

Utah Office of Homeless Services

ANNUAL REPORT DASHBOARD ON HOMELESSNESS



KEY FINDINGS

Our vision for the homeless response system in Utah is to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring; that all people experiencing homelessness can thrive to their fullest potential; and that our communities are stable and safe for everyone.

—Shared vision statement of the Office of Homeless Services and Utah Homeless Services Board

MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE: Prevention strategies are essential for making homelessness rare. In 2023, 273,052 (8.2%) of Utah's population was living below the poverty line. Addressing poverty through sustainable economic opportunities, affordable housing initiatives, robust social safety nets, and creating opportunities for jobs and increased income can significantly contribute to preventing homelessness before it occurs. Utah's rapid economic growth and population expansion in recent years have exacerbated the deficit of affordable and deeply affordable housing, as well as strained resources in behavioral health systems across the state.

- In 2023, 9,838 Utahns found themselves experiencing homelessness for the first time, marking an increase of 794 individuals compared to the previous year – a 9% increase
- According to the annual Point-in-Time Count, there was a 5% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night from 2023.
- There was also a 4% increase in individuals experiencing homelessness multiple times compared to 2022, based on UHMIS.
- Additionally, there was a 4% increase in individuals accessing emergency shelter and transitional housing over the course of the year compared to 2022, based on UHMIS.
- Utah's homelessness rate is approximately 11 per 10,000 people, significantly lower than the national average of 20 per 10,000. While the national rate has recently increased from 18 to 20 per 10,000, Utah has maintained a stable rate.

MAKING HOMELESSNESS BRIEF: Robust resources and comprehensive wrap-around services are crucial in ensuring that homelessness is brief and individuals can quickly transition to stable housing. By providing adequate support networks, including addiction and mental health services, job training programs, and access to affordable housing options, communities can effectively mitigate the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness. The data related to the length of homelessness remained relatively stable from last year.

- There was a slight increase in the average length of stay in emergency shelter.
- Average length of time homeless in emergency shelters increased by 1.21 days or 2%.
- In 2023, 80% of individuals engaging with our emergency shelter system spent 90 days or less in shelter, consistent with 2022.
- The percentage of individuals staying 12 months or more remained at 2%.

MAKING HOMELESSNESS NON-RECURRING: Ongoing supportive services play a crucial role in assisting individuals and families as they transition out of homelessness. These services encompass a range of supports such as housing assistance, job training, transitional housing, case management, financial counseling, and connections to long-term housing solutions. By addressing the multifaceted needs of those exiting homelessness, communities can ensure a more sustainable and successful path towards stable housing and long-term independence. The permanent housing projects with supportive services are highly effective in keeping the most vulnerable in housing.

- The number of people returning to homelessness within two years of exiting the system to a permanent housing situation decreased from 30% in 2022 to 25% in 2023.
- 93% of people housed by long-term housing projects maintained their housing or obtained permanent housing outside the project.