providers, law enforcement, local and county government, and local landlords, banks or housing developers.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services' Division of Housing and Community Development will continue providing staff support to the State Homeless Coordinating Committee. The Division also functions as the convener of LHCCs in the state and will receive additional funding and staff resources to support collaboration within and among LHCCs.

To ensure that all Utahns have access to state resources fairly and consistently, the state will explore affording each LHCC access to an equitable share of available grant funding every year.

Recommendation 4: Adopt Policies that Protect Landlords and Tenants

To strengthen and support the state's rapid rehousing efforts and the available affordable housing stock, the State Homeless Coordinating Committee will work collaboratively with the State Commission on Housing Affordability to find ways to strengthen both tenant and landlord protections. Clarifying the rules for eviction and the responsibility of tenants, on the one hand, and clarifying and strengthening regulation pertaining to discriminatory practices among landlords will alleviate conflicts between tenants and landlords. Furthermore, creating local or statewide mitigation funds to help cover costs, such as property damage or high tenant turn-over, that landlords sometimes experience while housing previously homeless individuals, will help alleviate the pressure on the diminishing pool of participating landlords.

Recommendation 5: Support the Further Development of a Utah Homeless Network

The State of Utah will continue to support the exchange of ideas and best practices among homeless network service providers and decision-makers. Expanded support for this work will include the creation of a Utah Homeless Network (UHN), with the Housing and Community Development Division - Utah Department of Workforce Services - as the backbone organization for the network, fostering connections across the state and specifically among local homeless coordinating committees, Continuums of Care, service providers, and advocates in order to share best practices, information, and build synergies. Utah's three Continuum of Care groups are currently planning to coordinate resources and efforts. The structure of the Salt Lake Coalition to End Homelessness may be one way to organize interests and information sharing in task-oriented groups within the Network.

The Housing and Community Development Division currently organizes a Summit each year, bringing these stakeholders together, but efforts to support meaningful exchanges and diffusion of best practices will be extended. The Utah Homeless Network could also help service providers and local decision-makers attend and host the annual Summit in localities across Utah. Summit activities would include for example, gathering homeless experts and service providers across the state, engage in homeless data collection and

analysis, as well as developing information and policy proposals for the Utah Legislature (see appendix 3 for example).

Recommendation 6: Implement an Education Campaign on Homelessness in Utah

The State of Utah will contract the development and implementation of an education campaign to raise awareness about what it means to be homeless, the causes of homelessness in the state, and the resources available to help individuals and families avoid becoming homeless or to get out of homelessness if they find themselves there. The education campaign will highlight the many different faces of homelessness and its existence in all corners of the state. Great awareness of homeless conditions, the prevalence of homelessness and what can be done to avoid or escape homelessness is an important component of fostering public support and amassing the resources necessary to make homelessness in all of Utah rare, brief and nonrecurrent. This education campaign will also be utilized to introduce this strategic plan to all Utahns and to rally support for its implementation and where possible, secure financial support from private donors.

Recommendation 7: Develop a Dashboard that Communicates Progress

The State Coordinating Committee on Homelessness, with the help of the Housing and Community Development Division within the Utah Department of Workforce Services, will develop a public dashboard that communicates the progress made to achieve goals of this strategic plan. This will serve as an accountability measure but also as a way to share information between LHCCs, CoCs, state agencies, other stakeholders and the public. Appendix 5 of this plan includes best practices on the design and potential contents of the dashboard.

Recommendation 8: Review and Assess the Implementation and Impact of the Statewide Strategic Plan on Homelessness

In the implementation of the Statewide Strategic Plan on Homelessness, the Housing and Community Development Division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services, will work with service providers to develop contract measures and targets associated with funding allocations. The Division will ensure that contract performance measures are appropriate and that performance targets are in alignment with the LHCC's priorities and targets, and that funding allocations and contracts align with this strategic plan. After its initial roll-out, the Statewide Strategic Plan on Homelessness and its implementation will be reviewed, and revised if necessary to address important developments, after a two-year period. The Statewide Strategic Plan will thereafter be reviewed on a five-year basis to assess progress toward goals and working effectiveness.

