



Cache County Human Services Assessment:

Homelessness and Housing

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NSNC

Northern Social Services Nonprofit Coalition



College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Transforming Communities Institute
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SOCIAL WORK



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About Northern Social Services Nonprofit Coalition

The Northern Social Services Nonprofit Coalition (NSSNC) develops and promotes Cache Valley social service nonprofit organizations to enhance access, improve service quality, and raise awareness of support systems to improve the lives of local individuals and families. Their vision is that Cache Valley families and individuals are safe, housed, supported and empowered through advocacy, education, direct services, and continuous collaboration. NSSNC members include leadership representatives from the following organizations: CAPSA, Neighborhood Nonprofit Housing Corporation, Options for Independence, The Family Place, English Learning Center, Cache Refugee & Immigration Connection, Cache Food Pantry, Utah Families Feeding Families, 4 Helping Hearts, Logan Pride Foundation, Cache Valley Humanitarian Center, Little Lambs Foundation of Utah, Boys & Girls Club of Northern Utah, Cache Valley Veterans Association. These organizations are united in their efforts to “compete together for the community.”

About Transforming Communities Institute

The Transforming Communities Institute at Utah State University responds to community-identified needs across Utah. Drawing on strengths and assets, TCI collaborates and engages with stakeholders to transform communities through research, professional education and training, advocacy, and action to build strong, resilient, and inclusive communities. TCI envisions that all Utahns will live in thriving, vibrant communities.

The Current Project

As Cache Valley grows, the strain on current human services has grown, and the lack of necessary resources to address social problems has become painfully obvious. The current project, the Cache County Human Services Assessment, provides local service agencies and policymakers with information regarding available human service programs and organizations, barriers that prevent people from accessing services, and potential gaps in services. Five areas of human services in Cache County were explored in the study: homelessness and housing; aging and people with disabilities; food insecurity; mental health and substance use services; and inclusivity, and support for diverse populations. Data were gathered from local organizational leaders via survey. If an organization did not respond, secondary data were gathered via online research. The study was designed and implemented as a collaborative effort of the Northern Social Services Nonprofit Coalition, USU’s Transforming Communities Institute, and USU Department of Social Work students of the 2022 MSW Organizations & Community course with the oversight of Dr. Jayme Walters.

In this report, findings and recommendations from homelessness and housing services are shared. In March and April 2022, a mixed-methods Qualtrics survey was emailed to organizations providing services to the homeless and those individuals seeking housing in Cache County. The data gathered during the assessment period were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis of two-cycle coding (descriptive and pattern coding).

Background

Homelessness has become an ever-increasing social problem in Cache County. Homelessness can be a result of numerous factors such as lack of affordable housing, low income, substance use disorder, family issues, and poor mental health and lack of accessible and affordable treatment.¹ Every year, the state of Utah mandates that all counties conduct a Point-in-Time Count (PIT) in which government employees and community volunteers canvas the county locating and counting individuals who are currently homeless. USU Social Work professor, Dr. Jess Lucero, states that they find individuals who are experiencing homelessness living in “...their cars in parking lots, at convenience stores, at work parking lots, at gym parking lots, at park and rides, transit centers... We also found folks at 24-hour spots, at storage units, sheds. Any place that is technically not fit for human habitation...”

The 2022 PIT in Cache Valley and Box Elder County found 15 people who were unsheltered, two being children. Additionally, about 106 individuals, 25 of those being children, were homeless but sheltered: 77 in motels and 19 in domestic violence PIT shelters.² (Read more about the local PIT count [here](#).)

The cost of housing in Cache County has increased dramatically over the past five years.^{3,4} This shortage can be linked to the number of people seeking housing versus the number of available apartments and homes. The 2020 Census count showed that Utah is the fastest growing state in the U.S., and Cache County is the fifth fastest growing county in Utah. Cache County Executive, David Zook, states that the majority of population growth can be attributed to the number of adult children and grandchildren who choose to stay in the Cache County and Utah.⁵ The housing shortage has also given landlords the ability to be much more selective when choosing renters. This can also mean that individuals who have access to rent assistance can lose their opportunity to utilize governmental aid if they are unable to secure a qualifying apartment in time. The rapid rise in home prices have also led current landlords to increase rental rates for higher profitability and to keep pace with current market trends.⁶



About Homelessness and Housing Providers in Cache County

In this study, 17 agencies were identified as aiding individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and/or seeking affordable housing in Cache County. Some of these organizations’ sole focus is to assist individuals in finding a solution to housing issues, and others offer a wider array of services to the community, which include help to residents struggling with housing issues. It is helpful to examine the role of each of these organizations and their services by where they fit on a continuum of care (CoC). According to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, a

CoC is “a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing...”⁷



Two nonprofits, 4 Helping Hands and Families Feeding Families (FFF), offer housing assistance through hotel vouchers to stay in hotels for up to 7 days. Northeastern Services (NES) and Chrysalis are nonprofits that focus on housing solutions for individuals with disabilities. They have group homes throughout Cache County that allow adults with disabilities to live with peers under the supervision of trained caregivers.

