Homelessness in the Bear River Region

Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties

Estimating the Extent of the Problem and Identifying Implementable Solutions

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Executive Summary

The scope of homelessness in the Bear River region is more significant than previously recognized. With the most recent Point-in-Time count numbers, it is clear that unsheltered homelessness is a growing concern in the region. Although several components of the homeless service system are currently functioning well in the Bear River region, there are several key components that are entirely missing and/or not operating as effectively as possible. The Bear River region spans rural and micropolitan communities, and the context of homelessness in the region is qualitatively different than it is in the Wasatch Front. The Bear River region currently receives approximately 1.3% of the state’s overall budget for homeless services (~$220,000), and each year the tri-county area contributes significantly more than that dollar amount to fund emergency services primarily in the Salt Lake area through the Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund. Without increased resources, system-level oversight and access to local data, an emphasis on housing affordability for extremely-low-income residents, and housing-oriented services, the Bear River region may be heading for an even more concerning future; wherein homeless families and individuals suffer the ultimate consequences. This is especially true given the economic uncertainty brought on by the global pandemic.

Communities in the Bear River region have long been resourceful, creative, and committed to serving the most vulnerable. Service providers in the region prioritize the needs of clients and do so on a shoestring budget. While some service delivery components are present and functional, each should be expanded to more effectively meet client needs. Making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring will require a reorientation to housing first principles and housing-focused services as well as attending to two major gaps in services: (1) permanent supportive housing; and (2) emergency shelter options for individuals and families who have not experienced domestic violence.

Although the Bear River region has had an operating Local Homeless Coordinating Committee (LHCC) since LHCCs were introduced in Utah more than a decade ago, the Bear River LHCC (BRLHCC) has lacked a common understanding, vision, and mutually agreed upon goals and objectives. A clear weakness in the region is the absence of systems level oversight and planning – without this, programs and projects that address homelessness are limited in effectiveness and impact. To date, local and county governments have been unengaged in the work of the BRLHCC and the wider community lacks an understanding of the scope of the problem. With a reorientation that is data-driven and grounded in systems thinking, the BRLHCC is poised to make significant progress toward the goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. As the BRLHCC reconfigures its structure, leadership, and charge, it will be positioned to coordinate with local and county governments and community partners to invest in the regions homeless services system.

This plan provides a structural framework that includes five recommended focus areas and specific action items for each strategy. It is a critical time to be involved in homeless services. By using proven strategies, the Bear River region will be able to maximize its limited resources and prioritizing the outcomes of those individuals and families they are invested in serving.
Key Findings and Takeaways

- Approximately 16.5% of Bear River Region resident households earn less than $25,000 per year.
- 19% of renter households and 6.5% of homeowner households are forced to pay more than 50% of their monthly income for housing costs (severely cost-burdened), making it extremely difficult to manage other financial obligations or weather even minor financial crises.
  - If these households could connect to units that require closer to 30% or less than their monthly income, they would be much more able to maintain stable housing in the face of financial emergencies.
- Nearly 1 in 4 Bear River Region resident households (24.5%) are forced to pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs (cost-burdened).
  - Among renters, 23.4% are cost-burdened and among homeowners, 19.4% are cost-burdened making both renters and homeowners susceptible to housing insecurity.
- A mismatch of housing affordability and availability in the Bear River Region contributes to increases in housing instability and homelessness in the area.
- Unsheltered and sheltered homelessness is on the rise in the Bear River Region, growing at a significantly greater pace than the wider State, the Balance of State, and our closest comparison, Iron County.
- Significant gaps in the homeless services delivery system are taxing existing programming, increasing community cost, and prolonging homelessness for households that otherwise may be able to rapidly end their homelessness.
Part I. State of the Problem

Introduction

Homelessness in Bear River Region: Estimating the Extent of the Problem and Identifying Implementable Solutions is a document with two primary parts. Part 1 lays the foundation for understanding the scope and context of homelessness and housing instability in the Bear River Region. It draws upon literature in the field, available data sources, and community input. Ideally Part 1 provides a common understanding for the Local Homeless Coordinating Committee and local community leaders to help establish a common scope and eventually a common vision. Part 1 also identifies additional gaps in available data and suggests steps for further access and analysis. Part 2 is further informed by best practice in the field of homeless services and system performance and builds upon the information gathered in Part 1 to create an actionable, strategic plan for the BRAG area. This proposed plan will be brought before the Local Homeless Coordinating Committee for feedback and adoption.

Dr. Lucero completed a review of available data sources including the American Communities Survey Data (ACS) for demographic and economic indicators. Additional sources were used for housing and homelessness data specific to the Bear River Region and State of Utah, including the 2018 State of Utah Affordable Housing Report, the 2019 State of Utah Annual Report on Homelessness, the Department of Workforce Services Homelessness Data Dashboard Report, and other reports from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that are either publicly posted by the state or that have been pulled by local service providers. Key stakeholder interviews were an integral part of contextualizing data and understanding community process.
The Bear River Region spans 3 counties in Utah’s Northernmost part of the state, Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties. Together they have a combined population of 177,687. With the largest city in the tri-county area, Logan, having a population 50,478 according to 2018 American Community Survey estimates. Although Brigham City, the county seat of Box Elder County is located just 25 miles from Ogden-Clearfield Metro Area (population 652,744), the remaining geography of the tri-county area can be characterized as rural and/or geographically isolated from major metro areas. Most available human services in the tri-county area are located in Logan City, the central city in the larger Cache Valley which is situated in Cache County. See table 1 for further demographic details.

Table 1. Demographic Profiles of Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Box Elder</th>
<th>Cache</th>
<th>Rich</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>53,001</td>
<td>122,336</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>177,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Alone</td>
<td>49,365</td>
<td>110,323</td>
<td>2,282</td>
<td>161,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Alone</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native Alone</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Alone</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race Alone</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>4,511</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3,004</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic or Latino</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>48,089</td>
<td>109,303</td>
<td>2,094</td>
<td>159,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>4,912</td>
<td>13,033</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>18,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Household Size</strong></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of particular note is the economic landscape of the tri-county area. Despite having record low unemployment, median household incomes in the area are substantially lower than the wider state of Utah. In addition, Logan City’s median household income is significantly lower than the median household income within its county. Median incomes are further stratified by renter vs. homeowner status. Renters in the Bear River Region earn just 46% of homeowner annual median earnings. See Figure 1 for a breakdown of city, county, and state median incomes in context.
HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) is the median family income calculated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for each jurisdiction, in order to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. HAMFI is not necessarily the same as other calculations of median incomes due to a series of adjustments that are made by HUD. HAMFI will be referenced throughout this document, and HAMFI thresholds for the Logan, UT-ID Metropolitan Statistical Area are shown in table 2 below. As can be seen in table 3, nearly one-fifth of renters in each county make less than 30% of the HAMFI or are considered extremely low-income. For these households, access to affordable housing is crucial.

Table 2. 2019 HUD Area Median Family Income Limits for Logan, UT-ID MSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in Family</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Low Income (30%)</td>
<td>$14,500</td>
<td>$16,910</td>
<td>$21,330</td>
<td>$25,750</td>
<td>$30,170</td>
<td>$34,590</td>
<td>$39,010</td>
<td>$43,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Income (50%)</td>
<td>$24,100</td>
<td>$27,550</td>
<td>$31,000</td>
<td>$34,400</td>
<td>$37,200</td>
<td>$39,950</td>
<td>$42,700</td>
<td>$45,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income (80%)</td>
<td>$38,550</td>
<td>$44,050</td>
<td>$49,550</td>
<td>$55,050</td>
<td>$59,500</td>
<td>$63,900</td>
<td>$68,300</td>
<td>$72,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Average Share of Renter Households by Income Group in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt;30% HAMFI</th>
<th>30-50% HAMFI</th>
<th>50-80% HAMFI</th>
<th>&gt;80% HAMFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HUD: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2009 thru 2015 [Data]
Housing Affordability

What to Look for in this Section…

- Lack of affordable housing increases risk for homelessness due to high cost-burdens for low and extremely low income groups.
- Current average hourly wages among renters in all 3 counties are inadequate for fair market rent rates.
- Extremely low-income groups (0-30% HAMFI) are disproportionately housing cost-burdened.
- Cache County has a shortage of 1,155 affordable housing units and a deficit of 2,110 available units for extremely low-income renter households (0-30% HAMFI) and 1,315 for low income renter households (30-50% HAMFI).
- Box Elder and Rich Counties have a deficit of 395 and 11 available units for extremely low-income renter households (0-30% HAMFI).
- Housing trends suggest that the shortage of affordable and available rental housing will worsen for extremely low-income households.

The issue of homelessness must be viewed in its larger context – specifically within local housing markets that influence risk for becoming homeless. Over the past years, the entire State of Utah has experienced a surge in demand for housing, and renter households are growing at a faster pace than owner households. With these market changes, rent rates have rapidly increased and subsequently, lower income households are disproportionately affected. Housing insecurity can lead to numerous other challenges, including getting behind on rent or mortgage, eviction, and ultimately the loss of housing. Data presented in tables 4 through 7 below are adapted from the State of Utah's 2018 Affordable Housing Report.

It is important to note that Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are not the same measure as Median Gross Rents estimated by the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). The 2018 ACS estimates Median Gross Rent for the tri-county area as $725. This is a figure captures all rental units in the area and estimates the median point. FMRs, on the other hand, are HUD thresholds that are set for rental units of different bedroom sizes in a given geographic area. FMRs are typically lower than what real market demands necessitate but are used as a method to save costs in housing programs. Table 4 presents fair market rent (FMR) amounts in the Bear River Region for the most recent year data is available. For low-income and extremely low-income households, monthly rent subsumes a greater portion of monthly income, and thus renters can easily get behind in other bills and are then forced to make difficult decisions regarding what to pay.
and when. Figure 2 illustrates one community member’s struggle to stay financially afloat and maintain housing in the face of family crises.

Figure 2. The Domino Effect

I mean we live paycheck to paycheck anyway. But we were managing OK staying on top of things, despite my son’s disabilities, and me still looking for a part-time job, we were holding on. Then my husband was in a car accident, and missed a few weeks of work, we’re not sure when or if insurance is going to pay. But without that paycheck, things started to spiral, I didn’t pay all of our electric bill, just part of it, part of the gas, because I knew rent was our priority. We were still $85 short on rent. And that got us late fees, those kept adding up. Then we got late fees on our utility bills. It was like this domino effect - one domino was hit and it sent the rest of them tumbling down. We are so close to being evicted, and the thing is if I would’ve reached out for help in the beginning it would’ve only been $125. But now that I have allowed all of this to happen we owe $725 in rent [and $190 in utilities], most of that being late fees.

- Bear River Region Community Member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-BR</th>
<th>1-BR</th>
<th>2-BR</th>
<th>3-BR</th>
<th>4-BR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>$473</td>
<td>$544</td>
<td>$720</td>
<td>$1,004</td>
<td>$1,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$564</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>$1,008</td>
<td>$1,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>$528</td>
<td>$605</td>
<td>$776</td>
<td>$1,070</td>
<td>$1,218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5 shows the estimated hourly wage for the average renter in each county juxtaposed with the needed hourly wage for a fair market rent 2-bedroom unit. As can be seen, there are significant discrepancies between columns, particularly in Rich county where rental units are more sparse and low-wage work is driven by the seasonal, tourism economy. These data suggest that average renters in the Bear River Region are in need of second jobs to support the cost of rent.
Table 5. Renter Income vs. Income Required to Afford HUD’s 2019 FMR in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimated $/hr: Avg Renter</th>
<th>Needed $/hr: FMR 2-BR Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>$12.28</td>
<td>$13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>$9.91</td>
<td>$13.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>$7.23</td>
<td>$14.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6 and 7 present data on HAMFI by county and in the context of cost-burden for housing. In the Bear River Region the vast majority of these households (76% to 99% depending on county) are cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 30% of their income on rent. Among extremely low-income households (30% HAMFI), 55-91% are severely cost burdened, meaning those households spend more than 50% of their monthly income for housing.

Table 6. Average Severity of Housing Cost Burden by Share of Income Group in Box Elder, Cache and Rich Counties, 2009-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cost-Burdened</th>
<th>Severely Cost-Burdened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;30% HAMFI</td>
<td>30-50% HAMFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HUD: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2009 thru 2015 [Data]

Table 7 shows a significant deficit of affordable housing units at the 0-30% HAMFI threshold in Cache County, though three counties carried a deficit in available housing units at the 0-30% HAMFI threshold and Cache County had the same deficit at the 30-50% HAMFI threshold. According to the State’s Report on Housing Affordability, Cache County is 1 of 5 counties in Utah has the greatest affordable and available moderate-income rental housing needs per 100 renter households in Utah.

Table 7. Deficit of Affordable and Available Rental Housing in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Affordable Housing Units</th>
<th>Available Housing Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;30% HAMFI</td>
<td>30-50% HAMFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>-1,155</td>
<td>1,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Extent of Homelessness in the Bear River Region

What to Look for in this Section…

- PIT count data show that sheltered and unsheltered homelessness is increasing at a greater magnitude in the Bear River Region compared to the larger Balance of State and its closest LHCC comparison, Iron County.
- Despite an overall decrease in total homelessness in the State of Utah, the Bear River Region has experienced a 195.5% increase in total homelessness over the past 3 years.
- Estimates from a community-based survey in the tri-county area indicate that lifetime prevalence rates of homelessness are significantly higher in the tri-county area (3.5%) when compared to the larger State of Utah (0.5%) – defined as having slept at a shelter because one had nowhere else to stay.

Geographic Scale

There are two geographic scales that are important to understand concerning homelessness in the State of Utah: (1) Continuum of Care (CoC); and (2) Local Homeless Coordinating Committees (LHCC). The CoC is a geographically bound regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) streamlines funding application processes through CoCs. CoCs are tasked with tracking and managing the homeless community in their area, including selecting and maintaining a compliant homeless management information system (HMIS). In Utah, there are 3 CoCs: (1) Salt Lake County CoC; (2) Mountainland CoC; and (3) Balance of State CoC. In total, there are 13 LHCCs across the state. Within the Balance of State CoC, there are 11 LHCCs spanning 25 counties in Utah. Each of these LHCC areas are distinct, but they are considered one collaborative CoC. See figure 3 for a visual depiction of LHCC areas.
Gathering Data on Homelessness

Like any other field, the use of data is core to defining the scope of the problem and tracking the success of related interventions. There are a variety of ways to gather data about homelessness and several pre-existing mechanisms for doing so; the key to effective use is to understand the strengths and limitations of each source.

The Point-in-Time Count (PIT)
The Point-in-Time Count is comprised of a sheltered and unsheltered count of homeless persons on a single night in January. The PIT is limited in its ability to estimate the scope of homelessness since it only captures a snapshot in time, does not account for alternate seasons in the year, and likely does not include all homeless individuals who are unsheltered.

Nevertheless it is the only measure in the Bear River Region for unsheltered homelessness and provides the benefit of a single measure that includes participation from all homeless service provider agencies in the area.

Point-in-Time Count data are collected in LHCC jurisdiction areas. According to the State of Utah Annual Report on Homelessness 2019, the Bear River Region (Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties) identified 65 homeless individuals (61 sheltered, 4 unsheltered). Sheltered individuals in the Bear River Region are counted at CAPSA and New Hope domestic violence shelters. Since 2017, the Bear River Region has witnessed a 196% increase in total homelessness, compared to the entire state of Utah which has experienced a 2.3% decrease in total homelessness. Looking at CoC comparisons, it appears that while PIT
homeless counts have decreased over the past three years in the Salt Lake City and Mountainland CoCs, counts have generally increased in the Balance of State, where rural challenges related to homelessness are nuanced and receive substantially less state funding. See table 8 for PIT counts over time for the State of Utah, Balance of State, Bear River Region, and its closest comparison, Iron County. It is important to note that PIT count numbers for the Bear River Region in 2020 increased drastically. State reports will not be available until August, 2020; however, the BRLHCC PIT Team reported an unsheltered count of 43 adults and 16 minor children, a count nearly 15 times higher than historical highs.

Table 8. 2017 – 2019 Point in Time Count Data by LHCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State of Utah</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>2574</td>
<td>2456</td>
<td>2390</td>
<td>-7.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>40.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2865</td>
<td>2876</td>
<td>2798</td>
<td>-2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bear River</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>177.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>400.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>195.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iron County</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance of State</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>29.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>73.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>36.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State of Utah Annual Report on Homelessness, 2019

*Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS):*

The Utah Homeless Management Information System (UHMIS) is a statewide database used to track homeless program and system performance. It utilizes a single client record, meaning when information is gathered about a client in one area of the state, it is tied to the client’s record should they relocate and seek additional services in another area of the state. To be a credible HMIS, independent HMIS implementations must keep federally mandated standards and data elements. This consistency allows for comparison across various CoCs and is used to allocate competitive homeless funding. With proper geo-coding the same data used on the CoC level can be extracted at the LHCC, regional, or state level. Good quality data in HMIS allows communities to see program-level performance reports for each HMIS-user program. It can also compile that programmatic data to evaluate a systemic response to homelessness. State and CoC-level data are reported through the State’s Homeless Data Dashboard available at jobs.utah.gov/housing/homelessness/homeless data.html.

In comparison to the PIT, HMIS data allows communities to look at persons served over the course of a season or year rather than a single night. However, HMIS has limitations for community planning because domestic violence service providers are precluded from
entering data. In the Bear River Region, this excludes a significant portion of homeless services data. HMIS-generated data is further detailed in the Homeless Service System & Performance section of this document and additional limitations for using HMIS these data are referenced.

