

Salt Lake City

Utah has managed to reduce its homeless population by 72 percent in the past nine years by implementing a Housing First Program in Salt Lake City, according to a recent article by [Mother Jones](#). The policy has gained national attention for its success and is serving as a model for programs in [North Carolina](#) and [San Francisco](#).

Tenants in the Housing First Program pay \$50 a month, or 30 percent of their income. The central idea is to give people shelter first, then focus on drug abuse, mental disorders or other personal issues.

The article pointed out that the best approach to solve homelessness is multi-faceted, but should essentially "create more jobs, redistribute the wealth, improve education, socialize health care, basically redesign our political and economic systems to make sure everybody can afford a roof over their heads."

[Utah's Fourth Street Clinic](#), which offers the homeless the medical attention they may need but often struggle to afford, is another successful facet of the city's homelessness plan. Since 1988, the clinic has dispensed medicine and provided medical support to more than 4,800 Utahns without a home.

San Francisco

The city of San Francisco has not effectively addressed its homelessness situation, according to a recent report in [The San Francisco Chronicle](#). The article found that the homeless population in the Bay Area had not changed for at least 20 years.

The city has tried a few different methods in the past, including a "shelter-bed-and-a-sandwich approach" and permanent housing options, but neither fixed any of the mental health problems and there simply wasn't enough space.

Possible solutions could be found in "private-public funding models, cheaper forms of modular housing and streamlining techniques for helping people move out of supportive housing after they've been stabilized," according to the article.

Jennifer Friedenbach of the [Coalition on Homelessness](#) said the problem has always been the money, and said the city needs "a sustained revenue source to double the housing units for homeless people, and to do prevention to keep people in their homes and to not become homeless to begin with."

Austin, Texas

Austin, Texas, is utilizing the recent tiny home trend to provide affordable housing to those who can't, according to [NBC News](#).

Community First, as one neighborhood is called, provides around 250 homeless people with a small home on a compact 27-acre lot. One resident referred to her new home as "33.5 feet of linear bliss."

The tiny neighborhood also has a church, a garden, chicken coops, a theater and a medical center, NBC reported, but residents must be able to prove they are homeless and submit to a criminal background check. Having a record, however, won't disqualify a possible resident. The most expensive property on the lot is less than \$400 a month.

Aurora, Colorado

Colorado's third-largest city announced in May that it will use its controversial marijuana legislation to help its homeless population.

The city plans to allocate \$1.5 million in legalized marijuana taxes to combat homelessness, according to the [Huffington Post](#). The money has already been divided among different nonprofits to spend as they see fit, according to the article. The Colfax Community network, for example, will receive \$200,000 to support its work of helping low-income families who find shelter in motels. And the city will provide two outreach groups with vans to help them serve the homeless in medical crisis, HuffPo said. The city will evaluate how the group spent the money before deciding to continue the funding next year.

Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles has proposed numerous efforts to combat the issue of homelessness over the years, but most recently announced a \$2 billion plan to build shelters for people who live on the street and have mental disabilities in efforts to prevent cyclical homelessness, according to a [CBS report](#).

And, according to [CNN Money](#), the L.A. County Board of Supervisors will propose a .5 percent tax for those making more than \$1 million a year that would go toward funding the county's [homelessness plan](#). The board estimates the tax would bring in about \$250 to \$350 million each year.

The [Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority](#) recently found that there were 46,874 people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, a 5.7 percent increase from 2015.

Unlawful Camping

In [Martin V. City of Boise](#), the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that anti-camping laws violate the US Constitution when there is no shelter available in the jurisdiction. The City can still issue citations and make arrests for activities that violate the law, but not for sleeping on public property. The courts have ruled that the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment bars a City from prosecuting people criminally for sleeping outside on public property when those people have no home or other shelter to which they can go.

- Some areas do not fall within the City's jurisdiction and must be reported to other state and local municipalities. Brentwood includes parcels belonging to nearly a dozen public agencies.
- Often times after a clean-up/removal is completed, individuals may return to the same or adjacent location. At which time the removal process starts again consistent with the law.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- For an article discussing homelessness around the world, go to <https://caufsociety.com/cities-solving-homelessness/>
- Here is a link to the Brentwood PD Page where you can find the Town Hall on Homelessness from March 16, 2022, at 6:00 pm.
- <https://www.brentwoodca.gov/government/city-manager/unsheltered-resources>
- Here is a link to the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness, where you can find information on the Meetings, Members, Bylaws, Governance, Reports, and Work Plans <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/council.php>

My thanks to Dawn Morrow, District 3 Rep from Supervisor Burgis' office, for some great information on the topic.

It appears from first glance that the cities which are being more successful are the ones who have adopted the "housing first" plan, meaning they get the homeless housed before they attempt to address other issues such as mental health, physical disabilities, drugs or other issues. That approach probably makes sense as it is hard to conceive of a mental health treatment regimen being successful if the person in treatment is returned to the street between sessions.

It appears that most cities first response is "We need more money" but absent a plan, state and federal government agencies are reluctant (or downright refuse) to throw money their way.

You are encouraged to do your own research and send it to me so that I can add to this report and make it more useful.

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