Bear River Association of Governments (BRAG) has a variety of programs geared to help people who are struggling with housing insecurity. BRAG is the agency responsible for distributing housing vouchers that assist individuals with low incomes with rent payments and the agency responsible for distributing hotel vouchers to assist individuals with no shelter. The Fuller Center and Neighborhood Nonprofit Housing Corporation (NNHC) focus on providing housing for individuals and families who are low-income. Both organizations offer home building programs for qualifying individuals. They require a set number of sweat equity hours from clients and their family/friends to successfully complete the building program. At completion, homes are then sold to clients for construction costs with a zero-percent interest home loan. NNHC also offers housing counseling, grant-funded home rehabilitation and repair, and income-based rental communities.

Two common issues faced by individuals who are experiencing homelessness is food insecurity and inability to afford healthcare. SNAP, the federal food assistance program, helps ease the burden of purchasing food for individuals who

are struggling to meet their rent and cost-of-living obligations.⁹ Both Logan and Cache School Districts offer federally-funded reduced and free lunch, weekend food backpacks, and after school programs that offer children safe and educational environments. USU houses the Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) that is open to any faculty, staff, or student. Individuals can come once a week, no questions asked, to collect food. The Cache Community Food Pantry also plays a large role in providing nutritional assistance to Cache County residents who have low incomes with certain criteria. Cache Community Health Center offers access to affordable healthcare in several ways. They aid individuals to apply for Medicaid and CHIP insurance coverage, obtain coverage on the Insurance Marketplace, and use a sliding-fee scale based on income to determine fees. They also have a policy that all patients will receive service regardless of their ability to pay.

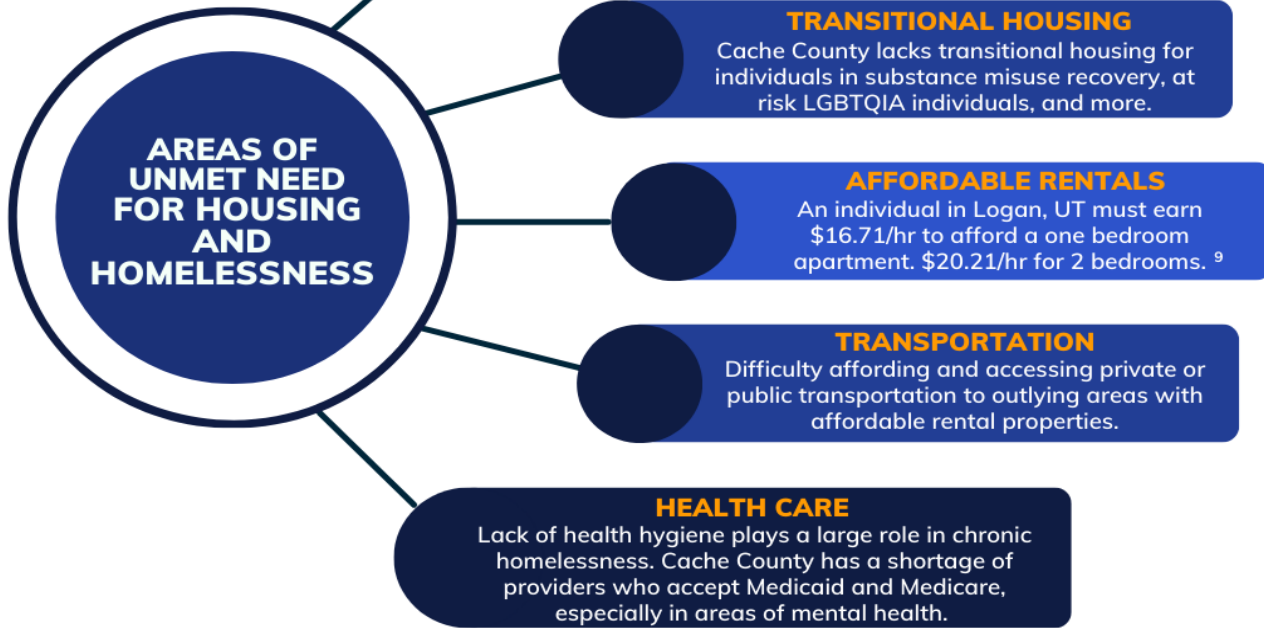
OTHER RESOURCES PROVIDED BEYOND HOUSING

- 4 Helping Hearts
 - Emergency food assistance, clothing, hygiene items
- Families Feeding Families
 - Open-access porch pantries, emergency assistance with rent, utilities, gas, holiday family sponsorships
- BRAG
 - Counseling, home grant programs, utility assistance, weatherizing, home repair assistance, tax preparation
- Cache Valley Veterans
 - Assistance with applying for VA benefits, Medicare, counseling referrals, support groups
- CAPSA & The Family Place
 - Counseling, group therapy, workshops
- The Fuller Center
 - Thrift shop for discounted building materials

