

DRAFT Pledge to help reduce child homelessness in Salt Lake County

Child homelessness is a problem too big to ignore but small enough to be solved if all sectors of our community come together to address it.

The problem

Homelessness is a traumatic experience that negatively impacts children's health and development. The negative impacts of homelessness on childhood wellbeing are increased as the length of homelessness increases. Our community has the ability to reduce the number of nights children spend in homeless shelters.

Where we are now

1,534 children under the age of 18 lived at a homeless shelter in Salt Lake County in 2018. Several hundred more spent at least one night at a shelter for victims of domestic violence. 51 percent of families with children that enter a homeless shelter leave within a month. 32 percent leave between one month and three months. 13 percent stay for between 3 months and 6 months. Only five percent of homeless families stay in a shelter for six months or more.

Solutions

- 1. Increase the number of apartments low income families can afford by producing new units and preserving existing affordable housing.** Between 2006 and 2016 the number of low income households in the Salt Lake metro area increased by 4,387 but the number of housing units low income families can afford decreased by 9,093 units.
- 2. Increase the number of permanent supportive housing units available for the most vulnerable homeless families.** Two percent of the families that stay at a homeless shelter are there for 9-12 months. In 2018 that would have been 15 families. The likelihood that the parents in these families have income limiting disabilities is very high. Permanent supportive housing can provide these families with the stability necessary for children to grow and learn.
- 3. Increase the income of families who experience homelessness.** Our community can connect parents to adult education and job training and provide the support parents need to benefit from these opportunities.
- 4. Increase access to childcare so that parents do not have to neglect their children in order to earn money or increase their income capacity.** A study conducted by Crossroads Urban Center in 2017 showed that 85 percent of homeless mothers who needed childcare were not able to obtain it.

I/We pledge to help educate others in our community about child homelessness and to support solutions that will help reduce child homelessness.

Name

Title, or Affiliation, if any