

# Community Assessment



2007



*Raising the Red Flag*

**United Way of Salt Lake**

*serving Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties*

*creating hope since 1904*

# Special Thanks to

## GEORGE S. AND DOLORES DORÉ ECCLES F O U N D A T I O N

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for generously underwriting the costs associated  
with the *2007 Community Assessment*

 **Raising the Red Flag**  
The complete research study is available on our website at [www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org)

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# Introduction

**United Way of Salt Lake (UWSL) is proud to present the findings of its latest Community Assessment research.** UWSL's service area encompasses Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele counties. The research contained in this report is focused on this four-county area of the State of Utah.

One of UWSL's primary roles is to periodically measure the severity and trends of the social issues facing the communities we serve. **The purpose of this report is to update and test the findings of UWSL's 2004 Community Assessment in order to assess its accuracy and relevancy today.** The 2004 assessment did not include findings from Davis County, but with the addition of Davis County to UWSL's service area in 2006, data on social service issues in Davis County are included in this report.

UWSL feels that it is important for us to commission the research and to direct the process, but not to complete the research ourselves. **Contracting with a reputable and capable research firm ensures that the findings are completely objective, with no internal biases, and reflect the true needs of the communities we serve.** The research contained in this report was conducted by the Utah Foundation, specifically Stephen Kroes, *Executive Director*, and Elizabeth Escandon, *Research Analyst*. The Utah Foundation was the successful recipient of a contract following a Request for Proposal process. The research was conducted in late 2006 and early 2007.

UWSL organized a Steering Committee to oversee the research process. It was comprised of members of the research team, human service providers, business leaders, government representatives and UWSL staff. The members of the Steering Committee included:

**Sharon Anderson** – *Family Connection Center*  
**Rebecca Chavez-Houck** – *Centro de la Familia de Utah*  
**Marie Christman** – *State of Utah, Department of Human Services*  
**Kelly Colopy** – *Salt Lake County, Department of Human Services*  
**Bill Crim** – *United Way of Salt Lake*  
**Elizabeth Escandon** – *Utah Foundation*  
**Terry Haven** – *Voices for Utah Children*  
**Stephen Kroes** – *Utah Foundation*  
**Tom Love** – *Love Communications*  
**Deborah Bayle Nielsen** – *United Way of Salt Lake*  
**Jerry Sanders** – *Norwegian Outdoor Exploration Center*  
**Jeff St. Romain** – *Volunteers of America, Utah*  
**Bonny Steele** – *United Way of Salt Lake*  
**Claudia Thorum** – *Granite Peaks Lifelong Learning – Granite School District*  
**Heather Tritten** – *Utah Community Action Partnership Association*

We are very grateful to those who have generously underwritten this important research:

**The George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation**  
**Salt Lake County**  
**ATK Launch Systems**

United Way of Salt Lake is pleased to have the opportunity to serve the people of Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele counties. We take our mission very seriously. We are committed to bringing people and resources together to solve our communities' most serious social issues.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Scott Anderson".

**A. Scott Anderson**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
United Way of Salt Lake



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Bayle Nielsen".

**Deborah Bayle Nielsen**  
President and CEO  
United Way of Salt Lake



# Background

This report is an update of the *2004 Community Assessment* conducted on behalf of United Way of Salt Lake (UWSL). Because it is an update of previously conducted research, it does not “start from scratch” in defining our communities’ most pressing social problems. Rather, this study provides insight into how our communities have changed in recent years and which social issues are worsening or impacting the largest number of people. This assessment focuses on trends and impacts of the 17 priority problems and the four “core” issues that were identified in the *2004 Community Assessment*. The four core issues are listed below in priority order:

## 1. Insufficient income

## 2. People lacking life skills

## 3. Inadequate child supervision

To better reflect the relevant issues around this problem and the opinions expressed by service providers and social service clients in this study, **Inadequate Child Supervision** will be termed **Inadequate Opportunities for Child and Youth Development**.

