

Homeless Resource Center Transition

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated Feb. 15, 2019

Resource Center Operations

What is a Resource Center, and how is it different from a shelter?

The resource centers are not simply shelters; they provide a new seamless system for delivering services to individuals experiencing homelessness. Food, medical care, employment assistance and case management and other partners will be accessible on site.

How will people be transported and connected between services in different parts of the county?

One of the major benefits of the resource center model is that essential services are provided within the resource centers. Food will be provided on site and a mobile health clinic will travel to each resource center. There will still be times when transportation between resource centers and other services will be needed, and a more complete plan for that is being developed. All three resource centers are located near public transit routes and funding has been set aside to facilitate needed transportation.

Will the resource centers operate year-round?

Yes.

Which organizations will operate the three resource centers?

Three experienced homeless service providers will each operate one resource center. The Road Home will operate the men's resource center in South Salt Lake. Volunteers of America will operate the women's resource center in Salt Lake City. Catholic Community Services will operate the combined men's and women's shelter in Salt Lake City. All three facilities are owned by the nonprofit organization Shelter the Homeless.

Is The Road Home going to close?

While the downtown shelter facility will be closing, The Road Home will not be closing. [The Road Home](#) is a private non-profit agency that assists individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and will continue to provide services at several locations, including the Midvale family shelter and the new resource center on 10th West.

Will The Road Home continue to operate the Midvale Center for families with children?

Yes.

System Capacity

Will there be enough beds?

Yes, there will be enough beds. There will be 700 beds in the three new resource centers, which is enough capacity for a typical night. If there are nights when additional capacity is needed, there will still be winter overflow at St. Vincent de Paul, just like there is now. For example, during a week in mid-December, the nightly average of people staying at The Road Home downtown shelter was 755 people, including overflow. As we continue to implement additional housing solutions, we expect that number to continue to go down.

Is additional housing being added? When?

Hundreds of units of additional permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless people will be opening over the next two years in Salt Lake City.

- Denver Street - 22 units - 2019
- First Step House - 79 units - 2020
- Magnolia - 65 units - 2020
- Pamela's Place - 100 units - 2020
- 5th East Apartments - 75 units - 2020
- 426 Apartments - 40 units - 2020
- The Magnolia - 65 units - 2020
- Additional vouchers for market rate units with supportive services will also be available

Won't this cause an influx of homeless people from other states?

There is no evidence to suggest that people come to Utah from out of state to take advantage of homelessness resources. Virtually every city in the country has people experiencing homelessness and is working to provide adequate services.

What happens with unsheltered people and those who do not want to engage in services?

There have always been homeless individuals who do not engage with the shelter system for a variety of reasons. Some people don't feel safe in a shelter or don't feel they are able to follow the rules. Some aren't comfortable interacting with service providers. Couples don't want to be split up into different shelters and people don't want to be separated from their pets. PTSD or other mental health conditions could make staying in a shelter impossible.

State partners recently developed a toolkit to assist cities in developing their own community response to unsheltered homelessness, which may include street outreach, close coordination across law enforcement agencies, periodic clean-ups of encampments and community involvement.

Service providers will continue to do their best to serve unsheltered homeless populations with street outreach and connecting them to services, as possible.

Coordinated Entry

How will people be connected with the right resource center or other provider? How will coordinated entry work?

Coordinated entry is a process designed to quickly identify, assess, refer and connect people in crisis to housing and assistance, no matter where they show up to ask for help. It can pave the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by:

- Helping people move through the system faster to housing
- Reducing new entries into homelessness by consistently offering prevention and diversion resources upfront
- Improving data collection and quality and providing accurate information on what kind of assistance consumers need

An effective coordinated entry system functions as a single system from entry to exit and all providers are performing their roles in moving people from entry to exit. All service providers within the system are responsible for implementing coordinated entry within their purview, while a single agency provides oversight of the process.

For the Salt Lake area coordinated entry system, Salt Lake County will serve as the oversight agency, while Utah Community Action will provide coordinated intake services at all three resource centers. Utah Community Action staff will conduct the initial assessment for each person who comes to a resource center, determining the best place for the person to stay that night and facilitating placement at a resource center or another appropriate place.

Law Enforcement

Will law enforcement continue to have a presence in the area after the downtown community shelter closes?

Yes, the Department of Public Safety and Salt Lake City are committed to maintaining the public safety improvements achieved during Operation Rio Grande permitting available funding. There is a public safety transition task group that will develop a plan on the transition timeframe, coordinating with all law enforcement agencies.

Other

How will you measure success?

Utah's goals for homelessness are to reduce the average length of stay in emergency shelter, increase successful transitions into housing and reduce the number of people who return to homelessness at some point in the future (recidivism).

What will happen to the service providers that are located downtown?

Service providers will continue to operate and serve their clients in the ways that they believe are the most effective. Adjustments to specific services may be made as the resource centers become operational to better meet the needs of clients.

How will homeless people be notified of the changes?

The Client Transition Task Group is developing a plan to ensure that people currently staying in shelters will be well aware of the transition plans. They will also be looking at the best way to notify people who are unsheltered - camping or living in cars - of the change. There will be posters and flyers to help spread the word, as well as case managers, staff and outreach teams to talk with people one on one and answer questions.