

SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN

JANUARY 2025



▶ LETTER

GOVERNOR COX, PRESIDENT ADAMS and SPEAKER SCHULTZ,

Thank you for your letter recognizing the importance of public safety in Salt Lake City and acknowledging the serious needs to address homelessness in Utah and our capital city. Salt Lake City's top priority is creating and maintaining a safe city where families and individuals can live, work, and thrive, including our strong business community. This is a focus I believe we all share, and it underpins every action proposed in this plan as we address the serious public safety and humanitarian crisis on our streets.

Salt Lake City's approach to public safety begins with acknowledging the indispensable role of the Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD), whose hard work consistently reflects their dedication to our City's well-being. The fentanyl crisis is tragically real, with drugs increasingly flowing into our state and distributors sent by members of international drug cartels often targeting vulnerable communities. Jail bookings from the SLCPD account for 28% of all bookings (1) in Salt Lake County—more than double the next highest contributor. At the same time, nearly half of those bookings—47%—involve individuals who self-reported as experiencing homelessness. This stark correlation underscores the critical need to address homelessness not solely as a criminal matter, but as a humanitarian crisis that the criminal justice system alone cannot remedy.

Since the first day of my administration, homelessness has been the single greatest challenge that my team and I have worked to address. Certainly, this challenge is one that cities across the nation are grappling with, especially capital cities, and one that Salt Lake City has long been at the center of in the state of Utah. Though the Homeless Resource Centers (HRCs) are tremendously effective (2) for the vast majority of individuals and families who enter their doors, a smaller number of individuals do not resolve their homelessness and other needs as quickly and some never even enter the HRCs. This particular population is the focus of this plan.

The current systems are not well designed to meet many of their needs nor address root causes, resulting in profound, negative impacts on their lives and on our entire community. Local evidence abounds of this dysfunction and tragic outcomes (3). Today, many entities across local government, homeless services, and the criminal justice system identify this population as “high needs, high impact,” or “high utilizers.” We will refer to the target population in this plan as High Utilizers (4).

The High Utilizer population we focus on are those individuals with more complicated needs than a stay in jail or placement in housing alone can solve. They include individuals living with mental health needs, substance use disorders, general trauma, those who may be both victims and perpetrators of crime, and a combination of these factors. These individuals often struggle to engage in services and many experience chronic homelessness. In addition, they may not have many interactions with homeless services, resulting in limited information about them in Utah's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), further complicating our efforts to describe their individual circumstances and needs. Even so, SLCPD, local hospitals, the District Attorney, justice courts, Third District Court, Salt Lake County Jail, and others have collaborated and shared critical data on the needs, impacts, and lack of root-cause resolution on these individuals. This plan highlights these plights through first-hand narrative, identifies gaps in the system, and proposes ongoing data tracking and direct actions for improvement.

The City will bring significant public safety action to ensure the high-need areas around the Jordan River Trail, the Ballpark neighborhood, and our downtown are safe, clean, and welcoming for all. In the downtown area, SLCPD will implement consistent foot patrols, increased bike patrols, and special operations. We will utilize our real-time data systems to respond rapidly to public safety needs that may arise in any other area of our City.

Salt Lake City is a faith-based community. We believe that each individual has inherent value and deserves dignity. To accept our system as it is denies the dignity of these human beings. This plan plainly maps the experiences of

many who engage in the system today as a means to illustrate the gaps and opportunities for positive change toward improving outcomes for individuals, and the community as a whole. This must include an increased public safety focus that connects directly to an improved system of accountability and supportive services to help as many people as possible recover and stabilize in permanent housing instead of ending up back on the street.

At the center of the multifaceted challenges in our system is a consistent lack of space and accountability for these individuals—in affordable housing, in shelters, in treatment and recovery facilities, and within our correctional system.

This lack creates painful gaps in the path to stability for thousands of Utahns, and serious challenges to public safety. In addition, legislative needs, revenue shortfalls, and data coordination deficiencies are also key areas of need and are a focus in this plan. Further exacerbating the impacts of these serious gaps, the taxpayer costs are highest, per individual, when we leave individuals on the street who are experiencing chronic homelessness. Neighboring states estimate that taxpayer costs are double (5) compared to when the same individuals are housed.

As with any humanitarian crisis, immediate and ongoing action is vital. This plan outlines the immediate, mid-term, and longer-term strategies, actions, and recommendations for the City and key partners. Coinciding with increased public safety, we must create space (6) in many parts of the system as soon as possible.

It is well known that the Utah Homeless Services Board (UHSB) is working to secure land for a large-scale, transformative campus for low-barrier homeless services. We support this effort, and we recognize the need for space in year-round shelter is immediately urgent. I am inspired by the robust shelter and support system set up by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Türkiye after a devastating 2023 earthquake that left thousands without homes. Working together in new and profound ways, we can create spaces of safety and support for all those in need.

Salt Lake City is dedicated to creating supportive shelter options as quickly as possible. We are committed to working hand-in-hand with valued partners, including government, community, business and religious leaders, to ensure we are aligned and coordinated. We are committed to finding a workable solution, having already reached out to these groups and had detailed discussions. We are well on our way towards building a consensus on a long-term solution to the challenge of homelessness in our community. When this consensus is reached, Salt Lake City is prepared to host a temporary location for year-round emergency shelter services while the State continues to finalize a permanent campus.

We also propose paths to create space in the Salt Lake County Jail, increased coordination with the criminal justice system, transparent and consistent reporting of outcomes for this population across the system, and space in our state and local budgets to meet these needs.

This plan articulates the barriers and needs specifically related to the High Utilizer population, both those within Salt Lake City's control and those under the jurisdiction of others. We highlight these system gaps and needs with the most collaborative intention, having long consulted with partners at each level this plan addresses, and with the explicit intention of improving the entire system. For our system across state and local government to work most efficiently, effectively, and humanely, we must work in concert with one another, not at odds. Collaboration between the state, cities, counties, service providers, and community leaders is essential.

This plan is certainly not perfect, nor is it completely exhaustive of opportunities for further improvement. This is a system-wide approach to improve safety and lessen the humanitarian crisis and public costs our City, state, and residents in need are suffering each and every day. To select some recommendations and disregard or only partially implement strategies will not result in the success you expect and all Utahns deserve. We must embark with collective momentum to effectively address this crisis.

I believe we must start with ourselves if we are to create real change. Salt Lake City is at the forefront of public safety and homelessness, but we cannot act alone if we expect lasting impacts. The identities of capital cities and their respective states are, no doubt, intertwined and the importance of having a thriving capital city cannot be overstated. The time for collaboration and cooperation is now. We all want to see Salt Lake City thrive for generations to come.

Most sincerely,

ERIN MENDENHALL



▶ TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
VISION	7
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	7
SCOPE OF THIS PLAN.....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	8
WHERE WE ARE TODAY	9
INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE MAPS	25
ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30
FOOTNOTES.....	48
APPENDICES	50

▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In mid-December 2024, Utah Governor Spencer Cox, Speaker of the House Mike Schultz, and Senate President Stuart Adams invited Salt Lake City (the City) to quickly provide a strategic plan addressing public safety in the City and identifying gaps and barriers across intersecting systems and services.

Methodology

To gather information, data, and experiences to inform this Plan, the City:

1. Collaborated with other government entities, including Salt Lake County, the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office (which co-serves as the City Prosecutor's Office), the Salt Lake County Jail, the State Office of Homeless Services, the Utah Department of Corrections, and many service providers.
2. Conducted interviews with nearly 50 state legislators, City Council members, residents, individuals with lived experience, providers, employees, and business, philanthropic, and religious leaders.
3. Sent out an open-ended survey to frontline staff in the City's Police, Fire, 911 Dispatch, and Public Lands teams, as these teams handle public safety issues and the impacts of drugs and homelessness every day. This survey garnered nearly 150 respondents.

Findings

We identified the following key barriers through interviews, data collection, and research:

1. **Housing Gaps:** Utah lacks sufficient affordable and supportive housing options, leaving many with no choice but to seek refuge in public spaces and shelters.
2. **Inadequate Support Services:** Limited availability of mental health care, substance use treatment, and wraparound services prevents individuals from achieving stability.
3. **System Fragmentation:** Poor coordination among law enforcement, service providers, judiciary systems, and government agencies creates inefficiencies and allows vulnerable individuals to fall through the cracks.
4. **Public Safety Concerns:** Balancing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness with the safety and usability of public spaces remains a significant challenge.

Key Actions & Recommendations

This Plan focuses most intensely on the two intercepts where the City has the most leverage: Community Prevention and Law Enforcement. It includes 27 actions the City will take, 11 of those being in the immediate- or short-term, and 23 recommendations for system changes over which the City does not have sole jurisdiction.

Key moves described in the Plan:

1. **Improve public safety by getting guns and drugs off the street:** The SLCPD will intensify police presence in downtown and in higher-crime areas. The Violent Crime Apprehension Team (VCAT) will deploy to crack down on drugs, particularly fentanyl, and firearm offenses—which are often connected to gang activity.

2. **Quickly increase emergency shelter options:** The City will allow the use of City-owned property for the temporary location of a new year-round homeless services campus.
3. **Increase consequences for High Utilizers:** Prosecution of high utilizers will be more coordinated and prosecutors will seek more stringent penalties. Jail overcrowding and frequent pretrial release must be addressed.
4. **Expand mental health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment options:** Without this, people cannot move through the system.
5. **Invest in housing:** Increase the availability of deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing so that emergency shelter and treatment beds are not dead ends.
6. **Commit to a joint plan and execute it:** Nothing in this Plan is effective without coordination and solutions at every point in the system. The State, County, and all cities must commit together to improve the system, hold people accountable and get them needed help, and save taxpayer money.

VISION

The City's public spaces will be safe, clean, and welcoming to everyone. People experiencing homelessness will be treated with respect and restored to dignity. The City will be unrelenting in fighting crime and holding people committing crimes accountable.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Everyone in need should be treated with dignity and have access to services, including low-barrier shelter.
- The City's public spaces will be safe, clean, and inviting to all law-abiding people.
- The City will hold people accountable for criminal actions.
- The City will be accountable for what is in our control and be clear and collaborative with partners on what resources are needed for the entire system to be successful.

SCOPE OF THIS PLAN

This Plan is intended to do the following:

- Identify specific, immediate actions the City will take to address visible public safety and homelessness issues seen in the City's public spaces.
- Summarize and map the current resources and processes that must be navigated by law enforcement, service providers, and individuals in the criminal justice and homeless services systems.
- Using State and County strategic plans, cross-jurisdictional data, and interviews with a broad consortium of participants, clearly identify gaps and barriers in the system.
- Make recommendations on improvements and resources needed in parts of the system within and beyond the City's direct control.

▶ INTRODUCTION

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Keeping the public safe is the most important duty of any city. A city's police department is at the front line, but lasting success hinges on the health and wellbeing of many systems. Salt Lake City recognizes we must continually strive to improve safety and ensure our public spaces are clean and inviting to residents and visitors.

While homelessness is not a crime, we recognize that *perceptions* of safety, and at times actual safety, are heavily impacted by prevalent unsheltered homelessness. Not only does it make other community members feel unsafe, unsheltered homelessness fosters a dangerous, inhumane, and unstable environment for individuals living outside, resulting in conditions that interfere with their ability to get their lives together and often leads to cycles of crime. Unfortunately, the need for affordable housing, shelter, treatment – and jail space – continues to far exceed available resources in Salt Lake County.

Because of multiple constraints at every point in the system, even people who end up being arrested dozens of times quickly revolve back out onto the street, repeating an endless cycle with few pathways out. The proliferation of dangerous street drugs, especially fentanyl, creates an even more dangerous environment for everyone in the community regardless of housing status.

A WAY FORWARD

Salt Lake City acknowledges the urgent need to address public safety, homelessness, and systemic inefficiencies. Achieving meaningful progress will require collaboration across all levels of government:

- **City Actions:** Salt Lake City will implement solutions within its jurisdiction as quickly as possible, including offering City-owned property for the temporary location of a new year-round emergency shelter campus, and increased police presence to drive progress.
- **State-Level Coordination:** As outlined in this Plan, State collaboration and funding are critical to bridging the gaps that perpetuate the cycle of homelessness and entrenchment in the criminal justice system.
- **Legislative Participation:** We urge the Utah State Legislature to consider all aspects of this Plan and take decisive action by funding necessary solutions and developing updates to statewide policy during the upcoming legislative session.