## 4. Barriers to education

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## Purposes of the 2007 Study

**To provide a valuable tool** for the community to use as a barometer of the social service needs and requirements of our area

**To serve as a resource** to nonprofit organizations, policy makers, government entities, faith-based organizations, foundations, corporations and others

**To be an effective tool** to educate our community as to its most critical needs, their trends and their underlying causes

**To serve as a road map** for UWSL to provide leadership and guidance to our varied stakeholders, to policy makers and to the community; to provide a mechanism to develop strategies for long-term solutions to community problems; and to invest resources in a targeted manner that assures the greatest impact

# Background

## Methodology

This study was commissioned by United Way of Salt Lake to test the findings of its *2004 Community Assessment* against current changes, trends and conditions of 17 priority social problems and four underlying or “core” issues that were identified in the 2004 research. United Way of Salt Lake also requested that the social problems identified and tested be ranked, using a variety of calculations, to determine the intensity and breadth of the impact of each of the problems. The research utilized data from each of the four counties served by United Way of Salt Lake: Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele. The assessment was conducted using four major components, as follows:

### A survey of service providers

and other professionals in the human service field who are involved in providing social services, researching social problems and/or advocating for solutions to these problems.

The survey was deployed online, with about 300 professionals invited to respond. About 43% of those who were invited actually responded to and participated in the survey.

### A review of reliable data sources

was conducted to provide insight into each of the priority problems including data sketches for each problem, which include time series to illustrate recent trends, as well as insight into how many people are affected by these problems.

### A review of academic studies

that have been peer-reviewed was performed to determine the relationships between the four core issues and other social problems, particularly focusing on the 17 priority problems.

### A series of five focus groups

were conducted with clients of providers of human services in Davis, Salt Lake and Tooele counties. Due to extenuating circumstances, a focus group which was scheduled for clients in Summit County was cancelled, but a questionnaire featuring similar questions to those asked of focus group participants was distributed to clients in Summit County. The focus groups gathered input directly from people most impacted by the problems examined through this research.

## Study Area

UWSL provides services to the people of Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele counties. This four-county area represents approximately 1.4 million people or about 52% of the population of the State of Utah. Children under age 18 make up approximately 31% of the total, while adults over the age of 65 represent about 8%. The population in the four counties is about 19% minority (non-white, but including Hispanics). About 9% of all individuals in the service area live below the federal poverty level (\$20,650 for a family of four in 2007). The median household income (in 2004) for the service area ranges from just over \$50,000 in Salt Lake County to nearly \$67,000 in Summit County.

## Population Profile for Service Area of United Way of Salt Lake

	Davis County	Salt Lake County	Summit County	Tooele County	4-County Area
Total Population (2007)	287,924	1,001,098	39,214	56,693	1,384,929
Percent Children (Under 18) (2007)	32.2%	30.0%	26.5%	33.6%	30.5%
Percent Elderly (65 and Older) (2007)	7.7%	8.3%	6.8%	6.7%	8.0%
Percent Minority (2005)	11.4%	21.9%	13.0%	14.2%	19.2%
Percent in Poverty (2004)	7.5%	10.2%	5.3%	8.2%	9.4%
Median Household Income (2004)	\$58,808	\$50,420	\$66,822	\$52,718	n/a*

Sources: Utah Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, Utah Department of Health’s IBIS PH, U.S. Census — Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

\*not available

# Survey Findings

A major component of this assessment was to survey leaders and professionals who are involved on a daily basis in providing social services, researching social problems or advocating for solutions to these problems. The survey was deployed online, with 304 professionals invited to respond. About 43% of those invited participated in the survey.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the 17 priority problems that were identified by the *2004 Community Assessment*. The 17 problems, listed alphabetically, are as follows:

