

Built here.

SECOND TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

YEAR 1 REVIEW



GOVERNOR COX

People.

OBJECTIVE	LEAD METRIC	PROGRESS	LEAD METRIC STATUS
Improve access to high quality affordable healthcare for rural Utahns.	Increase the number of primary care providers in rural counties by 5% by 2029.	Rural counties added 76 primary care providers, reflecting successful efforts by rural health care facilities to recruit primary care providers. The state was also awarded \$195 million for the first year of the Rural Health Transformation Program, creating an opportunity for generational investments to build resilient, sustainable rural health systems. Utah's plan will help reduce workforce shortages and improve health outcomes across rural Utah.	Baseline: 0% increase Target: 5% increase Current: 6.4% increase
Enhance behavioral health infrastructure.	Increase inpatient behavioral health beds for patients with serious mental illness by 10% by 2029.	The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has coordinated with local mental health authorities, the Utah Hospital association, and other key stakeholders to improve data usage, identify challenges, and break down barriers to increasing bed capacity. Through these partnerships, funding has been identified to open 133 new beds by 2029.	Baseline: 1,074 operational beds Target: 1,181 operational beds Current: 1,207 funded beds <i>Current bed numbers include 133 beds that have been funded across both the public and private sector and are at various stages of planning and development. These beds are scheduled to be operational by 2029.</i>
Eliminate drug-related deaths.	Reduce Utah drug deaths by 25% by 2029.	The state expanded access to opioid use disorder treatment, enhanced statewide training for law enforcement on crisis intervention and response, increased naloxone and fentanyl test strip distribution, and conducted community outreach and education on the harms of stimulant usage.	Baseline: 0% decrease Target: 25% decrease Current: 9.4% decrease
Ensure all Utah children grow up with a strong foundation of good behavioral health.	Increase the percentage of 9th-12th graders who indicate three Positive Childhood Experiences by 10% by 2029.	DHHS formed a youth behavioral health workgroup and launched the CHAT campaign, "Family Connection for Healthy Futures," which will educate families on the importance of positive and healthy communication between parents and children.	Baseline: 31.2% of 9th-12th graders Target: 41.2% of 9th-12th graders Current: 31.2% of 9th-12th graders

OBJECTIVE	LEAD METRIC	PROGRESS	LEAD METRIC STATUS
Promote child well-being by supporting healthy development within families.	<p>Improve the key indicators in the four areas of child well-being in families experiencing intergenerational poverty by 10% by 2029.</p> <p>1.) Annual average wage of adults employed all four quarters.*</p>	The state has worked to implement federal updates tied to SNAP work requirements to help families with economic stability. Agencies connected families to high-quality child care and backed educator training to improve reading and spelling outcomes. Continued support of strategies including provider and telehealth expansion have occurred to help increase children's preventive healthcare access statewide, especially in rural Utah.	<p>Baseline: \$22,129 Target: \$24,342 Current: \$18,045</p>
	2.) Percent of children who received preventative healthcare.*		<p>Baseline: 43.3% of children Target: 47.6% of children Current: 47.9% of children</p>
	3.) Percent of children age 0-5 with access to quality childcare.*		<p>Baseline: 15.5% of children (0-5) Target: 17% of children (0-5) Current: 16.8% of children (0-5)</p>
	4.) 3rd grade language arts proficiency percentage.*		<p>Baseline: 23.4% proficiency Target: 25.74% proficiency Current: 23.4% proficiency</p>
* Data is for individuals experiencing intergenerational poverty and not representative of the state as a whole.			
Improve transition services to reduce homelessness.	Reduce the number of individuals in custody or government services who enter homelessness upon release by 25% by 2029.	Partners met with the Homeless Management Information System team to better understand housing outcomes after individuals leave state custody, then collaborated to identify policies and pathways to include housing and additional services as part of transitional planning from state custody.	<p>Baseline: 566 individuals Target: 425 individuals Current: 474 individuals</p>

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Prioritize safe and stable housing for all Utahns.	Families experiencing domestic violence are connected to safety planning and tailored services, including safe shelter, within 72 hours of reaching out for help.	Utah has achieved 100% statewide adoption of the mandated Intimate Partner Violence Lethality Assessment across all law enforcement agencies, significantly improving immediate intervention for families experiencing domestic violence. The state also decreased unmet shelter needs for survivors by 6% over the last federal fiscal year. These improvements result from a coordinated effort between state agencies to prioritize housing stability and safety planning for survivors.	Baseline: 72 hours Target: 72 hours Current: 72 hours

Place.