▶ WHERE WE ARE TODAY



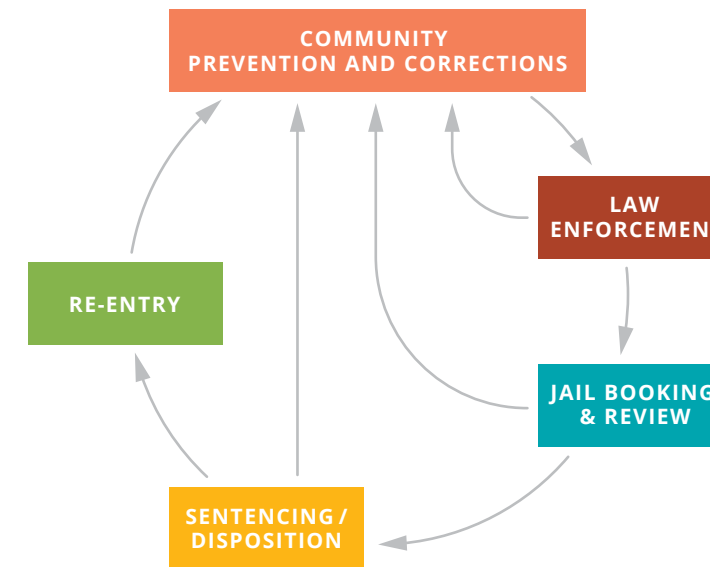
Our community members, both those who negatively impact the experience of safety in our community and those who don't, navigate an incredibly complex system of resources and processes. To be clear, this is not one, connected system. Rather, it is many disparate parts with different operators, attempting to work somewhat in conjunction with one another. The process is massive, and it can be challenging to see in its entirety at once, especially if any level of detailed analysis is desired. To support building an understanding of this larger system while also drilling into the details that bring to light the gaps, this plan looks at the processes through the lens of the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)—a model designed to help communities understand and improve the interactions between the criminal justice system and people with mental and substance use disorders.

For High Utilizer individuals in our community, the criminal justice system they must navigate is neither designed to address root causes that may underpin criminal behavior, nor well coordinated across the many jurisdictions to act in the best interest of their needs. It is long, complex, and leads to unaccountable outcomes that further exacerbate barriers to enter stable housing and employment.

In November 2022, leaders from the business community and many state and local agencies visited Miami-Dade County, Florida to learn about a highly successful model. Commonly referred to as the Miami Model, implementation of this system over 20 years ago has helped minimize the “washing machine cycle” of High Utilizer individuals through jail holding rooms, emergency rooms, court rooms, and back onto the streets. Miami-Dade County has synchronized the criminal justice system to address root causes, stabilize individuals with needed services, peer support, and housing, and has thus dramatically reduced public safety issues with this population. More information about the Miami Model can be found in Appendix B.



▶ COMMUNITY PREVENTION



The community level is where the impacts of system failures are felt by the most people, and it's also where we have the most opportunity to intervene and *prevent* criminal activity and homelessness. Community members interviewed for this Plan acknowledged and supported diversion and prevention at the front end of the system, but also want the City to resolve quality of life issues like sanitation, discarded property, and illegal camping that contribute to negative perceptions of safety.

“Something as simple as providing more garbage cans could help.”

—Impacted Constituent

As the arrows in the figure show, there are many points at which an individual can return to the community for a variety of reasons and often also with a variety of needs and risk factors that may not even be criminal in nature, such as limited access to healthcare, lack of social support, and other personal factors. Community work begins with support and prevention, addressing an individual's needs, and ideally providing supportive services to meet those needs to prevent entry or re-entry into the Law Enforcement Intercept.

At the conclusion of this trip, Utah attendees unanimously decided that our goal should be to replicate, to the extent possible, the Miami Model. Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson and her team, which had already been mapping our local Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) for several years, worked with many partners to further identify gaps and barriers in the current systems. On July 19, 2024, Salt Lake County published its 5-Year Human Services, Homelessness, and Criminal Justice Action Plan. Salt Lake City is indebted to our County partners for their foundational work. More information on the County's SIM work can be found in Appendix B.

While the City strives to be a good partner at every point in the SIM, there are two “Intercepts” where the City has the most influence: Community and Law Enforcement. For this reason, this Plan focuses most on those two areas.

Under Mayor Mendenhall's administration, the City has made substantial and measurable advancements at these Intercepts, including:

- **Affordable Housing:** Lead the state in affordable housing investment, totaling \$115,404,955 in City funding since 2021.
- **Homelessness Resources:** Unprecedented resources allocated toward homelessness.
- **Services:** Diversified response provides help for those in need of treatment and support.
- **Enforcement:** Targeted enforcement and directed patrols, particularly in alignment with the Downtown Safety Initiative (DSI), which encompasses the downtown core.
- **Community Outreach:** Initiatives to foster trust and collaboration between the SLCPD, residents, business owners, and unhoused individuals.

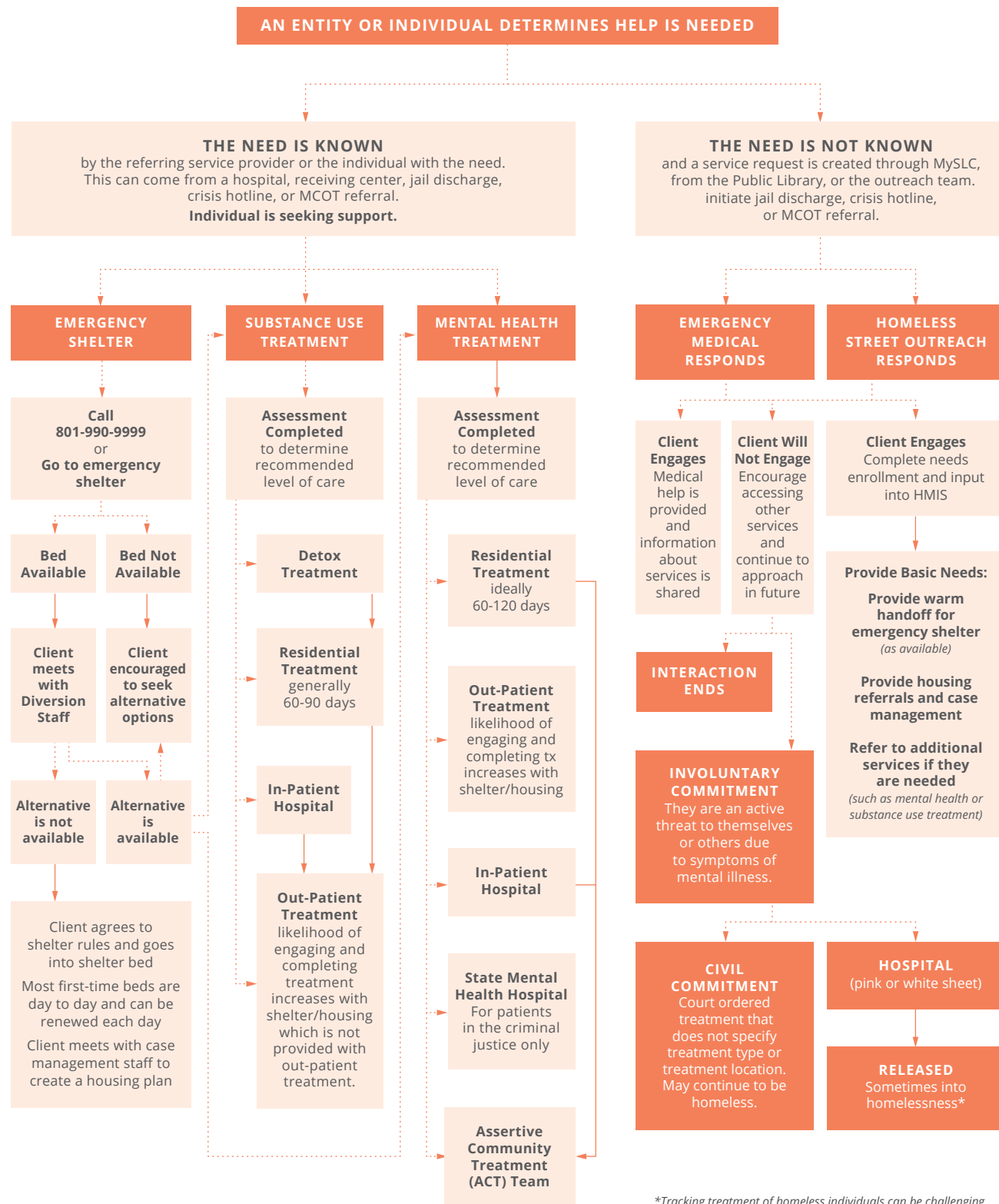
However, these parts of the system cannot operate successfully alone, and community members navigate this system by going down many different paths.

“We all need to do a better job at connecting all the different pieces of people who are trying to do things about homelessness in their silo. If we're able to communicate with one another we're going to arrive at better outcomes.”

—Case Manager/Outreach Worker

As each section is explored, flow charts and experience maps are used to describe pieces of the complex system by category (and colors that correspond with the graphic shown above) which include Community Prevention, Law Enforcement, Booking and Review, Sentencing/Disposition, Re-entry, and Community Corrections.

COMMUNITY PREVENTION



In reality, these steps often feel fragmented and unclear for all parties involved. More importantly, they are fraught with resource limitations at each step along the way.

“End services are missing, like day shelters. Criminal punishment for camping and trespassing is less justified when the shelters are at full capacity.”

—Person within the Judicial System

“Just because someone has dirty clothes, don’t say yuck, there is a person there wanting to be part of the community like everyone else.”

—Person Experiencing Homelessness

In 2023, data from the Utah Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) indicated, and the 2023 Point in Time Count (PIT) confirmed, that Utah saw about a 10% increase in individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time. Notably, the sharpest increase in Utah’s homeless population from 2022 to 2023 was seen in adults with mental illness, which increased by over 500 individuals with a total of 1,500 individuals counted. In Salt Lake County, the unsheltered count increased from 88 to 265.

Homelessness in adults with substance abuse disorders in Utah rose by 375 individuals between 2022 and 2023, with 338 counted as unsheltered. In Salt Lake County, the population with substance abuse disorders grew by an additional 295 individuals added to this subpopulation between 2022 and 2023, bringing the total population to 692 individuals.

Chronic homelessness also showed an increase in over 200 individuals statewide between 2022 and 2023, which led to the total count of this subpopulation exceeding 1,000 individuals, 361 of whom were counted as unsheltered. In Salt Lake County this subpopulation increased from 567 to 753, an increase of 186 chronically unsheltered individuals (7).

“There’s no policy question where more resources don’t help. When we are able to connect people to social workers, mental health treatment, outcomes are generally better.”

—Case Manager/Outreach Worker

The Community Prevention issues addressed in the Actions & Recommendations section are: (1) there is a shortage of 1,000-1,600 year-round emergency shelter beds in the system; (2) there is a severe shortage of affordable housing options statewide, with the greatest needs being deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing, along with stabilizing cost-burdened renters; (3) there is a shortage of mental health and substance use treatment resources, due in part to challenges finding and retaining staff and limited discharge and step-down options; and (4) outreach efforts should be better coordinated to effectively get more people off the street.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

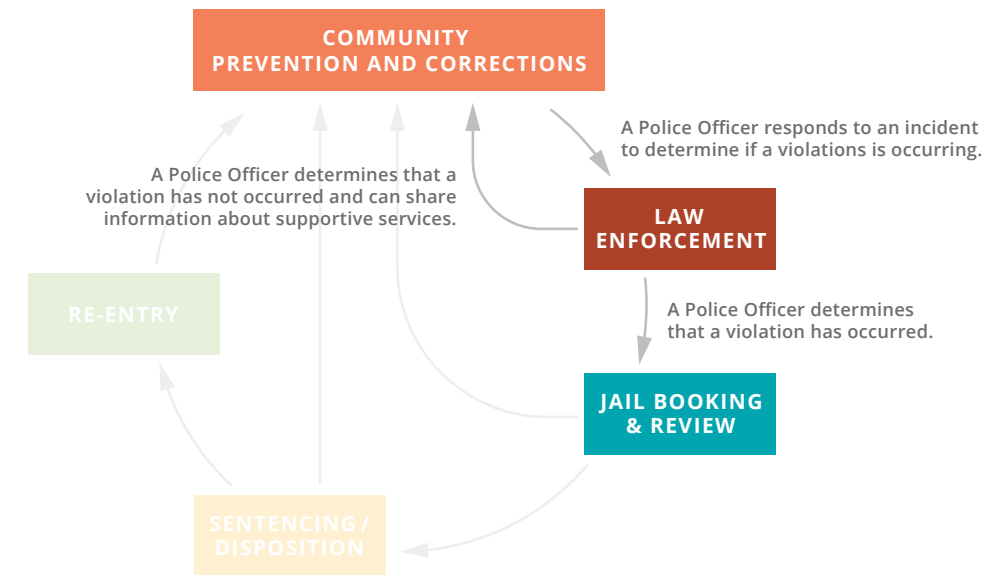
The Law Enforcement portion of the system is activated once a police officer gets involved due to a call for service, which may be through 9-1-1, the non-emergency line, or if an officer encounters potential criminal activity through proactive or routine policing. As a part of the system that interacts with the community regularly, Salt Lake City Police are both responsible for enforcement and are part of the effort to divert people into services that can lead to rehabilitation and permanent solutions. Law enforcement in Salt Lake City have increasingly become the first responders to individuals in serious mental health and/or substance use disorder crises. Traditional approaches to these issues sometimes lead to individuals being introduced into the criminal justice system without necessary treatment. SLCPD created its Community Connection Team (CCT) to assist officers in some of these more complex and challenging situations by providing alternative solutions where possible. The CCT includes highly trained detectives, Master’s-level clinicians, substance abuse counselors, social workers, and support staff. The team targets its services toward individuals experiencing homelessness, in mental health crisis, and/or in substance use disorder crisis by providing intermittent, short-term therapeutic intervention, education to officers on non-criminal justice alternatives for individuals in crisis, care coordination between agencies, access to detox beds, access to medical, mental health, and/or substance use disorder treatment, case management, assistance with navigation of the behavioral health system, and crisis intervention. Balancing public safety solutions with compassion is a daily challenge for law enforcement, but the SLCPD remains committed to public safety and community and individual growth.