**DV Comparable Databases**
Due to the added layer of protection often needed for survivors of domestic violence, Domestic Violence Service Providers are legally prevented from entering any personally identifying information for the people they serve into HMIS. Shelter and housing programs administered by domestic violence service providers that receive federal or state funding for homelessness are however required to maintain an HMIS-comparable database. Comparable data has been requested from CAPSA and New Hope agencies for use in this report. Though many communities have not yet found ways to integrate data from a DV comparable database, a comparable database would theoretically allow a community to compile a more complete picture of their local systems response to homelessness.

**Coordinated Entry Data**
In the Utah Balance of State CoC (which includes the Bear River Region), service providers use the same data platform for coordinated entry as they do for HMIS. Through coordination with the Utah Domestic Violence Coalition during the coordinated entry build, special processes were put in place to protect the identity of survivors and avoid the communication and input of personally identifying information. Coordinated entry data pertains to the community’s process to assess and place households into housing based on need and access to all available resources. Coordinated entry assessment data offers a unique look into the acuity of those individuals and households seeking housing assistance. Process measure points help a community to identify whether each agency is fully participating in the process and how they can improve their approach to quickly resolving a household’s homelessness.

**Additional Sources The TCI Annual Survey**
Several communities have conducted additional studies or drawn from other data sets in an attempt to give an even more comprehensive picture of homelessness or community attitudes toward it. The Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI) survey on homelessness is one such example in the Bear River Region. The TCI, housed in Utah State University’s Social Work Program, conducts an annual survey in collaboration with community and human service stakeholders. The topic of the survey shifts from year to year, but generally focuses on pressing social issues identified by stakeholders. In 2018, the TCI Annual Survey focused on the community’s attitudes, perceptions, and experiences related to homelessness. With substantive input from elected officials and various human service providers from Bear River Association of Governments, Department of Workforce Services, CAPSA (local domestic violence shelter), Neighborhood Housing Solutions, and Quality Youth Services, TCI developed and fielded a community-based survey in the Bear River Tri-County Area.

**TCI Annual Survey**

**Methods and Sample**

In total, 880 surveys were completed by community members in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties, the majority of which were
Cache County residents (n=730). The average annual household income for the sample was $52,796 with an average participant age of 37 years old. Just under half of participants were currently homeowners (49%) and just under one-third were college students. It is important to note that in general, the sample was less racially/ethnically diverse and higher income than the general Bear River Region population. In all reporting, college student samples are compared to non-college student samples to ensure wider community representation. A full summary of sampling methods and descriptive results can be found here. Below is a summary of community members’ reports of their own experience with various types of homelessness/housing instability.

Key Findings
Survey participants were asked questions related to various experiences related to homelessness including residential instability, eviction, sleeping at a friend or family members’ because there was not another option, sleeping somewhere not fit for human habitation, sleeping in a homeless shelter, and worry over becoming homeless. In the full sample, at some point in their lives, 5% of participants had been evicted, 23% had missed their rent or mortgage payment, more than 1 in 4 had slept at a family member’s because they had nowhere else to stay, 1 in 5 had slept at a friend’s because they had nowhere else to stay, almost 1 in 10 had slept somewhere not fit for human habitation because they had nowhere else to stay, 3.4% had stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, and 23% had worried about becoming homeless. See figure 4 below for comparisons between college student and non-college student samples. Refer to Appendix B for a full breakdown of 1 year, 5 year, and ever estimates.
Utah’s 2016 Comprehensive Report on Homelessness indicated that 11.7% of Utahns lived in poverty, and among those, 0.5% would end up entering the homeless service system. According to the community-based estimates above, the number of Bear River Region residents who have, at some point, entered the formal homeless service system is 7 times higher than the statewide estimate. As noted above, this is a community-based sample, surveys having been collected using stratified random neighborhood sampling, social media recruitment, and community and religious outreach. Further investigation into potential selection bias showed that the lifetime prevalence rates for experiencing homelessness did not change when the sub samples based on data collection methods were compared. In other words, the random sample (primarily a Logan sample), showed lifetime prevalence rates of 3.5% for having stayed in an emergency shelter and 9.4% for having stayed somewhere not fit for human habitation.
Funding Services in Bear River Region

What to Look for in this Section…

- The Bear River Region has three main organizations that receive funding for homeless services: BRAG, CAPSA, and New Hope Crisis Center.
- The Balance of State CoC received 1.8M in FY18 funding; BRAG receives $133,556, or 7.3% of this total award.
- Utah’s State Homeless Coordinating Committee (SHCC) allocated $17,391,238 in FY20, of which the Bear River Region (BRAG and CAPSA) received $219,337 for homeless services, or 1.3% of the State’s overall budget.
- Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties currently contribute $342,015 to the State of Utah’s Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund, which is awarded to other communities in Utah who meet the minimum shelter bed count.
- Numerous funding streams have not yet been accessed by the Bear River Region, but a strategic funding plan could lead to a significant increase in homeless service system funding.

Lack of funding and other funding challenges are often reported as barriers to improving service systems. Agencies in the Bear River Region have worked hard to utilize and increase available funding streams. In order to operate, each agency cobbles together a variety of funding streams and assumes responsibility for any unique reporting and compliance requirements. Although a full analysis of the dollars used toward homeless services in the Bear River Region still needs to be completed, this section outlines the primary funding streams dedicated to homeless services and housing.

State Homeless Coordinating Committee (SHCC) Allocation

The annual RFP pools four state and federal funding sources: Federal Emergency Solutions Grant (CFDA# 14.231), Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (CFDA# 93.558), Homeless to Housing (Utah Code 35A-8-505, 604, and 605), and the Pamela Atkinson Homeless Trust (Utah Code 35A-8-602 and 603). The funding is allocated by the State Homeless Coordinating Committee and administered by the Housing and Community Development Division in the Utah Department of Workforce Services. At present, the Bear River Region receives $219,337. These dollars fund Rapid Re-Housing, Motel Vouchers, Diversion, and CAPSA’s shelter. Funding allocations for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 are presented in table 9 below. For a more detailed look at SHCC funding allocations by LHCC areas, please refer to Appendix C.
Table 9. SHCC - HCD Homelessness Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY19 Total</th>
<th>FY20 Request</th>
<th>FY20 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAG</td>
<td>$108,609</td>
<td>$194,621</td>
<td>$124,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversion</td>
<td>$67,062</td>
<td>$63,889</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Re-Housing</td>
<td>$85,787</td>
<td>$44,720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter (Motel Voucher)</td>
<td>$32,147</td>
<td>$16,074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>$9,625</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPSA</td>
<td>$94,654</td>
<td>$137,436</td>
<td>$94,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>$111,682</td>
<td>$82,638</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Re-Housing</td>
<td>$13,260</td>
<td>$12,016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>$12,494</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition

The Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates dedicated funding for homeless services through the Emergency Solutions Grant (referenced above) and the Continuum of Care Program Competition. The Emergency Solutions Grant is allocated to entitlement jurisdictions by formula and is currently received by Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, and the State of Utah. The Continuum of Care Program Competition is allocated based on CoC score. It is evaluated in two phases: 1) through a local competition internal to each CoC and 2) through a national competition where each CoC is ranked and funding is allocated based on ranking. The Collaborative Applicant (the Housing and Community Development Division) of the Balance of State submits an annual consolidated application, representing the 25 Utah in the Balance of State geography. The application includes a CoC-internal rank and review of each individual project application submitted. Individual projects are then awarded based on the CoC’s total score. Table 10 below presents Utah CoC award comparisons by funding component for the fiscal year 2018. As can be seen, the Balance of State receives 16.7% of total HUD dollars allocated to CoCs in Utah. Of that 1.8M the Bear River Region receives $133,556 funded directly to BRAG, making up 7.3% of the total Balance of State award.

Table 10. HUD CoC 2018 Awards by Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balance of State</th>
<th>Mountainland</th>
<th>Salt Lake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Supportive Housing</td>
<td>$649,360</td>
<td>$974,858</td>
<td>$6,387,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Re-Housing</td>
<td>$992,425</td>
<td>$137,095</td>
<td>$732,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint TH-RRH</td>
<td>$32,164</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$329,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMIS</td>
<td>$80,640</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>$223,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoC Planning Project</td>
<td>$62,629</td>
<td>$50,465</td>
<td>$214,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,817,218</td>
<td>$1,198,418</td>
<td>$7,887,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-dashboard-reports/?filter-Year=2018&filter_State=UT&filter_CoC=&program=CoC&group=Dash
Other Sources that could be Coordinated for Homeless Services Funding

Portions of various other funding sources may be used for homeless services in the Bear River Region. Each source should be reviewed as part of a local funding profile. When evaluating such sources the LHCC should find out what portion of that resource is already dedicated to homeless services, how much of that resource is allowable to be dedicated to homeless services, allowable activities and length of service under that funding source, and whether it can be re-distributed or increased to meet an identified need. The following is a list of funding sources included on the 2015 LHCC funding profiles created by the State Community Services Office. While some of these funds may no longer be applicable and there may other resources for inclusion, this list bears value as a starting place.

• Community Development Block Grant
• Community Services Block Grant
• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
• Emergency Food Network, Qualified Emergency Food Agencies Fund,
• Social Services Block Grant
• Earned Income Tax Credit
• Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS
• Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund
• Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund – Tenant based rental assistance
• Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness
• Federal Emergency Management Agency-emergency food and shelter
• Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grants
• Housing Choice Vouchers
• VASH Vouchers
• Supportive Services for Veteran Families
• Low Income Tax Credits
• Foundation and private funding sources

Another possible source that deserves a closer look is the Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund. In 2018, the Utah Legislature passed the Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund bill (SB 235; revised in 2019 as HB 203). This bill requires cities and counties without emergency shelter services to transfer a portion of their sales and use tax revenue to a state-managed homeless mitigation fund. Cities and counties with emergency shelters that meet the minimum bed requirements according to their class are able to apply for funding, but cities and counties without emergency shelter are not eligible to use these funds. According to state records, the City of Logan alone is paying nearly $100,000 and Cache County is paying upwards of a quarter of a million dollars ($235,279.99) to the homeless mitigation fund, which is primarily funding homeless services in the greater Salt Lake Area. As we have historically given bus tickets to homeless individuals who have not experienced domestic violence to access emergency shelter at Lantern House in Ogden, it is appropriate that we pitch in to fund the services we are leaning on. However, this is not an ideal solution, and these dollars could be spent more effectively in our community to prevent and respond to homelessness. Refer to table 11 for a breakdown of Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund Deductions and Awards. Note that cities with required emergency shelter bed counts based on county class are not required to pay into the mitigation fund. These same cities are eligible to apply for funds to operate their emergency shelters. However, in these instances, remaining cities and unincorporated areas in the county still pay toward the fund.
Table 11. Homeless Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund Deductions and Awards, 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total Deduction</th>
<th>FY 2020 Awards</th>
<th>FY2021 Awards</th>
<th>Cities with Emergency Shelter(s) that meet required bed count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td>$12,082.52</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>$102,211.34</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>$235,279.99</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon</td>
<td>$38,308.98</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daggett</td>
<td>$1,935.68</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>$656,834.11</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duchesne</td>
<td>$37,796.13</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emery</td>
<td>$19,014.41</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield</td>
<td>$9,586.44</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>$18,275.03</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron*</td>
<td>$36,309.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cedar City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juab</td>
<td>$21,280.23</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kane</td>
<td>$14,304.74</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millard</td>
<td>$24,302.58</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>$25,121.88</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>$4,523.91</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake***</td>
<td>$1,618,466.22</td>
<td>$4,333,047.00</td>
<td>$3,528,880.88</td>
<td>Midvale, SLC, South SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanpete</td>
<td>$56,781.84</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevier*</td>
<td>$25,618.79</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Richfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>$77,714.95</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooele</td>
<td>$127,685.15</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uintah*</td>
<td>$46,957.69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$49,488.75</td>
<td>Vernal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>$1,121,436.54</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasatch</td>
<td>$60,767.78</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington*</td>
<td>$153,852.27</td>
<td></td>
<td>$243,750.00</td>
<td>St. George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>$5,128.83</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber*</td>
<td>$311,590.66</td>
<td>$398,273.00</td>
<td>$961,576.00</td>
<td>Ogden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,837,383.98</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘*’ indicates number of homeless shelters within specified county that received mitigation fund awards.
An effective homeless response system requires system-level leadership, planning, and evaluation and is much more effective at responding to community needs on the whole than the sum of its individual parts. System performance measures combine data across programs to evaluate how the community is doing in its response to homelessness. Local planning efforts should include these measures as a means to understand the efficacy of a changed program or new intervention. However, a full continuum of services needs to be in place to allow the community to maximize its system-level response. The components of this continuum will be outlined later in this section.
System Performance Measures

HUD reviews the impact of its funds on reducing homelessness based on 7 key system performance measures (SPMs). SPMs are tracked by UHMIS and reported at the CoC level. See figure 5.

HUD places emphasis on measures: 1, 7, and 2 to evaluate the system on the most effective practices currently known. Taken together, the SPMs help communities look at how they are reducing the number of people becoming homeless (Measures 2 and 5) and helping people becoming quickly and stably housed (Measures 1, 4, and 7).

Figure 5. HUD System Performance Measures

In 2019, the Utah Legislature mandated Utah’s Department of Workforce Services Housing and Community Development Division to draft a new strategic plan. This plan is in line with the federal strategic plan and introduces benchmarks in line with figure 2 above. The federal plan has increased strategic focus on (1) increasing Affordable Housing Opportunities; (2) Strengthening Prevention and Diversion Practices; (3) Creating Solutions for Unsheltered Homelessness; (4) Tailoring Strategies for Rural Communities; (5) Helping People Who Exit Homelessness to Find Employment Success; and (6) Learning from the Expertise of People with Lived Experience. The federal plan defines success as a community’s capacity to improve assessment, intervention, and connection to resources (outlined in Figure 6).
Congruent with the federal plan, the state’s strategic goals are to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Priority performance indicators, system performance baseline measures, and benchmarks for each strategic goal are presented below in Table 12.

Table 12. State of Utah’s Strategic Goals, SPMs, and Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
<th>Priority Performance</th>
<th>SPM Baseline</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Homelessness in Utah Rare</td>
<td>Fewer first-time individuals who experience homelessness</td>
<td>Number of persons who become homeless for the first time</td>
<td>Reduce by 10 percent from the preceding fiscal year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Homelessness Brief in Utah</td>
<td>Fewer days spent in emergency beds or shelter</td>
<td>Length of time persons remain homeless</td>
<td>Fewer than 20 days or 10 percent reduction from preceding fiscal year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Homelessness in Utah Non-Recurring</td>
<td>Fewer persons returning to homelessness, and more persons successfully retaining housing</td>
<td>(1) The extent to which persons who exit homelessness to permanent housing destinations return to homelessness; and (2) Successful placement in, or retention of, permanent housing</td>
<td>(1) Reduce by 10 percent from preceding fiscal year; and (2) Utah’s average meets or exceeds FFY17 Wester CoC average of 93 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Homeless Coordinating Committees are “key to the success of the Utah BOS CoC. The BOS CoC relies heavily upon LHCCs to oversee strategic planning efforts, review performance, and communicate to CoC staff and leadership. LHCCs collaborate locally with consolidated planning efforts and their responsibilities include:

- Holding local meetings (open to all stakeholders on at least a quarterly basis) to address local needs and strategic planning, including funding opportunities. LHCCs will also address BOS CoC strategic planning priorities.
- Conducting outreach into community to make sure LHCC is presentative and inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Appointing a Coordinated Assessment lead to guide local effort and participate in the CoC coordinated assessment workgroup.
- Appointing a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count lead to guide local effort and participate in the CoC PIT workgroup.
- Appointing a Domestic Violence representative to guide local efforts.
- Nominating a director to the BOS CoC Board. If elected, this nominee, along with the Coordinated Assessment, PIT lead and DV representative, constitute the 4 LHCC’s voting members for the BOS CoC.
- Annually submitting updated membership list and attendance to the Collaborative Applicant.
- Attending BOS quarterly meetings and annual strategic planning meeting.\(^1\)

LHCCs should use these goals, measures, and benchmarks presented above to create their own strategies to address homeless in their communities that are relevant and appropriate for the needs of their community. A major limitation in the BoS relates to data tracking, reporting, and use. Because SPMs are reported at the BoS level on the State of Utah’s Homelessness Data Dashboard, it is difficult for homeless service providers to use this resource for data-driven decision-making. In addition, not all participating homeless service agencies (e.g., CAPSA and New Hope) enter data in HMIS, making system overview data and other Data Dashboard features ineffective at telling the complete data story of the Bear River Region’s homelessness service system.

The following charts visualize the most recent three years of system-level performance for all HMIS- participating agencies in the BRLHCC (BRAG only). SPM reports were run with assistance from the State office, and comparisons were made with national averages, and CoCs in Utah where applicable.

### SPM 1. Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless

Measure 1 is not reported by the state because it is connected to homeless service systems with formal emergency services.

### SPM 2. Returns to Homelessness

**Desired Outcome:** Reduction in the percent of persons who return to homelessness.

The percentage of returns to homelessness among those who exited the system to permanent housing destinations is consistently lower than national and CoC comparisons though the trendline is increasing, showing more folks returning to homelessness within 12 and 24 months.

Higher rates of return to homelessness within 12 months are likely a result of inadequate supportive services. Higher rates of returns within 2 years are likely more related to the lack of affordable housing and other potential economic or environmental factors. See figures 7 and 8.