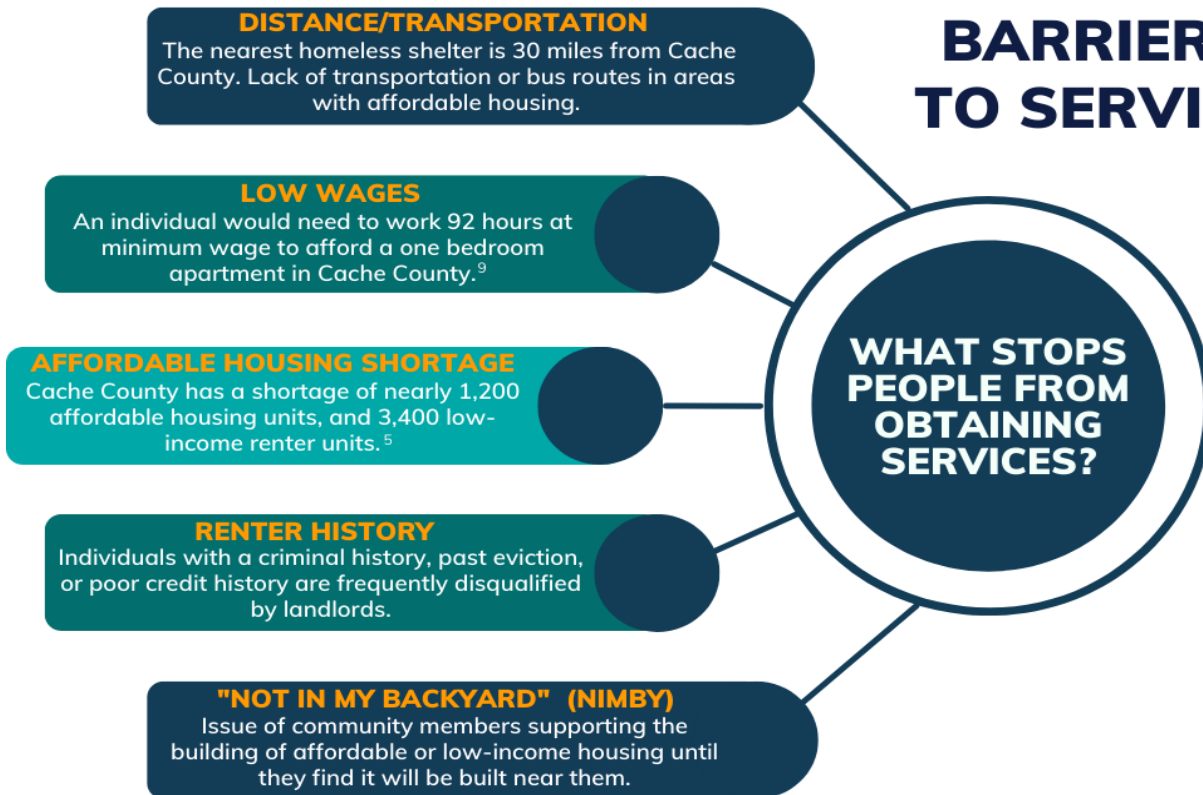
Cache County has three non-profits that offer housing assistance to specific populations. The Cache Valley Veterans Association (CVVA) offers service members and eligible family members access to homeless transition case management and homeless and housing services. The Family Place has three locations in Cache County and offers programs for caregivers with children ages 11 and under. Two of the programs, Crisis Care and Starfish Children's Shelter, provide childcare and housing for just a few hours up to 28 days (depending on situation). CAPSA is a nonprofit that aids anyone who is impacted by domestic violence, sexual abuse, or sexual assault. CAPSA offers emergency shelter and two-year transitional housing, which provides clients with housing subsidies, counseling, and education. Though not currently open, there are efforts underway to open a warming center in Cache Valley, beginning in the 2022-2023 winter season. [*\(Please click on this link or scan QR code to access a map of these services\).*](#)



GAPS IN SERVICE



BARRIERS TO SERVICE



Recommendations

- Organize a public awareness campaign to combat the lack of public knowledge or misinformation about higher density housing, affordable/low-income housing, and the current housing shortage
- Petition Logan City and Zoning council to reconsider legalizing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are separate from homeowner's residence
- Organize community service days where individuals are encouraged to assist local sweat equity home building projects. Help could be in the form of construction, clean-up, meals, or childcare
- Incentivize healthcare organizations to accept Medicaid and Medicare
- Landlord education and engagement on programs and encourage them to partner with social services to prevent evictions and aid in the rehousing of the homeless

To read the other reports from Cache County Human Services Assessment, please visit: https://bit.ly/NSSNC_22

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