“I didn’t get better until I became accountable, but everyone has their part in accountability. The Mayor’s Office. The City. The police. We need to realize our part in that accountability. Then the person learns to be accountable. Everyone needs to be accountable and not put the bad part or failed parts on the client.”

—Previously Unsheltered Individual

“I really appreciate the investment that’s been made in having social workers be a part of the law enforcement team and thinking of that as having it be a part of the team because I feel like it’s more through a lens of looking at individuals that are impacted by violence, we see those individuals who are often fleeing unsafe situations, and so they’re hesitant to engage with law enforcement because there was some reason they fled wherever they were at. They’re scared to engage. By having the law enforcement be made-up of not just sworn officers, but having it be more of a citywide presence so that you have both those and social workers.”

—Service Provider



“The idea that they’re not enforcing violations of the law that we associate with homelessness does not resonate with my experience from what we see at the courts.”

—Person within the Judicial System

“You see police officers passing people committing legitimate crimes, and they just keep going. The strategy has been let’s focus on the big crimes and not worry about the little thing.”

—Policymaker

The crimes most commonly responsible for impacting the quality of life of residents, visitors, and businesses include: drug violations, public intoxication, forgery, criminal mischief (non-felony), lewdness, retail theft, simple assault, and trespassing.

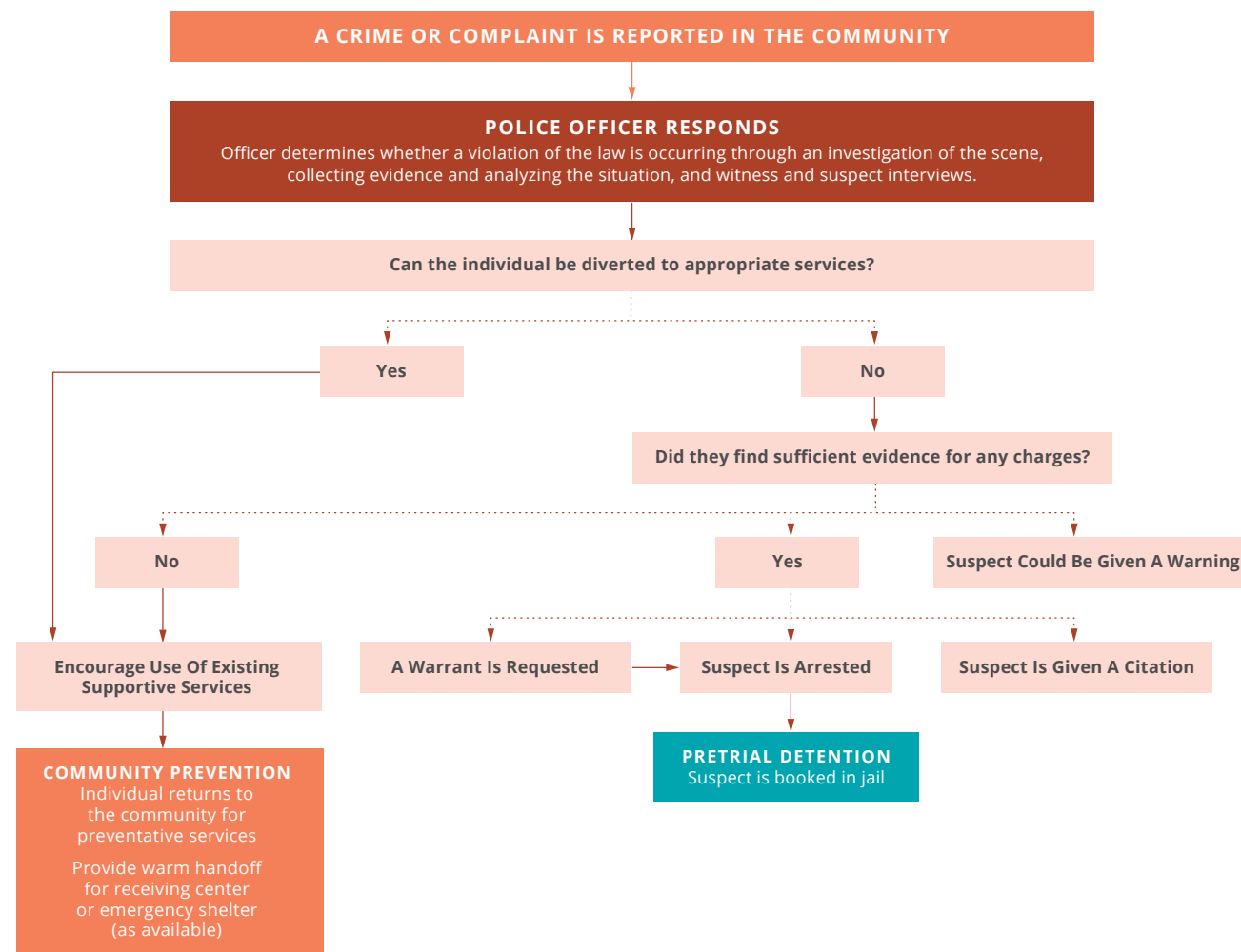
The SLCPD has made measurable improvements in addressing these crimes through its *Crime Control Plan* (8). In 2021, the SLCPD launched a multi-phase crime reduction plan that includes hotspot policing, place-based problem-oriented strategies, and targeted enforcement in high-crime areas. Between October 2023 and October 2024, SLCPD dedicated over 48,000 hours of patrol in the downtown area, issued 1,027 misdemeanor citations, and made nearly 2,000 jail bookings. Similar efforts on the Jordan River Trail and in Liberty Park areas resulted in more than 450 jail bookings and substantial improvements in public safety, including the seizure of more than 184,262 fentanyl pills in 2024 by the SLCPD’s Special Operations Division.

In 2024, Salt Lake City experienced a 5% overall crime reduction compared to 2023. Both violent and property crime decreased about 5% and 16%, respectively, when compared to the three-year average.

This progress has brought the City to a 16 year low in overall crime rates, a data point that reflects effectiveness of SLCPD's approaches and the officers' hard work. The SLCPD ended 2024 with a 50% increase in proactive policing when compared to the three-year average and handled over 8,400 calls related to transient activity. Arrests and citations have also risen, with a total of 8,508 jail bookings—the highest since 2017—and nearly 5,500 misdemeanor citations issued citywide.

Dealing with the intersection of crime and homelessness is complicated for law enforcement. Officers want to enforce the law and also want to solve root problems. It can be incredibly frustrating for an officer to arrest someone only to see them back out on the street a few hours later.

LAW ENFORCEMENT



From 2022 to 2024, one-third of SLCPD arrestees are repeat arrestees. These individuals, about 5,500 of the individuals arrested, average 4.4 arrests each within those three years. Looking at 2024 specifically (9), the SLCPD identified its top 25 most frequently booked individuals. These 25 people accounted for 292 individual jail bookings, with each person averaging about 12 jail bookings. The range of repeated jail bookings spanned from four to 29, with nine jail bookings being the most frequent. It is estimated that these 25 most frequent repeated bookings equates to officers spending nearly seven work weeks simply booking these repeat offenders.

Individuals experiencing homelessness expressed in interviews that police interactions range from compassionate to punitive. Many individuals expressed feeling criminalized for survival behaviors like sleeping outdoors. On the other hand, businesses are particularly concerned about the impact of loitering and other visible issues on their operations.

“When enforcement was really strict, they [unsheltered individuals] would walk around all night and then sleep during the day, meaning they weren’t looking for work.”

—Service Provider

“We keep swinging the pendulum from an overly punitive war on drugs approach versus a permissive acceptance of drug use. Both have very harmful consequences. We desperately need to find a middle ground approach that focuses on both accountability and compassion.”

—Policymaker

“How can we be proactive and prevent homelessness and illegal drug use on the streets? State needs to provide more resources.”

—Case Manager/Outreach Worker

“Homeless people don’t respect municipal boundaries, so we need at least a statewide or regional approach to policing. Regional problems need regional solutions.”

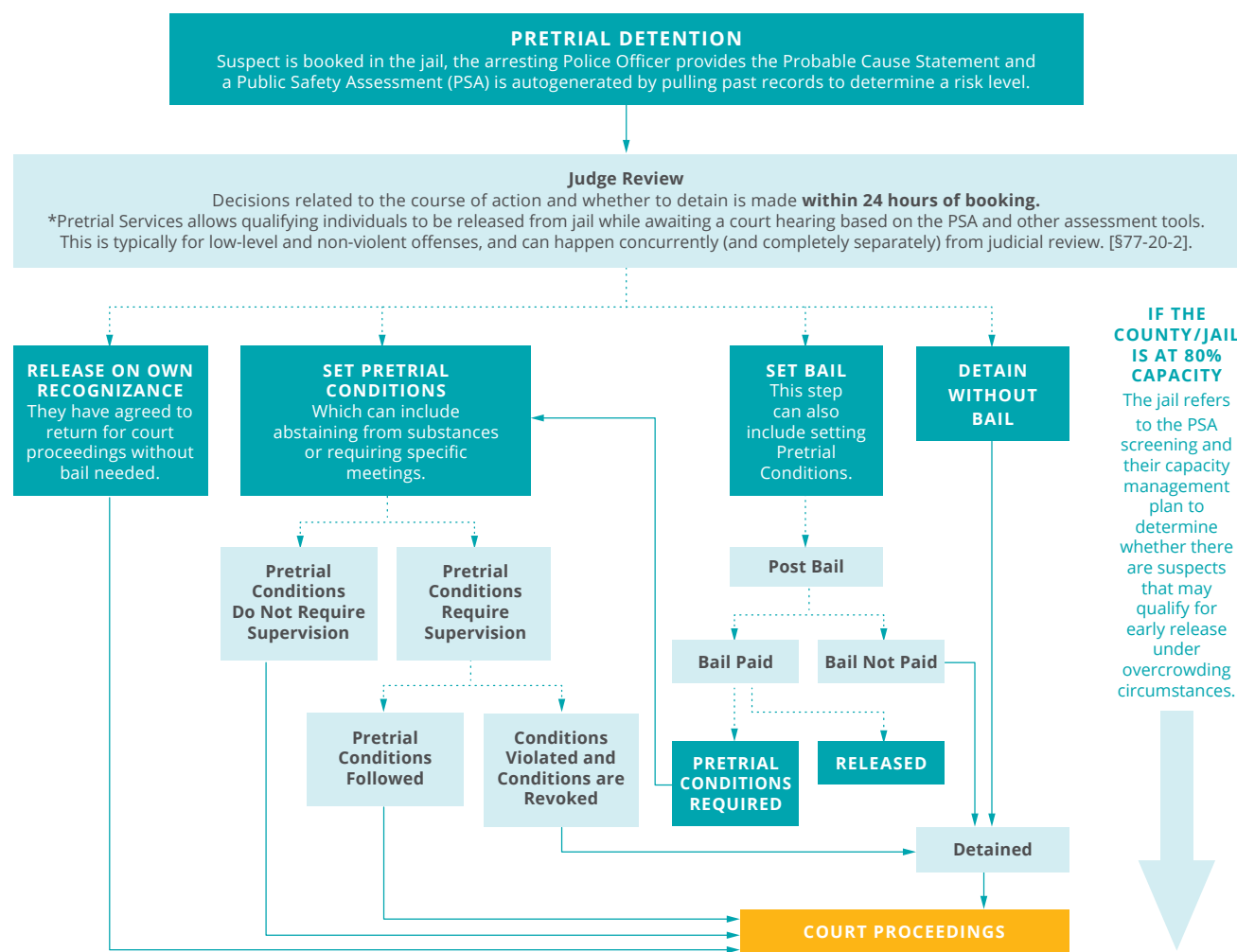
—Policymaker

The three key law enforcement issues the City addresses in the Actions & Recommendations section of this Plan are: (1) Salt Lake City is not doing enough to ensure people feel safe; (2) the City is perceived as lenient on enforcing ordinances against camping, loitering, and panhandling; and (3) the City is not responsive enough to residents and businesses negatively impacted by crime and homelessness.