---

\(^1\) Utah Balance of State Continuum of Care Policies and Procedures, 2018
Figure 7. Returns to Homelessness in 12 Months

Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018

Figure 8. Returns to Homelessness in 2 years

Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018
### SPM 3. Number of People Experiencing Homelessness

**Desired Outcome:** Reduction in the number of persons who are homeless.

SPM 3 shows the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness as recorded in HMIS on the federal fiscal year. The overall trend for unsheltered and sheltered homelessness in the Bear River Region is increasing. Included in figure 9 is the preliminary unsheltered homeless count for 2020 (not yet verified by the state). The trend of increasing homelessness is consistent with both the State Homelessness Data Dashboard and PIT data. Refer back to table 8 for PIT comparisons by CoC and relevant LHCCs.

![Figure 9. Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Bear River Region](image)

*Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018*

### SPM 4. Employment and Income Growth

**Desired Outcome:** Increase in the percent of adults who gain or increase employment or non-employment cash income over time.

Figures 10 and 11 show the percent of housing program participants who exited during the reporting period with increased income from the time they entered the program. SPM4a shows the percent of adults with increased *earned* income at exit where SPM4b shows the percent of adults with increased *total* income at exit. The blue line represents BRLHCC performance and the gray line represents national averages.
Though prior year performance is generally higher than national averages, the recent downturn in performance is concerning; this is likely connected to the loss of federal (CABHI) funding and high caseloads.

Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018

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**Figure 10. % of Adults who Increased Earned Income**

![Graph showing % of Adults who Increased Earned Income from 2017 to 2019 for BRAG and National. BRAG data shows a decrease from 2018 to 2019, whereas National data remains relatively stable.](image)

**Figure 11. % of Adults who Increased Total Income**

![Graph showing % of Adults who Increased Total Income from 2017 to 2019 for BRAG and National. BRAG data shows a decline from 2017 to 2019, while National data remains consistent.](image)

Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018
SPM 5. Number of People Experiencing Homelessness for the First Time

**Desired Outcome:** Reduction in the number of persons who become homeless for the first time.

The trendline is going in the right direction, with an overall reduction of the percentage of people who become homeless for the first time. However, it should be noted that the vast discrepancy between BRAG and National averages are likely due to internal policies that have, until now, prohibited individuals and families from accessing homeless services a second time within a 5 year time frame. See figure 12.

![Figure 12. % of People without a Prior Entry to the Homeless System](image)

Sources: HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018

SPM 6. Homeless Prevention and Housing Placement of Persons Defined by Category 3 of HUD’s Homeless Definition in CoC Program-funded Projects

Measure 6 is limited to a certain program type that is not currently operating in the BRLHCC.

SPM 7a. Successful Placement from Street Outreach

SPM 7a is difficult to evaluate because there is not currently a formal street outreach program and the outreach that does occur does not have consistent data-entry practices in the Bear River Region. Outcomes should improve somewhat as street outreach formalizes and becomes more housing-focused in its approach.
### SPM 7b. Successful Placement In or Retention of Permanent Housing

**Desired Outcome:** Increase in the percent of persons who exit to or retain permanent housing.

SPM 7b1 looks at successful exits to permanent housing from emergency shelter (ES), transitional housing (TH) and rapid rehousing programs (RRH). Since BRLHCC does not operate an emergency shelter system outside of its DV shelters, there are not reported data for this SPM.

SPM 7b2 looks at positive exits from permanent housing programs (other than RRH) or successful retention in a permanent housing program. The most recent sharp decrease is of particular concern and could be related to the loss of CABHI funding or reflect a data quality issue.

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![Figure 13. % of Successful Exits to Permanent Housing](image)

**Sources:** HMIS System Performance Measures, National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2018

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### Analyzing Performance

The brief analysis above focuses on trends over time, comparisons to national and CoC performance, and a broader community analysis of gaps and barriers where applicable. The BRLHCC should conduct a data quality analysis for each of these SPMs; consider additional types of analysis; and use performance data to optimize existing programs and funds and strategically invest new resources. Step Four in the HUD System Performance Improvement Briefs: Data Quality and Analysis for System Performance.
Improvement walks through each measure with specific suggestions for data quality assessment and suggestions for performance analysis for measures 1, 2, and 7 (p. 8-14). A sample of analysis types and questions are included in a table on page 6 of that brief.

**Components of an Effective Homeless Response System**

An effective homeless response system is made up of a continuum of services that will quickly identify persons who are experiencing homelessness and connect them to whatever is needed to quickly resolve their homelessness. The combination of these components may look different in different communities, but the primary functions of each must be met to meet system goals. Included within that continuum of services are: 1) coordinated entry, 2) prevention and diversion, 3) street outreach, 4) emergency shelter, 5) transitional housing, and 6) permanent supportive housing. Each of these service components should be evaluated on an ongoing basis according to its type, its participants and its contribution to system performance. See figure 14.

Figure 14. Components of an Effective Homeless Response System

In the Bear River Region, coordinated entry, prevention & diversion, and rapid-rehousing are currently operational, with some areas identified for improvement. Emergency shelter is available with CAPSA and New Hope, with 49 total beds. However, this emergency shelter is only available to survivors of domestic violence. BRAG operates a small motel voucher program, funded by approximately $16,000 per year from the state. These dollars are reserved
primarily for the coldest months of the year and are quickly expended in an area the size of the tri-county area (total population 177,687). The next pages detail essential functions and processes of each homeless service system component followed by an assessment of its current functioning in the Bear River Region.

1 Coordinated Entry
Coordinated entry is a process intended to streamline assessment and access to services in a way that prioritizes those with the greatest need. CoCs are required to create a system that works within their geography and select a common assessment tool so that each household is assessed by the same standard. Coordinated entry theoretically pools community resources for housing and assigns them according to agreed upon community standards and expectations. See figure 8 for a description of critical coordinated assessment components.

![Figure 15. Coordinated Assessment Components](image)

**Common Assessment**
The Utah Balance of State has adopted a phased assessment approach, meaning households are not assessed further than what is needed at the time of assessment. Before assessment, each individual should have access to a trained diversion specialist to discuss options, if that household is placed in shelter or remains literally homeless for 14 days without resolution they would be invited to participate in a short, self-report assessment called the VI-SPDAT Prescreen. The VI-SPDAT Prescreen draws from two separate assessment tools, the Vulnerability Index (VI) and the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT). The VI informed questions try to determine risk of death and the SPDAT
informed questions evaluate risk of housing instability. Once the pre-screen has been completed, service providers would use the scores to prioritize the next level of assessment for prioritization into housing programming.

The SPDAT is a standard, evidence-informed tool used across the State of Utah’s homeless service system to assess clients entering the system and inform housing assistance decision-making. The SPDAT is designed to:

- Help prioritize which clients should receive what type of housing assistance intervention, and assist in determining the intensity of case management services
- Prioritize the sequence of clients receiving those services
- Help prioritize the time and resources of Frontline Workers
- Allow Team Leaders and program supervisors to better match client needs to the strengths of specific Frontline Workers on their team
- Assist Team Leaders and program supervisors to support Frontline Workers and establish service priorities across their team
- Provide assistance with case planning and encourage reflection on the prioritization of different elements within a case plan
- Track the depth of need and service responses to clients over time

Where the VI-SPDAT prescreen is reliant upon self-report, the SPDAT is reliant on a combination of self-report and verification. It requires a greater input of time, which is especially valuable when determining who needs to be placed in more costly housing such as permanent supportive housing.

*Bear River LHCC Coordinated Entry 2019*

In 2019, BRAG, CAPSA, and New Hope participated in Coordinated Entry where 137 households were assessed using the SPDAT or F-SPDAT (figure 16). Of those, 70 households met the Permanent Supportive Housing/Housing First Cut-Offs (high acuity), and 66 met the Rapid Re-Housing cut-offs (mid acuity). Among the high acuity group, 9% were veterans, and a majority were single households (86%). Among the mid acuity group, 6% were veterans and a greater share were family households (58%). The high acuity group had a greater placement rate at 70% when compared to the mid acuity group (60%). See Figure 16 for details.
CAPSA’s internal coordinated entry data provided slightly more specificity in terms of program placement type and length of time in shelter prior to placement. In 2019, CAPSA completed 77 SPDATs (31 with families, 46 with single households). Among singles, 6 households met the Rapid Re-Housing Cutoffs, and 40 met the Permanent Supportive Housing/Housing First Cutoffs. Among families, 24 met the Rapid Re-Housing Cutoffs, and 7 met the Permanent Supportive Housing/Housing First Cutoffs. Among both mid and high acuity groups, 13% had unknown placement outcomes (figure 17).
Looking at Coordinated Entry overall and zooming in on CAPSA, it is notable that a higher proportion of households are assessed as high acuity. However, the most common program placement for this group, comprised primarily of single households, is Rapid Re-Housing. Although Rapid Re-Housing is a form of Permanent Housing, households with higher acuity within this group would benefit from Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). Although PSH is costly, research shows that it is highly effective and community costs are reduced. On the other hand, when someone in need of PSH is connected to the wrong resource, the costs to the community can be great. Because long-term outcome data from these program placements are not available at the agency or even the LHCC level, conclusions cannot be drawn.

Comparing Coordinated Entry data across Balance of State LHCCs allows us to see the relative assessment and program activities of BRAG’s peers. BRAG CE data shows that on average in 2018, more than 8 SPDATs were completed for households in the Bear River Region. On average, these households wait 24 days between the time they are screened and the time they are placed. Every month, 2.14 households are placed in a housing program and 2.45 households self-place. Compared to our BoS peers, BRAG has the second shortest time spent waiting between pre-screen to placement, indicating programmatic efficiency in Coordinated Entry. Refer to table 13 for further LHCC comparisons.

Table 13. Coordinated Entry Comparisons by Balance of State LHCCs, FY2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BRAG</th>
<th>Davis</th>
<th>Iron</th>
<th>MTL</th>
<th>Tooele</th>
<th>UBAOG</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Weber / Morgan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed SPDATS</td>
<td>8.42</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>39.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. days from prescreen to placement</td>
<td>24.36</td>
<td>26.80</td>
<td>35.45</td>
<td>54.33</td>
<td>38.25</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>29.25</td>
<td>31.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Program Placements (F &amp; F, Self-Placed, Other)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Program Placements</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>6.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Numbers presented above are monthly averages over the course of FY2018

2 Prevention and Diversion

Homeless prevention is difficult to target because we simply cannot predict who will become homeless were it not for prevention assistance, but shelter diversion is a type of homeless prevention that takes much of the guesswork out of the equation. It is a low intensity intervention applied when a household is actively seeking homeless shelter. The model follows mediation principles in an attempt to pause crisis thinking and identify what other resources may be available to that household and whether shelter entry is their best option.

In the Bear River Region, Prevention and Diversion happens as part of the intake process at BRAG. Following assessment, caseworkers work with clients to help them try to self-resolve their homelessness through family, friends, or other social supports. Caseworkers offer to help contact landlords and assist in locating available rental units.

An important piece of the Prevention and Diversion that occurs in the Bear River Region happens through an informal, grassroots community group called Families Feeding Families (FFF). FFF exists as a group on
Facebook, and has nearly 4,000 group members. The group operates 4 porch pantries for families who are in need of food assistance but may not qualify for assistance through the food pantry. In addition, the group acts as a convening power to crowdfund assistance for low-income households in the area who are at risk of eviction or are currently homeless. Group leaders typically work directly with landlords and utility companies to set up direct payments and get households who have experienced a financial setback on track with paying their rent. Although FFF is an informal group, their network is wide and they have built significant community trust in the area. Beyond their porch pantries and rental/deposit assistance, FFF consistently provides assistance with utilities, gas/fuel, motel shelter, medical costs, and other miscellaneous expenses that contribute to the domino effect of getting behind on housing costs. An annual summary of households served by category can be seen in figure 18.

Additionally, Cache Valley Veteran's Association (CVVA) provides support for veterans who are experiencing housing crises. Their wraparound case management connects veterans with resources to prevent homelessness. This agency is currently formalizing and expanding its programmatic reach to include other components of the homeless services response system.

Figure 18. Annual Summary of Households Served by Families Feeding Families, 2019
3 Street outreach

Street outreach seeks to identify unsheltered homeless individuals and connect them to housing and services. Street outreach workers often serve community members with the most acute needs (i.e. those who are unable to seek services for themselves and lack any kind of social support network to do it for them). Unsheltered homeless persons should be able to be assessed wherever they are found for participation in coordinated entry and connection to other resources. In smaller communities street outreach may not consist of a full-time dedicated team, but there should be some mechanism to meet this core function for unsheltered homeless people in the community.

Street outreach in the Bear River Region does not operate in a typical fashion. Outreach is carried out by a longtime BRAG volunteer and usually only when referrals are called into the BRAG office. The volunteer follows the tip and (1) outreaches to the homeless individual(s); (2) screens them with a VI-SPDAT; and (3) facilitates a visit to the BRAG office for further assessment. It is important to note that the current street outreach efforts do not proactively identify unsheltered homeless individuals, but rather relies on referrals and tips. This effectively leaves out a segment of community members who might otherwise be reached through traditional street outreach.

4 Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter is short-term, temporary housing to connect homeless persons to their own personal support networks and other resources and housing programs as necessary to resolve their homelessness. Emergency shelter should be focused on moving people out into housing rather than bringing services to people in shelter. Domestic violence emergency shelters have specific nuances that can increase average length of stays or require connection to specialized services, but they should generally maintain a similar focus on long-term, stable housing.

In the Bear River Region, Emergency Shelter exists through CAPSA and New Hope’s shelter for survivors of domestic violence. However, this leaves a significant gap in the community for homeless individuals who are not fleeing domestic violence situations. BRAG has limited funds for motel vouchers ($16,000 annually) to provide emergency shelter. In addition, churches and Families Feeding Families are other sources of assistance for motel assistance.

5 Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is short to medium term, temporary housing, up to 24 months in length. Studies have shown that transitional housing may not be as effective as rapid rehousing for resolving homelessness, except in the case of specific subpopulations where client choice is involved.

In the Bear River Region, there are a number of transitional housing options, however, as with emergency shelter, the majority are operated through CAPSA and only available to survivors of domestic violence. Additionally, Bear River House, a transitional housing program operated by Bear River Mental Health, provides residential services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Finally, Friends of Mental Health Court operates a 4-plex and works to house mental health court participants in a transitional manner.

6 Permanent Housing

There are two types of permanent housing programs, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing. Rapid rehousing (RRH) is
short to medium term assistance, up to 24 months in length depending on the program, to stabilize a household into housing that they will retain after the length of assistance. The end of program assistance is designed to transition households with minimal interruption to stability. RRH can be tailored toward higher acuity participants. A program that ends up serving that population without making appropriate adjustments in service delivery will likely facilitate returns to homelessness. See figures 19-21 for a description of the core components of RRH.

Figure 19. Rapid Rehousing Core Component #1

![Figure 19](https://example.com/figure19)

Adapted from National Alliance to End Homelessness Rapid Re-Housing Works

Figure 20. Rapid Rehousing Core Component #2

![Figure 20](https://example.com/figure20)

Adapted from National Alliance to End Homelessness Rapid Re-Housing Works
Permanent Supportive Housing is by far the most intensive and costly intervention. It is highly effective, but only in the case of those who truly need that level of intervention. It is typically reserved for persons with disabilities and with longer histories of homelessness. It also tends to be a less costly option for those individuals who would otherwise require significant community resources to meet their needs. These often come in the form of first responders, hospital visits, and other medical and behavioral health costs that are exacerbated by the person or household remaining un-housed. This can cost the community thousands and tens of thousands of dollars more than the cost of permanent supportive housing.

In the Bear River Region, BRAG operates Rapid Re-housing though state and federal dollars. Participating coordinated entry agencies work together to connect qualifying individuals and households to housing in the private rental market through rental assistance. With only $160,776 available in rental assistance through the State and HUD, BRAG, CAPSA, and New Hope are only able to serve a limited number of households per year with this program. In terms of Permanent Housing, there are little to no options. BRAG owns a 25 unit rental complex in Box Elder County, but Bear River Mental Health places clients in units, and this housing support operates separately from coordinated entry and does not interact with HMIS systems.
Community Stakeholder-Identified Gaps & Solutions

Community Stakeholder-Identified Gaps

Beginning in July 2019, community participation was coordinated by Dr. Jess Lucero, Associate Professor of Social Work at Utah State University and LHCC University Representative. Lucero facilitated large-scale community conversations at two LHCC meetings, and over the course of 6 months, conducted individual interviews with 23 key community stakeholders ranging from elected officials, agency leaders, caseworkers, community members, faith leaders, and advocates. Two central questions guided interviews: (1) What does the stakeholder perceive as the greatest challenges and barriers related to homelessness in the Bear River Region; and (2) What implementable strategies can the stakeholder identify to address the aforementioned challenges/barriers.

Community stakeholders generally agreed with what the data on the extent of homelessness presented above confirms: there is an increasing number of homeless individuals and families in the Bear River Region, and current homeless service system components are inadequate in meeting the needs of these households. Stakeholder-identified gaps can be easily categorized into four groupings with regular frequency:

1. System leadership and governance
2. Use and tracking of data
3. Service delivery
4. Community engagement

Gaps in System Leadership/Governance
Gaps in system leadership and governance were consistently referenced by participating LHCC members. People most commonly cited concerns with the current LHCC structure, representation, and coordination. Stakeholders referenced a lack of: shared vision, decision-making power, tri-county representation, coordinated efforts among agencies, political leader awareness and investment, partnerships with food pantry and interfaith leaders, and representation from homeless individuals.

