Message from the Executive Director

The 23rd annual conference had a record participation with 323 attendees. The conference offered 25 workshops and panel discussions featuring 67 presenters on a wide range training on affordable housing topics for beginners, as well as more experienced housing leaders, developers, and advocates.

Comenity Bank underwrote a report from the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute “Housing Cost Burden and Rental Assistance for Senior Households.” The report was released at our conference and Rob Ence from the Utah Commission on Aging moderated a discussion about the findings of the report. The panel featured a number of experts on Aging.

We are grateful to all of our sponsors, presenters, and attendees for another successful conference. Stay tune for the 2020 Save the Date.

Tara Rollins, Executive Director

Claudia O’Grady congratulates Kim Datwyler for receiving Wonder Woman Award

Fall Issue:
- 2019 Conference & Golf Tournament
- Save the Date: 11/06/2019
- UHC Member Spotlight
- SL Trib: Affordable Housing
- SLC Mayor’s Candidates Position on Affordable Housing & Homelessness
- Fair Housing Conference
# 2019 Conference Sponsors

Utah Housing Coalition is grateful to our 2019 Annual Utah Housing Matters Conference’s Sponsors

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We could not have a quality conference without their support. Thank you!
The Utah Housing Coalition would like to thank Rocky Mountain Community Reinvestment Corporation for being the driving force for making the Golf Tournament happen. UHC is lucky to have strong partners to join us in making Utah a better community.

The Tournament was held August 26th at the Park City Municipal Course. For the first year, we did pretty darn good with 68 golfers playing. We learned a lot and have already started planning for next year. Remember Swing Hard in Case You Hit It.

1st Place
David Watkins
Nicolas Anderson
Steve Campbell
Tina Andre

2nd Place
Steve Harbertson
Matt Gibbons
Nick Griffiths
Colby Lewis

3rd Place
Leigh Vandyke
Jon Oettli
Mat Timpson
Washington Federal

Men’s Longest Drive Hole #1
Spenser Jeppsen

Women’s Longest Drive Hole #1
Akina Bosley

Closest to Hole #2
Mike Young

Closest to Hole #8
Dustin McIntire

Closest to Hole #13
John Ward

Closest to Hole #17
Ryan Orcutt
SAVE THE DATE

Utah County Affordable Housing Meeting
November 6, 2019    10:00 am to 3:00 pm
The Startup Building    111 W 600 S Provo, UT 84601

Quarterly Meeting - Utah Housing Coalition

Utah Housing Coalition invites its members and anyone supporting affordable housing to join us for a very informative event regarding affordable housing issues in Utah County.

Tentative Schedule

10:00 – 11:30 am    PART I—Workshop on Land Trusts
11:45 am    Lunch & Networking
12:15 – 3:00 pm    PART II—Panel Discussions
- Panel I – Homelessness—Facilitator: Heather Hogue, United Way of Utah County
- Panel II - Federal Housing Programs—Facilitator: Robert Vernon, Provo Housing Authority
- Panel III - Federal & State Development Resources—Facilitator: Sharlene Wilde, NeighborWorks MCHS

More details to follow

Contact Us    801-364-0077    Trollins@xmission.com
Organizational Overview

Founded in 1958, First Step House has evolved into a dual-diagnosis capable, behavioral health treatment and housing provider for no and low-income individuals and families. We have been a consistent leader in the Salt Lake metro area delivering evidence-based interventions and achieving positive outcomes for individuals who have chronic substance use disorders, histories of homelessness, mental health conditions, criminal justice involvement, and primary health concerns.

We operate two residential treatment facilities, two outpatient treatment centers, and six transitional housing facilities in Salt Lake City, Utah. The scope of services we offer include substance use disorder and mental health assessment, residential and outpatient treatment, recovery residence services, housing, case management, employment support, primary health care and dental services, peer support services, and long-term recovery management.

Through our programs, we serve over 730 individuals per year – many of who arrive at our doorstep with very little resources, lack of family support, and numerous barriers to overcome.

