



Examining Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Homeless Services Throughout Utah: Cache County

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Working with Community Partners to Build Knowledge Through Research

The USU Transforming Communities Institute (TCI) partnered with the Department of Social Work and a community partner panel to conduct a research study that:

- Analyzed community perceptions and attitudes towards **individuals experiencing homelessness (IEH)**
- Identified perceived gaps in homelessness and services within the community
- Evaluated community support for the expansion of homeless services

This project utilized three undergraduate BSW research courses to develop and launch an online survey, which was completed in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

About the Survey Respondents



Average Age: 38.2 years

Race: 86% White

Gender: 60.8% Cisgender Women

Employment: 42% Employed Full-Time

Education: 52.5% Bachelor's Degree or higher

Political Beliefs: Wide range of political beliefs, the average participant identified as moderate

60% know someone who has experienced homelessness

Income

- Below 50k
- 50-100K
- 100K and above
- Chose not to answer



Religious Affiliation

- LDS
- Other Christian Denomination
- Atheist or Agnostic
- Other



Respondents Believe That...

- **92%:** There are valid reasons to become homeless.
- **81%:** IEH become homeless for reasons beyond their control.
- **82%:** IEH contribute positively to the well-being of a community.
- **83%:** IEH have the right to use public parks.
- **45%:** The community is concerned about IEH in their region.

Cache County Participants View the Top 5 Causes of Homelessness as...

1. Poverty
2. Housing Costs
3. Mental Illness
4. Substance Abuse
5. Lack of Support Network

"Even if there was only one homeless person in Cache Valley they would be worth the resources."

-Survey Respondent

► Perceived Gaps in Services

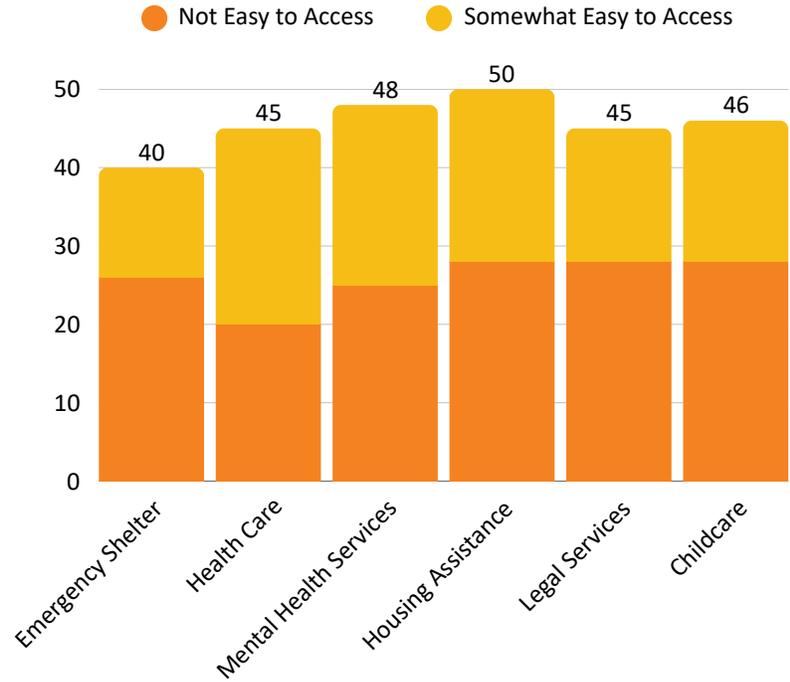
More than 35% of respondents don't know the resources available in the following categories:

- 44% Legal Services
- 43% Emergency Shelter
- 42% Substance Use Treatment
- 38% Childcare
- 42% Social Services/ Case Management
- 38% Financial Assistance
- 36% Clothing Banks

"It's an unseen problem in my community. People don't really see the homeless, therefore there is not a homeless problem. But this myth must be dispelled if we are going to locally fund sustainable resources and support the efforts of a resource center."

-Survey Participant

Top 6 Least Accessible Services %



► Support for Expanding Services

86.6% agree or strongly agree there should be a 24-hour shelter/resource center open year around

84% agree or strongly agree there is a need for a shelter/resource center

74.4% agree or strongly agree a shelter resource center is an effective use of my tax money

A resource center can provide a range of services to address immediate needs and increase stability, including emergency housing, food services, clothing, hygiene care, on-site medical and mental health care, job training, education opportunities, and case management.



✦ Significance of this Study ✦

This research provides direction for expanding services and indicates that community members are supportive of increasing resources for individuals who are homeless.

- Education and awareness to reduce stigma and increase knowledge about homelessness
- Greater access to inaccessible services (e.g., legal services; housing assistance)
- The development of a 24-hour, year-round resource center

Scan QR code to learn more

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Respondent Proximity to Homelessness

8.4% of respondents have experienced homelessness

47% of respondents have a friend or family member that has experienced homelessness

"If I suddenly became homeless today, I would have no idea where to start or even who to call for help."

-Survey Respondent