



Compassionate Communities Description and Action Plan

BACKGROUND

Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams co-chairs the Utah Civil and Compassionate Communities Initiative, which aims to inspire others to be more civil, welcoming, inclusive, caring, and compassionate, and to act on those intentions.

As Salt Lake County Mayor, McAdams has led by example and demonstrated compassion in numerous ways, including creating the following initiatives:

- **Collective Impact on Homelessness** – Operating on the belief that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring, Salt Lake County has led homeless service providers, funders and other stakeholders to use their collective expertise, resources, and data to continuously improve housing and service systems so they are safe, integrated, efficient and focused on self-sufficiency. The initiative has also integrated outcomes to ensure that communities hosting homeless services are safe and welcoming for everyone.
- **Operation Diversion/Rio Grande** - Recognizing that criminal justice is as much of a health issue as it is a public safety issue, Salt Lake County has spearheaded initiatives that create opportunities for success: individuals suffering from mental illness or struggling with alcohol or substance use are diverted from the criminal justice system wherever possible, and where that is not an option, they are given the opportunity to participate in structured criminal justice programs focused on reentry, treatment, mentorship, and wrap-around recovery support.
- **Welcoming Salt Lake** - Building on Utah's proud tradition of welcoming newcomers, Salt Lake County can ensure the economic, social, and civic potential of Salt Lake's New Americans is maximized – making Salt Lake more vibrant and globally competitive.

CURRENT EFFORTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Compassion is core to all of Salt Lake County's efforts. A recent demonstration of this commitment includes the Utah Citizen Summit, which was held in January, 2018 in partnership with the Utah Civil and Compassionate Communities Initiative. The event, Civic Expression Through Dialog and

the Arts, helped bring together community leaders to learn more about the art of effective listening and storytelling, the value of dissent and differences in our communities, and a mindful approach to dialogue.

Highlighting Salt Lake County's commitment to compassion, this event built upon recent efforts and helped fuel even more activities. Salt Lake County established a working group and solidified partnerships committed to intentionally threading compassion throughout interactions and activities.

Salt Lake County is proud to have recently prioritized the following initiatives, which are linked in many ways and have shared outcomes, all centered on compassion:

- **Collective Impact** - Using a Collective Impact approach, Salt Lake County is working with providers and other stakeholders to set a common agenda, determine outcome measures, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in homeless service delivery. To guide these efforts, Mayor McAdams convened a [Collective Impact on Homelessness Steering Committee](#) in early 2015 that included over 35 stakeholder organizations representing all interests. The Committee came to consensus around a set of shared outcomes for improving our homeless services system and, on that basis, secured significant state and private resources to promote a major service system redesign that includes new emergency shelter models, integrated health and homeless service models, and new residential treatment and housing models. The initiative is now influencing statewide policy and practice related to criminal justice, behavioral health, and intergenerational poverty.
- **Criminal Justice** – Several efforts underway in Salt Lake County demonstrate Salt Lake County's commitment to prioritizing treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Recent accomplishments include:
 - **Pay For Success Projects (launched in 2016):** Salt Lake County has just completed the pilot year for two Pay for Success projects aimed at reducing recidivism, offering stability, and stopping the revolving door to the county jail. Through this public/private/non-profit/community partnership, Salt Lake County aims to provide treatment, housing, and recovery support to 540 individuals over the next six years.
 - **The REACH (Recovery, Engagement, Assessment, Career, and Housing) Program** will serve over 225 high-risk, high-need criminal offenders over six years using evidence-based therapies, short-term housing support, and case management. These services will address criminogenic risks tied to recidivism, substance use, and mental health services. At the target impact level, the program will generate 26,800 fewer days in jail or prison and 225 fewer arrests.
 - **The Homes Not Jail program** will serve 315 persistently homeless individuals by providing rapid re-housing services, including move-in support, rental assistance, roommate matching for peer support, and intensive case management. At the target impact level, the program will

generate 1,500 months without jail or shelter and 250 graduations to permanent homes.

