

Community Engagement and Needs Assessment for Salt Lake County's Consolidated Plan

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Consolidated Planning

The objective of the Salt Lake County Consolidated Plan is to identify the greatest needs in Salt Lake County and, through a public process and public input, with input from a variety of agencies and organizations, develop a five-year strategy to address and mitigate the greatest needs and identify how funding received will be used to address and mitigate those needs from 2020-2024. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban development requires any communities that receive any of the following grants to complete a Consolidated Plan:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnership Grant Funds
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

The Needs Assessment and Public Engagement Process

This summary focuses on the needs assessment and public engagement process within the consolidated planning effort. The process began with a literature review to identify the universe of needs in Salt Lake County. These issues were the starting point for creating subsequent public engagement tools, including an online survey, in-person presentations and surveys, and booth activities used at public events.

Public engagement included outreach to two primary groups: (1) partner organizations, advocacy groups and local governments, and (2) underrepresented populations, protected classes and the general public.

The first group, partner organizations, advocacy groups and local governments were invited to participate in a kick-off meeting to learn about the participation process and provide feedback on plans for outreach, including a review of a draft survey for group two, underrepresented populations, protected classes and the general public. Group one received regular updates and progress reports as the participation process progressed. The County also conducted follow up meetings with subgroups in this category, including mayors of local municipalities and nonprofits working with those experiencing domestic

LITERATURE REVIEW

The needs assessment effort in the consolidated planning process began with a literature review to identify the universe of needs in Salt Lake County.

Universe of Needs: Top Issues

1. Health
2. Economy
3. Housing
4. Transportation/Access to Opportunity
5. Stability and Safety
6. Quality of Life
7. Education

abuse. Interactive, real-time phone polling was used in these meetings to gather more feedback on needs and to foster more detailed discussions. Efforts to reach group one organizations included outreach to the Continuum of Care, nonprofit/philanthropic organizations, developers and community-based organizations.

Outreach to the second group, underrepresented populations, protected classes and the general public, included an online survey housed on the County's website. Many efforts were employed to encourage survey participation, including the following:

- Media release in English and Spanish
- Social media posts/website banner on Salt Lake County's home page
- Targeted destinations for "take the survey" posters/fliers, including: Salt Lake County libraries, senior centers and health clinics, as well as nonprofit community health clinics, Department of Workforce Services Salt Lake County Employment Centers, area foodbanks and laundromats, and housing authorities/properties.
- Email invitations: partner organizations, advocacy groups and local governments were provided with email posters and invitations that they could print and post and also forward to their constituents, encouraging them to take the survey.
- Event participation: Salt Lake County participated in a

number of events encouraging survey participation. Alternate activities were also provided at the events themselves, including a “game” that enabled even those who couldn’t read or who didn’t know English to provide feedback.

The efforts above encouraged the general public to participate, but outreach and activities specifically targeted low-and moderate-income persons, those living in blighted areas, minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, public housing residents and other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas, as events and promotional materials centered around service providers, public facilities, and geographic locations/events that directly “touched” these populations.

Top Salt Lake County Issues and Needs: What Did We Learn?

Salt Lake County’s Community Needs Survey was open from September 9, 2019-October 20, 2019. A total of 1,602 residents participated in the survey, nearly double the 870 who participated in 2017, the last time the survey was done. Overall, across the survey and companion events, health (air quality) and housing (housing affordability) rose to the top of the list most often.

WHICH ISSUES ROSE TO THE TOP MOST OFTEN?

- **Health (air quality)**
- **Housing (housing affordability)**

Public Survey Results

What follows is summary data for all survey respondents as well as a summary of key differences in the results among various demographic and geographic subgroups.

ALL RESPONDENTS: PRIORITIES

What needs the most improvement in your local community?