BOOKING & REVIEW

When a suspect is arrested in Salt Lake City, they are taken to the Salt Lake County Jail by an officer for booking (10). The police officer will provide the jail with a probable cause statement, which outlines the facts required under the U.S. Constitution required for an officer to make an arrest, conduct a search, or receive a warrant. A Public Safety Assessment (PSA) performed by the jail will provide the suspect's past records (refer to a sample PSA in Appendix E). Adults in custody are also given the opportunity to interview with Salt Lake County's Pretrial Services Division, which has the authority to release offenders prior to a judge's review under certain circumstances if the suspect is a non-violent (or Felony 3 [F3]) offender or below. In 2024, Pretrial Services conducted nearly 30,000 interviews, with rare exceptions for individuals who were uncooperative with jail staff or declined participation.

JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW



“All SLCPD can do is arrest. The accountability measures are the responsibility of the rest of the system.”

—Frontline Police Officer

Upon acceptance into the jail, a judge must determine the next steps for the adult in custody based on the probable cause statement and the PSA. The judge determines if an individual should be released on their own recognizance (ROR), released with pretrial conditions (which may involve supervision), released with bail (which can also include pretrial conditions), or detained without bail.

While it is typical for a judge to determine the course of action first, the Salt Lake County Jail can also release an adult in custody at any stage of their criminal case when the jail reaches 80% operational capacity. The jail follows a separate but similar process, referencing the PSA screening and its capacity management plan which includes a risk matrix to determine whether there are adults in custody who may qualify for release due to overcrowding.

The Jail's risk matrix – used for release determination – considers both the safety and risk for the public as well as the safety and risk for the individual in jail. This analysis begins by prioritizing the release of offenders with the lowest-level and fewest charges and escalates to more severe charges as necessary to manage operational capacity. In speaking with Salt Lake County Jail executives, capacity issues have been a concern for over a decade and the protocol of capacity releases have been a constant for at least that long. If such a trend were to continue without increases in jail beds, it could lead to increasingly problematic decisions regarding who to release in the future.

SLCPD accounts for 29% of all jail bookings into the Salt Lake County Jail. The next highest contributors, the Sheriff's Office and West Valley City Police Department, account for 12% and 11% of bookings, respectively. Examining SLCPD's jail bookings more closely, the Sheriff's Office data shows about 47% of all SLCPD bookings involve individuals who self-reported as being “unhoused.”

According to the jail's dashboard, the jail has maintained an average daily inmate population of 1,786 over the past five years while also averaging 70 daily bookings and 70 releases per day. It is typical for the average adult in custody to spend about 25 days in jail before being released. Countywide, over the past 10 years, the average person booked into the jail has been booked seven times prior.

The most frequently arrested individual by SLCPD in 2024(11) has been booked into jail 29 times in a single year.

“Police can arrest people who have warrants issued by judges, they can be released without warrants being served. It's unfair because if you're not getting warrants cleared, it's unfair to get arrested twice in one day because they haven't “served” their warrant before getting released from jail.”

—Case Manager/Outreach Worker

The major Jail Booking/Initial Hearing issues addressed in the Actions & Recommendations section are: (1) people are booked and quickly released from the Salt Lake County Jail due to jail overcrowding, with few options and little oversight due to lack of resources; and (2) there is a lack of shared data, information, and clear communication between law enforcement, pretrial services, the jail, and judges regarding high-impact repeat offenders.

SENTENCING/CASE DISPOSITION

Court proceedings are arguably the most complex part of the system due to a variety of factors, including the existence of multiple courts and specialty courts, each with its own unique processes. This complexity is further compounded by the extensive use of legal and technical jargon, which can make the procedures difficult for individuals to understand. Additionally, navigating the intricate layers of rules, timelines, and jurisdictional requirements often requires specialized knowledge, creating significant barriers for those without legal expertise or access to criminal defense attorneys. This complexity underscores the importance of clear communication and accessible resources to ensure fairness and transparency in the judicial process.

The qualitative interviews conducted shed some light on the challenges related to this part of the system.

Frontline Police Officers are frustrated by the system's inability to address root causes. They feel like repeat offenders are cycled through the courts without meaningful consequences, which undermines their efforts and authority.

Impacted constituents view the court system as too lenient, particularly when offenders are released without addressing underlying issues.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are often overwhelmed by the judicial system, which often feels punitive to them. They also deal with challenges related to the logistics of making it to court appearances, and feel like there is inadequate support for them to meet what's required of them.

Case Management/Outreach Workers play a key role in supporting individuals through court-ordered programs but struggle with gaps in post-sentencing resources. They find that specialty courts are valuable but rely on case workers to provide meaningful follow-up support, which is often underfunded. Additionally, they shared that the judicial process can be overwhelming for clients, requiring additional effort from caseworkers to ensure understanding and compliance.

Judges expressed that they face challenges in balancing accountability with rehabilitation, particularly when resources are insufficient. They know that the judicial system plays a key role in diversion and prevention but depends on external service providers for implementation.

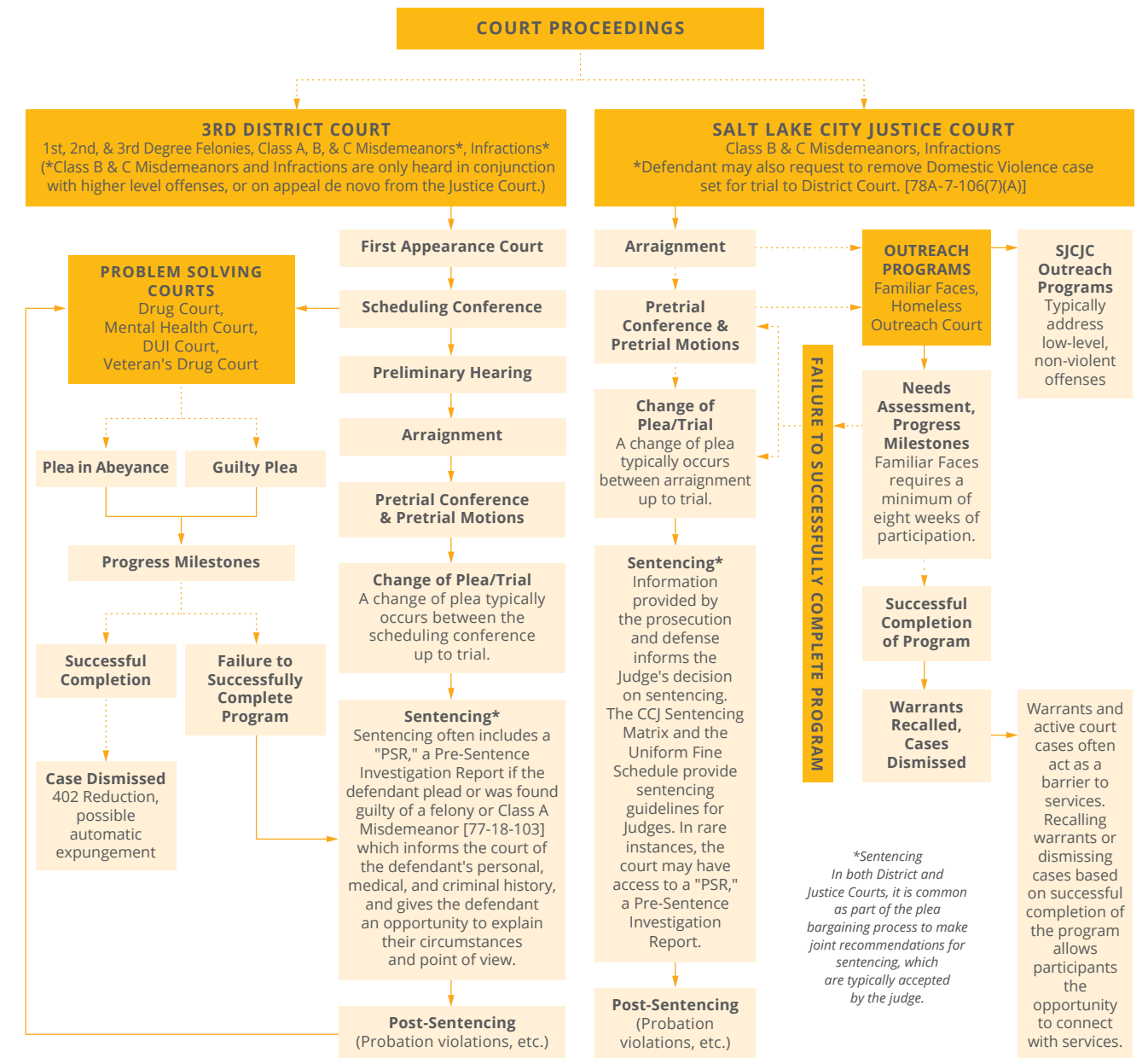
As a whole, interviewees shared that specialty courts (homeless, drug, mental health, veterans courts) are seen as valuable but reliant on access and on systemic support that is often insufficient. Community members are skeptical of the impact these courts can have, possibly due to their limited understanding of the role they play.

"The biggest issue is we need something besides jail for people with drug and mental health issues who are committing petty crimes."

—Person within the Judicial System

The two main Sentencing/Disposition issues addressed in the Actions & Recommendations section are: (1) repeat offenders slip through the cracks in different justice courts and district courts; and (2) system constraints mean that repeat offenders are not receiving needed resources and treatment.

SENTENCING / DISPOSITION



OF NOTE: At any point in this process, defendants are booked and released multiple times prior to sentencing. This can include being booked on new charges, outstanding warrants, etc.

"Criminalizing homelessness is problematic on a number of levels. People get arrested because they're sleeping on the street and they get taken to the jail and the jail just turns around, says we don't have space for them because we're overcrowded and underfunded. Then they just get put back out on the street and then that individual has to deal with the fines associated with charges that they're facing. They can't pay so those fines go unpaid. The charges increase because now they're behind on paying their fines and so now they have warrants out for their arrest, and then they get arrested, and they get taken to the jail and then the jail kicks them out because there's no space. The justice system isn't built to manage individuals experiencing homelessness."

—Service Provider

▶ RE-ENTRY

SALT LAKE COUNTY JAIL

The Salt Lake County Jail Resource and Reentry Program (JRRP) is a collaborative program between Salt Lake County Criminal Justice Services, Sheriff's Department, Legal Defenders Association, and Valley Behavioral Health. The purpose of JRRP is to provide individualized resources and information for any individual leaving the jail. During daytime hours, representatives from these organizations are located inside the jail's exit lobby and support individuals during their release. Service referrals include mental health and substance use, Medicaid, supervision and legal services, cell phone chargers, and referrals for other community services. JRRP services are voluntary.

PRISON

The Utah State Prison Reentry & Rehabilitation Division emphasizes that reentry planning starts from the first day of incarceration. Recognizing the challenges returning people face, such as securing housing, employment, and healthcare, the Reentry Team equips them with necessary skills, connections, and opportunities. By linking them with Workforce Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and other community resources before their release, they aim to ease the transition and reduce barriers. Additionally, the Programming Reentry Team helps individuals obtain vital documents like birth certificates and social security cards, as well as access comprehensive healthcare through Medicaid, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

After the orientation, clients scheduled for release will reunite with their family members and participate in a release fair. At this fair, various state and county government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based providers will provide staffing to connect with individuals. This allows individuals being released to connect with service providers and explore the available services in a centralized location.

"If you don't have a safe place to live and you don't have food, if you don't have those basic things to just be a person, if a judge put you on probation, then you're set up to fail. So how do we make sure that the treatments are meeting those basic needs and are happening while we're trying to go through the court process?"

—Service Provider

Accountability is essential, and jail is necessary for people who commit crimes. Nonetheless, individuals experiencing homelessness shared that incarceration often disrupts any process made in accessing services, leaving them without their belongings and unsupported upon release.

"Jail isn't the place to fix homelessness issues, it's the wrong place for mental health issues or drug issues, especially for people resistant to going to shelter."

—Frontline Police Officer

"I hate the narrative that jail is the place for getting care and recovery, because we aren't actually providing that. If we are going to further involve the criminal justice system with this population, we need to balance it with more expungement opportunities."

—Person within the Judicial System

▶ COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Community Corrections services, including Salt Lake County Criminal Justice Services (CJS) and Utah's Adult Probation and Parole (AP&P), are generally focused on providing accountability and rehabilitation for those who are awaiting trial, those who have been sentenced but are completing some of their sentence outside of jail, and those completing their sentences in the community after serving prison time. These programs are similar in multiple ways. Both rely on trained professional staff to manage caseloads of offenders and to create Individual Change Plans (ICP) to address prosocial skills, basic life needs, and help offenders successfully complete their sentences to allow them the chance to succeed in the community. Caseloads are generally determined by the assessment of the needs and risk of the offender. The CJS strives to maintain a goal of medium-to-high-risk caseloads supervised at a 1:50 ratio, while lower risk offender caseloads sometimes exceed hundreds per supervisor.