- **Operation Diversion (Fall 2016):** In Fall 2016, Salt Lake County launched a pilot program that offered individuals struggling with substance use and mental health issues an opportunity to be *immediately diverted from jail* into a structured treatment program. Under Mayor McAdams' leadership, a team of over 50 county staff members and social workers set up a receiving center in Salt Lake City to meet with individuals who committed non-violent crimes likely due to underlying substance use or mental health issues. At the receiving center, a team of public defenders, social workers, and criminal justice case workers, conducted a full risk and needs assessment and offered eligible individuals an opportunity to enter treatment in lieu of criminal prosecution.
- **Operation Rio Grande (Fall 2017):** Building off the success of Operation Diversion, Salt Lake County partnered with the State of Utah, Salt Lake City, and the private, non-profit and faith communities to launch Operation Rio Grande. Each month since Operation Rio Grande began, a team of social workers, attorneys, and case workers have gone into the jail or community to meet with individuals involved in the criminal justice system to offer them the chance to participate in a newly created Operation Rio Grande specialty court program. The program offers immediate access to treatment, with little to no wait times. Wherever possible, individuals are released from jail the same day they are assessed, resulting in less jail days and access to treatment much sooner than the standard criminal justice system. Since Operation Rio Grande began, the county has screened hundreds of cases, and has been able to assess and offer 164 individuals the opportunity to participate in structured behavioral health treatment programs.
 - As part of the Operation Rio Grande effort, outcomes are being tracked to provide data for policymakers. This offers an opportunity for better long-term policy decisions about the design and funding of a more successful approach to the criminal justice system.
- **Sober Living:** In January 2018, Salt Lake County launched a new Sober Living Voucher Pilot Program to help individuals transition out of jail or residential treatment, back into the community. Sober living homes provide safe, affordable housing for people in addiction recovery. The homes require individuals to continue treatment for substance use, as they actively seek work or participate in the community. This program has 8 private and non-profit housing partners and has the capacity to house close to 100 individuals for up to 6 months. Since the beginning of April, Salt Lake County has housed 55 individuals. Through partnerships with the Division of Workforce Services and the Utah Transit Authority, individuals are also provided with a work counselor to develop an individual employment plan and are given a bus pass to help with transportation. Unified Police Department helps individuals move into their homes and the LDS church provides them a two-week supply of food.

- **Expungement Day:** Under Mayor McAdams' leadership, the county launched its first ever "Expungement Day," on April 5, 2018, offering former offenders a chance to clear their criminal records of past convictions that make it difficult for them to escape past mistakes and move on to live productive lives. Having a criminal record makes it difficult for individuals to obtain employment, become eligible for housing, and get back on their feet. Through this collaboration, a team of 40 volunteer attorneys from the Utah State Bar were trained on the expungement process, and assisted individuals in clearing their records. Over \$19,000 in private donations was raised to cover all fees (sometimes in excess of \$500 per person), making this service free of charge to all who participated. The Department of Public Safety accelerated the review of applications, streamlining the complex process and eliminating months of long wait times to clear a criminal record. In total, our Expungement Day partners were able to assist 73 individuals expunge over 100 convictions and charges.
- **Welcoming Salt Lake Initiative** – Recognizing that new Americans add economic strength and cultural vitality to the community, the Welcoming Salt Lake Initiative was created to support and harness those important qualities of immigrants and refugees. A New American Task Force was created in March 2016 that includes more than 75 business, government, and community leaders. This task force helped create an action plan that has led to the following accomplishments:
 - Launched the Welcoming Week Campaign in September 2016
 - Created an Office for New Americans in October 2016.
 - Developed a website for information for New Americans in October 2016

ACTION PLAN

Proud of recent accomplishments, Salt Lake County plans to build upon their efforts and formalize a plan that will continue to inspire community wide compassion. The following activities are scheduled to take place to compassionately address issues including homelessness, criminal justice, and refugees and New Americans over the next 12-24 months:

Compassionate Community Kick-Off Activities and Events:

- Joint Resolution from County Council and Mayor in support of continuing and developing programs to strengthen Salt Lake County's compassionate efforts
- Encourage others to engage in, and even become compassionate communities, through information to be provided at targeted regional and statewide meetings, including:
 - Council of Mayors
 - Council of Governments
 - Utah League of Cities and Towns
- Kick-Off/Press Announcement

While compassion is a driver of all county activities and initiatives, the following initiatives have been prioritized as part of Salt Lake County's compassionate community designation:

Compassionate Initiatives:

- **Childhood Stability** –As part of a continuum of cradle to career services offered in a Compassionate Community, Salt Lake County is committed to increasing access to opportunity for our most vulnerable populations by focusing on the four pillars of childhood stability: Education, Healthcare, Safety and Economic Opportunity.

Our effort was inspired by the 14 shared outcomes adopted by the Salt Lake County Collective Impact on Homelessness Steering Committee, which prioritized preventing homelessness for children and families. While homelessness presents challenges for individuals of all ages, it is exceptionally damaging to children, especially very young children. Having a safe place to live is an essential foundation for doing well in school, for having a healthy body and mind, and for building a future.

In 2016, a Collective Impact on Homelessness workgroup focused on increasing housing security for children established a framework for stakeholders working across each of the four pillars of childhood stability to use. Together, we challenged ourselves and the larger community to incorporate housing into all of our work and to consider an episode of homelessness as a poor outcome towards our collective efforts to improve the lives of children.

Our community accepted that challenge and helped to strengthen that original framework into its current form which will guide activities over the next 12-24 months, which will include:

- Define improved housing security as an integral part of a spectrum of infant and child wellbeing that includes improved outcomes in health, education, safety and economic opportunity.
- Focus our prevention, housing interventions and crisis diversion efforts on families, especially those with children, age birth to 6 years.
- Ensure that families and children who “graduate” or age-out of supportive programs for young children, are connected to programs that provide ongoing support—including public school programs and after school programs—at each stage of childhood development.
- Focus our housing-related diversion, mediation efforts, and supportive services on youth (age 13-18), who are currently in crisis or are at-risk of experiencing a housing crisis, including those who have previously experienced an episode of homelessness. This includes and prioritizes teenage parents and parents-to-be.

- Ensure equitable access to programs designed to increase childhood stability, regardless of geography, language and cultural barriers, and/or proximity to services.
- Open a new residential rehabilitation center for women and women with children and develop a related housing complex onsite. A partnership between Salt Lake County, Murray City, Volunteers for America Utah and the Salt Lake County Housing Authority, and the State of Utah, the Women and Children's Center will be a prominent symbol of Salt Lake County's efforts to improve outcomes for children across multiple service sectors and jurisdictions. It will:
 - Pilot a new form of supportive housing – “service enriched housing” that bridges the gap between transitional and permanent supportive housing
 - Forge new connections between social detox, medical detox and supportive housing
 - Help divert women and women with children from jail and shelter and for preventing an episode of homelessness for children
 - Connecting women and children who are diverted from jail and shelter to education, healthcare, employment and other forms of opportunity
- Prioritize the following additional interventions immediately for children and families:
 - Develop a coordinated referral and assessment policy for children and their families that integrates housing resources, health and human service programs, job training and employment opportunities, legal services, and public education programs.
 - Encourage equitable access for all children and families by helping connect new Americans to cultural orientation, courses in English as a Second Language, and translation services to access mainstream services where needed.
 - In order to prevent cyclical poverty and homelessness, including intergenerational poverty, prioritize job training and employment programs on families with children. This includes opportunities for child care assistance and transportation supports.
 - In developing these and other interventions with our partners, Salt Lake County aims to help connect individuals to services across agencies, and bridge gaps caused by restrictive definitions of poverty and homelessness. As a community we have agreed that, where local resources and will exist, stakeholders should not be inherently restricted by any single agency definition of homelessness which may limit their ability to meet the needs of children and families in crisis.
- **Criminal Justice Reform** – Salt Lake County's Pay for Success Programs and involvement in Operation Rio Grande will continue over the next 24 months. In addition to these efforts, Salt Lake County plans to:

- Push for full expansion of Medicaid to expand treatment opportunities and funding for the criminal justice involved;
 - Continue its participation in the Salt Lake County Opioid Task Force to help address the opioid epidemic facing our community;
 - Work with the Salt Lake County Sheriff's office to enhance reentry services for offenders in our community, including access to critical identification documents needed to obtain services;
 - Launch an innovative employment/transportation initiative focused on connecting individuals in addiction recovery to high-paying employment opportunities that are not easily accessible via public transit;
 - Identify opportunities to target and assist at-risk individuals to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system.
- **Building Welcoming Communities** – The Mayor's Office for New Americans works to ensure the economic, social, and civic potential of Salt Lake's New Americans is maximized-making Salt Lake more vibrant and globally competitive. Below is a list of strategies to accomplish this vision.
 - **Achieve Certified Welcoming Certification:** Strong 21st Century communities are ones that connect and include people of all backgrounds. To achieve this certification, Salt Lake County must meet a series of seven rigorous Welcoming Standards. The Welcoming Standards provide a comprehensive roadmap for Salt Lake County building more cohesive and equitable communities and fostering connections between newer immigrants and long-time residents. It also sets benchmarks that community organizations, residents, and others can use to hold welcoming places accountable and inspire continued innovation.

The Seven Welcoming Standards include the following:

- **Government Leadership** – In welcoming places the local government implements systems and programs that strengthen community efforts and embed inclusion within government agencies.
- **Equitable Access** – Welcoming places work to ensure community services and opportunities are available to all residents, including immigrants.
- **Civic Engagement** – Welcoming communities actively ensure that residents, including newcomers, fully participate in civic life by increasing access to leadership and democratic spaces.
- **Connected Communities** – Welcoming communities build connections between newcomers and long-term residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.
- **Education** – Welcoming communities strive for an educational system that ensures all students have the support they need to succeed in school and the education they need to succeed in the workforce.
- **Economic Development** – Welcoming communities harness the full potential of all residents. Immigrants have the skills and assets to thrive, and economic development systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent.

- Safe Communities – Welcoming communities foster trust and build relationships between residents, including newcomers, and local law enforcement and safety agencies.
- **Increase the naturalization rate of New Americans:** Faced with high naturalization fees and a complicated application process, many are choosing to put off citizenship in favor of the simpler and cheaper option of renewing their legal permanent resident status. This is a missed opportunity both for immigrants/refugees and for our community. The benefits of naturalization include higher earning potential for new citizens, increased voting, and political participation, improved connection between communities and local services, and reduced deportation rates. The Mayor’s Office for New Americans has secured legislative funding and is organizing a regional initiative to support over 22,000 legal permanent Salt Lake County residents to become U.S. citizens. This initiative provides the infrastructure for stakeholders to work collectively to increase awareness, expand resources, and activate untapped community assets.
- **Ensure a complete 2020 Census Count:** The census determines the allocation of more than \$400 billion in federal funding for local programs. The 2010 census missed 1.5 million minorities. The Mayor’s Office for New Americans will convene and organize efforts to address the four major areas of undercount:
 - Ensuring that low-visibility households are included in the Master Address File
 - Recruiting enumerators and canvassers from minority communities
 - Reaching out to educate minority households about privacy and importance of the census
 - “Getting out the count” campaign for minority households

FUTURE EFFORTS

It is important for us to continue to carry these compassion-inspired activities forward. Salt Lake County is demonstrating our long-term commitment through the creation of people-centered, data-driven programs and meaningful partnerships.

Salt Lake County believes that by becoming a Compassionate Community, we are not only strengthening our community today, but are also making an investment for a better future. The planned activities, projects and initiatives not only help solidify a robust economic future for all Salt Lake County, but more importantly, help create a more livable, stronger, compassionate community for all residents.