1. Air Quality
2. Housing Affordability and Options
3. Mental Health Services
4. Transportation
5. Education

Top Health Concerns:

1. Air Quality
2. Mental Health/Suicide Prevention
3. Health Care Access and Insurance
4. Substance Abuse/Addiction
5. Children’s Health

Top Economic Concerns:

1. Living Wage/Cost of Living
2. Economic Independence

3. Adult Education & Workforce Training
4. Poverty/Intergenerational Poverty
5. Job Creation/Access to Jobs

Priority Economic Development Initiatives:

1. Higher Wage Jobs
2. Job Training
3. Creating Jobs

Top Housing Concerns:

1. Housing Affordability
2. Housing/Neighborhood Condition
3. Housing Choices
4. Housing Shortage

Priority Housing Programs:

1. Building More Affordable Housing Units
2. Home Ownership Assistance
3. Preserving Existing Affordable Housing
4. Home Repairs and Energy Efficiency Improvement Assistance
5. Providing Rental Assistance

Priority Services and Improvements

1. Mental Health Services
2. Housing Services
3. Healthcare Services (Medical and Dental)
4. Homeless Services
5. Substance Abuse and Addiction
6. Transportation Services
7. Childhood Education Programs
8. Job/Vocational Training
9. Childcare
10. Neglected/Abused Child Services

Community/Neighborhood Priorities

1. Street Improvements
2. Sidewalk Improvements
3. Park Enhancements
4. Publicly Owned Facilities (libraries, senior centers, etc.)
5. Water Improvements

IS HOUSING AVAILABLE?

70% = respondents that do not think that the **availability of housing** meets the needs of Salt Lake County’s growing population.

81% = respondents that say there is **not enough housing for low-income families.**

79% = respondents that say there is **not enough housing for people experiencing homelessness.**

IS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE?

51% = yes

49% = no

DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS

LOW OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Low opportunity areas are places that lack access to quality jobs and education, and have higher rates of poverty, housing instability and labor market engagement. Low opportunity areas in Salt Lake County include Kearns, Magna, Midvale, Murray and South Salt Lake. Combined, 231 individuals from these areas took the public survey, with participants from Kearns making up 45% of total responses. Key differences between all survey responses and survey responses from low opportunity areas are noted below.

What needs the most improvement in your local community? Two of the five top concerns among low opportunity areas do not appear at all when considering Salt Lake County as a whole, including top ranked **neighborhood revitalization** (49%) and fourth ranked **safety** (36%). While air quality is the top improvement according to 51% of respondents overall, it falls to number five (32%) among low opportunity areas. Mental health services and transportation do not appear on the top five list for low opportunity areas.

Health: While air quality ranks as the top health concern overall, it ranks second among low opportunity areas overall, behind top ranked **mental health/suicide prevention**. Overall, air quality and mental health/suicide prevention are among the top two concerns of all low opportunity communities except Midvale, which identifies healthcare access and insurance.

Housing Programs: Among all survey respondents, building more affordable units is the #1 ranked program overall, with home ownership assistance ranking second. However, among low opportunity areas, **home ownership assistance** is the #1 ranked program, with building more affordable units ranking second.

VARIOUS INCOME SEGMENTS

Noted below, survey responses from various income segments, including very low income (<\$35,000), low income (\$35,000-<\$50,000) and moderate income (\$50,000-<\$75,000), reflect some key differences from survey responses overall.

What needs the most improvement in your local community? While air quality is the top improvement according to 51% of survey respondents overall, **housing affordability and options** is the top improvement identified by very low- and low-income individuals (53% and 54% respectively).

Health: Air quality ranks as the top health concern overall, but those with very low incomes rank **mental health/suicide prevention** as a top concern.

Services and Improvements Priorities: Overall, mental

health services topped the list of respondents' priorities, with a #1 ranking and 40% selecting it in their top three. The top pick was **housing services** for very low- and low-income respondents. Mental health services were ranked significantly lower (30%) for very low-income residents than for respondents overall.

OLDER ADULTS

Survey responses from adults aged 55+ generally correspond to responses overall. A key difference occurs when asked about services and improvements priorities, where **housing services** is the top pick for those aged 55+, in contrast to respondents overall, who identify mental health services as the top pick.

