

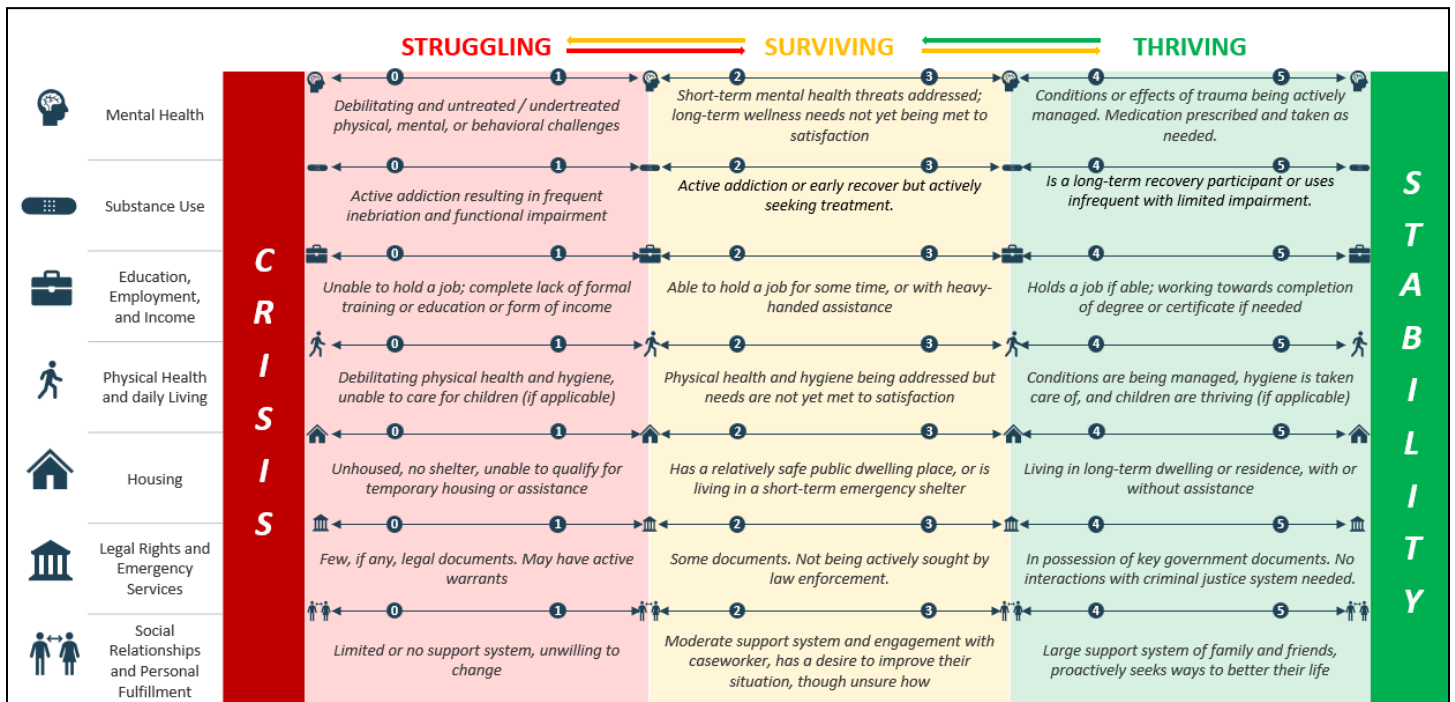
# THE UTAH MODEL: GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO OVERCOME HOMELESSNESS

**CONTEXT:** This document is intended to bolster Utah’s existing Plan to Address Homelessness with greater clarity and purpose. A core goal of Utah’s unified approach is to elevate the extraordinary efforts of the individual heroes and hundreds of organizations already engaged in addressing this challenge. This document will not answer every question or address every possible exception to the principles outlined. We recognize these guiding principles must be adapted to fit the unique needs of specific sub-populations and geographic regions. This document defines the ultimate set of unifying principles, foundational requirements and ecosystem support we believe are critical to deliver healing for our most vulnerable members of society.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Utahns fundamentally believe in the inherent value and expansive potential of all human beings. We are dedicated to improving the lives and circumstances of our most vulnerable, including those experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, and despite tremendous effort, resources, and goodwill throughout the state for many years, the prevalence and consequences of homelessness have only worsened—for both individuals and our communities. Utah intends to change history; we will help those experiencing homelessness to heal. In Utah, we are committed to the proposition that homelessness will not end in hopelessness.

