



UTAH FOUNDATION

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Despite Booming Economy, Analysis Shows Utah Community Quality of Life in Decline Utahns Report Concerns about Housing, Living Costs, Other Challenges

(June 29, 2022) – Today, the Utah Foundation releases *The 2022 Utah Community Quality of Life Index: Is a Booming Economy Making Life Better?* The report focuses on community quality of life – based on a survey where Utahns rate their communities on a series of 20 factors. In this report, the Utah Foundation discusses the results of the 2022 survey, compares 2022 data with previous years, analyzes responses by population group, and suggests targeted ways that policymakers might improve quality of life in Utah communities.

Since 2011, the Utah Foundation has measured community quality of life with the Index five times. In 2022, the Community Quality of Life Index stands at 64 out of a possible 100 points, making this year the clear low mark.

Among the findings of the new report:

- Utahns' perception of community quality of life has declined since 2013 – from an Index score of 73 to 64.
- Affordable housing has the lowest performance rating in the index – far lower than any other factor.
- Housing affordability and other costs of living accounted for nearly two-thirds of the overall decrease in community quality of life from 2018 to 2022. Eleven other factors also decreased during the same time period.
- The availability of good jobs is the only factor on Utah Foundation's Community Quality of Life Index that has trended upward during the past decade.
- Utahns who are religiously affiliated, those with higher levels of education, older Utahns, men, and those with higher incomes all reported better community quality of life than did their counterparts. Those respondents who identified with a religion indicated a higher community quality of life on 12 of 20 aspects on the index, and those with more education indicated a higher community quality of life on 11 of 20 aspects.
- When asked what could improve quality of life for Utahns, more than one-third of Utahns suggested that their communities need to see more housing that is affordable.
- In the policy arena, the findings primarily suggest:
 - A need for promoting the production of quality, affordable housing and find other ways to reduce the cost of living.
 - Investing in the built environment and enhancing land use policies to promote attractive, high-quality developments and streetscapes that are pedestrian friendly and include key amenities.
 - Building on policies and programs aimed at improving air quality.

- Investing in transportation and transit infrastructure to reduce traffic and improve the quality of roads and highways.
- Other areas of concern for policymakers include water issues and the quality of public schools.

Utah Foundation President Peter Reichard said housing costs, inflation and other challenges are taking a toll. “Despite a booming economy, Utahns’ perception of their community quality of life is moving in the wrong direction,” Reichard said. “But our analysis of the survey results offers clear guidance for policymakers looking to reverse that trend.”

The 2022 Utah Community Quality of Life Index is the first release in the Utah Foundation’s 2022 Quality of Life project. A report on personal quality of life and other releases will follow.

The 2022 Utah Community Quality of Life Index is available on the Utah Foundation website at www.utahfoundation.org. Special thanks to **Wellquest Living** and **the George and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation** for providing grant support to make this project possible. Thanks also to **Intermountain Healthcare** and **Lighthouse Research** for in-kind support.

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Founded in 1945, the Utah Foundation’s mission is to produce objective, thorough and well-reasoned research and analysis that promotes the effective use of public resources, a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns. The Utah Foundation seeks to help decision-makers and citizens understand and address complex issues. The Utah Foundation also offers constructive guidance to improve governmental policies, programs and structures.

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