2019-2020 Updates

In February 2019, First Step House broke ground and began construction on the Central City Apartments. In December of 2017 First Step House was awarded $1.2 million in State and Federal Tax Credits to develop 75 units of permanent supportive housing for people with histories of homelessness and severe mental illness. This project was the result of a partnership with Salt Lake County Behavioral Health, Optum Healthcare, Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake, and BlueLine Development. Together we worked to design the apartments, clinic space, and supportive services necessary to respond to a critical need on our community – housing and wrap around services for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.
In March of 2019 First Step House became the operator and service provider of Valor House – a facility located on the Veterans Affairs (VA) campus in Salt Lake City. With this new role, First Step House transitioned from operating and serving 18 transitional housing units for Veterans to 66 one-bedroom units for Veterans. To support the Veterans in these housing units, program staff utilize a variety of models including bridge housing, clinical treatment, and intensive wrap-around services to assist homeless Veterans in transitioning to permanent housing.

In Fiscal Year 2020, First Step House will break ground on the 426 Apartments, a new permanent supportive housing facility that will be located at 426 South 500 East in Salt Lake City, Utah. The 426 Apartments will house and service individuals, including Veterans, who are homeless and have disabilities; this includes, but is not limited to, individuals diagnosed with substance use disorders and mental health conditions.

The people living at this location will be provided with supportive services necessary to manage their conditions, access services, and achieve long-term stability.

This apartment complex will be composed of 40 one-bedroom units which will be set aside for people with incomes at or under 25% of the Area Median Income.

Over the course of 60 years, First Step House has transitioned from being a true half-way house to a licensed, credentialed and soon-to-be accredited, behavioral health treatment provider. We are now able to deliver effective residential substance use disorder treatment, outpatient treatment, robust case management services, medical care coordination, recovery residence housing and, as of 2019, permanent supportive housing. Ultimately, all our growth and achievements bring us closer to our mission—the core of who we are—to help people build lives of meaning, purpose, and recovery.
One of Utah’s major sources of loans for affordable housing projects — the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund — is running low on cash and isn’t expected to get a new infusion until next summer. The dip in reserves reflects increasing demand for less expensive apartments in a state where rents in many areas continue to climb.

According to one of the fund’s top managers, it’s also being driven by rising construction costs and a shifting picture for other subsidies that has more developers seeking loans to make their projects pencil. “We haven’t spent all of our money, but we are spending a lot faster than we normally would,” said Jonathan Hardy, director of housing and community development at the state Department of Workforce Services.

Board members for the fund doled out roughly $9 million in loans in mid-July, leaving them about $5 million to lend for the remainder of the state’s fiscal cycle, which ends July 1, 2020. “We gave almost all our money away in one meeting,” said Kip Paul, a board member and vice chairman of investment sales at Cushman & Wakefield, a Salt Lake City real estate brokerage. Hardy said the remaining balance “is not a lot compared to what we expect to see the rest of the year.” Developers, he said, are facing rising costs for labor, building materials and available land.

“We have more demand for funds than we have available supply,” Hardy said. “We’ll have to do some extra prioritizing.”

The Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund — named for Utah’s 15th governor and first woman to hold the office — is known for gap financing, with its loans of up to $1 million helping low-income housing projects survive small shortfalls.

Its recent drop in cash on hand comes while Utah is struggling with a lack of affordable housing, as escalating home prices push many would-be homebuyers to the sidelines and rising monthly rents are squeezing household budgets.

Officials estimate Utah currently lacks roughly 45,000 dwellings affordable to those earning below-average wages, particularly those at the lowest income levels. The Olene Walker fund has contributed to the construction of 19,286 residential units in Utah since it was created in 1992, according to state financial reports.

In light of the state’s housing affordability gap — which some have dubbed a crisis — state Sen. Jake Anderegg sponsored a bill earlier this year to give the fund a one-time infusion of $20 million and $4 million annually.
But the money was stripped out of the bill in the last days of the legislative session. “It was a missed opportunity,” Anderegg said.

The Lehi Republican is also co-chairman of the state Commission on Housing Affordability, created in 2018 to study Utah’s housing shortage and ways to address it. He said Thursday he had already opened a bill for the 2020 legislative session seeking new cash for the Olene Walker fund a second time around. “It is a very effective use of money,” Anderegg said. “If we can better articulate real numbers of who we’re helping and how it’s going to help them, our chances of getting funding this year will improve greatly.”