**NORTH STAR:** Providing shelter, food, medical care, and more is important; but independent services that primarily address immediate needs are insufficient. Thus, Utah is embarking on a bold new undertaking that integrates and systematizes various efforts and investments in pursuit of our ultimate objective — to help those experiencing homelessness realize their inherent dignity and walk the path towards human thriving.

## UNIFYING FRAMEWORK: THE PATHWAY TO HUMAN THRIVING



The Pathway to Human Thriving framework orients and organizes both outcomes and activities according to stages of progress (from struggling to surviving to thriving) and dimensions of need and opportunity. The framework helps at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels. As we work with individuals experiencing homelessness, the framework helps us identify current needs and what incremental progress should focus on based on an individual’s situation. We fully recognize that each person’s path will be different, additional needs may arise, and we all lapse and regress at times. A common framework allows us to monitor, learn about, and adjust to needs, solutions, and progress across our communities.

## UNIFYING PRINCIPLES

Utah's funders, agencies, and service providers ensure the following commitments motivate and permeate all our efforts:

- **Human Centered:** We recognize the inherent variability in different sub-populations' challenges and needs and will apply the Pathway to Human Thriving framework in nuanced ways for individuals and sub-populations and will adopt a Know-By-Name system to ensure each person receives individualized and coordinated care.
- **Root-Cause Focused:** We are conscious of the root causes and complex realities that lead to and perpetuate homelessness. Economic and health 'shocks' result in significant setbacks that can lead to housing loss. Homelessness is often a consequence of underlying, co-occurring trauma, mental health disabilities, and substance use disorders. In almost all cases, homelessness exacerbates those challenges, turning temporary setbacks into persistent patterns and chronic conditions into destructive behaviors.
- **Evidence Based:** We expect service providers to prioritize evidence-based practices that have been shown to have the highest impact in driving recovery. Efficacy rates will be tracked so that service providers can learn from one another regarding those policies and practices that most help individuals recover. Measures of success for specific interventions will be based on successful recovery, not just program completion.
- **Expectation Driven:** We combine robust support and opportunity with meaningful expectations and accountability. For individuals, this involves contributing meaningfully to one's own healing alongside humane but consistent and comprehensive enforcement models to minimize self-destructive and/or anti-social behavior (e.g., drug distribution, public disruption, camping, etc.). Utah will maintain its commitment to offering first-level, low-barrier shelter and basic food to all individuals, provided they do not bring illicit substances into the facility, engage in harassment, assault, or trafficking, or cause physical harm to others. For additional services, the State will use an incentive model that builds achievement, dignity, and confidence by pairing self-directed movement along the Pathway to Human Thriving with increased access to system benefits and services.
- **Results Oriented:** We are focused on long-term results (i.e., incremental progress along the Pathway to Human Thriving), not just on addressing immediate needs or being satisfied with delivering goods, services, and programs. Utah invests in its most vulnerable by achieving recovery from trauma and addiction, improvements in mental and physical wellbeing, self-sufficiency and accountability, and ultimately sustainable reintegration with society. Programmatic benchmarks appropriate to each level of intervention will be used to evaluate the degree to which each service provider is contributing to the long-term success of those experiencing homelessness.

## SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Transforming the current fragmented system into one that integrates solutions and enables holistic healing will require that we establish shared approaches, systems and expectations across providers – in short, a set of requirements. The following are critical, foundational requirements for successful and efficacious participation in that system:

- **Know-by-Name:** The Know-by-Name system will track all efforts supporting the individual such that the State knows what is working and what is not working in helping an individual progress along the Pathway to Human Thriving. All individuals receiving State services beyond first-level low-barrier shelter and basic food will be required to participate in Know-by-Name. We will build on existing investments in HMIS as the foundational database and incorporate data from additional systems (e.g. Justice, Health, Medicaid), where legally and technically feasible, to secure a more comprehensive picture of the individuals we seek to help.
- **Case Management:** The availability of trained case managers is crucial to the success of both the Know-by-Name system and the Diversion and Intercept model. Thus, dramatically increasing the number of clinical behavioral health workers is paramount and will be supported by innovations in how we credential, how we license and how we fund case management. Each of those innovations are currently being pursued to enable case managers to provide personalized continuity across our system by better connecting disparate services.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning:** By rigorously assessing outcomes, holding stakeholders accountable, and continuously learning from both successes and setbacks, we can refine strategies, optimize resources, and make meaningful progress towards sustainable solutions for homelessness in the state. The implementation of a systemwide, structured measurement, evaluation, and learning process will enhance our ability to achieve the common goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Through a formalized MEL process, Utah will assess the effectiveness of various policies in real-time, allowing for data-driven insight and refinements to programs.

- **Consistent, Long-term Funding:** Unreliable funding is devastating to system efficacy. In the 2025 Utah Legislative Session, a consistent funding source will be identified and appropriated to fund evidence-based practices for the Know-by-Name system, the Diversion and Intercept model, the necessary facilities and wrap-around services (including mental and behavioral health care, substance use disorder support, skills-based training, employment), a significant increase in the number of clinical behavioral health specialists dedicated to helping individuals along the Pathway to Human Thriving, and the state’s MEL solutions. The consistent funding source will allow the State and Counties to provide stable, full-time employment for frontline employees supporting our State’s most vulnerable. The State will require return-and-report mechanisms to ensure the funding is having the impact intended in helping people improve their lives.

### **ESSENTIAL ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT**

Our efforts to address homelessness do not exist in a vacuum. For our guiding principles, overarching strategy and system requirements to be effective in moving people along the Pathway to Human Thriving our efforts must be supported by the ecosystem that surrounds this problem. That includes the following critical changes outside of traditional OHS scope:

- **Reliable Unsanctioned Camping Enforcement:** Allowing unsanctioned camping and loitering exposes homeless individuals to severe risks. Living in makeshift campsites in locations not intended for habitation leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, violence, illicit drugs, sexual abuse, and health hazards, intensifying existing trauma and making recovery increasingly challenging. To protect society’s most vulnerable, all municipalities in Utah will consistently enforce unsanctioned camping and loitering policies.
- **Disruption of the Supply of Illicit Substances:** The use of illicit substances devastates the lives of homeless individuals, deteriorating both their physical and mental health. The cycle of addiction and dependence on these substances leads to increased vulnerability and reduced opportunities for recovery. The state of Utah will strategically and aggressively disrupt both the supply and demand of illicit drugs and, in doing so, ensure success for those who are striving to rehabilitate from substance use disorder.
- **Implementation of the Diversion & Intercept Model:** The State’s largest 5 counties must implement a Diversion and Intercept model. Like the model of Miami-Dade County — in which a 20-year implementation of the Sequential Intercept Model has effectively addressed the issue of individuals repeatedly cycling through emergency rooms, shelters, jails, and the streets — Utah will train police in CIT (Crisis Intervention Training), integrate social workers with law enforcement, and offer mental health care as an alternative to incarceration.
- **Recovery Focused Criminal Justice System:** The options for effective criminal justice are not a binary choice between enforcement or non-enforcement. To best support our most vulnerable population, criminal justice reform must focus on the true objective: the long-term improvement of human conditions and behavior. In doing so, Utah will blend care and rehabilitation with appropriately increased accountability and expectations. In conjunction with the Diversion and Intercept model, Utah’s justice system must leverage targeted penalties and evidence-based off-ramps into effective services, to drive progress along the Pathway to Human Thriving.
- **Expanded Housing Support:** Utah is not in the business of housing; as a society, we are in the business of improving human lives – of helping each individual better realize their inherent dignity. Housing, though, is a very important activity in helping individuals improve their circumstances. While housing alone is insufficient, housing provides the stability, independence, and potential security to propel healing and growth. We must support the development of housing beyond our typical system (e.g., emergency shelters, transitional housing) including more affordable housing units that can serve as a destination for individuals successfully transitioning out of our system (e.g., permanent supportive housing, traditional affordable housing).

### **A TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITY**

We recognize that many of the guiding principles outlined in this document represent stark but necessary departures from both conventional mindsets and approaches. Doing more of the same things in the same way will simply lead to more of the same results. We are resolute in our commitment and investment and inspired by the challenge and opportunity.