Appendix 1: Methodology

The University of Utah research team designed and implemented a multiple-methods approach to study the needs of those experiencing homelessness in Utah and strategies for minimizing homelessness. The research team consisted of Dr. Jesus N. Valero and Dr. Lina Svedin, both assistant and association professors (respectively) in the Department of Political Science, as well as 10 graduate research assistants: Rachel Black, Andrea Bradley, Daniela Chapman, Kelbe Goupil, Georgina Griffith, Lynda Horne, Jeffrey Johnson, Nancy Proctor, Holly Richardson, and Miles Southworth. The research process began in mid-May 2019.

The methods used in this plan included the following processes:

- First, a study of existing state and federal policies, reports, and publications relating to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This step included capturing the magnitude of the problem and trends on homeless populations and subpopulations by analyzing data from the Continuum of Care Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Performance of Utah CoCs was compared to national averages as well as to similar communities within states in the Western U.S. Census Region¹⁰.
- Second, using the Western U.S. Census Region as a sampling frame, a total of 9¹¹ existing statewide strategic plans in other states were collected, reviewed, and analyzed.
- Third, with the partnership and support of staff in the Division of Housing and Community Development of the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS), a total of 14 focus groups were held across the State of Utah. A total of 170 individuals representing nonprofit organizations, government, citizens, and other stakeholders' participation in focus groups. Specifically, focus groups were organized with 12 out of 13 Local Homeless Coordinating Committees (LHCC), and these groups consisted of individuals representing homeless service providers, government leaders, and other key stakeholders within their jurisdiction (see table 4 for a demographic profile of participants). Additional focus groups were held with the leadership of the three CoCs in Utah (Salt Lake County, Mountainland, and Balance of State) and with frontline employees of homeless services in Salt Lake County.

The research team led the conversation using a semi-structured facilitation guide consisting of questions on 1) conditions in their community, how homeless individuals enter service system, existing & needed resources; 2) process of working

¹⁰ Region 4 or West Census Region includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Washington, and Wyoming

¹¹ States with statewide plans include: Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Wyoming, Washington

together and ways of improving service coordination; 3) measuring impact and benchmarks; and 4) other topics of interest. Focus group meetings last on average 1.5 hours, conversations were recorded and transcribed, and qualitative data analyzed using coding processes.

- Finally, the research team conducted in-person and telephone interviews with two key government officials with subject matter expertise on homeless policy from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions and lasted 1 hour (on average).

Table 5: Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants

		Frequency <i>N</i>	Percent %
Gender	Male	72	42%
	Female	99	58%
Race/Ethnicity	White	148	87%
	Nonwhite	22	13%
Constituency	Government	69	41%
	Nonprofit	86	51%
	Education	6	4%
	Citizen	7	4%
	Other	2	1%
TOTAL		170	100%

Source: Utah Strategic Plan Research Team, 2019

Appendix 2: Representation of LHCCs in State Homeless Coordinating Committee

Local Homeless Coordinating Committee	Number of Voting Members in State Committee
Bear River Association of Governments	0
Weber County	1
Davis County	0
Tooele County	0
Uintah County Association of Governments	0
Six County Association of Governments	0
Iron County	0
Washington County	1
Carbon/Emery Counties	0
Grand County	0
San Juan County	0
Mountainland CoC	0
Salt Lake County	4

Source: Utah Code 35A-8-691

Appendix 3: Example of a Statewide Homeless Network

Texas Homeless Network

Website: <https://www.thn.org>



Donate

Membership

Advocate

Texas Homeless Network (THN) is a non-profit membership-based organization helping communities strategically plan to prevent and end homelessness. THN works to end homelessness in Texas by collaborating with all communities, large and small, across the state to build systems to achieve this goal. We coordinate local and national advocacy efforts, data collection and research, host an annual statewide conference, and serve as the host agency for the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) where we assist in the coordination of programs and funding.

Mission

We lead Texas communities to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Focus Areas

Education

through our statewide conferences and working one-on-one with communities

Resources

through sharing news, data, and best practices from around the state and nationally, and providing technical assistance

Advocacy

through collaborating with our members on a policy agenda addressing legislation affecting homelessness at the state and federal levels

Appendix 4: HMIS Providers

This strategic plan endorses no particular HMIS provider. Instead, the list below is intended to be an information list of potential HMIS providers that can be utilized to manage homeless information system.