Gaps in Data Tracking/Use
Gaps in data tracking and data use were primarily raised by service providers. Stakeholders discusses the need for improved evaluation of existing programs, and current gaps and challenges related to state systems for data tracking. Specifically, state data systems are inconsistent in scale and scope and these systems are not always integrated between BRAG, CAPSA, and New Hope. Another gap in this domain relates to the utility and application of data. With the aforementioned challenges, many service providers are unable to pull system performance reports or engage in meaningful data-driven decision-making.

Gaps in Service Delivery
Community stakeholders identified numerous gaps in service delivery including the need to build more coordinated partnerships with social service providers in the area that experience significant overlap with homeless clients. Attendance at LHCC and coordinated entry meetings also indicate a gap in participation from these parallel service
systems, including criminal justice, mental health, health care, and substance abuse service providers. Stakeholders also identified specific components of the homeless services system that are lacking. Namely, Emergency shelter for homeless persons who have not been directly impacted by domestic violence and a complete absence of permanent supportive housing. The Bear River Region currently has no choice but to try and connect into these resources in neighboring Weber County, but transportation challenges, population size, and insufficient resources in Weber County make it difficult to minimize gaps in access. Transportation challenges were again mentioned in terms of low-income and homeless households being able to seek and maintain employment opportunities that would increase housing stability. Stakeholders also cited insufficient case management support to assist individuals who are homeless. At present there are two housing caseworkers employed at BRAG and their capacity to provide more intensive case management is limited due to time constraints and an increasing number of clients seeking housing assistance.

Gaps in Community Engagement
Community stakeholders unanimously agreed that the wider community in the Bear River Region currently lacks awareness of the extent to which homelessness is present in their community. In addition, stakeholders discussed the general public’s lack of understanding concerning the causes and consequences of homelessness as well as the availability of services in the community to address homelessness. Stakeholders agreed that there is a need for community consciousness raising to mitigate these gaps in community awareness. In addition, service provider stakeholders discussed the need to improve community outreach efforts. At present, clients who enter the homeless service system make contact with CAPSA, New Hope, and BRAG – community outreach is needed to engage community members who are not made aware of available services through those channels.

Community Stakeholder-Identified Solutions

Many of the community stakeholder-identified gaps speak to obvious solutions, such as outreaching to new LHCC members to meet gaps related to representation and increasing access to shelter. There are however several ways to go about solving each gap. The following are a list of suggestions put forward by community members that may have merit as initial or later-phase strategies:

Emergency Shelter Strategies
- Create a master lease arrangement with one or more local motels where a set number of rooms are leased on a monthly basis and used for emergency shelter.
- Mobilize the LHCC Red Team to form a response system for immediate crises, including a 24-hour hotline.
- Seek new funding sources to expand the emergency shelter motel voucher program
- Explore legislation that would reclaim Homeless Mitigation Funds so they can accrue in a fund earmarked for emergency shelter.
- Create one or more resource centers, where people can rest and warm themselves for up to 36 hours while receiving case management services

Permanent Supportive Housing
- Key agencies pursue collaborative funding to develop a local permanent supportive housing program based on identified need.
- Increase agency participation in coordinated entry to include mental health
and substance use providers in order to better coordinate the housing needs of high acuity individuals/households.

Other
- Develop strategic partnerships with local landlords to improve housing placements.
- Develop a volunteer mentorship program to help fill case management gap.
- Explore the mobility voucher program as a means to fund opportunities for employment-based transportation.

Synthesis of Gaps & Barriers

Gaps & Barriers in Leadership & Governance

Local

The Bear River Homeless Coordinating Committee meets once per month. The vision, scope and purpose of the BRLHCC is undocumented and unclear at this time and meeting content often reflects this lack of focus. Discussion and decisions made in the BRLHCC are more regularly sourced from interested citizens rather than data or best practice. This becomes increasingly important to address as the state and other bodies begin to look more to the local homeless coordinating committees for leadership, planning and local direction. Without structure, focus, appropriate capacity, and delineated roles and responsibilities, it is difficult for the BRLHCC to provide action-oriented leadership to respond to homelessness in the Bear River Region.

In addition to a lack of agreed upon roles and responsibilities, there are not any structural processes in place for BRLHCC decision making. Both leave BRLHCC members somewhat paralyzed when it comes to shifting discussion toward action. They also create a sizable community-level gap. At present two to three homeless service providers attempt to fill that gap here and there with limited resources, community support, and perspective.

The State and CoC make requests for information from LHCCs and have recently adopted local planning requirements. They also often introduce new programming or new federal regulations for implementation on a local level. At present most of these types of requests and plans for implementation are developed outside of the BRLHCC by local service providers whose funding is tied to these requirements. This is common in areas where the local homeless coordinating committee is not effectively structured, resourced, invested, or educated on homeless systems and best practice. Service providers often do not have the capacity to assume oversight of these new requirements on behalf of the LHCC in the first place; but attempting to run them through the LHCC can make an already cumbersome task
exponentially more cumbersome and increase the risk of missing deadlines, rubber stamping, promoting activities contrary to best practice, and potential loss of funding. It should not be the sole responsibility of service providers to oversee a community planning process or meet the state and CoC responsibilities assigned to the LHCC. If the responsibilities assigned to the LHCCS are too cumbersome, the LHCCS need to be the ones to provide feedback and advocacy.

The following list succinctly summarizes the barriers, and some of the unintended consequences, under this current dynamic:

- Without a common structure, focus, appropriate capacity, and delineated roles and responsibilities, it is difficult for the BRLHCC to provide action-oriented leadership to respond to homelessness in the Bear River Region.
- There is a troubling gap in the use of data and best practice to guide BRLHCC meetings, discussions, and decision making.
- When best practice training and discussions are largely held outside the BRLHCC, the BRLHCC is less likely to understand or seek information about crucial components of the homeless services system and build the knowledge base needed to provide effective leadership.
- The BRLHCC does not currently receive appropriate training to facilitate best practice oversight and implementation on an ongoing basis.
- Service providers are not adequately staffed or positioned to fulfill community-level requirements.
- The BRLHCC could draw upon a broader collective capacity, including, but not limited to local service providers. A higher level of functioning requires dedicated, human capacity in some form at the system-level.
- The BRLHCC is better positioned than a small collective of service providers to represent the community as a whole and ensure legislation, requirements, and local implementation are consistent with a local strategic plan.
- Service providers experience an inherent conflict when faced with raising issues or providing meaningful feedback when those who should receive the feedback (state office) hold the purse strings. The BRLHCC does not face the same inherent conflict and could more effectively advocate on behalf of the entire community, including service providers.

**Representation on the BRLHCC**

The BRLHCC currently includes a relatively broad group of members. There are, however, some significant gaps in participation that need to be addressed - representation from Box Elder and Rich counties and persons with lived experience of homelessness. In addition, the BRLHCC has experienced a phenomenon that is common among coalitions and community groups that are perceived as inactive over time: the loss of membership with decision-making power for their agency or community. Service provider input and perspective is crucial for the BRLHCC, but this needs to be complemented with local decision-making power that can move strategic initiatives forward. Without cross-sectoral representation and community and agency-level authority, the BRLHCC will not be in a position to drive community initiatives or advocate for funding and policy that has direct impact on those we serve.
**BRLHCC Sub-committees**

At present there is an active coordinated entry team, but this team does not officially serve as a sub-committee on the BRLHCC. Additionally, the Red Team, an action-oriented sub-committee of the BRLHCC, has operated off and on over the past several years. However, this team has faced significant challenges in moving strategic initiatives forward without key buy-in and structural support from the larger BRLHCC. The BRLHCC is currently formalizing sub-committees and working to improve its structures in parallel with this plan.

**State**

**Representation & Decision-Making at the State Level**

The state-level barrier with the largest impact on local communities hinges on a structure of representation that essentially shuts out 23 of the 25 counties in the Balance of State (BOS) from having a voice on the State Homeless Coordinating Committee (SHCC). As has been discussed elsewhere in this report, the SHCC makes funding allocation decisions that have immense implications for LHCCs. Although Weber and Washington Counties have a voice on the SHCC, they are vastly outnumbered by the Salt Lake County composition of the committee. Beyond this, the perspective and needs of remaining counties in the BOS are not represented with any voting power. Although the BOS Chair has a seat at the table, they currently have no vote, and thus the BOS is at the mercy of a committee that does not fully understand the context of homelessness in rural Utah.

**Gaps & Barriers in Data Tracking and Use in Bear River Region**

**Attitudes Toward Data Tracking & Use**

Attitudes toward using data at the *community-level* are generally positive. Stakeholders would like to see this happen, but either data is inaccessible on a usable level or the community lacks an awareness of what is available and the knowledge base to use it. The lack of community governance structures and clearly delineated roles and responsibilities, including a formal arrangement of the role and responsibilities of the State HMIS team in relation to the LHCCs, exacerbate this problem exponentially.

Most stakeholders have not received adequate training about the homeless services system as a whole, best practice, what data are available for use, and what constitutes success. Performance indicators need to be evaluated in the context of overall system goals and best practice. For example, community leadership should be aware that prioritizing program participants with the highest needs (a best practice) may make it difficult to attain stable housing or increase income and those performance indicators will be affected.
The current extent of community-level data use consists as an oral report of the point-in-time count numbers to the Bear River LHCC each year and a review of the Coordinated Entry Data Summaries by the current Coordinated Entry Subcommittee, which is occasionally orally reported to the BRLHCC.

The point-in-time count report is acknowledged, but rarely used to drive community action planning. Community efforts to estimate homelessness through Spring, Summer, and Fall counts are similarly not being used to inform decision-making in a coordinated, meaningful way. Three agencies (BRAG, CAPSA, and New Hope Crisis Center) currently enter Coordinated Entry data and have done so consistently since January 2019. Coordinated Entry Reports are generated by the State HMIS team from LHCC-level data on a monthly basis. These reports are currently not used by the LHCC or discussed in the context of ongoing program process evaluation with the Coordinated Entry Team. Without ongoing process and outcome evaluation of Coordinated Entry data, program performance cannot be assessed. When service providers can see the results of their efforts they are able to evaluate approaches and course correct where needed. Basic attitudes toward the use of data and daily practices need to shift in order for the Bear River Region’s homeless system to become truly data-driven.

The general feeling about using homeless data among service providers in the Bear River Region is that they know it’s there and would like to use it, but lack confidence in HMIS-generated report quality and only have access to agency level information. Additionally, staff turnover and caseload make institutionalizing data use difficult. Agency-level use of data varies significantly across agencies. Most service providers are certain to use data points in presentations to boards and in grant writing, but some may not have a good understanding for which indicators are linked to specific outcomes and which interventions may directly influence those outcomes. Some agencies may even have a sense of these connections and share information with mid-level management on a consistent basis, but it is rare for managers to use data in meetings with front line staff to evaluate performance and improve services.

HCDD Generated Reports & Accessibility

The Homeless Programs Team, located in the Housing and Community Development Division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services, has made significant improvements to data access in the past couple of years. They have generated a filterable data dashboard, committed to releasing Point in Time (PIT) and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data more quickly, and refreshed coordinated entry reporting. HMIS staff are ready and willing to pull needed reports upon contact. Despite these advancements, more needs to be done if local communities are going to govern their own homeless systems.

Reports that are generated on a State and CoC level are not automatically published regularly and filterable on an LHCC and/or County level. The state’s Homelessness Data Dashboard is a good example of the latter. It is an incredible tool, but because it cannot be filtered by LHCC or county, there is no immediate way to gather accurate information for BRLHCC use. The dashboard does afford the option to filter by agency, but this too is problematic because CAPSA and New Hope (two of three major service providers) are not represented on the dashboard due to differences in reporting
mechanisms for domestic violence shelters. The DWS Homelessness Data Dashboard currently includes a tab for HUD System Performance Measures on a CoC level that could be filtered by LHCC but is not currently. It also has tabs for Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Performance. This is immensely helpful, but it does not yet include rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing performance data. Given that RRH is the primary program operated in the Bear River Region, the absence of these data make the data dashboard purposeless for BRLHCC users who are unfamiliar with data systems but wish to be data-informed. The BRLHCC should advocate for the state to build these additional tabs while adding the ability to filter program performance by LHCC and/or county.

PIT and HIC data are made publicly available in the State’s Annual Homeless Report and are helpfully broken down by LHCC and County, but they, the HIC in particular, lack enough detail for LHCCs to evaluate accuracy, which would ideally be done prior to HUD submission. If the BoS were able to generate these reports on an LHCC-level prior to the BoS submitting them to HUD they could ask communities to verify counts. These reports are a helpful source of information, but Weber and other local communities would benefit from an additional layer of comparative analysis in these reports if possible.

Agencies that already enter data into HMIS have the advantage of being able to pull HMIS reports on their own at an agency or program level. However, not all service providers are adequately trained in conducting these tasks. An untapped resource among service providers is Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) assessment data. Coordinated entry assessors and case managers have been entering SPDAT data for some time, and while the HMIS team had previously made plans to generate a report based on these data, it was either never completed or local providers are unaware of how to use it. Various breakdowns of SPDAT data could help inform agency leadership and case managers of: client progress over time, service linkages that need improvement, clients who need a more intensive intervention, and areas for additional case manager training.

Data Quality

Data quality is defined by HUD as “an umbrella term that refers to the reliability and comprehensiveness of a community’s data and encompasses several concepts.” HUD defines: completeness, coverage, utilization, accuracy, timeliness, and consistency; which are used as categories to evaluate data quality in the Bear River Region.

Completeness

The degree to which all required data is known and documented. Coverage and utilization are both forms of completeness.

Data completeness among HMIS-participating agencies is evaluated through data quality reports. These reports convey calculated data errors and missing or incomplete values. Ideally there’s a comparable quality report with CAPSA and NHCC. Currently there is no mechanism for reporting these in the Bear River Region.

HMIS Coverage

The degree to which all homeless assistance providers within a CoC’s geography enter all homeless clients into HMIS. Providers include those funded by the CoC and ESG Program, federal partner agencies, foundations, and private organizations.
HMIS coverage in the Bear River Region is relatively good, though there are some gaps. Currently there are two victim service provider agencies (CAPSA and New Hope) precluded by law from entering personally identifying information into HMIS. Both of these organizations offer data for the annual point-in-time and housing-inventory-count, giving those reports 100% coverage. However, organizations outside of those mentioned (e.g., Families Feeding Families and Cache Valley Veteran’s Association) operate outside of the scope of HMIS and thus data coverage is limited.

**Utilization**
*The degree to which the total number of homeless beds within the HMIS are recorded as occupied divided by the total number of homeless beds within the CoC’s geographic coverage area.*

Utilization rates require additional attention. Utilization rates are not reviewed by the BRLHCC and contributing data may include inaccuracies.

**Accuracy**
*The degree to which data reflects the real-world homeless individual or service.*

Data accuracy tends to be more concerning than data completion because it can be more difficult to identify whether data in the system matches reality. Qualitative evaluation of programs compared with performance reports and matching HMIS records to in-house files can be helpful. Data accuracy checks were not performed as a part of this strategic plan.

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2 Utah HMIS SOP 9-3-14_approved
https://www.dropbox.com/s/ss70u04mbxvjxcu/Uta

**Timeliness**
*The degree to which the data is collected and available when it is needed.*

The timely input of data into the system is obviously important for report accuracy. Assuming providers enter accurate dates of service, timeliness of entry can be evaluated through the data quality report. The Utah HMIS policy is for agencies to “enter or upload information into the UHMIS database within five working days of seeing the client,” though 24 hours is preferred where possible. The same section within the Utah HMIS Standard Operating Procedures states that certain components of street outreach and emergency shelter data entry can be entered within a 10 business day window. It is also suggested that all agencies create a “client record verification/audit procedure” to be exercised at least quarterly. Standard agency practice for data quality and record verification was not reviewed as a part of this strategic plan.

**Consistency**
*The degree to which the data is equivalent in the way it is collected and stored.*

Consistency in data collection and recording is what allows for comparison within program types. Similar to accuracy, parts of consistency can also be difficult to measure without direct observation. For example, the way in which staff administer questions or assessments and interpret the results may vary significantly. This requires attention especially when it comes to SPDAT assessments that are used to prioritize households for housing, where there is some evidence of inconsistent and inflated scoring.

The basic structure for a highly functional
Homeless Management Information System, per HUD specification and State leadership, are in place, but the community needs to take ownership for what information is being put into the system and what they hope to get out of the system. At present, the system only produces metrics that are as quality as the data that are entered. It appears that there is currently system-level confusion and avoidance related to the tasks of entering, analyzing, and using high quality data. Communication and oversight functions need to be defined so that quality data can become broadly accessible and utilized.

**Gaps & Barriers in Housing Affordability**

As referenced previously in this report, the state of affordable housing for low-income households in the Bear River Region is troubling. The Bear River Region lacks a coordination and planning body to review data and create a strategic plan to address the gaps and barriers to safe and affordable housing, especially for those households that are considered to be extremely-low-income. The long term costs to the community, not to mention the homeless services system, for not getting in front of this need will be significant.

Having said this, several entities and community leaders have begun to coalesce around the need to evaluate and support improved access to affordable housing. For example, in the 2020 legislative session, Representative Val Potter co-sponsored a bill on the Utah Senate Floor that would expand support from numerous funding streams for affordable housing through rental assistance for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition, since the passage of 2018 HB 259, each city in the Bear River Region has created a plan to address moderate income housing growth. However, these legislative and municipal government efforts will remain as ideas on paper without community traction. Grassroots groups like Families Feeding Families, other community groups, and developers need to engage with local decision makers in order to take action and bring innovative solutions to this issue.