Salt Lake County Criminal Justice Services provides a continuum of services that include Pretrial and Probation Services.

According to Salt Lake County's Criminal Justice Services, "Pretrial Services allows qualifying individuals to be released from jail while awaiting a court hearing. Utilizing the least restrictive conditions possible, Pretrial will:

- Provide a non-financial release from jail and case management or tracking through case disposition.
- Provide information about upcoming court dates
- Utilize evidence-based assessments and tools to identify appropriate resources and create case plans to help reduce barriers to success. Assessments used include the Public Safety Assessment (PSA)." (12)

When sentenced to probation, clients are scheduled to attend a CJS intake meeting with a case management officer. During this meeting, the case manager reviews the court-order requirements and outlines the general expectations for supervision while on probation. Supervision requirements generally include regular check-ins with the assigned case manager and may also involve a substance use assessment, mental health evaluation, urinalysis testing, and more. All CJS probation clients in Salt Lake County undergo a Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessment to identify areas of need. Throughout their probation, clients work with their case manager to develop a personalized case plan that addresses these needs and supports their successful completion of supervision and re-entry.

Some offenders with higher level convictions may be instead supervised by AP&P.

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE MAPS

PERSON EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

People experiencing homelessness often encounter systemic barriers, including limited access to shelters, treatment programs, and inconsistent support. The lack of affordable housing, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment forces many to navigate a fragmented and overburdened system, often leaving them feeling unsupported and vulnerable.

	EXPERIENCES & FEELINGS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
COMMUNITY PREVENTION	<p>“ Want to be part of the community like everyone else. ”</p> <p>“ My personal belief is to build more housing and not more shelter because you can keep building more and more shelter. But is that what we want people to do? To live permanently in shelter? ”</p>	<p>Outreach efforts, such as CHAT teams and Downtown Ambassadors, are helpful but cannot fully address the scale of need.</p>	<p>Access to prevention services is hindered by systemic barriers like identification requirements, mistrust of law enforcement, and limited availability of resources.</p> <p>Diversion programs provide alternatives to criminalization but are difficult to navigate without transportation or caseworker support.</p>
LAW ENFORCEMENT	<p>“ Sometimes people who aren't homeless think that homeless people shouldn't be there. ”</p> <p>“ I think the very first thing they should do is have a non-police group of people to interact with the homeless population. The HEART Team does some of this. ”</p>	<p>Some individuals report positive, respectful interactions with law enforcement.</p> <p>Diversified response teams, such as those with social workers, are appreciated but not widely available.</p>	<p>Police interactions range from compassionate to punitive. Many individuals feel criminalized for survival behaviors like sleeping outdoors.</p> <p>Encounters with law enforcement often lead to displacement rather than meaningful solutions.</p>
JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW			<p>Detention often disrupts any progress made in accessing services, leaving individuals without belongings or support upon release.</p> <p>The crowded jail system frequently releases individuals early, creating uncertainty and a lack of follow-up care.</p> <p>Hearing schedules are confusing and often delayed, causing individuals to disengage from the system.</p>
SENTENCING DISPOSITION			<p>Navigating the judicial system is overwhelming and often feels punitive. Specialty courts like drug or mental health court are beneficial but not always accessible.</p> <p>Missed court dates due to logistical challenges (e.g., lack of transportation) result in warrants, increasing instability.</p> <p>The focus on program compliance without housing or adequate support makes it difficult to meet requirements.</p>
RE-ENTRY & COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS	<p>“ We really need more housing options for people with criminal histories. ”</p>		<p>Officers often encounter the same individuals after release, highlighting systemic gaps in re-entry support.</p> <p>The lack of coordination between law enforcement and case management teams results in missed opportunities for intervention.</p> <p>Without affordable housing or follow-up services, individuals frequently return to the same circumstances that led to their initial arrest.</p>

According to AP&P's website, they supervises two basic classifications of individuals: probationers and parolees. An individual on probation may have served some jail time, but it is generally someone who has committed a crime and been sentenced by the courts to be supervised in the community while held to a higher standard than the general public. A parolee is an individual who was sentenced to serve prison time, but who was subsequently released back into the community by the Board of Pardons and Parole before expiration of a sentence. Like probationers, parolees are supervised and held to a higher standard of rules than a general member of the public. (13)

Both CJS and AP&P seek to assist their clients in following through with court-orders, which often involve connections with a variety of community services and help.

“The supervision of offenders transcends beyond ensuring that they comply with conditions of probation or parole. Our officers often must assist offenders with obtaining the basic essentials to survive. This may include housing, employment, school, training, food, treatment, therapy and counseling.” (14)

Success of community supervision programs generally depends on:

- The ability of staff to provide adequate supervision to offenders;
- The coordination of information and services within the criminal justice system and with community partners such as housing, shelter, and treatment providers; and
- The availability of those community services to meet the offenders' needs.

Like many of the systems that address crime and homelessness, staffing is an ongoing challenge for these program, with CJS identifying the need for up to 150 peer support professionals to assist in increasing effectiveness of supervision programs.

Additionally, the lack of safe and affordable housing, and the limited availability of residential treatment programs for mental illness, and substance use disorders continue to create massive barriers for offenders to stabilize, successfully complete court orders, and sustain personal success after their legal requirements have been completed.

However, in addition to needing additional funding and resources, coordination of information about clients continues to be difficult. For a variety of legal, organizational, and resource reasons, law enforcement and some other criminal justice entities generally do not have access to HMIS data, some treatment provider records, and real-time shelter and housing information. While there are some resource limitations as well as legitimate reasons for limiting some data and individual information, without greater coordination between these systems, we may continue to limit our success in diverting and stabilizing individuals outside of the criminal justice system.

“We really need more housing options for people with criminal histories. The only places that are accepting applicants with that history are places that are perpetuating intergenerational poverty and crime.”

—Service Provider

“We need to stop pretending we can rehabilitate everyone. We can't, and we need a solution for them, too.”

—Impacted Constituent

FRONTLINE POLICE OFFICER

Police officers are at the frontline of addressing homelessness and public safety. Balancing enforcement with compassion is challenging, especially when resources are insufficient to meet the needs of unsheltered individuals. Collaborative efforts with social workers and homeless resource centers show promise, but systemic gaps persist.

	EXPERIENCES & FEELINGS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
COMMUNITY PREVENTION		<p>Officers often rely on diversion programs to address homelessness-related issues.</p> <p>They also feel that collaboration with outreach teams is effective.</p>	<p>Officers face challenges when resources like shelter beds or treatment options are unavailable.</p> <p>Collaboration with outreach teams is limited by the scale of the homelessness crisis.</p> <p>Officers encounter resistance from individuals who mistrust law enforcement or fear criminalization.</p> <p>There is difficulty coordinating with homeless resource centers due to client confidentiality.</p>
LAW ENFORCEMENT	<p>“ There has been a lot of very positive interactions with police, they help with enforcement around facilities. ”</p> <p>“ Add twenty officers downtown. ”</p> <p>“ Be tough on crime. Need public safety to run public safety. ”</p>	<p>Diversified response models, such as social worker collaborations, improve outcomes.</p>	<p>Balancing public safety with compassion is a daily challenge, especially when interacting with individuals in crisis.</p> <p>Diversified response models are not universally available.</p> <p>Resource limitations, such as the lack of mental health beds or detox facilities, constrain officers' ability to help.</p>
JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW	<p>“ Jail isn't the place to fix homelessness issues. ”</p>		<p>Arresting individuals for low-level offenses feels counterproductive when they are quickly released due to jail overcrowding.</p> <p>Officers are often called upon to enforce specific ordinances but lack the resources to enforce compliance.</p> <p>The pretrial process is seen as inconsistent, with individuals detained or released based on jail capacity rather than risk assessment.</p>
SENTENCING DISPOSITION			<p>Police provide critical evidence and testimony for judicial processes but are frustrated by the system's inability to address root causes.</p> <p>Repeat offenders often cycle through the courts without meaningful consequences, undermining officers' efforts.</p> <p>Specialty courts are seen as valuable but reliant on systemic support that is often insufficient.</p>
RE-ENTRY & COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS			<p>Officers often encounter the same individuals after release, highlighting systemic gaps in re-entry support.</p> <p>The lack of coordination between law enforcement and case management teams results in missed opportunities for intervention.</p> <p>Without affordable housing or follow-up services, individuals frequently return to the same circumstances that led to their initial arrest.</p>

IMPACTED CONSTITUENT

Residents and business owners are often frustrated by the visibility of homelessness and its impact on public spaces, safety, and economic activity. While there is support for compassionate solutions, many constituents feel that current efforts are inadequate or poorly communicated.

	EXPERIENCES & FEELINGS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
COMMUNITY PREVENTION	<p>“ There isn't capacity in the shelter system to get people out of our parks. ”</p> <p>“ It's not a City problem, it's a national problem. ”</p> <p>“ Something as simple as providing more garbage cans could help. ”</p>	<p>Residents and businesses support diversion and prevention efforts but expect greater transparency about effectiveness.</p>	<p>Homeless encampments near public spaces and businesses create concerns about safety, cleanliness, and economic impact.</p> <p>Constituents feel the City needs to expand prevention programs while addressing visible issues like loitering and trash.</p>
LAW ENFORCEMENT		<p>Some constituents appreciate visible police presence but express mixed feelings about enforcement strategies for homelessness-related issues.</p> <p>Many residents support diversified response models, such as Downtown Ambassadors and Park Rangers.</p>	<p>Businesses are particularly concerned about the impact of loitering and other visible issues on their operations.</p> <p>Residents want to see more results from diversified response models that show reduction in crime and improvements in public safety.</p>
JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW	<p>“ We need to work to try and stop cycle, there's no room in jail anyway, they're going to get released. ”</p>		<p>Community members expect detention to deter crime but see its effectiveness undermined by overcrowding and early releases.</p> <p>Repeat offenses among individuals released from jail raise concerns about public safety and accountability.</p>
SENTENCING DISPOSITION			<p>Constituents view the court system as too lenient, particularly when offenders are released without addressing underlying issues.</p> <p>There is limited understanding of the role of specialty courts, leading to skepticism about their impact.</p>
RE-ENTRY & COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS	<p>“ We need to stop pretending we can rehabilitate everyone. We can't, and we need a solution for them, too. ”</p>		<p>Community members expect treatment programs to reduce recidivism but are often unaware of their existence or outcomes.</p> <p>The lack of affordable housing and job opportunities for individuals re-entering the community contributes to public frustration.</p> <p>Constituents support increased investment in services but want assurances of accountability and measurable results.</p>

CASE MANAGER/OUTREACH WORKER

Case workers and outreach teams serve as critical connectors between individuals and services but face overwhelming demand and limited resources. The lack of coordination and funding across systems creates barriers to effective service delivery.

	EXPERIENCES & FEELINGS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
COMMUNITY PREVENTION	<p>“ We should focus on meeting basic needs; people do not think right without their needs met. ”</p> <p>“ Don't really have a space for those with chronic mental health issues, this will solve homelessness. ”</p> <p>“ Homeless services are working furiously to get people out of homelessness. And I worry that policy is creating homeless people faster than we are housing currently homeless people. ”</p> <p>“ It's frustrating that we are saying that the scattered site system isn't working when we haven't funded it. ”</p>		<p>Case workers provide connection to resources, but often due to services being overcapacity, they cannot appropriately serve their clients.</p> <p>Coordinating with law enforcement and shelters is effective but often hindered by siloed information and fragmented systems.</p> <p>Prevention efforts are seen as the most cost-effective solution but require greater investment and systemic integration.</p>
LAW ENFORCEMENT		<p>Outreach teams often mediate between law enforcement and individuals in crisis, bridging critical gaps.</p>	<p>Collaboration with police is crucial but limited by staffing shortages and inconsistent training on trauma-informed care.</p> <p>Diversified response models, such as the CHAT team, are effective but need to be scaled to meet demand.</p>
JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW			<p>Case workers frequently re-engage clients after release but face challenges when individuals are released without notice or support.</p> <p>The lack of coordination between jails and community services creates gaps in care and continuity.</p> <p>Detention disrupts progress for individuals already connected to services, requiring additional outreach and resources.</p>
SENTENCING DISPOSITION			<p>Outreach teams play a key role in supporting individuals through court-ordered programs but struggle with gaps in post-sentencing resources.</p> <p>Specialty courts are valuable but rely on case workers to provide follow-up support, which is often underfunded.</p> <p>The judicial process can be overwhelming for clients, requiring additional effort from case workers to ensure understanding and compliance.</p>
RE-ENTRY & COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS			<p>Re-entry programs are essential but underfunded, leaving many individuals without adequate support upon release.</p> <p>Case workers struggle to find stable housing or employment opportunities for clients, perpetuating the cycle of homelessness.</p> <p>Greater coordination between jails, courts, and community services is needed to ensure successful re-entry.</p>

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The judiciary plays a vital role in balancing public safety with rehabilitation. Specialty courts offer tailored solutions, but systemic resource limitations and coordination gaps hinder their effectiveness.