GEOGRAPHIC QUADRANTS

There are distinctions in survey results when considering Salt Lake County's four geographic quadrants:

Northwest Quadrant (Kearns, Magna, Taylorsville, West Valley City)

- Air quality is the top improvement according to 51% of all survey respondents, but **neighborhood revitalization** is the top need for respondents from the northwest quadrant of Salt Lake County (51%), a concern that only ranks sixth, at 24%, among all respondents.
- Though air quality ranks as the top overall health concern among all survey respondents, residents living in the northwest quadrant of Salt Lake County rank **mental health/suicide prevention** as the top health concern.
- For survey respondents overall, the **condition of housing and neighborhoods** secures the #2 rank for housing concerns. This concern is especially high among residents in the northwest quadrant of the county.
- While building more affordable units is the #1 ranked program overall, in the northwest quadrant building more affordable units is ranked #3, behind **home repairs and energy efficiency improvement assistance**.
- 67% of all survey respondents express a positive view of their community's safety; however, respondents from the northwest are **less likely to feel safe**, with only 40% expressing a positive view.
- 41% of all survey respondents express a positive opinion when asked if children in their community are **receiving the education they need**. However, 50% of respondents in the northwest quadrant of the County have a negative view.

Northeast Quadrant (Emigration, Holladay, Millcreek, Salt Lake City, South Salt Lake)

- When looking at all survey responses, mental health services topped the list of services and improvements priorities; however, the top pick was **housing services**

for the northeast quadrant. Housing services was ranked significantly higher (44%) in the northeast quadrant than for respondents overall (34%).

Homeless services also ranked significantly higher (41%) in the northeast quadrant, in contrast to 25% overall.

Southwest Quadrant (Bluffdale, Copperton, Herriman, Riverton, South Jordan, West Jordan)

- While air quality is the top improvement according to 51% of all survey respondents, **transportation** is the top improvement cited by those from the southwest quadrant (47%).
- Building more affordable units is the #1 ranked housing program when considering all survey responses, but in the southwest quadrant of Salt Lake County respondents identify **home ownership assistance** as the top ranked program.
- 67% of all survey respondents express a positive view of their community's safety, with respondents from the southwest **feeling safer** than any other group, with 83% expressing a positive view.
- 41% of all survey respondents express a positive opinion when asked if **children in their community are receiving the education they need**, whereas 60% of respondents in the southwest quadrant of the County have a positive view.
- When asked about community/neighborhood priorities, southwest quadrant respondents expressed significantly less interest in sidewalk improvements (34%) than respondents overall (50%) and significantly more interest in **water improvements** (44%) than respondents overall (34%).

Southeast Quadrant (Alta, Cottonwood Heights, Draper, Midvale, Murray, Sandy, White City)

- Though creating higher wage jobs is the top priority in southeast Salt Lake County, its score was somewhat lower than in other quadrants due to more interest in **creating jobs and job training** in this part of the county.
- When asked about community/neighborhood priorities, street improvements garnered top position, and was identified 64% of the time when all survey respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities; however, in the southeast quadrant of Salt Lake County, respondents identified **park enhancements** (59%) as their top pick.

Literature Reviewed as Foundation for Engagement Process:

- *2016 Community Health Needs Assessment (Intermountain Healthcare)*
- *2018 Community Needs Assessment (Utah Community Action)*
- *2019-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Wasatch Choice 2050 (Wasatch Front Regional Council)*
- *Moderate Income Housing & Action Plan, February 2017 (Salt Lake County)*

- *State of Utah Affordable Housing Assessment, 2017 (Workforce Services)*
- *Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan, 2018-2020 (Health University of Utah)*
- *Housing Prices and the Threat to Affordability, March 2018 (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute)*
- *2019 Economic Report to the Governor (Utah Economic Council)*
- *Utah 211 Annual Report, July 2017-June 2018 (United Way)*
- *2018 Results Matter Report of the Promise Partnership*
- *Utah's Long-Term Demographic and Economic Projections Summary, July 2017 (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute)*
- *2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (Wasatch Front Economic Development District)*
- *Your Utah Your Future Vision for 2050 (Envision Utah)*
- *Building a Better Beehive, June 2019 (Utah Foundation)*
- *Utah Foundation Quality of Life Index, September 2018*