**Gaps & Barriers in the Components of Homeless System Service Delivery**

**Gaps & Barriers in Coordinated Entry**

HUD defines coordinated entry as “a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.” Effective coordinated entry pools all community resources together and prioritizes
and assigns clients to these resources based on need. It requires a massive shift in how agencies think about their programming and their responsibility to homeless people in the community (not just those within their agency walls). It should promote self-resolution where possible and prioritize those with the highest acuity. It requires a client-centered approach and the highest level of coordination among service providers.

Coordinated entry in the Bear River Region has been operational in some form since 2014. Initial implementation required a significant shift in the way agencies interact with clients and with one another. The three primary homeless service provider agencies should be commended for the way in which they engaged this process, reorganized internal procedures for the good of the community, and applied their own agency resources to make it work. While the coordinated entry process in the Bear River Region is functional enough to meet Federal requirements, much can be done to improve efficacy and realize the full benefit of such a system in the Bear River Region. It appears there are several issues limiting further development and keeping it from operating at an optimum level. Not the least of these is a seemingly limited understanding of the scope of coordinated entry.

**Limited Scope & Vision**

The current group that meets to manage the coordinated entry process manages the client prioritization list and matches clients to available housing programs. This is an important part of coordinated entry, but only one piece. A full coordinated entry system would develop client-centered pathways from housing crisis to housing stability, including homeless prevention, quickly identifying homeless persons, connecting them to emergency services, engaging them in housing-focused case management and connecting them with housing programs and other supports as needed, whether or not there is a housing program opening. At present, limited case management capacity in the region makes it difficult to ensure that all of these components are operating at their fullest potential. The coordinated entry process requires a system-level vantage point that is highly coordinated with parallel service systems.

**Coordinated Entry Subcommittee Membership & Participation**

The coordinated entry sub-committee is missing membership and participation from several key stakeholders and parallel service systems to make this more advanced, system-level vision a reality. Currently CE includes regular participation from BRAG, CAPSA, New Hope Crisis Center, and the Department of Workforce Services. Other members to consider including: Bear River Mental Health, Bear River Substance Abuse, hospitals, Cache Valley Veteran’s Association, Families Feeding Families, street outreach initiatives, law enforcement, and interfaith leaders, among others. It may be most helpful to consider who is needed around the table to create the client-centered pathways referenced above. These meetings should allow the community to track the number of homeless persons at any given time and proactively connect people to housing opportunities, **whether or not there is a housing program opening**. Such an expansion of membership may also facilitate increased capacity within the sub-committee, to interpret and manage data, offer housing navigation services, and more.

**Inclusive community outreach for coordinated entry**

Just as the coordinated entry group needs to expand its membership to include a broader
group of community stakeholders, the pool of clients served by the coordinated entry group needs to expand to be representative of all persons in the Bear River Region who are experiencing literal homelessness. Clients who enter the coordinated entry system are limited to three access points within the community: 1) Clients sheltered at CAPSA, 2) Clients sheltered at New Hope Crisis Center, and 3) Clients who walk into or are referred to Bear River Association of Governments homeless and housing programs. This approach does not account for the inclusion of Lantern House as an emergency shelter service for Bear River residents, who need to access coordinated entry. It also does not account for the large group of unsheltered persons based locally who are in need of housing services (see subsection on street outreach and quick identification and engagement). Coordinated entry and assessment should not be available only to persons who are in emergency shelter, but ensuring this is the case requires effective community messaging and outreach.

Dynamic Prioritization and Data Management
A highly effective coordinated entry system applies a dynamic and real time approach to prioritization and data management.

Dynamic prioritization prioritizes persons based on vulnerability and the number of anticipated housing placements. Persons who have been assessed that may not be prioritized for housing do not sit static on the list, but are served with problem solving, diversion, and other available resources to connect them to housing opportunities. Coordinated entry data and meeting observation hint at minimal engagement and offering of services to those for whom housing may not be available. This is likely due to a lack of understanding and capacity.

Data generated through coordinated entry was intended to give communities a way to continually evaluate their process and performance. The monthly coordinated entry reports produced by HMIS include both process and performance data. The coordinated entry sub-committee is not regularly reviewing these reports at present. This not only poses a missed opportunity for effectively using data in decision making, but it also jeopardizes the quality of the coordinated entry process and coordinated entry data.

Gaps & Barriers in Prevention & Diversion

Current prevention and diversion activities are not well coordinated or consistently reported at a community level. Access to information for persons at risk of homelessness is somewhat limited and difficult to find. Even if someone who is at risk of eviction is able to track down 211 as a resource, the list of referrals is limited to contact information for a few property managers and housing authorities. This is a clear gap. Several communities outside of Utah have developed a program or center that offers eviction prevention, landlord mediation, and housing navigation services. This is often built in as part of a community’s coordinated entry process.

TANF homeless prevention dollars, currently awarded to BRAG, could better target higher risk households. However, where this form of TANF funding will only support families for up to four months, and national averages suggest successful assistance for homeless households takes an average of 5 months, it will require that funders be educated and pathways to longer-term assistance be created where needed. Without a broader evidence-base, communities should be careful not to
prioritize funding for homeless prevention programming over other proven models, especially if they don’t have the ability to carefully evaluate those efforts and make a contribution to the evidence-base.

Any existing homeless prevention programming should be carefully evaluated and highly targeted to maximize the possibility for success.

Homeless diversion is a kind of homeless prevention that takes place at the time a homeless individual or family is seeking shelter. Homeless diversion is a light touch, relatively low-cost to cost-savings intervention. It helps homeless individuals pause their current crisis as they are seeking shelter and consider what pre-existing safety nets may be available for them to draw upon. Good diversion programming is driven by mediation principles and can be effective even for high-barrier households. A successful program may have a 25-30% diversion rate, which tends to be significant when compared to the cost to the community for unsheltered homelessness. Data provided by CAPSA shows their diversion rate was 29% in 2019. Overall CE data show that, on average, approximately 2.5 households per month are successfully diverted from homelessness. However, CE data does not allow us to link these diversion rates with other data that would allow a proportional calculation. Additionally, much of the Bear River Region’s diversion efforts are funded through TANF dollars, under which only households with children or youth are eligible. This has created a gap in funding and service for households made up of single individuals or adults only.

Other organizations such as Families Feeding Families, church congregations, and Cache Valley Veteran’s Association are doing prevention/diversion work, however, the impact and outcomes of these organizations’ work is not currently folded into the larger system picture. Ideally, the light-touch, strengths-based mediation approach used in homeless diversion would be available throughout the coordinated entry process and even at other points in time as households engage in housing programs.

Gaps & Barriers in Street Outreach

The extent of the need for street outreach, a program type where providers outreach to unsheltered homeless people on the streets, in the Bear River Region is difficult to define. This is due in part to the limited outreach activities that currently exist through the region and a lack of HMIS coverage or other data sources for the informal outreach initiatives that do exist. The 2020 unsheltered point-in-time count however shows a clear presence of need, and indicates that it is much more extensive than previously assumed. PIT numbers provide enough evidence to substantiate an increased, consistent and organized street outreach effort in the community. An effort that is housing-focused, directly connected to emergency services, shelter options, and coordinated entry.

Current street outreach efforts by formal homeless service provider agencies in the Bear River Region do not proactively identify unsheltered homeless individuals, but rather rely on referrals and tips. This approach likely excludes the most vulnerable community members who are unable to take steps to seek services on their own. Families Feeding Families has fulfilled some of the need for street outreach, but has geographic limitations, does not consistently track data on their outreach efforts, and does not participate in coordinated entry as a means of connecting people to
services. In addition, law enforcement are not adequately looped into street outreach efforts nor are officers educated on referral processes for services.

**Gaps & Barriers in Housing-Focused Emergency Shelter**

Households who are not fleeing a situation of domestic violence or sexual assault have very limited options for emergency shelter in the Bear River Region. This is a significant gap in the homeless services system and directly impacts all other parts of the system. The limited options for non-DV emergency shelter operate with significant barriers either to access or to quick identification and engagement back into the broader continuum of community-based services. The motel voucher funding awarded to BRAG does not have a set of criteria for use that is understood by the community and inclusive of coordinated entry pathways. The Lantern House emergency shelter in Ogden is another form of emergency shelter serving residents in the Bear River Region. The volume of and outcomes for persons from Bear River accessing this shelter is not tracked by the BRLHCC and formal agreements to connect services to those who utilize the Lantern House for shelter are entirely absent.

**Gaps & Barriers in Transitional Housing**

Transitional housing is most appropriate for survivors of domestic violence, transitional age youth, and substance use treatment programs. The transitional housing program through CAPSA serves this purpose for survivors in Cache County (any further gaps or barriers would need to be evaluated through program performance), though it appears through housing inventory count (HIC) data that there may be a gap in transitional housing options for survivors who access services in Box Elder County. Additional questions need to be raised about transitional housing programs for persons experiencing mental illness. For example, would those program participants be better served through the evidence-based practice of permanent supportive housing or alternatively through a short stay emergency shelter and subsequent access to other permanent housing with community-based support. There does not appear to be any transitional housing for transitional age youth or substance use treatment; this niche may also be worth consideration down the road.

**Gaps & Barriers in Permanent Housing**

There are two main types of permanent housing programs offered as a part of most homeless service systems; permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing.

*Permanent Supportive Housing*

Permanent supportive housing is a model of housing assistance that “combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals and families lead more stable lives.” It is the most intensive and expensive housing intervention available. However, when used for highly vulnerable and chronically homeless households it actually creates a cost savings to the community and a possible pathway for participants to live a fulfilling, independent life. For this reason it is important that every community have access to

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PSH and that participants for PSH are carefully selected based on verified need.

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) should perhaps be the highest priority in the Bear River community. The current inventory of PSH beds is zero. Permanent supportive housing plays a unique role in serving the most vulnerable persons within the community. It cannot be replaced with other service provision in cases where it is needed to resolve homelessness. This cannot be stressed enough.

**Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid rehousing is a type of permanent housing that offers: 1) housing identification, 2) short term (up to 3 months) or medium term (up to 24 months) rent and move-in assistance, 3) and housing-focused case management. It places participants into housing units in the community with a minimum one-year lease in their name to promote rapid stabilization and community integration. The amount of rental assistance and supportive services is scalable based on client need, making rapid rehousing (RRH) one of the more flexible housing program types within a homeless services system. It is however extremely limited in the Bear River Region, and with the complete absence of permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing programs are forced to serve high acuity clients who would be better served through PSH programming. RRH providers in the Bear River Region are not adequately equipped to respond to this dynamic, which has a tendency to overload case managers and set clients up for failure. Additionally, program policies that refuse services to clients who have been served within the past 5 years, further exacerbate the failure of this intervention.

**Housing Identification**

The housing identification component of RRH deserves special consideration. Given the constraints of the rental market in the Bear River Region, RRH program participants face significant challenges in locating and securing housing that will lead to housing stability. This dynamic is further complicated by the current use of RRH in place of PSH. Participants who are most at risk are approved for RRH assistance; however, these very risk factors often make housing identification more difficult. Without more intensive case management support, high-risk RRH participants can potentially lose their place in the program before they even identify housing. For participants with lower acuity scores, locating and securing housing is made difficult without agency participation in landlord courtship. Such practices are often a function of time constraint. Rarely do case managers have time to even consider outreaching to, engaging, and educating new landlords. BRAG, CAPSA, CVVA, and New Hope Crisis Center each have made efforts to identify prospective landlords amenable to housing individuals who are homeless, but these efforts lack coordination, common vision, and buy-in from the community. Families Feeding Families have had some success informally identifying prospective landlords and are eager to partner with formal agencies in strategic, community-wide efforts to better engage landlords.
Gaps & Barriers in Community Engagement

Gaps & Barriers in Community Awareness

Underestimation & Misunderstanding
Community stakeholders consistently identified a general lack of community awareness regarding the occurrence, causes, and consequences of homelessness in the Bear River Region. These concerns were consistent with TCI annual survey results where community members from the Bear River Region (N=880) were not educated on the issue of homelessness in their community. Furthermore, this survey revealed that community members overwhelmingly agreed that single, adult men and veterans were the most likely to be homeless whereas families (2-parent families in particular) were the least likely to be homeless. As the 2020 PIT count showed, more than half of households surveyed in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties were family households (N=43) and only 7% were Veterans. It is not uncommon for community members to generalize their perceptions about who is homeless to the one or two visible cases of homelessness they have witnessed in their daily lives. However, homelessness in the Bear River Region is often invisible - families who are sleeping in their cars at night blend into the fabric of the community during the day as parents go to work and children attend school. Beyond a general misunderstanding about who is homeless, community stakeholders cited concerns that community members, especially community leaders, underestimate the extent of homelessness in the area. Stakeholders reported a general community perception that homelessness does not exist beyond a handful of individuals. Given that PIT count numbers have historically not exceeded 5 unsheltered homeless individuals, there has not yet been evidence to the contrary. As the 2020 PIT count and TCI annual survey results indicate, however, the real extent of homelessness far exceeds the community’s perceptions.

Gaps & Barriers in Community Channels for Action

Findings from the TCI community survey showed that community members from the tri-county area strongly agreed that they would like to support efforts to address homelessness that are organized by their faith community or other faith communities. In addition, community members strongly agreed that they would like to volunteer at a local homeless center or youth homeless resource center (N=880) if the opportunity were available. These findings are consistent with the community involvement observed through Families Feeding Families. Many community members are ready and willing to assist financially or through in-kind donations and giving of their time. However, there are few opportunities for community members to take action in the homeless services arena – not just because there are so few operating homeless services components in the region, but also because current formal structures are relatively unknown to the general public. For example, without publicly available information about the BRLHCC on the web, interested community members’ inquiries are only answered if they happen to know someone who is already connected with the committee.
Part II. Strategic Plan

Strategies to Address Gaps & Barriers

Strengths of the Bear River Region

Rural communities are often overlooked by state and federal offices. Service provision in rural communities often costs more and service providers/programs are proportionally under-resourced. Despite these challenges, rural communities manage to accomplish a lot with a little. The Bear River Region is no different. Although there are numerous gaps in the current homeless service system, the strengths and resources of the communities in the region can be leveraged to develop scrappy strategies that will lead to substantive change and improvements. Through focusing on the system as a whole, improving coordination and oversight and using data and performance to drive decision-making, homelessness in the Bear River region can become rare, brief and non-recurring. It requires an investment of resources and a new way of thinking; not simply checking boxes to meet requirements or assuming prior modes of operation can change without adequate support. The strategic plan will be organized into five categories. Each category will include targeted objectives and strategies for the Bear River region. See table 14 below for a guide to each strategic section.

Table 14. Strategic Plan At a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area 1: Leadership &amp; Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Reorganize the Bear River Local Homeless Coordinating Committee and its Subcommittees</td>
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### 1.2 Engage in System-Level Planning and Evaluation

1.2.2 Review funding and establish priorities.

### 1.3 Integrate Best Practice into Decision-Making and Service Provision

1.3.1 Remove barriers to housing first as a system and within individual projects.

1.3.2 Train BRLHCC members and local decision-makers.

1.3.3 Support training for service providers.

1.3.4 Learn from persons with homeless experience.

### Focus Area 2: Data Use and Tracking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.1 Increase Availability of Useful Data and Reports | 2.1.1 Work with HCDD to localize and analyze State and CoC-level reporting.  
2.1.2 Create a clearinghouse for BRLHCC homeless data and information. |
| 2.2 Improve Data Quality | 2.2.1 Develop a data quality plan for BRLHCC adoption.  
2.2.2 Support data quality and inclusion for domestic violence service providers. |
| 2.3 Use Data in Every Community, Agency, and Program Meeting | 2.3.1 Provide system and program level performance training.  
2.3.3 Include a detailed policy for data use. |

### Focus Area 3: Affordable Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develop a Bear River Region Housing Affordability Plan</td>
<td>3.1.1 Support the creation of a Housing Affordability Commission to develop a strategic plan for housing affordability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus Area 4: Homeless System Service Delivery
| 4.1 Enhance the Coordinated Entry Process | 4.1.1 Use referenced tools to evaluate and revise local coordinated entry policy and practice. |
| | 4.1.2 Adopt a ‘Universal system management’ approach to housing prioritization. |
| | 4.1.3 Consider streamlining and jointly resourcing housing navigation & landlord outreach activities to rapidly house homeless households. |
| 4.2 Quickly Identify and Respectfully Engage Persons Experiencing Homelessness | 4.2.1 Use client input to expand coordinated entry outreach and inreach. |
| | 4.2.2 Establish street outreach program and policies that do not criminalize homelessness. |
| | 4.2.3 Ensure street outreach teams have the capacity for routine outreach. |
| 4.3 Ensure Emergency Services are Client-Centered, Low-Barrier, and Housing-Focused | 4.3.1 Conduct multi-method needs assessment for expanding emergency services programs/projects. |
| | 4.3.2 Use referenced tools to evaluate current emergency services. |
| | 4.3.3 Create self-accessible resources and information to facilitate homeless exit plans and self-resolution. |
| 4.4 Increase Utilization and Quality of Permanent Housing Programs | 4.4.1 Scale RRH caseloads, length of assistance, and case manager training to match participant need. |
| | 4.4.3 Use referenced tools to evaluate RRH and PSH programming and create performance management plans. |
| 4.5 Ensure Community Supports are Available and Commensurate with Client Need | 4.5.1 Improve pathways to clinical treatment, supported employment, and other services tailored for persons with disabilities. |
| | 4.5.2 Review and improve access to programs that could increase a formerly homeless person’s ability to gain employment and income supports. |
| | 4.5.3 Prioritize homeless prevention resources for persons who have previously experienced homelessness. |
4.6 Increase Flow Through and Availability of Permanent Housing

4.6.1 Increase rapid rehousing programming.

4.6.2 Develop a collaborative PSH project in the Bear River Region that will serve the most vulnerable community members.

