



# Utah Office of Homeless Services

## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Wayne Niederhauser, State Homeless Coordinator*

In 2025, with continued investment and policy direction from the Utah State Legislature, the Office of Homeless Services advanced several key areas within the state's homelessness response system. Funding allocated during the 2025 General Session supported progress in shelter capacity, winter response, homelessness prevention, and system governance. These efforts contributed to increased shelter access during critical winter months and improvements in accountability and system performance.

## KEY INVESTMENTS AND IMPACTS

### Emergency Shelter & Winter Response

- \$3.9 million in ongoing funding to launch and operate a second family shelter in the Salt Lake Valley.
- In FY26, \$5.5 million in one-time funding was allocated to expand emergency shelter operations statewide during cold weather events. In FY25, winter response investment supported 901 additional winter shelter beds, including 256 Code Blue beds and 3,370 emergency shelter nights provided in a hotel setting.
- \$16.7 million in ongoing, annually adjusted funding to support homeless shelter cities by mitigating community impacts, enhancing emergency response and strengthening local services.
- The Legislature authorized tools to accelerate site acquisition for a transformative homeless services campus, with statutory authority limited to a defined area in Salt Lake City, northeast of the airport. The planned campus will include between 1,200 and 1,600 beds.
- Emergency shelters throughout Utah have strengthened their policies and procedures to better ensure a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

**Impact:** The 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count recorded a 715-person increase in overall homelessness. Critically, 95% of that increase (677 individuals) were sheltered, compared to just 18% in 2023, evidence of the expanded winter shelter response working as intended. Data also shows an increase in the number of children experiencing homelessness, highlighting the importance of family shelter.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

- Continued investment in the HOME Court pilot, diverting justice-involved individuals from jail and shelter to treatment.
- In FY25, deeply affordable and attainable housing grants supported the development of 88 deeply affordable units, contributing to a total of 160 new housing units statewide. Strategic investments through the Affordable Housing Grant (AHG) expanded access to stable, long-term housing for Utahns most in need.
- Our commitment to addressing Utah's affordable housing crisis remains strong. We continue working to ensure Utah families have access to the resources they need for stable, long-term housing. At the same time, we are dedicated to expanding access to quality mental and behavioral health care—providing individuals and families with the support necessary to thrive.

**Impact:** These efforts prevent homelessness among vulnerable populations and support long-term stability, particularly for families and youth at risk.

### **Data-Informed Innovations**

For the first time, Utah's 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count included a question asking unsheltered individuals what types of shelter they would use if available:

- 610 preferred private rooms
- 568 selected bring-your-own setups (cars, tents, RVs) with shared facilities
- 511 would use small units with shared bathrooms
- 356 were open to congregate shelters
- 236 selected none of the above

**Impact:** This data confirms that most unsheltered Utahns are open to accessing shelter, if it aligns with their needs for privacy, autonomy, and safety.

In response to this need and the success of the initial pilot, the Utah Office of Homeless Services transitioned the microshelter project from a pilot to a permanent program in partnership with Switchpoint. On September 28, 2024, Phase II of the microshelter community officially opened at a state-owned site in Salt Lake City (548 S 700 W). Since its launch in November 2023, the community has provided hundreds of individuals with safe, private, non-congregate shelter.



Residents have integrated seamlessly into the surrounding community. With 24/7 on-site staffing, the program has generated few calls for service from business owners or law enforcement which demonstrates both its effectiveness and sustainability. Modular design has also proven to be more cost-efficient than traditional shelter construction, requiring fewer infrastructure resources and allowing for faster deployment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2025 legislative session provided essential tools, funding, and policy mechanisms to respond to urgent needs within Utah's homelessness system. While gains were made in winter shelter access, prevention efforts, and service coordination, these improvements require sustained investment to ensure long-term impact.

The Office of Homeless Services extends sincere thanks to the Governor's Office, the Utah State Legislature, the Utah Homeless Services Board, local government partners across city and county municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and the philanthropic community for their continued leadership, collaboration, and support.