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Leverage investments in the 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games for the benefit of future generations.	Complete the strategic double-tracking of FrontRunner by 2030, with a milestone of securing all necessary capital and operating funding and completing engineering by 2029.	The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) submitted their entry to the engineering proposal for the FrontRunner double-tracking with the Federal Transit Authority in October. Design for the project is more than 50% complete, and 75% of utility master agreements have already been executed.	Baseline: 0% complete Target: 100% complete Current: 20% complete
Increase housing affordability and ownership rates at all income levels.	150,000 new housing units built or underway, including 35,000 new starter homes, by 2029.	The administration is pursuing policies and programs to achieve the goal of 35,000 starter homes by 2028. These efforts have resulted in over 41,000 new homes permitted statewide, with 7,000 new starter homes completed. In 2026, priorities include creating more opportunities for Utahns by turning empty, surplus state-owned land into starter homes and building regional infrastructure to support new housing.	Baseline: 0 housing units, 0 starter homes Target: 150,000 housing units, 35,000 starter homes Current: 41,526 housing units, 7,000 starter homes
Increase Utahns' access to opportunities for essential quality of life destinations.	Construct 40,000 new housing units within areas designated as city or town centers in regional visions.	Nearly 9,000 new homes were permitted and built within city and town centers. Utah expanded the number of designated city and town centers to 399 locations, expanding mixed-use footprints by 19 square miles, and increasing the number of certified Station Area Plans (SAP) to 98. These SAPs now plan for 108,000 additional homes, supported by initiatives like new mixed-use Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zone development and improved transit connectivity.	Baseline: 0 housing units Target: 40,000 housing units Current: 8,806 housing units

OBJECTIVE	LEAD METRIC	PROGRESS	LEAD METRIC STATUS
Achieve better safety outcomes, preserve infrastructure, and improve mobility throughout the state.	Improve the state's transportation safety index by 10% by 2029.	In 2025, Utah experienced the lowest number of traffic deaths since 2019 (248). UDOT, the Department of Public Safety, and our partners helped achieve this fatality reduction in large part by implementing the strategies developed through the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. With safety at the core, hundreds of construction projects proactively identify and manage traffic risks annually. Key initiatives included expanding wrong-way detection systems and increasing Zero Fatalities outreach.	Baseline: 76% transportation safety index Target: 86% transportation safety index Current: 85.2% transportation safety index
Ensure that Utah has reliable, affordable, and clean energy to power our communities and economy.	Double Utah's power production in the next 10 years and secure committed projects that will account for at least one-third of this target increase by 2029.	Operation Gigawatt is creating a future of energy superabundance by expanding Utah's geothermal generating capacity, exploring where civil nuclear energy technologies make sense, and bringing battery storage and more natural gas online. Shifting baseline capacity takes time due to energy's long development timelines, but Fervo Energy's 500 megawatt expansion by 2028 and other projects are moving Utah toward its goal.	Baseline: 0 gigawatts Target: 1.33 gigawatts Current: 500 megawatts
Expand and increase access to outdoor recreation opportunities for all Utahns to improve quality of life and public health.	Increase the number of Utah residents within a 10-minute walking distance to a recreational opportunity by 20%.	Through more than a dozen grant programs, the Division of Outdoor Recreation awarded over \$44.2 million to 215 projects statewide in 2025 to improve infrastructure, access, and safety. This includes \$735,300 for youth engagement programs that provide outdoor education opportunities for more than 21,500 youth.	Baseline: 1,925,000 residents Target: 2,310,000 residents Current: 1,982,750 residents
Develop resiliency in Utah's water systems, including the Great Salt Lake, through comprehensive adoption of responsible water wise growth.	75% of the population will live in an area (cities and counties) with adopted water efficiency standards for new construction by 2029.	In 2025, four additional cities and one county in Utah adopted water efficiency standards for new construction.	Baseline: 65% of the population Target: 75% of the population Current: 65.58% of the population

OBJECTIVE	LEAD METRIC	PROGRESS	LEAD METRIC STATUS
Develop resiliency in Utah’s water systems by reducing water use and improving water quality.	Implement water-optimizing and water quality improvement practices on 120,000 acres of agricultural lands by 2029.	The state helped agricultural producers put 25,380 acres of water savings and water quality improvement projects on their land. This includes installing more efficient irrigation on 22,741 acres through the water optimization program and implementing conservation practices on 2,639 acres with the support of Agriculture Resource Development Loans.	Baseline: 0 acres Target: 120,000 acres Current: 25,380 acres

Prosperity.