1. Mediware - ServicePoint
2. Bitfocus - Clarity Human Services
3. VisionLink- CommunityOS
4. Belldata - Client Services Network
5. Eccovia Solutions – Client Track
6. Social Solutions
7. Foothold Technology - AWARDS

Appendix 5: Dashboard Best Practices

The purpose of a dashboard is to communicate information in a visual way to make evidence-based decisions. Thus, everything that is needed to make that decision will be available at a glance. While purposes of a dashboard are varied, it is recommended that the State develop a dashboard for strategic purposes—that is, to view performance of communities and assess progress towards strategic goals identified in this plan and through local efforts. A few best practices on designing a dashboard include¹²:

1. Refreshed every year to include most recent annual data
2. Data is transformed into consumable information for laypeople
3. Trends and patterns are identified visually
4. Data helps guide the decisions of policymakers, funders, and other key stakeholders
5. Those viewing the data are able to increase knowledge and learning of the policy issue
6. Ensuring all data is found within a single screen so that users can analyze information, compare, and develop conclusions (fragmentation of data causes confusion and challenges the ability to analyze)
7. Choosing the right type of graph for the data; introducing more variety is not necessarily a good thing

In general, dashboards are not about flashy designs or beautiful aesthetics—it's about presenting data in the right format so that users can read data accurately and clearly to ultimately leave users better informed and knowledgeable.

After reviewing a number of existing dashboards in Western states and in other areas of the US, a number of data points became common:

1. Total number of homeless individuals in the State and by region
2. Cost of housing services, successful exit, etc.
3. Cost of housing vs. wages/earnings in the State
4. Number of individuals housed
5. Progress on specific priorities or objectives
 - a. Housing development
 - b. Outreach
 - c. Reducing specific subpopulations such as Veterans or Mentally Ill
6. Highlight successful communities

¹² Smith, V. S. (2013). Data dashboard as evaluation and research communication tool. In T. Azzam & S. Evergreen (Eds.), *Data visualization, part 2. New Directions for Evaluation*, 140, 21–45.

Below is a list of dashboards that be utilized as samples and not endorsements of effective or impactful illustrations of information. Lessons can be learned and ways of presenting can be adopted for Utah specific dashboards:

Community	Website
Washington	https://public.tableau.com/profile/comhau#!/
Oregon	https://public.tableau.com/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services#!/vizhome/InformationDashboardPITCount_1/Point-in-TimeCount
California	https://www.lahsa.org/dashboards?id=31-adults https://everyoneinla.org/count/ https://www.rtfhsd.org/resource-library/regional-reports/homeless-dashboard/
Texas	http://www.homelesshouston.org/continuum-of-care/dashboards-2/may-2018-system-performance-dashboards/
Canada	http://canatx.org/dashboard/our-basic-needs-are-met/

Appendix 6: Comparison of System Performance Measures by Western States (Averages)

State	SPM 1	SPM 2	SPM 2 %	SPM 3	SPM 4	SPM 4 %	SPM 5	SPM 7	SPM 7 %
Arizona	49	178	10%	4055	28	9%	4284	1084	94%
Alaska	44	98	13%	3845	3	4%	2610	300	84%
California	74	75	12%	1476	13	8%	1325	394	95%
Colorado	115	104	12%	4686	7	1%	3468	294	95%
Hawaii	100	337	14%	4353	3	2%	2892	692	93%
Idaho	59	100	8%	1552	12	15%	1442	338	97%
Montana	99	10	1%	555	58	23%	1454	3	43%
New Mexico	40	112	11%	1837	21	8%	2010	961	94%
Nevada	48	182	15%	1782	3	8%	1260	341	91%
Oregon	37	76	9%	1886	8	7%	2226	356	94%
Washington	66	233	10%	4551	15	4%	4932	1165	92%
Wyoming	46	169	29%	2695	0	0%	2218	58	95%
Western Average	65	140	12%	2373	14	7%	2510	499	89%
Utah Average	39	420	26%	4748	11	5%	3378	817	89%