	EXPERIENCES & FEELINGS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
COMMUNITY PREVENTION		<p>Judges see external prevention efforts as critical to reducing caseloads but recognize systemic barriers that limit their effectiveness.</p>	<p>The judiciary relies on supportive resources to address root causes but many of those resources are limited.</p> <p>Prevention programs require sustained funding and support from local and state governments.</p>
LAW ENFORCEMENT	<p>“ People don't respect municipal boundaries, so we need a statewide or regional approach to policing. ”</p> <p>“ The idea that they're not enforcing violations of the law that we associate with homelessness does not resonate with my experience from what we see at the courts. ”</p>	<p>Judges value law enforcement collaboration.</p>	<p>While valuing law enforcement, they also recognize the need for more diversified response models to address homelessness and mental health issues.</p> <p>The judiciary depends on police to enforce court orders but sees inconsistencies due to resource limitations.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination between law enforcement and the courts is essential for addressing systemic challenges.</p>
JAIL BOOKING & REVIEW			<p>Pretrial detention decisions are constrained by overcrowding, forcing judges to make difficult trade-offs between safety and equity.</p> <p>Early releases undermine judicial efforts to hold individuals accountable, creating frustration within the system.</p> <p>The lack of follow-up services for individuals released from detention highlights systemic gaps that judges cannot address alone.</p>
SENTENCING DISPOSITION	<p>“ We need something besides jail for people with drug and mental health issues who are committing petty crimes. ”</p> <p>“ For those missing services, it's hard to punish someone when all the shelters are full. ”</p> <p>“ I hate the narrative that jail is the place for getting care and recovery. ”</p>	<p>Specialty courts provide accessible solutions.</p>	<p>The judiciary relies on supportive resources to address root causes but many of those resources are limited.</p> <p>Prevention programs require sustained funding and support from local and state governments.</p>
RE-ENTRY & COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS		<p>Judges emphasize the importance of re-entry programs in reducing recidivism.</p>	<p>There are significant gaps in funding and coordination for re-entry programs.</p> <p>The lack of affordable housing and employment creates a risk for individuals to re-enter the homelessness cycle which limits judicial effectiveness.</p> <p>Greater collaboration with case workers and community services is needed to ensure successful reintegration and compliance with court-ordered programs.</p>

ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The City is aligned with the State Office of Homeless Services, Salt Lake County, and the Utah Impact Partners (UIP) that the solutions needed to address repeat criminal offenders who are also unsheltered and/or dealing with mental illness and substance use disorders are nuanced, and to be effective, we must look holistically at the system. The Actions and Recommendations in this Plan are connected to the part of the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) they impact so as to create a seamless connection to existing plans.

The City focuses its actions on the SIM components under its control – Community Prevention and Law Enforcement. Other parts of the SIM are under the more direct control of other agencies and government entities. We have noted recommendations in the parts of the system that the City does not control, as well as some recommendations that apply system-wide.

The City is in the process of developing a dashboard tracking progress and reporting outcomes to ensure we can update stakeholders on implementation of this Plan.

SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MODEL

The following Actions and Recommendations correlate to different parts of the SIM, which are color-coded below. We begin with Law Enforcement as our key issue and then move to Community Prevention.



“You need to have officers in those parks, like the Park Rangers. People will feel safer when they see that there’s somebody who’s going to be responding.”

—Policymaker



ISSUE: Salt Lake City is not doing enough to ensure people feel safe.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- 1. SLCPD will launch the Community Impact Division (CID) to increase officer presence and reduce crime downtown.** The CID has three primary objectives: (1) reducing crime through targeted enforcement and rapid response to high-priority areas; (2) improving livability by quickly addressing public nuisances, problem locations, and illegal activities that impact neighborhoods; and (3) building trust between law enforcement and our community through highly-visible, accessible, and community-oriented policing practices.
- 2. SLCPD will deploy its Violent Criminal Apprehension Team (VCAT) to aggressively target gang activity and disrupt the spread of narcotics and firearms.** VCAT will enhance and amplify the work of the SLCPD’s Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Gang Unit, forming a cohesive and robust law enforcement-directed response to drug and firearm offenses, particularly fentanyl and gang issues. Together, these units will consist of 20 dedicated officers (15). VCAT and SIU will perform undercover and proactive operations and work with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Salt Lake County District Attorney’s Office to ensure offenders are fully prosecuted and sentenced accordingly. Detectives will continue to partner with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) Salt Lake Metro Drug Task Force. This collaboration allows SLCPD to leverage the DEA’s extensive resources and authority to dismantle major drug trafficking organizations responsible for bringing narcotics into our community. Recognizing gang crimes, drug use and firearm trafficking leave no neighborhood unharmed, the SLCPD’s crime reduction efforts will span the entire City. However, the strategic deployment of police resources can have a positive impact on reducing crime and enhancing community safety (16). A concentrated focus will be placed on areas such as Downtown, Ballpark, and the Jordan River Trail—key hotspots where the City knows people are illegally using, possessing, or distributing narcotics.

MID-TERM ACTIONS:

- 1. The City will explore funding additional police officers to ensure that effective proactive policing strategy continues to result in decreasing crime.** Funded sworn positions grew 3.5% between 2022 and 2024, not quite keeping pace with an increase in calls for service (17). However, proactive policing efforts, including hot spots, problem areas, and mitigation work, has grown over 65% under Mayor Mendenhall’s administration.
- 2. SLCPD will secure, through a budget amendment already in the process, and deploy 10 additional public safety cameras in high-traffic areas.** Research (18) shows that with active monitoring, strategic placement, and community engagement, public safety cameras placed in high-crime areas can lead to crime reductions without displacing crime into other areas. Effective camera deployment requires planning and community involvement. The SLCPD deploys its marked pole and trailer cameras using crime data, call for service data, and input from community members to determine when and where to immediately mobilize additional public safety cameras.
- 3. The City is developing an integrated park security camera program at high-volume parks and public squares in 2025 to deter crime.**

IMPACTS:

The SLCPD’s CID will increase proactive policing and community outreach, and decrease certain calls for service, such as unwanted persons, suspicious circumstances, and trespassing in the DSI. With intensification of efforts in specific areas, crime and unsheltered homelessness could be pushed into other parts of the City, or to other cities. Salt Lake City will be constantly monitoring for these potential impacts and will respond accordingly. Without more jail space, shelter space, treatment space, and the implementation of other recommendations in this Plan, this approach will not be fully effective.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED:	No
ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED:	Yes
RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA:	See Appendix E



ISSUE: The City is perceived as lenient on enforcing ordinances against camping and other quality of life ordinances.



ISSUE: The City is not responsive enough to residents and businesses negatively impacted by crime and homelessness.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- 1. The SLCPD will reaffirm and reinforce to officers that enforcement of public order offenses is a priority for the City.**
- 2. The City Council will be presented with an updated ordinance aimed at addressing the negative impacts of camping including updates to the regulations prohibiting the use of RVs for camping on streets in the City.** These updates will enable the City to focus enforcement efforts and prioritize the timely removal of encampments near sensitive areas like HRCs, daycares and schools, businesses and homes, and the Jordan River.
- 3. Prosecutors will seek enhanced penalties for repeat offenders.** Arresting agencies operating in the City will be required to indicate whether an arrestee is a repeat offender in the DSI (Downtown Safety Initiative) area – a step the SLCPD is already implementing. These designations will be communicated to both the City Prosecutor’s Office and the Salt Lake County District Attorney’s Office. Both the City Prosecutor’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office have implemented protocols to capture the DSI designations and have communicated these enforcement protocols to the line attorneys. Prosecutors will give these cases heightened scrutiny and aggressively prosecute cases filed. DSI defendants may be considered for treatment courts with appropriate supervision, if warranted. If a DSI defendant receives probation, prosecutors will seek to strictly enforce the terms and conditions of probation. Cases that are violent in nature will be aggressively prosecuted and seek either jail or prison as appropriate.

MID-TERM ACTIONS:

- 1. The City will work with the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) on best practices for policies and enforcement actions.** Such best practices and policies will allow cities across the State to take a consistent approach to these issues.
- 2. Salt Lake County and the State of Utah should also consider enforcing camping on their properties uniformly with the underlying municipal jurisdictions.**

IMPACTS:

Increased penalties on repeat offenders are intended to address those smaller number of offenders who are committing a larger number of crimes. However, this may displace others who may be in current systems beds and will require more jail beds, detox beds, and mental health treatment beds.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: Possibly, for additional jail and treatment beds.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix E

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- 1. The City will redouble efforts to enforce quality of life laws, as described on previous page.**
- 2. The City will establish the Downtown Safety & Activation Partnership.** This will be a collaborative partnership with local businesses, community organizations, and residents to gather input, share metrics on key indicators of safety (crime rates, vacancy rates, foot traffic), and refine new strategies based on stakeholder input. The Department of Economic Development will begin work on this immediately with our key partners, and will officially convene the group within the next few months.

MID-TERM ACTIONS:

- 1. The City will expand the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to respond more quickly to reports of trash, biowaste, camping, and other livability issues, and deep-cleaning sidewalks and other high-traffic spaces more regularly.** The City will add workgroups and more effective equipment to this function to carry out sidewalk sweeping and washing of 3-4 block faces per day. The City will budget for these increased costs initially and work with the Salt Lake Chamber and Downtown Alliance to identify long term funding solutions.
- 2. The City will release an RFP seeking a provider that can increase hygiene options (restrooms and showers) for the unsheltered. If successful, this funding could be extended by the City Council in the future.**

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: No

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix E



ISSUE: There is a severe shortage of affordable housing options statewide, with the greatest needs being deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing, along with stabilizing cost-burdened renters.

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

The Other Side Village (TOSV) is completing their 60 unit first phase by fall 2025. Salt Lake City will assist TOSV to expedite development of their next phase(s) to add over 200 new deeply affordable tiny homes.

SHORT and MID-TERM ACTION:

Salt Lake City will continue investments of at least \$5 million in FY26 for deeply affordable housing projects.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION:

Salt Lake County will work with cities, the State, and philanthropic partners on funding opportunities and properties to develop housing for those in behavioral health treatment, including group homes and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects with appropriate county services included.

IMPACTS:

As part of their 5-Year Behavioral Health Services Plan, Salt Lake County identified the need to create 1,000 new housing units with a focus on those engaged in treatment or exiting high intensity to lower intensity treatment services. This included 300 group home beds, 300 PSH beds, and 400 deeply affordable units.

The foundation for individual dignity is some level of autonomy and stability including a reliable place to call home. Appropriate housing and individual services are the foundation for increasing individual dignity, particularly for those who are completing treatment services and need long-term places to continue their journey to personal success.

Creating these specific types of housing will improve the flow of patients from high-intensity treatment programs to lower-intensity ones. This will shorten treatment stays, allow for more clients to access programs, and improve follow-through with ongoing care. The benefits will extend across all levels of the treatment community, including adult detox, residential and outpatient mental health services, substance use treatment programs, and long-term, high-intensity Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) programs.

- STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED:** Yes
- ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED:** Yes
- RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA:** See Appendix F

“If the goal is to get people off the street and give them a charge for camping, then there should be a mechanism set up to give them housing rather than going through the court process.”

—Person within the Judicial System

“If we can get someone into substance abuse treatment, when they graduate, they don’t have anywhere to go, without a safe affordable place to go they will go back into the same patterns as before.”

—Service Provider



ISSUE: There is a shortage of 1,000-1,600 year-round emergency shelter beds.

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

Expedite creation of shelter beds through a temporary emergency shelter. Salt Lake City will allow the use of a City-owned property for a campus facility for up to 24 months if capital and operational costs can be allocated by the State and philanthropic partners, while the state constructs a permanent low-barrier campus. This temporary facility will also include designated occupied vehicle and recreational vehicle (RV) parking. In order for this campus to result in fewer people camping on City streets, people currently experiencing homelessness in Salt Lake City must have priority access. The City will request that the State, through DPS, provide law enforcement services in the immediate area to ensure that this new facility does not detract from police presence elsewhere in the City.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS:

- 1. The Legislature should identify and allocate a stable, dedicated funding source for homeless services, mental and behavioral health, and affordable housing during the 2025 Legislative Session.** Several ideas for funding streams have been discussed in past years, including an alcohol or tobacco tax, a real estate transaction fee, an increase to the local option sales tax, and a boarded and vacant building tax.
- 2. The State Legislature should consider requiring all counties to provide some ratio of emergency shelter and housing services in proportion to their population, projected growth, and number of cost-burdened or housing insecure household units.** The Point-In-Time Count and each jurisdiction’s Moderate Income Housing Plan could also be considered to determine need.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION:

The Office of Homeless Services (OHS) should lead a request for additional FY27 operations and capital funds, and continue to pursue a permanent homeless services campus to open as soon as FY28.