- Adult and juvenile crime**
- Barriers to education**
- Breakdown of the family**
- Domestic violence**
- Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development\***
- Insufficient income**
- Lack of affordable housing**
- Lack of access to mental health care**
- Lack of affordable health care**
- Lack of life skills**
- Lack of parenting skills**
- Lack of positive role models**
- Lack of services for the elderly**
- Lack of support for people with disabilities**
- Lack of transportation**
- Language/cultural barriers**
- Substance abuse**

*\*Note: To better reflect the relevant issues around this problem and the opinions expressed by service providers and social service clients in this study, "inadequate opportunities for child and youth development" replaced the nomenclature used in the 2004 assessment, "inadequate child supervision".*



# Survey Findings

## • Demographics of Survey Respondents

Those responding represented a broad variety of social service organizations including those providing:

- Basic needs
- Child and youth development
- Support for disabled
- Education
- Medical or dental health care
- Advocacy for social issues
- Domestic violence services
- Employment or job training
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment

Those responding represented the following types of organizations:

- |                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| • Nonprofit organizations             | 62.5% |
| • Government agencies (not education) | 23.1% |
| • K-12 schools                        | 6.7%  |
| • Private sector organizations        | 1.9%  |
| • Colleges or universities            | 1.0%  |
| • Other                               | 4.8%  |
- (included early childhood education, faith-based, youth program, Office of Education)

Respondents were asked which of the four counties their organizations serve:

- |             |    |
|-------------|----|
| • Davis     | 62 |
| • Salt Lake | 94 |
| • Summit    | 59 |
| • Tooele    | 66 |



# Survey Findings

**Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their perspectives on the 17 priority problems:**

- **What is the severity of the impacts these problems have on individuals?**
- **How broad are the impacts of the problems?**
- **What are the trends for each of the problems?**
- **What is your overall rating of the importance of the problems?**

## • **Priority Ranking from Service Providers**

Based on the results of these questions, a ranking of each problem was established and the averages of their mean scores were calculated. Using the rank based on average score, the following lists the 17 problems in priority order:

1. **Lack of affordable health care**
2. **Insufficient income**
3. **Lack of affordable housing**
4. **Substance abuse**
5. **Lack of access to mental health care**
6. **Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development**
7. **Breakdown of the family**
8. **Domestic violence**
9. **Barriers to education**
10. **Lack of life skills**
11. **Lack of parenting skills**
12. **Adult and juvenile crime**
13. **Language/cultural barriers**
14. **Lack of positive role models**
15. **Lack of transportation**
16. **Lack of support for people with disabilities**
17. **Lack of services for the elderly**

## • **Top Five Concerns**

At the end of the survey, another question asked respondents to explicitly rank their top five concerns from the list of 17 problems. This differs from the previous questions in that, rather than rating each problem on a scale of 1 to 7, this question asked them to rank their top five. The results are similar, but not the same. In this exercise, each problem was ranked based on the total number of respondents who placed it in any of the top five rank positions. The top five problems from this exercise are:

1. **Insufficient income (tie)**
1. **Lack of affordable health care (tie)**
3. **Barriers to education**
4. **Substance abuse**
5. **Lack of affordable housing**

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

For each of the priority problems identified, survey respondents were given an opportunity to provide open-ended input regarding best practices, barriers to addressing the problem and ideas for overcoming those barriers.

The following summaries for each problem, listed alphabetically, briefly describe commonalities among the responses as well as individual responses that are particularly noteworthy:

### Adult and Juvenile Crime

#### Successful programs and policies:

- A variety of efforts that focus on intervention and treatment
- After school and mentoring programs, as well as substance abuse treatment and Drug Courts
- Early intervention, protective orders and coordinated community responses in addressing domestic violence

#### Barriers:

- Substance abuse and a lack of funding resulting in insufficient treatment and prevention programs
- Justice services are not being fully utilized because of a lack of public awareness

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Greater collaboration among service providers
- Greater diversity among justice staff (police, court personnel, juvenile justice staff)
- Development of parenting and life skills, and support for the family structure
- Increased public awareness of the problem and of existing resources