Appendix 7: Comparison of System Performance Measures by Utah CoCs

	SPM 1	SPM 2	SPM 2 %	SPM 3	SPM 4	SPM 4 %	SPM 5	SPM 7	SPM 7 %
Salt Lake City & County CoC	67	792	31%	9081	28	7%	5457	2008	94%
Utah Balance of State CoC	39	308	18%	3892	0	0%	3566	230	87%
Provo/Mountainland CoC	11	160	29%	1272	4	8%	1110	214	86%

Appendix 8: List of States and CoCs Included in Western States (*N* = 58 Continuums of Care in 12 Western US States)

State	CoC Name	CoC Number
AZ	Arizona Balance of State CoC	AZ-500
AK	Anchorage CoC	AK-500
AK	Alaska Balance of State CoC	AK-501
CA	Santa Rosa, Petaluma/Sonoma County CoC	CA-504
CA	Richmond/Contra Costa County CoC	CA-505
CA	Salinas/Monterey, San Benito Counties CoC	CA-506
CA	Marin County CoC	CA-507
CA	Watsonville/Santa Cruz City & County CoC	CA-508
CA	Mendocino County CoC	CA-509
CA	Turlock, Modesto/Stanislaus County CoC	CA-510
CA	Stockton/San Joaquin County CoC	CA-511
CA	Daly/San Mateo County CoC	CA-512
CA	Visalia/Kings, Tulare Counties CoC	CA-513
CA	Roseville, Rocklin/Placer, Nevada Counties CoC	CA-515
CA	Redding/Shasta, Siskiyou, Lassen, Plumas, Del Norte, Modoc, Sierra Counties CoC	CA-516
CA	Napa City & County CoC	CA-517
CA	Vallejo/Solano County CoC	CA-518
CA	Chico, Paradise/Butte County CoC	CA-519
CA	Merced City & County CoC	CA-520
CA	Davis, Woodland/Yolo County CoC	CA-521
CA	Humboldt County CoC	CA-522
CA	Colusa, Glenn, Trinity Counties CoC	CA-523
CA	Yuba City & County/Sutter County CoC	CA-524
CA	El Dorado County CoC	CA-525
CA	Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, Tuolumne Counties CoC	CA-526
CA	Tehama County CoC	CA-527
CA	Alpine, Inyo, Mono Counties CoC	CA-530
CA	Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County CoC	CA-602
CA	Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County CoC	CA-603
CA	Bakersfield/Kern County CoC	CA-604
CA	Pasadena CoC	CA-607
CA	Riverside City & County CoC	CA-608
CA	San Bernardino City & County CoC	CA-609
CA	Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County CoC	CA-611
CA	Glendale CoC	CA-612
CA	Imperial County CoC	CA-613
CA	San Luis Obispo County CoC	CA-614

CO	Colorado Balance of State CoC	CO-500
HI	Hawaii Balance of State CoC	HI-500
HI	Honolulu City and County CoC	HI-501
ID	Boise/Ada County CoC	ID-500
ID	Idaho Balance of State CoC	ID-501
MT	Montana Statewide CoC	MT-500
NM	New Mexico Balance of State CoC	NM-501
NV	Reno, Sparks/Washoe County CoC	NV-501
NV	Nevada Balance of State CoC	NV-502
OR	Eugene, Springfield/Lane County CoC	OR-500
OR	Medford, Ashland/Jackson County CoC	OR-502
OR	Central Oregon CoC	OR-503
OR	Oregon Balance of State CoC	OR-505
OR	Hillsboro, Beaverton/Washington County CoC	OR-506
OR	Clackamas County CoC	OR-507
WA	Washington Balance of State CoC	WA-501
WA	Spokane City & County CoC	WA-502
WA	Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County CoC	WA-503
WA	Everett/Snohomish County CoC	WA-504
WA	Vancouver/Clark County CoC	WA-508
WY	Wyoming Statewide CoC	WY-500

Appendix 9: Connecting Utah’s Strategic Plan on Homelessness with the Federal Plan on Homelessness

The overarching mission and vision of the federal plan and that of Utah’s state plan are aligned, but Utah’s more modest vision is based on the state’s current conditions.

The Federal Plan emphasizes that “we know that the only true end to homelessness is a safe and stable place to call home” (Home, Together, p. 3). The Utah state plan acknowledges that a safe and stable place to call home is nowhere near reality for persons in Utah today, regardless of what locality they find themselves in. The state mission - to make homelessness in all of Utah rare, brief, and nonrecurrent - is a realistic and anchored aspiration that takes into account Utah realities and the plan’s five-year forward projection.