IMPACTS:

Increasing shelter resources is critical to getting people off the street and into humane and safe living conditions. It will allow the entire criminal justice and homeless services system to work more effectively. Currently, 25% of the inmates in Salt Lake County Jail self-report experiencing homelessness prior to incarceration and will return to it upon release. Residential mental health programs have an average length of stay twice the current goal because of lack of discharge options for clients. Eighty-four percent (84%) of clients in adult detox waiting for available treatment options also report being homeless. While supportive housing is the longer-term goal, emergency shelter beds would provide a critical outlet for all these systems

- STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED:** Yes
- ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED:** Yes
- RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA:** See Appendix F

“I see plenty of people who are not living in homes and are in our parks which I get makes people feel unsafe, but at the same time we can’t offer them another solution when there isn’t capacity in the shelter system.”

—Impacted Constituent



ISSUE: There is a severe shortage of mental health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment resources. Salt Lake County also hosts nearly all regionally available residential services.



ISSUE: Outreach efforts should be better coordinated to effectively get more people off the street and connect them with services and treatment.

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

Increase and fund Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams from five teams to nine so that 400 more clients can be served anywhere in the community, meeting current Salt Lake County needs. ACT teams are mobile psychiatric programs that work with clients with some of the most severe and persistent mental illnesses in our community. Their daily services, wherever a client is living, working, or sometimes being held (hospitals, jail, etc) have documented success in stabilizing their symptoms, improving client functioning over multiple areas, and decreasing medicaid costs by millions of dollars.

MID-TERM ACTION:

To assist movement of people through existing mental health and substance use treatment programs, a portion of new shelter beds should be developed and set aside specifically for those exiting treatment.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION:

Implement the Salt Lake County Behavioral Health Strategic Plan by funding and developing acute mental health group homes, permanent supportive housing, and other deeply affordable housing so that people can be more quickly discharged from acute care, allowing more people to move through the outpatient treatment system. The State should also consider incentivizing other counties to increase behavioral health services.

IMPACTS:

Increasing treatment resources will allow the entire criminal justice and homeless services system to work more effectively. The current length of stay in residential mental health treatment is 2-3 times Salt Lake County’s goal of less than 120 days. Additional resources, particularly ACT teams and treatment beds where people with high needs and high impact on the community can go to receive help, would be massively beneficial for the individuals and for the surrounding community. Without these resources, law enforcement is forced to move people around with no alternatives, and act as mental and behavioral health professionals instead of fighting crime. This need is identified by OHS, Salt Lake County, and UIP in their recent plans.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: Yes

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix F

“The State and business owners want people off the street and out of parks, where they appear to be congregating. The challenges are that homeless people are picking up charges like loitering, camping etc. go to jail and get a charge, but the State and business owners don’t look at the whole entirety of the population experiencing mental health issues and don’t have a place to go. Creating additional barriers by the false narrative that these people will be held accountable. In reality, these people have lost everything: family, friends, housing, food, they don’t have a safe place to go. What does accountability look like for them?”

—Service Provider

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

The SLCPD’s Community Connections Team (CCT), which comprises highly-trained detectives and behavioral health and licensed clinical social workers, will provide targeted support during planned operations and homeless response calls, emphasizing emergency shelter, receiving center and treatment access, and reducing cycling in and out of shelters. SLCPD social workers and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) detectives will be present during operations to connect individuals to shelter and treatment resources, with backup information available to officers if social workers are called away. Partnerships with non-profit organizations that can triage individuals for substance use disorder (SUD), residential treatment, and access to beds are key components.

A significant element of the strategy includes encouraging individuals to sign releases of information (ROI) for continued case management, if SLCPD social workers take on the client’s case. To prevent individuals from repeatedly cycling through shelters, the SLCPD’s approach highlights connections to County behavioral health programs that can focus on stabilization through case management, housing, and medication support. Additionally, the approach emphasizes referrals to Mental Health Court (MHC) and partnerships with the legal defenders office to provide supervision and encourage housing engagement, with potential benefits from including legal representation during responses.

MID-TERM ACTION:

- 1. The City will improve efficiency and effectiveness of its Diversified Response teams.** Over the past several years, the City has built out diversified response teams – specifically, positions like social workers, park rangers, and community responders who can resolve issues that often come to the Police or Fire departments but can be resolved without a sworn officer or full fire apparatus, freeing those teams up to do their jobs. These teams have been incredibly impactful, but could work together and with the SLCPD and SLCFD more efficiently. The City is embarking on a systemwide efficiency analysis to identify how we can better integrate and utilize these teams to save taxpayer money and have a more effective impact in the community.
- 2. Focused outreach.** If a temporary campus model comes online, City-funded street outreach, and the Justice Court, SLCPD, and SLCFD social workers will coordinate and focus intense engagement with those remaining outside to get them into other options.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Legislature should consider additional statutory provisions aimed at admitting individuals into medical facilities for purposes of evaluating and treating substance abuse disorders. This expansion would supplement the State’s existing provision for emergency civil commitments based on mental health needs. Additionally, the Legislature should consider granting police officers immunity in circumstances in which they are forced to make a difficult determination on whether to admit an individual under the existing and potentially expanded emergency civil commitment laws.

Florida’s Marchman Act (F.S.A. Chapter 397) allows for the civil commitment of individuals with substance abuse issues. Additionally, Florida law includes broad immunity for police officers who act in good faith. Utah does not have a corresponding statute regarding substance abuse, and immunity is limited, which might have a chilling effect on officers.

IMPACTS:

With the opening of additional emergency beds, many people will voluntarily enter shelter. However, those remaining outside often have the most complex barriers to entering shelter, treatment or housing and will require longer term street engagement, with increased behavioral health and psychiatric supports. Giving more tools to law enforcement to detain people for mental health and/or substance abuse disorder evaluation may get more people into treatment faster. Revisions to this process warrants careful deliberation with experts, and care for individuals' civil liberties.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: Yes

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix F

"I think the police are doing a great job of engaging the unsheltered population. Contrary to what some of the provider community thinks. As I've gone out with officers and spoken with them and seen them in action, I think they're doing a really good job of engaging the population. They are particularly effective when they have a social worker teamed up with them and they're engaging the population."

—Policymaker

"I think we're seeing more visibility from the law enforcement. But it must be both. We must enforce as well as giving them the opportunity or telling them we do have a space for you in shelter. If not, then people are back at the service providers' doors asking for help with getting an ID again. This is super costly for nonprofits. To keep replenishing if there's no place for them to go."

—Service Provider



ISSUE: People are booked and quickly released from the Salt Lake County Jail due to jail overcrowding, with few options and little oversight due to lack of resources.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- 1. Salt Lake County Jail proposed adding 450 additional beds through the recent County bond proposal to meet the current needs.** The County should explore currently unused or underutilized government buildings for additional correctional facility space.
- 2. If Salt Lake City and the State can launch a pilot emergency shelter campus with sufficient beds, the West Valley City shelter building on Redwood Road could be considered for alternative needs, including a 150-bed Justice and Accountability Center as envisioned by Salt Lake County.**

MID-TERM ACTION:

- 1. Corrections facilities in every county could be considered statewide collective assets.** Medium and minimum-risk inmates could be relocated to facilities in other counties to immediately open more space in the Salt Lake County Jail for high risk and/or repeat offenders.
- 2. The State should consider enabling sheriff's offices to detain defendants with outstanding warrants from other counties in the State and arrange transport with an automatic hold to prevent premature release.** This could function similarly to the extradition system between states.
- 3. County Pretrial Services needs additional resources to properly supervise people, as well as additional resources to which people can be referred to seek the assistance they need, such as safe living spaces, to not re-offend.**

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION:

Create the Salt Lake County Justice and Accountability Center. Salt Lake County identified 300 beds as the goal for this facility to avoid discharges directly to the street due to lack of emergency shelter availability.

IMPACTS:

Without additional jail space, it is not possible to meaningfully enforce the law and/or enact harsher penalties for repeat offenders. Furthermore, if the State desires to enact harsher penalties or increase enforcement on drug or immigration charges, that will create additional space constraints. A study done in 2022 shows the correlation between offenders released from jail and higher crime rates in Salt Lake City (See Appendix). Salt Lake County reports the need for an additional 450 beds; an unoccupied section of Oxbow Jail could add up to 184 additional jail beds. Opening a new building or expanding current jail operations would require additional staff and operational costs. Transporting offenders to other counties would likely require additional funding and issues for inmates and their legal counsel. Creating a Justice and Accountability Center would not increase jail capacity, but would allow better oversight of discharges by County Justice Services and AP&P. This, coupled with DSI designation that notifies Jail, Pretrial, judges for repeat offenders to be held in current jail beds, could address some issues with people being immediately booked and released.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: Yes

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix G

"We have high utilizers, the people that have a lot of contact in the Downtown Safety Initiative areas, that are already on probation or parole. If they're not on for substantial violent type of crimes, they may get booked into the jail and the jail releases them within a couple of hours because of overcrowding or other reasons. They abscond again and it's a never-ending cycle."

—Corrections System employee



ISSUE: There is a lack of shared data, information, and clear communication between law enforcement, pretrial services, the jail, and judges regarding high-impact repeat offenders.



ISSUE: Repeat offenders slip through the cracks between different justice courts, district courts, and service providers.

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

The SLCPD will implement new requirements to improve the documentation and handling of cases involving individuals who may pose a greater risk to public safety. All officers will now be required to include the DSI (Downtown Safety Initiative) designation, when appropriate, in police reports, probable cause statements, and citations. When submitting cases through the e-Prosecutor system, officers and detectives must also confirm whether the case qualifies as a DSI case before submission. To help ensure the effectiveness of these measures, officers will receive additional training on improving their probable cause statements. This training will focus on including critical information about outstanding warrants and repeat offenses, helping judges and prosecutors assess the potential risk an individual might pose if released from jail. This will better allow county pretrial services, prosecutors, and judges to see important information up front to more effectively steer people into services or hold them in jail.

RECOMMENDATION:

The State should support coordinated case management services that operate across agencies and jurisdictions. Without this coordination, there is no mechanism to assist defendants in navigating complex treatment systems, and no mechanism for issues of noncompliance to be quickly brought to the court's attention so that appropriate sanctions can be imposed. Additionally, if the court could have the option to order defendants to social services and case management plans, individuals could continue receiving services through coordinated efforts even after the court loses jurisdiction.

MID- and LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The City will work to convene a data and research working group with the SLCPD, Salt Lake County, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.** This group will focus on improving data sharing and strengthening the ability to cross-reference agency data.
- 2. Adopt and implement the data-sharing goals in the State's Plan to Address Homelessness.**
 - By 2024:** The state of Utah will establish data sharing agreements with at least three systems external to the homeless system of care (e.g., criminal justice, healthcare & human services, workforce, and education).
 - By 2026:** The state of Utah will have a data sharing platform accessible to providers who enter into Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that provides access to and visibility of system partner data.
 - By 2028:** The state of Utah will develop a generalized protocol for organizational and project performance evaluation across multiple systems that work with people experiencing homelessness. Re-evaluation of these protocols will be carried out in 2030.

IMPACTS:

The ability for courts to make detailed orders and tie compliance to a comprehensive treatment plan is limited by the availability of information about an individual's treatment and service history. Coordinated case management would help.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: No
ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes
RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix H

IMPACTS:

Current practices are hindered by outdated processes that often require manual reviews to fully assess an individual's involvement in the criminal justice system. By collaborating, these agencies can identify opportunities to streamline data integration, improve decision-making, and better inform our communities and the State. Solving data sharing issues is a foundational piece of a functioning Sequential Intercept Model. Until agencies are able to share information about repeat and high-impact offenders, they will continue to slip through the cracks and end up back on the street. This is a complex problem that needs dedicated work to solve.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: No
ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes
RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix G



ISSUE: System constraints mean that repeat offenders are not receiving needed resources and treatment.



SYSTEM WIDE ISSUE: Despite numerous plans to improve integration of the criminal justice, homelessness, and treatment services systems, there remains a lack of coordination between government entities and service providers

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. Fund recommendations in the Governor’s budget for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) to move people through the waiting list.** The current waiting list is nearly 7,000 people long, meaning that people wait years.
- 2. Increase housing options for where people can go when they are discharged from treatment.**

IMPACTS:

Because of too few housing and shelter options, people do not have anywhere to go when they complete treatment, creating a backlog in the system. If options can be increased, more people who need treatment could move through the system more efficiently.