### Barriers to Education

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Head Start and other early learning, before and after school programs
- Adult education classes, ESL classes, literacy programs
- Culturally sensitive services

#### Barriers:

- Language and cultural differences
- Insufficient funding and lack of support for teachers
- Lack of public awareness of problem, resistance to reform
- For adult learners, transportation, child care, inconvenient class times

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Community learning centers, after school and adult literacy programs
- Increased funding for pre-school and extended day kindergarten
- Greater responsiveness and sensitivity to minorities
- For adult learners, better transportation and child care, more flexible hours and class locations

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Breakdown of the Family

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Premarital classes, parenting classes, religious teachings
- Family counseling services
- Utah Saves (social marketing initiative), money management classes, financial education courses

#### Barriers:

- Financial demands and stresses
- Lack of communication skills, lack of role models
- Lack of program funding

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Mandatory premarital and parenting classes
- Family counseling
- Policies that address sources of financial stress (affordable housing, higher wages, affordable health care, increased financial education and asset development programs, etc.)

### Domestic Violence

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Shelters and other support systems (legal assistance, counselors)
- Training for law enforcement, protective orders
- Increased public awareness

#### Barriers:

- Lack of funding, lack of understanding of available resources
- Cultural attitudes that pressure families to stay together
- Potential financial and safety risks to victims
- Insufficient education for youth regarding abuse

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Additional funding for services
- Preventive interventions that address underlying issues
- More collaboration among professionals
- Methods to remove offender (rather than victim) from the home

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Inadequate Opportunities for Child and Youth Development

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Office of Child Care programs, Head Start and other pre-school programs
- After school and mentoring programs

#### Barriers:

- Inadequate funding, high cost of child care
- Cultural attitudes towards need for child care
- Insufficient income, low wages for child care workers, lack of transportation
- Child care regulations
- Families with both parents or single parent working, parents who do not pay child support

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Increased state funding for child care, better wages for child care workers
- Greater awareness and advocacy, change in public attitudes about child care
- Extended day kindergarten, before and after school programs
- Extended programming (nights, week-ends)

### Insufficient Income

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Earned Income Tax Credit program (Earn It. Keep It. Save It.), Individual Development Accounts
- Utah Saves, financial literacy programs, youth financial education
- Adult education and job training, economic development
- Programs tailored to specific populations (immigrants, refugees)

#### Barriers:

- Low wages, high cost of living, cycle of poverty, jobs with no benefits
- Lack of education
- Political system and tax policies that benefit the wealthy
- Lack of transportation

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Increasing the minimum wage
- Increasing access to education, job training, life skills programs
- More affordable housing, housing assistance programs
- Affordable health care, containment of health care costs



## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Lack of Access to Mental Health Care

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Community mental health system
- Counseling and other services (offered on a sliding fee scale)

#### Barriers:

- Insufficient funding, lack of resources, high cost of services, insufficient income
- Lack of accessibility
- Social stigma, perception that mental health is not as important as physical health
- Lack of coverage by health insurance plans

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Expanded health insurance coverage
- Parity for mental and physical health conditions by insurance plans
- Sliding fee scales for services
- Increased education about and visibility for mental health issues

### Lack of Affordable Health Care

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, Primary Care Network (PCN)
- Community and nonprofit clinics
- Doctors, hospitals, and clinics that work with low-income patients on affordable payment plans

#### Barriers:

- Special interest groups
- Inadequate funding for and caps on government programs
- Growing number of jobs without insurance benefits, lack of affordable plans for small business
- Rising costs of health care and health insurance
- Language and cultural barriers

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Cost containment, additional funding and expansion of existing government programs
- Universal health coverage, greater awareness of existing programs
- Partnerships among public/private/nonprofit/medical industry
- Medical industry reform

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Lack of Affordable Housing

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Housing Authority programs (Section 8 vouchers, public housing), low-income housing tax credits
- Transitional and assisted housing programs, rent subsidies, temporary rental assistance
- Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund
- First-time homebuyer programs