OBJECTIVE	LEAD METRIC	PROGRESS	LEAD METRIC STATUS
Expand access to early childhood development resources to future-proof prosperity for all Utahns.	Increase the number of Utah students who are reading on grade level.	The governor's literacy initiative, kicked off in December of 2025, proposes investments for early literacy interventions and will provide targeted classroom support, as well as the launch of a statewide campaign to encourage reading at home.	<i>The lead metric for this objective has been adjusted to better capture current priorities around literacy. New lead metric information will be developed after the 2026 legislative session.</i>
Increase the college and workforce readiness of high school graduates.	Increase the share of graduating high school students with a postsecondary credential.	Utah is preparing to release the First Credential Master Plan, the state's roadmap for implementing the First Credential Program. The program aims to ensure every student has the opportunity to graduate high school with a credential that leads to postsecondary and career opportunities.	<i>The lead metric for this objective has been adjusted to better capture current priorities around literacy. New lead metric information will be developed after the 2026 legislative session.</i>
Provide more opportunities for Utah adults to reskill and upskill to meet Utah's growing demand for labor in areas of high strategic value to the state.	Increase the percentage of Utahns between the ages of 25 and 64 years old with a short-term credential from 12.4% to 15% by 2029.	Custom Fit, which is administered through the Utah System of Higher Education, delivered 451,161 hours of training to 16,673 employees across 1,847 companies in fiscal year 2025. Utah Works, led by Talent Ready Utah and in partnership with colleges, technical institutions, and employers statewide, funded 16 programs serving 1,386 participants in partnership with 18 employers across urban and rural Utah.	Baseline: 12.4% of Utahns (25-64) Target: 15% of Utahns (25-64) Current: 12.4% of Utahns (25-64)
Reimagine Higher Education in Utah to better align programs with workforce needs and enhance USHE graduates' effectiveness.	Increase the number of Utah employers that assess USHE graduates' durable skills and technical skills as sufficient upon workforce entry to 95% within targeted industries by 2029.	More than 82% of strategic reinvestment funds were allocated to instruction and research. The strategic reinvestment initiative at Utah's degree-granting institutions is heavily focused on expanding instructional capacity in workforce-centric programs, with the majority of reinvestment funds supporting healthcare, engineering, computer science, and business programs. The reinvestments target programs that are best positioned to increase the capacity of durable and technical skills to the benefit of the students and industry.	Target: 95% <i>Lead metric information will not be updated until a follow-up survey of Utah employers is completed.</i>

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Strengthen Utah's position as a premier global leader for innovation and entrepreneurship.	Increase Utah's new business startups by 50% by 2029.	With startup projections trailing the 2025 baseline, the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity has developed an action plan to ensure Utah remains the nation's most founder-friendly state by addressing startup fragmentation through four strategic pillars: ecosystem alignment, expanded mentorship, industry-linked innovation hubs, and global capital attraction. The plan creates a repeatable way to convert Utah's educational strengths and talent into a globally competitive startup landscape.	Baseline: 110,000 startups Target: 165,000 startups Current: 98,308 startups
Intensify economic diversification in rural Utah by advancing transformative infrastructure projects that enhance connectivity, resilience, and growth.	Support a transformative infrastructure project in each regional center by 2029.	The state met with the five rural associations of governments to discuss and identify their transformative infrastructure projects, resulting in two transportation planning grant proposals and support connecting partners with state agencies. Follow-up meetings are planned to address implementation barriers and provide additional resources.	Baseline: 0 projects Target: 5 projects Current: 5 projects
Preserve and amplify the "Utah Way" of kindness, service, and spirit of community.	Double the number of youth and young adults participating in service through Volunteer for Good and the One Utah Service Fellowship by 2029.	This year, 21 high schools participated in the state's Volunteer for Good Program, recording 89,286 service hours, with an estimated economic impact of almost \$3 million. Since launching in 2024, One Utah Service Fellows have served more than 305,000 hours, recruited or managed more than 13,000 volunteers, and assisted more than 320 local sites to serve their communities.	Baseline: 6,531 youth Target: 13,062 youth Current: 15,415 youth