Focus Area 5: Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Increase Community Awareness of Homelessness</td>
<td>5.1.1 Establish a community outreach plan with short- and long-term goals for raising community awareness.</td>
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<td>5.1.2 Support the development of a BRLHCC website.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.1.3 Create a policy for BRLHCC media and press contacts that are consistent with community outreach plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 5.2 Improve Community Channels for Action | 5.2.1 Create and share a matrix of all key housing services stakeholders and the opportunities available for community participation with each. |
| | 5.2.2 Continue to build and improve PIT count practices for increasing community participation. |

1. Leadership & Governance

A community’s ability to end homelessness is contingent on an effective system of governance, oversight and organization. Strong governance ensures sustainable leadership and decision-making processes, including ongoing strategic planning. With a structure in place, roles and responsibilities are clear and the community is able to develop and attain a common vision through shared goals and measurements; including strategies to implement best practice and to acknowledge unique sub-populations.
**STRATEGY 1.1**
*Reorganize the Bear River Local Homeless Coordinating Committee and its Subcommittees*

**ACTION ITEM 1.1.1**
*Revise BRLHCC scope and membership*

The BRLHCC needs to take responsibility for system-level planning and evaluation, including performance improvement, funding strategies and cross-sectoral coordination. BRLHCC membership should consist of people who have the credibility and experience to drive systems change. A few local community leaders who are already invested in homeless services could be gathered first to help identify and outreach to new members, with strategic support from the executive leadership team of the BRLHCC.

The revised BRLHCC’s mission could be to provide leadership for the homeless services system in the Bear River Region.

After onboarding and initially re-structuring this committee, meeting frequency could be reduced to quarterly, but it should be scheduled at times that allow representatives to approach other bodies, such as the State Homeless Coordinating Committee or legislative committees with up to date information. In its new role, the BRLHCC could become a sustainable component tied to county governments.

Gaps in strategic representation need to be addressed. For example, school district, substance abuse agency, and law enforcement representation is currently absent. Additionally, representation of current and/or formerly homeless individuals is missing. Finally, participation from grassroots groups like Families Feeding Families could help the BRLHCC meet outreach goals and introduce perspectives outside the norm of the housing service provider.

Member agencies need to be represented on the BRLHCC by someone who has enough authority to make decisions on behalf of the agency. In most cases this would be an executive director, though another executive officer with written decision-making authority could fill their stead. Multiple agency representatives could attend BRLHCC meetings, while retaining only one vote for each agency. This could be a beneficial model for furthering education and impact in the community and should be seriously considered as the new committee takes form. Such changes will need to be thoughtfully timed in order to give new participants a clear idea of why BRLHCC participation is worth their investment.

**ACTION ITEM 1.1.2**
*Form BRLHCC subcommittees and workgroups*

The inter-agency service coordination that has occasionally taken place at BRLHCC meetings should now take place at subcommittee meetings and in workgroups. It is recommended that the BRLHCC create five subcommittees to attend to specific components of this plan and the homeless services system as the BRLHCC shifts its focus.

Recommended committee structure:
- Executive Committee
  - Chair, Vice Chair, PIT Lead, Coordinated Entry Lead, Secretary
- PIT Committee
• Chaired by PIT Lead, works with Data and Community Engagement committees
• Data Use/Tracking Committee
• Homeless Service Provision Committee
• Community Engagement Committee

Each Subcommittee should have an assigned chair, vice-chair and include members in addition to homeless-service providers. Subcommittees will oversee specific action items and performance measures and report directly to the BRLHCC on a quarterly basis. Workgroups can be formed under committees as needed to accomplish more specific tasks. Rather than forming a housing affordability committee, instead it is recommended that the chair appoints 1 or 2 members to connect with other formal and informal groups working on the issue outside of the BRLHCC context. Given that every municipal government has created a moderate income housing plan and elected officials have sponsored legislation on the topic, there is already robust work happening in this domain. It is recommended that BRLHCC help to convene some of the key players and that a housing affordability commission springs from these efforts.

**ACTION ITEM 1.1.3**
*Document the new leadership structure.*

This action item is intended to further engage the re-visioning process for the BRLHCC while simultaneously providing a means for sustainability. At minimum the BRLHCC and each Subcommittee should have a written: purpose and scope, description of membership and voting membership, membership and leadership selection and succession process, decision-making process, intended use of standard data and reports, and conflict of interest policy. Some communities create an MOU for members of BRLHCC-like committees, which may be worth consideration.

**ACTION ITEM 1.1.4**
*Advocate for ongoing decision-making power on the State Homeless Coordinating Committee.*

At present, the Bear River region does not have official representation on the State Homeless Coordinating Committee. Presently, the BRLHCC is indirectly represented through Balance of State representation. Although the HCDD recently adopted a strategic plan that gives LHCC’s more opportunity to recommend funding allocation amounts based on local knowledge and expertise, there is still a critical need to ensure that the SHCC has adequate representation from the Balance of State, where the context of rural and micropolitan homelessness differs in key ways from the Wasatch Front. It is recommended that the executive committee discuss this issue with local state legislators and develop an action plan to address the gap of representation.

**STRATEGY 1.2**
*Engage in System-Level Planning and Evaluation*

**ACTION ITEM 1.2.1**
*Develop Performance management plans.*

As the BRLHCC begins its work as a decision-making, planning and oversight body, it will need to evaluate performance, set goals and
track outcomes for the system. This process should be written into a performance management plan that is made publicly available. The BRLHCC may wish to schedule an initial off-site planning meeting to participate in intensive training and develop the first system performance management plan.

It is recommended that the BRLHCC also consider whether each Subcommittee should create a performance management plan to coordinate implementation and oversight of their assigned strategies and action items.

A SYSTEM-LEVEL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

It is recommended that the BRLHCC use the HMIS-generated HUD System Performance Measures to identify baselines, evaluate benchmarks, and generate community goals and timelines. The BRLHCC may wish to put particular emphasis on the following three measures, though all 7 have value and should be looked at in combination:

- HUD System Performance Measure 1: Length of Time Homeless
- HUD System Performance Measure 2: Returns to Homelessness
- HUD System Performance Measure 7: Successful Placement in and Retention of Housing

An assessment of the Bear River region’s current performance can be found above in the state of the problem section. Three years worth of system performance measure reports are reported. The National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2015-2017 could be referenced to set initial benchmarks for comparable measures.

PROGRAM-LEVEL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Each program type (homeless prevention, street outreach, homeless diversion, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing) and/or project should have a set of standards and goals associated with the type of assistance provided. A basic template for a program-type performance management plan could be created with joint input from the data and service provision committees. The BRLHCC may wish to tap into University resources and expertise to accomplish this task.

Agencies can use the same system performance measure report out of HMIS to generate program-type, agency, and project-level data and submit it to the BRLHCC as needed. This is valuable, as long as it is appropriately contextualized, because it shows how individual pieces influence system performance. HMIS or comparable database-generated annual performance report (APR) and qualitative evaluations should be used for a more in-depth project level analysis.

SUB POPULATIONS

Just as specific program types have their own unique set of approaches, certain subpopulations require specialized attention and interventions to achieve success. Specific subpopulations include youth, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, and chronically homeless individuals and families. Certain subpopulations may have unique characteristics that influence performance. It is recommended that future strategic plans present strategies related to each subpopulation. The BRLHCC should also review data to identify disproportionately represented groups, such as racial minorities and the LGBTQ+ population to minimize
disparity in service that may negatively impact these groups.

**ACTION ITEM 1.2.2**

*Review funding and establish priorities.*

As a part of system planning and evaluation, the BRLHCC should review existing funding, evaluate whether its current use is most beneficial for the system, explore whether any sources can be increased, and establish community funding priorities.

**REVIEWING HOMELESSNESS FUNDING**

An awareness of local performance and funding streams, and how these compare with other communities will equip leaders to advocate for funding increases. For example, the data showing increasing PIT numbers for sheltered and specifically unsheltered homelessness in the Bear River region should have bearing on BRLHCC strategy for state homeless funding. The BRLHCC can look at the prior year allocations proportionate to homeless population and performance to make a case for increased funding.

The BRLHCC should create a funding profile, including a comprehensive list of funding both current and potential. It may also be beneficial to include brief funding source descriptions and calculations of available funds received vs. homeless counts and other basic comparative allocation data. Below are sample questions that could help evaluate the current use and function of funding sources.

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**QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE CURRENT USE AND FUNCTION OF FUNDING SOURCE**

- Who receives these funds within the Bear River region and for what function? Are they the best suited agency to provide this service?
- If there is more than one agency, how do they avoid overlap?
- Would it be advantageous to reallocate funds to a single agency rather than spreading it among multiple?
- What is the cost per service and cost per successful outcome?
- If multiple agencies perform separate functions, is there a function that could be matched to the resource to facilitate higher performance and competitiveness for the funding if applicable?
- How does the current provision of these funds influence the client? How might any changes further influence clients?
- What additional restrictions are placed on the funding by those who administer it at a state or local level and could those be negotiated to better meet local needs or increase efficiency?
- Are any dollars left unspent or recaptured at the end of the grant year?
- Are there other funds that are more restrictive that might be better suited for this purpose to allow these funds to be used more flexibly?
• Would it be possible to increase funding from this source?
• How does the Bear River region’s funding (or a specific agency’s award amount compare to other recipients?
• How does the specific use of these funds integrate best practice?
• How does the specific use of these funds address the shared vision and strategic plan for the Bear River region?
• What are the source’s reporting requirements?
• Could they be streamlined with other reporting requirements to reduce the burden on service providers and the BRLHCC?

ESTABLISHING FUNDING PRIORITIES

Funding priorities should target projects that: 1) are consistent with best practice, 2) most improve system outcomes, 3) are high-performing, and 4) fill a specific need.

The BRLHCC could choose to support improvement to low-performing projects that fill a system need or recommend funds be reallocated away from those projects. The following figure lists recommendations from this plan that will require additional funding. Each of these could be evaluated and prioritized based on the four priorities above.

 ADDITIONAL FUNDING NEEEDED —

• Increase the number of case managers for permanent housing (RRH and PSH)
• Support ongoing training for improving homeless service system performance and functioning
• Support the development of emergency shelter options
• Support eviction prevention, landlord outreach, and housing navigation efforts
• Support the development of a permanent supportive housing facility
• Expand rapid re-housing programming
• Increase housing-focused case management in shelter and street outreach
• Expand homeless diversion for households without children

STRATEGY 1.3
Integrate Best Practice into Decision-Making and Service Provision

ACTION ITEM 1.3.1
Remove barriers to housing first as a system and within individual projects.

It is imperative that all parts of the homeless services system are housing-focused. This means any barriers to housing are mitigated and removed, and Housing First principles are fully
adopted system-wide. Housing First principles should be reviewed both in written policies and procedures and in practice. It is recommended that the BRLHCC use two tools to complete this assessment, the Housing First Checklist: Assessing Projects and Systems for a Housing First Orientation and the HUD Housing First Assessment Tool.

The Housing First Checklist was created by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and is “intended for use by policymakers, government officials, and practitioners alike to help make a basic assessment of whether and to what degree a particular housing program is employing a Housing First approach.” The first portion of the checklist reviews core elements of housing first at the program/project level. The second portion of the checklist explores core elements of housing first at the community level. The latter portion should be completed by the BRLHCC; the BRLHCC can determine whether it would be beneficial to request answers anonymously prior to engaging in discussion about the basic tenets of Housing First. The BRLHCC can then identify areas of weakness and brainstorm action steps for improvement to be included in performance management plans. The BRLHCC can revisit the checklist on a semi-annual or annual basis to identify improvements and/or new barriers since the last review.

The HUD Housing First Assessment Tool, published in 2017 builds upon the checklist and looks at individual projects more in-depth. It is recommended that the BRLHCC encourage providers to complete these tools and compile answers for BRLHCC discussion. The Homeless Service Provision Committee could potentially assist with this.

**ACTION ITEM 1.3.2**

*Train BRLHCC members and local decision-makers.*

A basic knowledge of homeless systems and programs is important for decision-makers to lead effective systems change. The learning content areas listed in this action item constitute basic knowledge that can be formatted and delivered in ways that meet the needs and time constraints of BRLHCC members. For example, the homeless system simulation game (90 minutes) requires relatively little time input compared to the amount of knowledge and understanding gained for participants. This activity is strongly recommended as it rapidly introduces the working parts of a homeless system and shows how system based decisions directly influence outcomes. For other topics, BRLHCC leaders can be educated one-on-one as their assignments and schedules demand and presentations on key topics can be integrated into committee meetings over time. It would be advantageous to encourage local decision makers and BRLHCC members to attend professional conferences, such as National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Conferences, which offer several sessions about leadership, planning, use of data and best practice.
## SAMPLE TRAINING TOPICS FOR BRLHCC MEMBERS AND LOCAL DECISION MAKERS

1. **Homeless systems 101**
   - The main components of a homeless service system
   - Housing first
   - A systems approach
   - Coordinated entry and prioritizing resources to the most vulnerable

2. **Homeless system simulation game**
   - Identifying how the various parts of the homeless system work together and how system-level decisions impact client outcomes.

3. **Homeless governance in the State of Utah and the BRLHCC.**
   - The role and function of the State Homeless Coordinating Committee, CoC, State Homeless Office and HMIS.
   - The role of the BRLHCC and its subcommittees
   - Orientation to the BRLHCC homelessness funding profile and common funding sources

4. **Using data to drive strategy and decision-making**
   - Orientation to the BRLHCC strategic plan
   - Available reports, tips for analysis and basic use

### ACTION ITEM 1.3.3

**Support training for service providers.**

Homeless service providers are indeed the local experts in their individual service delivery areas, but overtaxed providers often find it difficult to create time and space to read up on the latest research and practices. Furthermore, it cannot always be assumed that new employees will receive consistent training, including those at the executive level. In order to keep a competitive edge for funding and excellence in homeless services in the Bear River region, there needs to be an emphasis on and investment in training. Executive-level staff and board members could be included in BRLHCC trainings if they are not already a member.

Training for front-line staff should emphasize evidence-based practices such as housing first, motivational interviewing, critical time intervention, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care. Ongoing norming across assessment tools, standard procedures for coordinated entry, and how to use data to inform service delivery should also be given attention. Finally, it may be worthwhile to include basic training about the system as a whole and the Bear River strategic plan so each individual part can see how it operates within the larger whole to advance agreed upon strategies.

The Homeless Service Provision Committee could be responsible to identify needs, develop training schedules, coordinate with
neighboring communities and report back to the BRLHCC. Such coordination has potential to reduce training cost and duplication across agencies. This subcommittee could also identify which agencies plan to attend key conferences and find ways to create an information loop about new content.

**ACTION ITEM 1.3.4**

*Learn from persons with homeless experience.*

A key best practice tied to requirements for multiple funding sources is to involve persons with lived experience of homelessness in all aspects of the homeless services system. Utah has been somewhat weak on this requirement and the Bear River region is no exception. It is recommended that each committee, subcommittee, and agency board be reviewed for consumer membership and participation (not simply attendance). This review could be conducted by the Homeless Service Provision Committee or an appointed committee or individual.

It is also strongly recommended that a consumer advisory board, open forum, or series of focus groups be held quarterly to gather feedback from persons with lived experience. Participants should represent a variety of experience, including subpopulations and minorities. Program participants should also be consulted for project-level evaluation. Given the current lack of street outreach in the Bear River region, it will be important to make efforts to reach individuals and families who have experienced homelessness but have not touched the formal system.

**2. Data Use & Tracking**

Data-driven decision-making requires collecting, cleaning and using data to inform each aspect of the work we do in the homeless services system. Quality data should influence goal setting, resource allocation, and policy and practice improvements. System leaders and service providers often have good intentions to use data, but the unavailability of useful data, poor data quality, unclear delineation of governance and accountability, lack of common measurement and vision, and/or a lack of understanding for the field and what constitutes success can create barriers to effective use.

**STRATEGY 2.1**

*Increase the Availability of Useful Data and Reports*

System performance, and other system tracking data need to be readily available if they are going to be used to drive systems change. The BRLHCC should advocate for helpful
modifications to existing reports, post information in a central location for ongoing use, and request access to data sets that are not yet integrated.

**ACTION ITEM 2.1.1**

*Work with HCDD to localize State and CoC-level reporting to BRLHCC.*

Reports needing regular review, that the HMIS team has graciously provided upon request for this plan, should be made readily available on an LHCC or county-level. The state could also better support the BRLHCC (and other LHCCs) by using their data analysis and publications expertise to add an easily-understandable layer of analysis to published reports, such as simple rankings or comparisons: across the state, with other communities, over time, and with national averages.

BRLHCC leadership should work with the Housing and Community Development Division (HCDD) Director and State Homeless Programs Team Manager to explore options. Procedures for making reports available could subsequently be included in the updated HMIS Standard Operating Procedures.