The fund loaned out $8.9 million in all of 2018, spread over 14 projects in nine counties, for construction worth a total of $132.7 million. That helped bring 779 new or refurbished apartments on line, accessible to tenants earning between 25% and 60% of the state median incomes, according to the fund’s latest report. The board gave out $8.6 million at its July 18 meeting, funding 12 projects over the course of three and a half hours. Along with money from repaid loans, the Olene Walker fund draws its cash from periodic contributions by the Utah Legislature, as well as money from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and other sources.

Tara Rollins, executive director of Utah Housing Coalition, which advocates for low-income residents, said the fund has proved especially crucial in developing so-called “deeply affordable” housing, accessible to tourist workers and others earning close to minimum wage.

“It’s been doing exactly what we need in addressing the lowest incomes,” Rollins said. Developers who seek loans from the Olene Walker fund typically also rely on what are called low-income housing tax credits, which one top Utah housing advocate has likened to a down payment for many affordable housing projects.

Awarded to states by the U.S. government, the tax credits are in turn given out to developers of qualifying low-income housing projects. Developers then sell the credits to investors looking for federal tax breaks, as a way to lower project costs and keep resulting rents more within reach. Rollins noted that the next round of low-income tax credit awards to Utah projects will take place in early October. Many of those recipients could be in a position to make new loan requests to the Olene Walker fund well before the fund gets replenished next July, she said. “Those projects usually have to be coupled up with Olene Walker to make them go,” she said.
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At the same time, President Donald Trump’s new tax plan — also known as the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act — lowered corporate tax rates in a way that has reduced the value of low-income housing tax credits to some investors. “We still have lots of buyers out there, but they’re not as willing to pay as much as they did,” said Grant Whitaker, president and CEO of the nonprofit Utah Housing Corporation, which helps award the credits.

Those funding challenges aside, one board member for the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund said she saw additional demand for loans as a positive sign that more cities, housing authorities and developers were pursuing affordable projects, particularly in rural areas. “We’re seeing a lot of very worthy projects,” said Nicole Cottle, who is also an assistant city manager in West Valley City. “I’d love to have extra money, but I do really feel confident with where we are.”

The Salt Lake Tribune article is well written, but it still doesn’t tell the whole story. With Utah’s housing market as strong as it is now, how many developers will be willing to try and put together a LIHTC deal, knowing they won’t get much-needed gap funding until at least next July? And what happens next July if there isn’t enough OWHLF money to fill the gap on each project awarded tax credits? Tax credits deals are difficult under the best circumstances, but trying to get a seller to sign a 12-month real estate purchase contract while waiting for project financing seems highly unlikely. How many potential projects will Utah lose because of this? At a time when the need for affordable housing is at an all-time high, this issue needs immediate attention and multiple partners working together to find a solution.

Kim C. Datwyler, Executive Director at Neighborhood Housing Solutions and UHC Board Member

(Scott Sommerdorf | Tribune file photo) Former Utah governor Olene Walker, addressing a luncheon in the Capitol Rotunda in January 2008 about the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund. She was also accepting the 1st annual “Spitfire Award” presented by the Utah Housing Coalition. Walker, who died in 2015, was considered a champion of affordable housing.
Salt Lake City Mayor Race

Candidate Erin Mendenhall

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Every resident of Salt Lake City deserves a safe, affordable home. Young people who grew up here can’t afford to stay here, creating a massive drain on our economy, and residents living on fixed incomes are squeezed out. I love this city, and I’ve lived here long enough to have to search for a home through several different stages of “affordability.” I have three young kids and I want them to be able to live here when they get older and to build their lives here.

Vacancy rates are under 5% and cost increases are outpacing income growth, so we have to do something. About 50% of our renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing—an unsustainable ratio.

The truth is, though: the mayor does not control the housing market. There are only so many levers we can pull, which makes it even more important that our mayor knows how to find them and use them.