#### Barriers:

- High housing costs, inadequate funding, insufficient incomes, employment barriers
- Lack of tenant protections, predatory lending practices
- Lack of community support for development of affordable housing

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Development of affordable housing through public/private partnerships
- Tax breaks for owners/developers, local housing trust funds
- Expansion of rental assistance programs
- Increased wages, better mass transit
- Education on renting and home ownership as part of financial literacy programs

### Lack of Life Skills

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Parenting classes, mentoring, classes for youth on adult roles
- Shelter-based instruction with homeless and near-homeless individuals
- Organizations that provide activities and instruction for youth

#### Barriers:

- Difficulty defining life skills, declining social value norms
- Lack of support for public school teachers
- Not enough mentors
- Lack of time (and interest) in taking classes
- Funding limitations

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Better integration of life skills in schools, getting schools to work with outside programs
- Increasing training for teachers and mentors
- Teach people the "hidden rules" of poverty and how to attain middle class status

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Lack of Parenting Skills

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Healthy Families, Parents as Teachers, Love and Logic, other parenting classes
- In-home parenting classes, mentoring and support from community groups
- Financial literacy classes and other life skills programs that reduce parental stress

#### Barriers:

- Lack of awareness of training options
- People not understanding their role as parents, not having had good parental role models, difficult to get parents to recognize the need
- Overwhelmed with struggles of daily life, too busy to attend classes

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Customized parenting classes for ethnic groups, other cultural adaptations
- Creating rewards or tax incentives for parents who take classes
- Require a parenting course for K-12 students
- Classes for new parents

### Lack of Positive Role Models

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Norwegian Outdoor Exploration Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Utah Mentor Network, Boy and Girl Scouts
- Training for parents to become role models for their children, such as work done by Head Start

#### Barriers:

- Disconnected or disinterested parents
- Shortage of programs and mentors
- Materialism, lack of neighborhood relationships
- Insufficient funding
- Need for more diverse volunteers

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Universal preschool
- More aggressive recruitment of volunteers and mentors
- Training parents to be role models through school connections
- Getting schools to provide space for programs to function

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Lack of Services for the Elderly

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Programs that keep seniors in their own homes, in-home services like home-delivered meals, counseling, health care
- Senior centers, services provided through county aging services and associations on aging
- Respite care for caregivers

#### Barriers:

- Rapidly growing population of aged
- Lack of community knowledge
- Family hesitance about using programs

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Expanded affordable senior housing, faith-based elderly housing
- Discounts for food, health care and transportation
- Expansion of in-home services

### Lack of Support for People with Disabilities

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Employment supports that assist with maintaining independence
- Americans with Disabilities Act, Division of Services to People with Disabilities
- Established private provider network

#### Barriers:

- Low funding
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified workers
- Lack of general understanding of issues facing those with disabilities
- Lack of understanding of ADA requirements
- Need for long-term care

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Privatization of services, funding to reduce waiting lists
- Shortening application process for benefits
- Obtaining an independent market-rate study to update benefit levels



# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Lack of Transportation

#### Successful programs and policies:

- TRAX, UTA Flextrans Paratransit services
- Carpool promotion efforts

#### Barriers:

- Insufficient bus service, inconsistency of bus timing leading to job problems (late to work, getting fired), insufficient night and week-end service
- Lack of understanding of transportation needs of disabled
- Expense of mass transit

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Free or subsidized bus passes to those in need
- More bus routes, better night and week-end service to accommodate job shifts
- Individualized transportation for elderly
- Sensitivity training for bus drivers and transit administration

### Language and Cultural Barriers

#### Successful programs and policies:

- ESL classes, cultural fairs, charter schools with a language focus
- Daily Dose English program, Horizonte School, Coalition for Multicultural Workers' Safety and Health, English Learning Opportunities initiative