Priority reports that should be made readily available on an LHCC-level include:

- Homelessness Data Dashboard: System Overview, program type performance and system performance measure tabs; ongoing (HCDD)
- Coordinated entry reports, monthly (HCDD, appears to operational)
- HUD System Performance Measure Report, quarterly (pulled from HMIS either by a trusted service provider, data committee chair with HMIS access, or HCDD)
- Program performance, quarterly (HCDD)
- Data quality reports, quarterly (HCDD)
- Point-in-time count (PIT), at least annually and prior to HUD submission (HCDD)
- Housing-inventory-count (HIC), at least annually and prior to HUD submission (HCDD)

Other information/reports to work with HCD to explore access to:

- SPDAT reports for case managers (previously under development, but never available)
- Quarterly spend down reports for State and BoS funding
- Prior zip code and other mobility analysis
- Carbon copy of State and BoS monitoring reports
- Prior state allocations should the BRLHCC wish to conduct longer-term funding analysis
- Special compilations of performance data used for State Homeless Funding and CoC competitions, such as those distributed in the February SHCC meeting.
- Other data sets used to drive SHCC and HCD strategy as they are created and any special analysis conducted by the Workforce Research and Analysis Division

As filters for the data dashboard are being built, the BRLHCC and HCDD could arrange for HMIS staff or the Data Committee Chairperson to run certain reports on a regular basis and post them to the web as a work-around. Information and reports could also be sent to the System Coordinator who can flag information for the BRLHCC and its subcommittees.

These adjustments and report availability will only serve to strengthen the performance in the
Bear River Region, the BoS, and the state of Utah.

**ACTION ITEM 2.1.2**

Create a clearinghouse for BRLHCC homeless data and information.

Once needed reports are obtained, the BRLHCC should find a way to link or post this information where it can be repeatedly accessed and used across the community, such as a tab on county websites. Publicly available information improves transparency, facilitates the possibility of more frequent use, and even very simply allows for reports passed out during meetings to be accessed by those who are not present. A calendar for BRLHCC meetings, related community events and training; links to resources (referenced in this plan and otherwise); and system performance management plans could be included as they are available. Efforts to create an online clearinghouse for system and program level data could be combined with efforts to make homeless resource information more readily available for households experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

**STRATEGY 2.2**

*Improve Data Quality*

Several community members lack confidence in HMIS data quality. The action items under Strategy 2.2 provide concrete ways to build confidence in HMIS data. The first action item recommends the development of a data quality plan and the second highlights a data quality concern specific to domestic violence service providers. Action items in Strategy 2.3 will also support improved data quality over time.

**ACTION ITEM 2.2.1**

*Develop a data quality plan for BRLHCC adoption.*

It is recommended that the BRLHCC Data Subcommittee analyze recent data quality reports and develop a robust data quality plan for BRLHCC input and adoption. Those assigned to complete the task should start with the Data Quality section in Appendix C, the supplemental considerations in Appendix B, and the “Action Steps to Improve Data Quality,” pages 5-6 in the System Performance Improvement Briefs: CoC Data Quality.

The Data Subcommittee will need to refer to pre-existing standards in the Utah HMIS Standard Operating Procedures and apply them as benchmarks where applicable. They should also find ways to support HMIS monitoring activities. Finally, the HUD System Performance Improvement Briefs: Data Quality and Analysis for System Performance Improvement may also prove useful.

Once the data quality plan is approved by the BRLHCC, the Data Subcommittee can take responsibility for oversight between meetings with support from the HMIS Team.

**ACTION ITEM 2.2.2**

*Support data quality and inclusion for domestic violence service providers.*

Domestic violence (DV) service providers who receive Federal homeless funding are restricted from entering any identifying information into HMIS for those they serve. However, DV
service providers are also required to have an HMIS comparable database if they receive any CoC or ESG funding. This comparable database should allow DV service providers (CAPSA and New Hope) to pull de-identified raw data and reports with the same specifications and formulas used by HMIS.

Current Federal reporting requirements only direct these data be integrated with other community data once a year through the annual PIT and HIC, but communities are strongly encouraged to find ways to lawfully include DV data in their local planning and decision-making processes.

Studies show that as many as 57% of all homeless women report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness. Another study of homeless women with children found that 80% had previously experienced domestic violence. The frequency of homeless persons who have experienced or are actively experiencing domestic violence and the frequency of those who experience domestic violence experiencing housing instability is too significant to ignore. Data that may help decision-makers better serve this subpopulation need to be integrated into local analysis and reporting where possible.

It is recommended that the BRLHCC conduct or request skilled county or university staff to conduct a review of the comparable database used by CAPSA and New Hope, ensure it meets compliance standards as an HMIS-comparable database, support funding solutions to address weaknesses and identify ways information from that database could be lawfully integrated into community planning and decision-making efforts. The BRLHCC may wish to explore similar possibilities with other non-HMIS participating providers should those providers not be appropriate to enter data directly into HMIS.

**STRATEGY 2.3**

*Use Data in Every Community, Agency, and Program Meeting*

The community must begin introducing data into all aspects of the homeless services system. From consumer input and individual client SPDAT scores to system performance reports, each meeting held to review community progress, connect resources, share information and direct future action should include some kind of data to substantiate claims and inform results.

At minimum, each body that meets should ask the following questions: What assumptions are our discussions and decisions based upon? Can they be substantiated with data? What reports are available that relate to the topics we are discussing? Are there trends or outcomes we should examine before correcting course? How will we measure the impact of any changes made? Is there information that could better inform our meeting objective?

The following action items are consistent with, and cross-referenced to, action items in the Homeless System Service Delivery Focus Area. Their emphasis here is a deliberate part of becoming a data-driven system.

**ACTION ITEM 2.3.1**

*Provide training based on system and program level performance.*

(See also ACTION ITEMS 1.3.2 and 1.3.3)

The training referenced in 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 should include application-oriented training
about system and program level data and performance. The focus is not so much how to read the reports (though that may be helpful in some settings), as it is how to use them. Homeless service provider executive staff, management, and board members may benefit from a separate training or peer learning forum. Reports the BRLHCC should have familiarity for are listed in Action Item 2.1.1. Reports that are readily accessible and should be trained to for agencies and programs follow:

- Annual Performance Reports
- Monitoring Reports
- Coordinated Entry Report
- Each of the community-level reports, broken down to an agency level

**ACTION ITEM 2.3.2**

*Include a detailed policy for data use in written policies and procedures.*

3. Housing Affordability

The extent to which housing stock is affordable and available in a community directly impacts the community’s overall risk for homelessness. Although municipalities have been tasked with creating a moderate income housing plan, there is currently a lack of Bear River Region, multisector buy-in for increasing housing affordability. Without a strategic plan to expand housing affordability, homelessness in the Bear River Region will continue to grow. Developing a strategic plan for housing affordability will require multi-sector participation as well as input from a wide range of municipalities in the region.
STRATEGY 3.1

Develop a Bear River Region Housing Affordability Plan

ACTION ITEM 3.1.1
Support the creation of a Housing Affordability Commission to Develop a Strategic Plan for Housing Affordability

It is recommended that the BRLHCC support the convening of a group of community leaders to look at housing affordability need and solutions in the Bear River region. The current work underway in the region in this domain appears to be siloed. Convening a diverse group of community leaders who are actively working to expand housing affordability could create channels for partnership and innovation that did not exist previously. This group could analyze gaps, barriers and impediments to fair, safe, and affordable housing on a county and municipal level; and dynamically track existing and new units (and their affordability) in the community. Ideally county and municipal governments, economic development experts, land developers, landowners, transportation officials, affordable housing advocacy organizations, financers, the State Housing and Community Development Division, and housing authorities should be part of the conversation. Together this group could review existing data and generate local strategies to influence development, consolidated planning, legislation, and other policies to meet community need.

4. Homeless System Service Delivery

High performing communities, with strong cross-sector coordination and data-driven targeting, can reduce the number of persons that experience homelessness. This work cannot be limited to homeless service providers. Communities must be able to quickly identify those at risk of becoming homeless and target resources in a cost-effective way. Once an individual or household becomes homeless, the path to housing stability is often layered and complicated. A low barrier, need-based and highly coordinated continuum of homeless programming can significantly reduce time to reclaim housing stability. While housing does end homelessness, a sustainable end must include client-driven, wrap around services. Client-driven refers to the client’s individual needs and participation. Service provision should be individualized enough to scale the response and should include community-based supports that facilitate long-term sustainability and integration.
**STRATEGY 4.1**

*Enhance the Coordinated Entry Process*

**ACTION ITEM 4.1.1**

*Use referenced tools to evaluate and revise local coordinated entry policy and practice.*

The Homeless Service Provision Committee should use the tools referenced below and the HMIS-generated Coordinated Entry Report to evaluate the coordinated entry process and create a performance management plan.

The Subcommittee will want to pay special attention to implementing a Housing First orientation and housing-focused services, the administrative structure and logistics of coordinated entry, and the existing prioritization list and housing-match process, including SPDAT assessment consistency.

Making homelessness brief requires a housing-focused approach. The housing-focused case management self-assessment portion of the NAEH Emergency Shelter Learning Series asks the following questions that are just as applicable to the system as they are to emergency shelter providers: 1) Are all our services focused on helping participants obtain and sustain housing as quickly as possible? 2) Do we have appropriate staffing and job descriptions to provide housing-focused, rapid exit services? 3) Do our staff know how to provide case management that is focused on creating a housing plan and helping participants develop and achieve housing-focused goals to exit [homelessness] quickly? 4) Are participants assisted to create a rapid exit housing plan with staff within one week of entering shelter [or street engagement]? and 5) Does our agency embrace housing-focused messaging - throughout its environment, activities and policies?

Coordinated entry administration requires some investment on behalf of the community. Potential conflict and capacity need to be considered. For example, could one of the local governments or another somewhat neutral entity offer leadership or administrative staff to support this process? A system coordinator position could add capacity to this Subcommittee. Additional funding could be sought through the BoS competition to help fund coordinated entry work, though this would require advance conversation with the BoS to determine how such an application would fit within their funding priorities.

Tools to help evaluate and improve the coordinated entry process:

- NAEH Coordinated Entry Evaluation Tools: endhomelessness.org/resource/coordinated-entry-evaluation-tool
- And NAEH provided sample participant surveys from other communities: endhomelessness.org/resource/coordinated-entry-community-samples-resource-library
**ACTION ITEM 4.1.2**

*Adopt a ‘Universal system management’ approach to housing prioritization.*

The community prioritization list should be a dynamic, up to date platform that gives a sense of how many homeless people have housing program needs.

A Universal System Management approach to coordinated entry was delineated as a specific model by OrgCode to differentiate among various common approaches to client prioritization and housing match. The name of the approach is less important than its intent and characteristics. According to DeJong,

“This is the best approach for addressing multiple priorities at once, making the housing process more efficient, and taking as much subjectivity out of the process as possible while leveraging HMIS. ...the community collects an inventory of all of the eligibility requirements for each [PSH and RRH program]. The community can then be clear, for example, that their top priority for offering a PSH unit is a person who meets the definition of chronic homelessness, who is tri-morbid, who has been homeless for three or more years, and who has a VI-SPDAT score of 13 or higher. This will then generate a list of just those people that meet that group for the top priority. Assuming all of the documentation is in order for each of those people, the list can be provided to PSH providers that serve that group that have a vacancy... In this approach, the emergency side of the system (shelters, outreach, drop-ins) are responsible for getting people document ready and putting them on a list, and housing providers are responsible for taking people off the list. There can also be fail safes of assigning people if they are not picked within a certain period of time. And it can generate specific lists for every type of PSH, RRH, TH or any other type of housing intervention that exists in your community. Gone are the days of case conferences and trying to chase people down.

This approach also comes with some problems that need to be resolved. It can be difficult for a community to establish and agree upon priority groups. It can be cumbersome to learn every single eligibility detail for every single housing program, in large part because many providers have unwritten rules. It can be difficult for well intentioned service providers to let go of advocating for specific people to the point where it actually circumvents why coordinated entry is so necessary.”

The following link outlines the other two approaches DeJong is distinguishing from: 
http://www.orgcode.com/3_main_approaches_to_coordinated_entry

The Balance of State has already identified PSH and RRH prioritization standards, using a combination of the highest SPDAT score and applying any program-specific requirements. If the cleaned up prioritization list continues to have so many high-scoring households, it may be worth considering additional prioritization categories based on need, such as tri-morbidity or total length of homelessness. This would need to be discussed with the Balance of State, but could likely be put into the coordinated entry policies and procedures local addendum to avoid requiring adoption from the entire BoS and Mountainlands CoCs.

**ACTION ITEM 4.1.3**

*Consider streamlining and jointly resourcing housing navigation & landlord outreach activities to rapidly house homeless households.*

Streamlining housing search and landlord outreach activities has the potential to add significant capacity to homeless service providers. Such services could potentially be
co-located with similar community-wide efforts to track affordable housing within the community and to make homelessness rare and non-recurring.

The Homeless Service Provision Committee could consider this option. They should also consider partially-centralized and decentralized options, such as increased funding for housing search within housing program staff while centralizing landlord outreach and unit tracking.

STRATEGY 4.2

Quickly Identify and Respectfully Engage Persons Experiencing Homelessness

ACTION ITEM 4.2.1
Use client input to expand coordinated entry outreach and inreach

It is recommended that information for accessing homeless and housing resources be made more available to the target population. To date, some of the most obvious postings on the web consist of lists of agencies without a clear pathway of who to contact for what. This should be revisited with input from persons with lived experience to ensure there is an easy way to access helpful information. Posting information in libraries, food access points, churches, schools and service sites could be valuable for those who do not have computer access. Non-homeless service providers and employees who work at places frequented by homeless persons, such as librarians, should be given information and invitations to participate in planning and training. The value of public education is multi-fold, but has been shown to be particularly valuable in suburban areas and municipalities without service hubs. In these areas a friend, family member or church group may be the first to identify individuals at the time they become homeless. Low input forms of public education could be explored. For example, the point-in-time count can be used to increase public education about homelessness. Volunteer events could include an educational component, and housing-related events, such as landlord outreach open houses, could be announced through broad public forums whenever possible. The Homeless Services Provision Committee could work with the Community Outreach Committee to advance these efforts.

ACTION ITEM 4.2.2
Establish street outreach program and policies that do not criminalize homelessness.

Because of common biases assigned to homeless people, it is especially important for communities to ensure that local laws and law enforcement activities reflect best practice over common myths. The BRLHCC should coordinate with county and municipal law enforcement to provide education and advocate for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and basic homeless education. Law enforcement, with the proper skills and information, can be a highly valuable partner to quickly identify homeless persons, particularly in smaller municipalities without a service hub. Strengthening connections with law enforcement by having a law enforcement
representative on the BRLHCC could help ensure these outcomes.

The annual competition for Federal homelessness funding awards direct points for communities being able to show they have applied strategies to reduce the criminalization of homelessness. Accordingly, the community may also wish to consider developing a specific plan to reduce the criminalization of homelessness. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty developed the Housing Not Handcuffs Initiative, a supplemental Fact Sheet, and policy recommendations that would be helpful resources to facilitate education and planning. The BRLHCC could also refer to Martin v. Boise for the 2018 9th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmation about criminalizing conduct that is an unavoidable consequence of being homeless.

**ACTION ITEM 4.2.3**

*Establish a street outreach team and ensure it has the capacity for routine outreach.*

Street outreach teams need to have enough capacity to engage and case manage unsheltered homeless clients to facilitate service engagement, particularly for those clients with disabling conditions. Street outreach should be *low-barrier* and *housing-focused* and the system should not require persons to enter emergency shelter in order to access needed housing and service programming. Outreach workers should collectively know *all* unsheltered homeless persons by name, connect them with emergency services and shelter, and support them through the coordinated entry process. Street outreach staff need to be dedicated professionals to attain these expectations. A more accurate picture of the scope of unsheltered homelessness also needs to be explored.

It is recommended that the community evaluate street outreach practices and identify resources to coordinate and expand street outreach activities to this end. Through the assessment phase of this strategic planning effort, it was noted that currently street outreach is informal and is based on referrals. This means the majority of unsheltered homelessness in the Bear River Region is not being reached unless they formally access services or are working with another agency who refers them. After a deeper assessment of street outreach current efforts and needed improvements is undertaken, it is recommended that a street outreach project that accounts for the nuances of rural homelessness be developed and proposed for funding consideration in 2021.

**STRATEGY 4.3**

*Ensure Emergency Services are Client-Centered, Low-Barrier, and Housing-Focused*

**ACTION ITEM 4.3.1**

*Conduct multi-method needs assessment for expanding emergency services programs/projects.*

As has been noted above in this document, emergency shelter services in the Bear River
region are limited to individuals who have experienced domestic violence. Historically, the Bear River region has sent unsheltered homeless individuals who do not qualify for services at CAPSA or New Hope to Ogden for shelter services. While this meets the immediate need for some, it leaves individuals and families who are employed and/or have children enrolled in local schools with few options to maintain stability in their current community. Currently motel voucher programs operated by BRAG, Families Feeding Families and local churches are attempting to fill this gap; however, these efforts are disjointed and disconnected from the larger service system. It is strongly recommended that an in-depth needs assessment be conducted on this issue specifically. The Data and Homeless Services Provision Committees could jointly direct this needs assessment while tapping into resources at the University to conduct the needed research. With findings from a needs assessment, creative solutions from other similarly-sized municipalities could be explored for goodness of fit. Ultimately, expansion of emergency shelter services in the Bear River region will require significant political will and community support, so the BRLHCC will need to develop some consensus on this issue and then work with the Community Engagement Committee to strategically foster the necessary conditions for building support.