On the City council in 2017, I put together a $21 million fund to allow the city to offer low-interest loans to private developers to incentivize the construction of new affordable housing units.

It wasn’t easy, but because of my knowledge of the city budget and experience working with the departments, we made it happen. That work has so far resulted in 500 new affordable housing units being created, with hundreds more in the pipeline and half of the original funding still to be invested.

These kinds of loans—especially loans that leverage public dollars to attract private investments—are a smart and powerful way to get more affordable housing in Salt Lake City. As mayor, I will work with the Council and the RDA to expand these programs and help more people of our neighbors to find affordable housing.

To further increase the supply of affordable housing, I will make sure that, should Salt Lake City win the 2030 Olympics, the housing created for the Olympic village is converted to affordable housing for our community afterward.

The city should do more to prevent housing displacement with more low-income loans and by protecting existing affordable housing from demolition. To keep more people safe in their homes, I will strengthen code enforcement and work with relevant agencies and organizations to ensure that landlords are maintaining existing affordable units at a standard in which they are fit to live. Renters should not be subject to black mold and standing water because they cannot afford a luxury apartment.

There’s another half to this equation, though: income. The average market rent on a two-bedroom home in the city is $885. To pay for that, a person would need to make over $17 an hour...but the average renter makes just $13 an hour.
As Mayor, I will make it a priority to attract the kind of employers that will make it more affordable to live in this city. I will create incentives for companies to hire local, hire union, and to pay you better.

We have to make it easier and more affordable to call Salt Lake City ‘home’ and that will one of my top priorities as mayor.

**HOMELESSNESS**

Whether people have a home or not, they are our neighbors and we can’t turn our backs on them.

We have two new homeless resource centers opening in the city this year and I was proud to help create the first women-only center in the city, but it’s not enough. Whenever it happens, the closure of the Road Home could leave hundreds without a safe place to sleep this winter.

Solving the problem can’t wait for the next mayor to take office in January. We need to be working with state and county partners to create an emergency winter shelter for those who won’t fit into our new homeless resource center. And that’s exactly what I’ve been doing.

Several months ago, I began discussing the issue with the Lieutenant Governor and the Department of Workforce Services, and I’m optimistic we will be able to reach a temporary solution to get through the winter. But it would be a temporary solution.

The city’s homelessness crisis requires long-term progress in four areas:

- Increasing the stock of affordable housing equitably across the city;
- Supporting programs that prevent evictions and keep people in their homes;
- Expanding programs that provide social and mental-health services to people experiencing; and,
- Ensuring the city is doing everything it can to prevent and treat opioid addiction.

It is unacceptable that members of our community are forced to go without a roof over their head because they’re short a couple hundreds dollars on rent and cannot access the services they need to set their own lives on track. We will not end homelessness from city hall alone: we must think hard and act collectively and regionally to strengthen our continuum of care.

Salt Lake City is clearly the epicenter of a truly regional problem, but we should not shoulder this responsibility on our own. The humanitarian crisis in our city needs to be addressed in partnership with the state and county. We can’t wait around and expect the state to step in and save the day—we need to step up now.

As mayor, I will double-down on our partnership with Volunteers of America, and properly fund our Downtown Ambassadors and Park Ranger programs to prevent evictions and homelessness by connecting more at-risk people with supportive services. I will also work to reduce no-fault evictions through strengthening tenants’ rights ordinances, increasing landlord compliance related to fair treatment of tenants.

We can’t turn our backs on our neighbors when they need us the most.

To learn more about Erin Mendenhall, please visit her campaign web site Erinmendenhall.com
Salt Lake City Mayor Race

Candidate Luz Escamilla

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We all love living in Salt Lake City, but doing so has become more and more expensive and made it out-of-reach for many individuals and families in a range of different situations. This is not only an issue for low-income individuals and families, it also affects our seniors, working families and our young professionals. We must use all the tools in the city’s toolbox to make housing more affordable for several segments of our population.

The city has several entities that play a role in affordable housing, including the city’s Redevelopment Agency (RDA) and the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City (HASLC). We need to coordinate the city’s collective efforts and collaborate with the state and county to effectively address the issue of affordable housing.