The federal plan also highlights that “thriving communities need enough housing that is affordable and equitably available to people across a full range of incomes—from young adults just starting out to seniors who want to spend their remaining years feeling secure” (Home, Together, p. 3). Knowing that sufficient affordable housing that is equitably available to Utahns across the range of income spectrums is a massive problem across Utah, the federal ambition level far outpaces current Utah efforts, and the Utah state plan proposes a series of action items to bring Utah’s in better alignment with this Federal goal.

The emphasis on the importance of community stakeholders working together to achieve the objectives that are necessary to end homelessness and that together we are making progress is echoed in the Utah state plan. Utah’s plan emphasizes working together in its mission statement and draws on collaboration and collective exchanges for learning, adapting and improving homeless services and efforts across the state. Working together to make homelessness in all of Utah rare, brief and nonrecurring is making progress, and the statewide plan outlines how we can make a great deal more progress reducing homelessness in Utah.

Areas of increased focus in the 2018 Federal Plan on Homelessness are:

1. Increasing affordable housing opportunities
2. Strengthening prevention and diversion practices
3. Creating solutions for unsheltered homelessness
4. Tailoring strategies for rural communities
5. Helping people who exit homelessness find employment success
6. Learning from the expertise of the people with lived experience

All of these areas are included in the Utah state plan on homelessness. The first four areas of increased focus are prioritized in the Utah plan. The last two are included but receiving less priority in the current five-year plan.

The federal plan recognizes that “the people who experience homelessness are diverse—in their experiences, in their challenges, in their household compositions, in their ages, in many other ways—and we must tailor and target our strategies and actions to reflect that diversity” (Home, Together, p. 6). The plan also outlines a process where “federal partners will continue to work with communities, and provide tools and information, that will enable them to set their own ambitious goals, tailored to their local conditions, and grounded in their local data” (Home, Together, p. 6).

A strong emphasis in the Utah State plan is to let LHCCs that have the best grasp of local variations in homeless populations and their needs, be given the authority, resources and responsibility for prioritizing needs and tailoring effective responses to meeting the local priorities. This push for local resourcing and local control is a direct response to the current diversity of homeless populations in Utah as well as variations in local resources and needs. Rather than setting population-specific goals as the federal plan does, the Utah state plan acknowledges that population dispersion and needs look different across local communities in Utah but that the needs of any individual who enters the homeless services system through coordinated entry should be assessed and resourced accordingly. The Utah state plan covers the next five years, with suggested points of assessment and adjustment along the way. The Utah plan therefor sets a timeframe on the changes expected at all levels of strategic planning – LHCCs, CoCs and the State level –but the prioritized efforts at the local level can be long or short-term projects.

The Utah state plan on homelessness is aligned with the federal plan’s definition of success. The federal plan is based on “a shared vision of what it means to end homelessness: that every community must have a systemic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can’t be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience” (Home, Together, p. 7). This shared vision is intrinsic to the Utah state plan in its mission statement, its action steps and recommendations for Utah. “That means that every community must have the capacity to: quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness; intervene to prevent people from losing their housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system; provide people with immediate access to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry if homelessness does occur; and quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and services tailored to their unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing” (Home, Together, p. 7).

While the specific capacities that the federal plan outlines as necessary for success to be achieved, Utah’s plan strives for the same goals but the specific action steps and

recommendations in the plan are adjusted to current capacities and inventoried conditions across Utah. The Utah plan does address a need to strengthening community capacity, particularly when it comes to preventing persons from becoming homeless as a result of a lack of affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, substance abuse treatment or a lack of mental health treatment. The inadequate number of shelter beds in urban areas and the acute lack of emergency shelter options in rural Utah communities are also areas identified in the Utah plan as needing redress.