**ACTION ITEM 4.3.2**

*Use referenced tools to evaluate current emergency services.*

It is recommended that emergency shelters engage in shelter evaluation and further transition to a low-barrier, housing-focused approach. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has put forward an Emergency Shelter Learning Series that could help with evaluation and action planning. It includes educational webinars, self-assessments, action plans, and a shelter outcome metrics form. Shelters should also evaluate client access to information that would facilitate rapid self-resolution of homelessness. It may be worth creating an ad hoc working group or learning collaborative of shelter directors and key staff to implement this action item. At present, operating shelters in the Bear River region are limited to CAPSA and New Hope; however, the use of motel vouchers to fill the emergency services gap should be similarly evaluated. A full inventory of motel vouchers (BRAG, Interfaith, Families Feeding Families, CVVA, etc.) should be conducted and efforts to streamline and apply strategy to the use of motel vouchers should be undertaken. In addition, it will be critical for the Bear River region to connect with Weber County given the number of individuals from the tri-county area who find shelter at Lantern House and other shelters in Weber County.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the five keys to effective emergency shelter are: a housing first approach, safe and appropriate diversion, immediate and low-barrier access, housing-focused rapid exit services, and data to measure performance (see figure below). These five keys are applicable across all types of emergency shelter, though there may be additional considerations for unique populations. For example, youth homeless shelters should include a strong emphasis on family reunification while DV shelter average lengths of stay may be longer on average and should be compared to other DV shelter averages.

**ACTION ITEM 4.3.3**

*Create self-accessible resources and information to facilitate homeless exit plans and self-resolution.*
This is part of a recurring theme to make information accessible to people who could benefit from it. It is generally believed that the majority of homeless people find their own resolutions to homelessness without a specific housing intervention. In order to potentially increase the number of people who are able to do this and reduce the length of time it takes, housing-focused informational resources should be made publicly available and advertised.

This information should be streamlined and listed online as well as in physical locations, like emergency shelters and other common service hubs. It could include service referral information, available community classes, and pre-existing resources (such as the HUD Housing Search Assistance Toolkit: Conducting the Housing Search Resources). The provided tools are “designed to help clients with their housing search, particularly those who are searching on their own.” It could also facilitate more rapid connections to employment support, economic assistance programs, child care and other community services.
THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER

Housing First Approach
Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.

Safe & Appropriate Diversion
Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.

Immediate & Low-BARRIER Access
Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and staying open 24/7. Eliminate sobriety and income requirements and other policies that make it difficult to enter shelter, stay in shelter, or access housing and income opportunities.

Housing-Focused, Rapid Exit Services
Focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.

Data to Measure Performance
Measure data on percentage of exits to housing, average length of stay in shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve outcomes.

National Alliance to End Homelessness
**STRATEGY 4.4**

*Increase Utilization and Quality of Permanent Housing Programs*

**ACTION ITEM 4.4.1**

*Scale RRH caseloads, length of assistance, and case manager training to match participant need.*

Rapid rehousing can help fill gaps in PSH, but only if the program is nimble enough to be scaled to match client need, including use of the program as bridge housing to permanent supportive housing where needed. As higher-acuity clients are selected for RRH, caseloads need to be decreased, the length of assistance needs to be increased (even maximized) and case manager training should include evidence-based practices for serving persons with disabilities. This will require additional funding.

Rapid rehousing has proven to be a highly successful and cost efficient program when administered well, especially when compared to the older transitional housing model and even for participants with higher needs and more significant barriers to stable housing. However, if high need clients are to be served effectively through rapid rehousing, the program needs to be intentionally tailored to this end.

Under CoC and ESG funding sources it is allowable to provide rental assistance and supports to clients for up to 24 months. CoC funding also allows for an additional six months of supportive services after clients have received the maximum 24 months of housing assistance. If higher-acuity clients are going to meet success in rapid rehousing (which is especially necessary due to the lack of PSH), the community should expect a longer average number of months of assistance to positive exit and the possibility of clients needing to be rehoused to a new unit within that same time. Regardless of the PSH stock in the community, it would do RRH programs well to more readily be able to scale services to client need both in practice and in policy. Program policies should be evaluated and tailored to support repeated incidents of homelessness. Historically program policies have limited repeat lifetime assistance; however, evidence suggests that prior homelessness is the most accurate predictor of future homelessness. Policies that do not support individuals who have repeated spells of homelessness are counterproductive.

The case manager to program participant ratio should be commensurate with client need and participants should have a direct pathway to clinical support, programs that assist clients to increase income, supported employment, and mainstream PHA-administered housing subsidies as needed.

**ACTION ITEM 4.4.3**

*Use referenced tools to evaluate RRH and (eventually) PSH programming and create performance management plans.*

**RRH**

The core components of rapid re-housing, performance benchmarks, program standards and tools for evaluation and improvement can be found in the two following National Alliance to End Homelessness technical assistance products. It is recommended that rapid rehousing providers use these tools to evaluate programming and develop a RRH
performance management plan that incorporates components of the housing first self assessment to present to the BRLHCC.


**PSH**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Evidence-Based Permanent Supportive Housing Toolkit provides a clear set of standards and recommendations for the effective creation, implementation and evaluation of permanent supportive housing. PSH providers should review these materials and join together in qualitatively evaluating their programs and reviewing performance data to set new goals and generate performance management plans that incorporate components of the housing first self assessment to present to the BRLHCC.

- SAMHSA PSH Evidence Based Toolkit https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510

**STRATEGY 4.5**

*Ensure Community Supports are Available and Commensurate with Client Need*

**ACTION ITEM 4.5.1**

*Improve pathways to clinical treatment, supported employment, and other services tailored for persons with disabilities.*

Pathways to services tailored for persons with disabilities need to be made accessible throughout the homeless services system, including and especially once people are placed in housing. Supported employment and individual placement and support (IPS) services are helpful tools whereby persons with disabilities are assisted in finding and maintaining employment (Bear River Mental Health and Options for Independence has some programming already available, but whether the availability meets the scope of need among homeless and formerly homeless persons and the way those resources are accessed need to be solidified.)

Access to behavioral health treatment and health prevention activities appear to be similarly disconnected from permanent housing participants at present. An assessment of the scope of need throughout the homeless services system compared to availability and a refresher of pathways to access may be something that BRLHCC leadership and other partners like Options for Independence and USU’s Center for Persons with Disabilities could work together to quickly address.
ACTION ITEM 4.5.2

Review and improve access to programs that could increase a formerly homeless person’s ability to gain employment and income supports.

In addition to those supports tailored to persons with disabilities, there are several mainstream resources and programs that homeless and formerly homeless households could access to improve housing stability. These programs include, but may not be limited to: WIOA, SNAP, WIC, early childhood care and education, SSI, SSDI, TANF, and Medicaid.

Each mainstream program could be assessed by DWS to determine how many homeless and formerly homeless participants are on the program and what barriers may be limiting participation. In some instances it may be beneficial to provide training to specific mainstream resource and program staff who could become familiar with, and offer services to, formerly homeless persons as part of their workload. Those staff could attend relevant homelessness trainings and perhaps even be responsible for targeting DWS programming to households in permanent housing programs. Ideally these staff would become especially skilled at working with this population and recognize the unique needs of homeless persons with disabiling conditions.

ACTION ITEM 4.5.3

Prioritize homeless prevention resources for persons who have previously experienced homelessness.

Prioritizing homeless prevention resources, in addition to mainstream resources, can provide an added safety net for people currently housed in and seeking to exit permanent housing programs.

STRATEGY 4.6

Increase Flow Through and Availability of Permanent Housing

ACTION ITEM 4.6.1

Increase rapid rehousing programming.

Rapid rehousing programming is cost-effective and scalable when housing units can be located. Increased rapid re-housing should consider appropriate caseloads and not attempt to put funding into housing assistance without balancing caseloads.

"[Rapid re-housing] has been demonstrated to be effective in getting people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and keeping them there. By connecting people with a home, they are in a better position to address other challenges that may have led to their homelessness, such as obtaining employment or addressing substance abuse issues. The intervention has also been effective for people traditionally perceived to be more difficult to serve, including people with limited or no income and survivors of domestic violence. Research demonstrates that those who receive rapid re-housing assistance are homeless for shorter periods of time than those assisted with shelter or transitional housing. Rapid re-housing is also less expensive than other homeless interventions."
ACTION ITEM 4.6.2

*Develop a collaborative PSH project in the Bear River Region that will serve the most vulnerable community members.*

The Bear River region has enough high acuity households to benefit from permanent supportive housing. As PSH is conspicuously absent in the community, the BRLHCC might consider supporting single-site, project-based PSH. However, given the absence of PSH in the region, all types of PSH should be considered. Nevertheless, single-site, project-based permanent supportive housing has pros and cons as does any service delivery model, but is certainly worth exploring based on the current dynamics of the Bear River region’s homeless services system. A few of the benefits and concerns of this type of PSH model, as outlined by SAMHSA in the their Evidence-based PSH Toolkit, are stated below:

**SINGLE SITE**

Services and housing can be co-located, which is convenient for many. Not always integrated; location choices can be limited for tenants. A sense of community develops within site. Some programs restrict tenant choice and freedom. Neighborhood resistance might be encountered. Living in designated special-needs housing can be stigmatizing.

**PROJECT BASED**

Ensures long-term availability and affordability for 20, 30, 40 years or more. Development is a lengthy and complicated process. The landlord is already aware of service needs of tenants and may be more understanding and supportive if a crisis arises and less likely to enter eviction proceedings if something goes wrong. Depending on market conditions, creating housing can be more expensive.

The case for expanding project-based PSH in the Bear River region is made stronger considering the region’s complete lack of co-located housing and services for homeless persons combined with the tight housing market that makes physical units difficult to find. Creators would have to carefully and creatively consider ways to minimize common challenges with single site, project based developments, such as integration and stigmatization. It is recommended that the BRLHCC leadership and community-based decision-makers find a way to support the development of permanent supportive housing in the community with a modest number of units.

5. Community Engagement

Effective community engagement requires widespread buy-in, a common scope of understanding, and a common vision among community partners and service providers, decision-makers, people affected by homelessness, and the wider community.

Without adequate community awareness and involvement, homeless service systems in rural and micropolitan areas like the Bear River region are unable to leverage innovative resources. Increasing community awareness and improving community channels for action
are two key goals in the plan toward improving community engagement. This work cannot be limited to homeless service providers and will require all hands on deck.

**STRATEGY 5.1**

*Increase Community Awareness of Homelessness*

**ACTION ITEM 5.1.1**

*Establish a community outreach plan with short- and long-term goals for raising community awareness.*

As has been noted throughout this document, the Bear River region has historically underestimated and misunderstood the issue of homelessness in its communities. It is strongly recommended that the Community Engagement Committee leads the effort to develop a community outreach plan that will deconstruct the misunderstood aspects of homelessness in the community and shed light on the scope of the problem in the community. This plan should have short- and long-term goals for raising community awareness through various mechanisms (media, community education, elected official engagement, etc.). The Community Engagement Committee should work with other committees and the larger BRLHCC to ensure that the goals of the community outreach plan are consistent with the direction that the larger homeless service system is moving.

**ACTION ITEM 5.1.2**

*Support the development of a BRLHCC website.*

As has been noted elsewhere in this document, having comprehensive community information readily available and accessible to individuals experiencing homelessness is a major gap. Beyond this consumer gap in information accessibility, there is currently no mechanism for relaying information regarding homelessness to the larger public or to relevant stakeholders. It is recommended that the BRLHCC develop a website, possibly linked to from city and county tabs. The BRLHCC website should provide general information on the programs/resources available in the community and serve as a landing place where community members who are interested in reducing homelessness can get connected with the work underway. Additionally, the website should include the BRLHCC’s mission, calendar, minutes, and agendas.

**ACTION ITEM 5.1.3**

*Create a policy for BRLHCC media and press contacts that are consistent with community outreach plan.*

Consistent with action item 5.1.1, the Community Outreach Committee should develop a media toolkit or other guiding document that ensures the BRLHCC and partnered agencies can stay on message. Repetition is key to cultivating community awareness, and repeating mutually agreed upon messages that use person-centered, housing-first language is critical to building a larger community narrative on homelessness that humanizes individuals experiencing homelessness rather than stigmatizes them.
STRATEGY 5.2

Improve Community Channels for Action

ACTION ITEM 5.2.1
Create and share a matrix of all key housing services stakeholders and the opportunities available for community participation with each.

Core homeless-serving agencies like those who participate in coordinated entry are currently aware of each other’s mission and resources, there are numerous homeless-serving adjacent agencies that are disconnected. It is recommended that the BRLHCC spearhead the development of a housing services matrix that documents the services provided by core and adjacent agencies. This matrix could be published on the BRLHCC website and used for community outreach/education. Additionally, this matrix could improve the coordination between agencies of case management and ultimately improve outcomes for clients.

ACTION ITEM 5.2.2
Continue to build and improve PIT count practices for increasing community participation.

As the 2020 PIT count demonstrated, having robust community participation in the count is paramount for more accurately estimating the extent of homelessness in the Bear River region. A more accurate count speaks to state officials in charge of funding allocation decisions, but more importantly it speaks to key community decision-makers who will be critical in efforts to expand and improve homeless services in the region. It is recommended that the BRLHCC continue to work with the University and community groups like Families Feeding Families, Logan Pride Foundation, Cache Valley Veteran’s Association, and others to improve participation in the PIT count. Specifically, the PIT Count Committee should take an inventory of current and missing partners and take action early to ensure their involvement. For example, more active participation from law enforcement and hospitals could improve the count in future years. Finally, efforts should be made to better engage Box Elder county and Rich county in the count.

Next Steps

A strategic plan is only as good as its implementation. Successful implementation is dependent on effective leadership and committee initiative. Once the BRLHCC populates the committees outlined in this plan, it is recommended that each committee meets to discuss the section of the strategic plan that is most relevant to their charge. Each committee should develop a prioritization list and
accompanying timeline that they can report back to the BRLHCC. With quarterly reports from committees, the larger committee can attend to system concerns while committees move the work forward.

Appendix A. TCI Sample Characteristics, 2018 (N=880)

<table>
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<th>Non-Students (n=604)</th>
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<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.20</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>10.10</td>
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<td>9.10</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>56.30</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>18.60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.70</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>15.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>63.80</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>14.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>61.40</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7.70</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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<td>66.10</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.30</td>
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<td>7.20</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>66.50</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. TCI Personal Experiences related to Homelessness, (N=880)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bear River AOG</th>
<th>Students %</th>
<th>Non-Students %</th>
<th>Full Sample %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last Year</td>
<td>Last 5 Years</td>
<td>Ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed residences more than twice?</td>
<td>21.60</td>
<td>65.30</td>
<td>84.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been served an eviction notice?</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been evicted?</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed one rent/mortgage payment?</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept at the home of a family member because you had nowhere else to stay?</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>28.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept at the home of a friend because you had nowhere else to stay?</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept outside or somewhere else not fit for habitation because you had nowhere else to stay? (e.g., car, tent, etc.)</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>12.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in an emergency shelter, drop-in center, or transitional housing for homeless?</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about becoming homeless?</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>20.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B Notes: Respondents were asked to check if they had experienced any of the listed items in the last year, 5 years, ever, or never. Values in table reflect percentages and are cumulative from 1 year to ever. In other words, if respondents indicated they had lost their job in the last year, then they are also counted in the percentages for having lost their job within the last 5 years and ever. These data are for everyone who indicated living in the Tri-County area (Cache, Rich, Box Elder Counties).

Appendix C. Summary of State and HUD CoC Funding for Homeless Services in the State of Utah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>State of Utah SHCC-HUD Homelessness Allocations</th>
<th>HUD CoC Funding Allocation</th>
<th>Homelessness Shelter Crisis Mitigation Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY19 Award % of Total</td>
<td>FY20 Award % of Total</td>
<td>FY18 % of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCG</td>
<td>$203,263.00</td>
<td>2.15%</td>
<td>$219,337.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon-Emery</td>
<td>$88,200.00</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>$114,013.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>$37,500.00</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>$52,070.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>$134,000.00</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>$223,496.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>$30,921.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uintah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>$11,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooele</td>
<td>$20,428.00</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>$25,946.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>$26,000.00</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>$84,050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>$582,452.00</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>$63,082.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber-Price</td>
<td>$399,631.00</td>
<td>4.27%</td>
<td>$999,924.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monticello</td>
<td>$433,677.00</td>
<td>4.58%</td>
<td>$787,507.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake</td>
<td>$7,068,062.00</td>
<td>74.72%</td>
<td>$14,302,644.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,60,413.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,981,200.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,903,163.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Gross Funding Comparisons by CoC in the State of Utah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Total State Funding</th>
<th>Total Federal Funding</th>
<th>Total Combined</th>
<th>% Total Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSCG</td>
<td>$3,475,841.75</td>
<td>$1,817,218.00</td>
<td>$5,293,059.75</td>
<td>16.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCG</td>
<td>$7675,567.00</td>
<td>$1,198,418.00</td>
<td>$1,965,985.00</td>
<td>5.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCG</td>
<td>$17,921,528.88</td>
<td>$7,887,527.00</td>
<td>$25,809,051.88</td>
<td>78.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,164,933.63</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,903,163.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$33,068,096.63</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures reflect data for most recent FY of published funding numbers. The state funding includes SHCC/HUD Allocation (FY19) and Mitigation Fund Awards (FY21); the federal funding includes Total HUD-CoC Awards for FY18.