The city released its housing goals in a report called Growing Salt Lake City, which proposes several strategic goals that would improve affordable housing across the city. First, it targets low-income renters, particularly those under 40% of Area Median Income (AMI), and seeks to provide increased housing opportunities by funding and developing new housing units, stabilizing very low-income renters, and work with landlords to improve their housing stock.

Next, the plan seeks to review and modify land-use and zoning regulations to reflect affordability needs and removing impediments to encourage housing development. Lastly, the plan focuses on housing discrimination and programs to increase homeownership and rental opportunities.

Public-private partnerships and a working relationship with the state and Salt Lake County will be necessary for the next mayor to make progress on affordable housing and the other large-scale issues. Luz has the record, the experience, and the reputation as a bridge-builder who gets things done.

HOMELESSNESS

People experiencing homelessness are part of our city. Their situations must be our concern not just as a public health and safety issue, but as a moral issue.

The next mayor will be immediately confronted with a shortage of shelter beds during our winter months. We must make our resource center more robust, increase the number of available beds, and develop active outreach and wrap-around services to assist those individuals who refuse to enter shelters due to trauma.

We must also address children experiencing homelessness to ensure not only their health and welfare, but also provide stability in their education as many have their school year interrupted, shortened or otherwise impeded.

Extending resources and services requires our city to work with a number of stakeholders, including the state, Salt Lake County, nonprofits, and residents, to find new ways of addressing this longstanding issue.
Salt Lake City Mayor Race

As mayor, Luz will convene a coalition of public-private partnerships to work on solutions that will have a meaningful impact.

It’s also important to collect adequate and accurate data from shelters, resource centers and service providers to properly track the outcomes and our progress.

Luz has a record of securing funding for wider services for nonprofits and passing legislation in the Utah Senate to help individuals experiencing homelessness. She has the experience bringing people together to work on complicated and multi-faceted problems like homelessness. Luz is the champion Salt Lake City needs.

To learn more about Luz Escamilla, please visit her web site luzformayor.com

General Election—November 5, 2019

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020 is a non-partisan campaign to register, educate, and mobilize more low income renters and affordable housing advocates to be involved in voting. Renters, especially low income renters, are underrepresented among voters. To ensure low income housing interests are represented, it is critical that organizations engage these renters and other low income people in the voting process. Find out more here

“While attending the 2019 Conference, I realized how much I missed the affordable housing community and all of the great colleagues I used to collaborate with. I was also pleasantly surprised to see the evident progress in the affordable housing movement towards more progressive and inclusive strategies.”

For the past eight years, Francisca Blanc has been growing professionally in the development and fundraising field. She’d assisted numerous social services organizations in Utah and Colorado, and she’d built upon her experiences. When first hired by UHC in 2008, Francisca was a fierce advocate for manufactured homeowners, and she grew her passion to become a loyal advocate for people living in poverty.

Please, welcome back Ms. Blanc to Utah Housing Coalition as the Advocacy & Outreach Coordinator.
SAVE THE DATE
The Disability Law Center, Salt Lake County & Utah Housing Coalition
PRESENT
2nd Annual Fair Housing Conference in Utah

TUESDAY 10/01/2019
Viridian Event Center
8030 S 1825 W
West Jordan, UT 84088

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Michael Allen
Partner at Relman, Dane & Colfax

The Disability Law Center, Salt Lake County, and Utah Housing Coalition are sponsoring a one-day Fair Housing Conference on Tuesday, October 1, 2019. The Conference will run from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM at the Viridian Event Center in West Jordan and will include lunch. This training is designed to educate service providers, advocates, architects, designers, planners, and other housing professionals about fair housing laws and requirements.

Two tracks will be offered at the conference

A general track featuring fair housing history, the Fair Housing Act today, legislative and policy possibilities, accommodations versus modifications, and landlord-tenant/fair housing issues.

A design and construction track outlining the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act. This will be a day-long track for designers, planners, architects, and other related professions.

Questions?
Please contact either:
Vard at vmcguire@disabilitylawcenter.org or
Tara at trollins@xmission.com

6 CEUs AVAILABLE