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: Yes

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA: See Appendix H

RECOMMENDATION:

Each entity should devote committed resources to implementing a joint plan within and across our organizations. OHS, Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, and the Utah Impact Partners have all identified this as a critical need, but thus far we have not set out to build the process where the partners work together to achieve this integration

How: Numerous efforts have been made in recent years to bring relevant entities together to address the systemic issues at the heart of crime and homelessness, from the Collective Impact process in 2015, Operation Diversion in 2016, and Operation Rio Grande in 2017 to the Coordinated Homeless Services Plan signed in 2023 by Governor Cox, County Mayor Wilson, and Salt Lake City Mayor Mendenhall. Past collaborative efforts have not included a commitment from each entity to embark together on a multi-organization change management process. The elements of the process could be as follows:

- 1. Hire a neutral facilitator. Jointly develop a RFP and select an experienced mediator or facilitator to neutrally guide this process.**
- 2. Establish a shared vision and common goals.** We must agree on desired outcomes and the long-term goals as the foundation of the plan.
- 3. Define success.** We have a multitude of data on crime, homelessness, housing, treatment, and other indicators, but we lack agreement on what metrics demonstrate progress or success.
- 4. Clearly define roles.** Each of our entities has different resources, roles, and responsibilities in this ecosystem. However, because the system is under-resourced, we resort to finger-pointing when people fall through the cracks of the system and end up on the street committing crimes. With clearly defined and agreed-upon roles, our organizations might understand that each person on the street has the opportunity for various points of intercept and diversion, and we are collectively responsible to execute our parts.
- 5. Develop a comprehensive change management plan for each of our organizations.** This piece is perhaps most critical, and what has been missing from our past joint efforts. While lasting change must be collective, each of our organizations is large and change is difficult for the people who are on the front lines of the work. Each entity needs a customized plan to address specific processes, structures, and cultures. This could include specific “change managers” in each organization, and communication strategies, trainings, and technologies that will work in each organization.
- 6. Develop a unified action plan with metrics that are easily and transparently tracked and available in a shared dashboard.** In addition to individual organizational plans, we must create a unified action plan that outlines key milestones, timelines, and roles. This should include specific tasks and deliverables for each organization, timelines, and resources (funding, personnel, etc.).
- 7. Develop a joint communication strategy within each organization, across our organizations, and to the community.**
- 8. Agree on an ongoing process to review changes, monitor performance, and continually adjust and improve.** This could be developed into an Interlocal Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding between entities in order to protect the process from future political changes.

IMPACTS:

As identified in the Utah Impact Partners' Guiding Principles to Overcome Homelessness, with commitment to and implementation of a Diversion and Intercept Model, "Individuals experiencing homelessness can be diverted to support systems offering mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and housing support. As an example, at the point of arrest, law enforcement officers trained in crisis intervention will have the option to refer individuals experiencing mental health crises or substance use issues directly to specialized crisis stabilization units. Targeted interventions aim to address the fundamental cause of criminal behavior and promote long-term recovery and stability."

STATE LEGISLATION NEEDED: No

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED: Yes

"City and State need to really coordinate heavily. State is SO enforcement focused on the front end, but without the back end of support, you can't do it all. They need to help make jail space, rehab centers, different facilities, so we can do full enforcement."

—Case Manager/Outreach Worker

"There is a gap around information and coordination. Those are structural [issues]. Systems behave the way that they're designed. The criminal justice system is actually very siloed. Their siloed in independent agencies and their siloed at different levels of government. What does the city vs. the county own? This will always create barriers to coordination. Each entity has its own case management system. Jail, PD, criminal justice services. None of these systems talk to each other, they exist for the day-to-day operations of a particular agency."

—Person within the judicial system

"Champagne taste on a root beer budget is where we are. It's gotta be all of us—the State, philanthropy, the city, the county."

—Policymaker

OTHER CITY ACTIONS:

- 1. Clean City Team:** In FY26, the City will consolidate resources from several departments to create a citywide Clean City Team. This strategy pulls together resources to address conditions that can lead to crime, like graffiti, abandoned property, trash, poor lighting, and neglected public spaces. The City will work to quickly address problem businesses that permit criminal and nuisance behavior that has a detrimental impact on the surrounding neighborhood, such as active drug trade, gambling, public intoxication, and sexual solicitation. This task force will actively seek input from frontline workers, patrol officers and residents and business owners to identify and address specific problems.
- 2. Increase safe storage:** The City will work to expand these options over the next year. Having a secure place to store important possessions is critical for unsheltered people. Without a place to store things, many people are hesitant to go into shelter, and are also making themselves vulnerable to theft. Furthermore, the City must expand storage space so that City teams mitigating camps can store important possessions that people have left behind. This is an important element to protecting the constitutional rights of individuals living outside.
- 3. Park security:** The City will add security services at parks at closing hours to assist in making sure people are complying with curfew.
- 4. Street lighting:** The City will improve lighting in crime hotspots and main thoroughfares where homeless populations tend to gather.
- 5. Boarded and abandoned buildings:** The City will more aggressively enforce ordinances on abandoned properties and boarded buildings, which are linked to crime hotspots. The City recently increased the fees on boarded and abandoned buildings and will increase work to keep vacant structures secure and hold absentee property owners accountable.

OTHER SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Evaluation of taxpayer investment in the system:** The State should consider evaluating the cost of services and care across sectors for chronically homeless individuals versus the cost of providing permanent supportive housing for that population. (See examples from Nevada (19) and Colorado(20)).
- 2. Reunification fund:** The State could consider establishing a fund administered through OHS that provides individuals transport to another state where the individual has connected with a support network.
- 3. Shelter rules and security:** The State could consider adjusting contracts with HRCs to require more stringent or more consistent rules, and/or require tighter security inside shelters. This must be done with consideration for where individuals go if they are exited from shelter for breaking a rule so that they don't simply end up camping outside the shelter.

CONSOLIDATED LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Funding and Appropriations

- a. In partnership with the City and other key partners, fund and develop a temporary, year-round campus while location of a permanent site is underway.
- b. Dedicate ongoing funding streams for the following systems:
 - i. Homeless services.
 - ii. Mental health and substance use disorder treatment, including residential treatment and group home options. Fund and increase ACT teams.
 - iii. Deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing.
 - iv. Jail capacity expansion.
- c. Expand the HOME Court model. (21)
- d. Increase funding for Utah's Division of Services for People with Disabilities to improve waitlist times.

2. Existing Code Changes

- a. Consider revising state law to allow officers to write a citation or make a custodial arrest for Class A misdemeanor offenses. This change could ease the burden on jails while ensuring offenders receive clear information about their charges and next steps in the legal process, and that the criminal activity is addressed immediately.
- b. Examine the process requirements for evidence booking in cases of unsheltered arrest.
- c. Revise and increase penalties for possession of drug paraphernalia in parks.
- d. Revise state codes regarding involuntary commitment to strengthen discharge planning for those in serious mental health crisis.
- e. Revise bail and other jail release guidelines to allow for proper sentencing of repeat offenders, particularly those with substance use disorders.
- f. Lengthen the amount of time that a temporary land use resolution can be enacted in order to facilitate the location of temporary shelters.
- g. Explore revising Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation grant to increase support for public safety needs and camp mitigation activities across a shelter host city.
- h. Explore changes to Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation grant to better support cities with multiple homeless service centers within their boundaries.
- i. Reinstate drug-free zone enhancement to 1000 ft from a school or house of worship, and remove the requirement that the building be occupied.
- j. Reinstate annual safety inspection requirements for recreational vehicles.

3. Other Policy Considerations

- a. Shield cities from lawsuits when disposing of personal items during camp abatements. Balance with more direct clean up notice requirements. Mandate standardization of protocols for encampment removal among all jurisdictions.
- b. Consider jails under a collective asset model in which jails must transfer to neighboring counties before releasing people for overcrowding. Consider a model where counties must hold offenders from other counties while the offender's home county arranges transport.
- c. Increase the number of jail beds in Salt Lake County.
- d. Encourage regional development of residential substance use and mental health treatment beds outside of Salt Lake County to ease the current burden on these resources.
- e. Require all counties to provide some ratio of year-round emergency shelter and housing services in proportion to their population, projected growth, and number of cost-burdened or housing insecure household units. The Point-In-Time Count and each jurisdiction's Moderate Income Housing Plan could also be considered to determine need.
- f. As additional beds come online through campus development, the State Office of Homeless Services could require that sections of HRCs be set aside for people with chronic mental and behavioral health needs, and fund on-site supportive services in accordance.
- g. Adopt and implement the data-sharing goals in the State's Plan to Address Homelessness:
 - i. By 2024, the state of Utah will establish data sharing agreements with at least three systems external to the homeless system of care (e.g., criminal justice, healthcare & human services, workforce, and education).
 - ii. By 2026, the state of Utah will have a data sharing platform accessible to providers who enter into HMIS that provides access to and visibility of system partner data.
 - iii. By 2028, the state of Utah will develop a generalized protocol for organizational and project performance evaluation across multiple systems that work with people experiencing homelessness. Re-evaluation of these protocols will be carried out in 2030.

▶ FOOTNOTES

- 1) Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office. (2024). Corrections: Jail Division. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/sheriff/corrections/jail/>
- 2) Roughly 80% of individuals who entered the Homeless Resource Shelters (emergency shelter system) resolved their experience of homelessness in fewer than 90 days. <https://jobs.utah.gov/homelessness/hard.html>
- 3) Repeat offender arrested after alert citizen calls 911: www.deseret.com/2010/8/10/20133549/repeat-offender-arrested-after-alert-citizen-calls-911/

Serial burglar arrested in Salt Lake City yet again: <https://www.ksl.com/article/51150889/serial-burglar-arrested-in-salt-lake-city-yet-again>

Repeat offender: Man arrested in Salt Lake City 2 times in 1 month: <https://www.abc4.com/news/wasatch-front/repeat-offender-man-arrested-in-salt-lake-city-2-times-in-1-month/>
- 4) The term 'High Utilizer' is the result of providers and partners across the system recognizing that a disproportionately high amount of resources, time, and money, was being spent on this relatively small portion of the homeless population, without any meaningful resolution of the root causes for their homelessness.
- 5) <https://redrock.clarkcountynv.gov/meaningfulchangelv/about-homelessness.html>

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104499/costs-and-offsets-of-providing-supportive-housing-to-break-the-homelessness-jail-cycle_0.pdf
- 6) <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1167451.pdf> 2024-2025 State Winter Shelter Plan <https://governor.utah.gov/press/gov-cox-announces-agreement-with-local-governments-comprehensive-approach-to-homeless-services-as-key-part-of-fy25-budget/> This effort, spearheaded by Governor Cox in his FY25 budget, recognized many gaps in the system and need for more emergency shelter beds. His budget requested \$128M to stabilize shelters and support additional shelter creation.
- 7) <https://jobs.utah.gov/homelessness/homelessnessreport.pdf>
- 8) <https://police.slc.gov/2022/10/10/slcpd-release-updated-crime-control-plan-strategic-plan-reduce-violent-crime/>
- 9) January 1 – December 12, 2024 (SLCPD)
- 10) In some circumstance, the jail may refuse booking a person if they have a medical condition the sheriff's office has identified as grounds for rejection under their policy.
- 11) January 1 – December 12, 2024 (SLCPD)
- 12) <https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/criminal-justice-services/pretrial/>
- 13) <https://corrections.utah.gov/probation-parole/about-app/>
- 14) <https://corrections.utah.gov/probation-parole/about-app/>
- 15) This number includes detectives assigned to VCAT, SIU, and the DEA Metro Drug Task Force.
- 16) In September 2024, the SLCPD held a 30-day public safety enforcement initiative resulting in the arrest of 102 people. This focused approach demonstrates the effectiveness of allocating resources to address specific areas, enhancing safety and reducing crime.
- 17) Calls for service in 2024 totaled 139,000 calls, which was up 5% compared to the previous 3 year average.
- 18) La Vigne, N. G., Lowry, S. S., Markman, J. A., & Dwyer, A. M. (2011). Evaluating the use of public surveillance cameras for crime control and prevention. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 1-152.
- 19) <https://redrock.clarkcountynv.gov/meaningfulchangelv/about-homelessness.html>
- 20) [https://www.commonsestituteus.org/colorado/research/housing-and-our-community/homelessness-in-denver#:~:text=Estimated%20Denver%20Total%20Spending%20on%20Homelessness%20\(2021%E2%80%932023\),expected%20to%20be%20between%20\\$37%2C309%20and%20\\$73%2C450](https://www.commonsestituteus.org/colorado/research/housing-and-our-community/homelessness-in-denver#:~:text=Estimated%20Denver%20Total%20Spending%20on%20Homelessness%20(2021%E2%80%932023),expected%20to%20be%20between%20$37%2C309%20and%20$73%2C450)
- 21) <https://le.utah.gov/interim/2024/pdf/00000304.pdf>



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