“USICH and its federal partners will develop and utilize an annual performance management plan with specific target actions, milestones, and deadlines. USICH will also use multiple performance measures to assess the overall impact of the implementation of Home, Together” (Home, Together, p. 8). The Utah state plan is charging LHCCs to develop strategic priorities and to measure progress toward achieving those strategic priority projects. CoCs are charged with helping LHCCs coordinate their requests for funding and to facilitate service inventorying and data collection within each CoC. The State is charged with prioritizing funding the top priorities of the LHCCs, using flexible funding mechanisms allowing for local allocation control, and to direct state-controlled funding toward LHCCs that are not yet competitive for Federal funding. Utah CoCs will continue to collect data on the HUD performance measures and report those to the state, and collaborative applicants will report performance to HUD. In addition, the Utah state plan requires benchmark achievement on key performance measures identified as requiring performance improvement over the next five years to bring Utah more in line with Western region performance or signifying significant overall Utah improvement.

In addition to the strategies and objective identified as important to the federal plan on homelessness, Utah is also committed to improving the quality of the data that the state bases its performance assessment on, updating definitions that are a poor fit to current conditions, and reviewing and adjusting the state plan based on changing conditions and progress made over the next five years.

Table 6. How the Utah state plan on homelessness corresponds to the Federal plan on homelessness

Federal plan strategies and objectives	Addressed in Utah plan	Utah plan component addressing federal objective
1. Ensure Homelessness is a Rare Experience	✓	
Objective 1.1: Collaboratively Build Lasting Systems that End Homelessness	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More local control and prioritization - Expanding LHCC representation - CoCs facilitating data collection and funding requests - Utah Homeless Network - Revising key state definitions - Expanding representation and voting in SHCC - Linking in transportation and education as service providers - Outreach - Coordinated entry - Bring case management back in/Investing in HR - Culture of connecting persons exiting intuitions to services if risk of homelessness - Warm hand-off
Objective 1.2: Increase Capacity and Strengthen Practices to Prevent Housing Crises and Homelessness	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing inventory - Developing more affordable housing - Bringing case management back in/Investing in HR - Providing more substance use treatment, mental health treatment - Developing more permanent supportive housing
2. Ensure Homelessness is a Brief Experience	✓	
Objective 2.1: Identify and Engage All People Experiencing Homelessness as Quickly as Possible	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outreach - Coordinated entry - Bring case management back in/Investing in HR - Culture of connecting persons exiting intuitions to services if risk of homelessness - Warm hand-off
Objective 2.2: Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter or other Temporary Accommodations to All Who Need it	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency beds outside SLC and Ogden - Shelters and receiving centers in rural Utah
Objective 2.3: Implement Coordinated Entry to Standardize Assessment and	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinated entry - Shelters and receiving centers in rural Utah

Prioritization Processes and Streamline Connections to Housing and Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing first - Culture of connecting persons exiting intuitions to services if risk of homelessness - Bring case management back in/Investing in HR - Warm hand-off - Providing more substance use treatment, mental health treatment
Objective 2.4: Assist People to Move Swiftly into Permanent Housing with Appropriate and Person-Centered Services	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinated entry - Housing first - Rapid rehousing for right population - Emergency beds outside SLC and Ogden - Bring case management back in/Investing in HR - Development of more permanent supportive housing - Providing more substance use treatment, mental health treatment
3. Ensure Homelessness is a One-Time Experience	✓	
Objective 3.1: Prevent Returns to Homelessness through Connections to Adequate Services and Opportunities	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring case management back in/Investing in HR - Culture of connecting persons exiting intuitions to services if risk of homelessness - Warm hand-off - Development of more permanent supportive housing - Providing more substance use treatment, mental health treatment
4. Sustain an End to Homelessness	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utah has not achieved enough progress locally to make this an executable strategy yet
Objective 4.1: Sustain Practices and Systems at a Scale Necessary to Respond to Future Need	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed action steps and recommendations in the plan will get LHCCs, CoCs and Utah as a state into a position where practices and systems will be sustained at a scale necessary to respond to future needs. - Expanding LHCC representation - Funding LHCC priority projects - Increasing flexibility in funding use - CoCs facilitating data collection and funding requests - Utah Homeless Network - Expanding representation and voting in SHCC - Allocating state controlled funds to lower capacity LHCCs using new definition of "homelessness" - Housing inventory based on new definition of "affordable" - Developing more affordable housing - Developing more permanent supportive housing - Providing more substance use treatment, mental health treatment - Linking in transportation and education as service providers