#### Barriers:

- Biases against immigrants, media stereotypes of immigrants, hostility towards immigrants
- Lack of employer training for non-English speakers
- Limited time and transportation to attend English classes, difficult to communicate about program availability to non-English speakers
- Funding decreases

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Increased awareness about immigrants' contributions to society and economy
- Greater cultural sensitivity among service providers
- Help transferring professional credentials from foreign countries
- Comprehensive immigration reform

# Survey Findings

## Analysis of Open-ended Survey Responses on 17 Priority Problems

### Substance Abuse

#### Successful programs and policies:

- Existing, affordable substance abuse treatment and prevention programs, substance abuse services integrated with other services
- Media advertising on dangers of substance abuse

#### Barriers:

- Inadequate funding and capacity
- Societal stigma of substance abuse, TV and movie glorification of drug use
- Widespread availability of drugs and alcohol, difficulty of overcoming addiction
- Mental illness (substance abuse as self-medication)

#### Ideas for overcoming barriers:

- Additional public and private funding for prevention programs and treatment services
- Increased services for mental illness, health insurance parity
- Stronger penalties for criminals

*For more in-depth information on the survey responses, please see pages 151 – 197 of the complete research study available on our website at [www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org).*



# Survey Findings

## Importance of the Core Issues

The *2004 Community Assessment* described four core issues, which were part of the 17 priority problems, but which were identified as being the root causes of the other problems. In the 2004 assessment, the four core issues were ranked as follows: 1. Insufficient income, 2. People lacking life skills, 3. Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development, 4. Barriers to education

The survey of service providers and professionals was used to confirm whether the four core issues are still considered causal core problems and whether their ranking should remain the same or change.

**These core issues received the following ranking in the 2007 Community Assessment:**

1. Insufficient income
2. People lacking life skills
3. Barriers to education
4. Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development

Note that in this assessment the rank of the core issues for the number one and two priorities did not change, but numbers three and four, inadequate opportunities for child and youth development and barriers to education, switched their level of priority ranking.

Respondents were also asked if any other problem should have been one of the core issues, but those responses were small in number.

**The survey results confirm that the core issues identified in the *2004 Community Assessment* are still considered by this group to be the most important causes of other problems in their communities.**



# Secondary Data Findings

To gain a more complete understanding of how the 17 priority problems impact our communities, this study reviewed the most recent available data for each problem. Where possible, a time series was created to illustrate recent trends. The data also provide insight into how many people are affected by these problems in the four-county area. Where possible, an estimate was created for the number of people affected by each problem. For some, a range of impacted persons was created, while data limitations prevented such estimates for other problems. In addition, recent trends were categorized for each problem based on a review of all of the data sources.

## Summary of Data Findings: Trends and Breadth of Impact

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Number of persons affected</b>
Adult and Juvenile Crime	slightly worse	110,794
Barriers to Education	about the same	231,876
Breakdown of the Family	slightly worse	240,846
Domestic Violence	stable to slightly worse	216,049
Inadequate Opportunities for Child and Youth Development	slightly worse	68,433 - 334,057 Updated numbers as of April 5, 2007
Insufficient Income	worse	346,232
Lack of Access to Mental Health Care	worse	138,493 - 249,287
Lack of Affordable Health Care	worse	152,342 - 498,574
Lack of Affordable Housing	worse	327,686
Lack of Life Skills	indeterminate	n/a*
Lack of Parenting Skills	worse	57,071 - 285,357
Lack of Positive Role Models	indeterminate	42,207
Lack of Services for Elderly	worse	Up to 111,406
Lack of Support for People with Disabilities	worse	Up to 163,036
Lack of Transportation	stable	76,016
Language/Cultural Barriers	worse	96,945 - 265,906
Substance Abuse	stable to slightly worse	40,361 - 171,599

\*not available

Note: Data from the U. S. Census is used throughout this section. The most recent census data is from 2000. The U. S. Census also conducted the American Community Survey (ACS) for the years 2002-2005. However, for Summit and Tooele counties, the most recent data available is 2000, because these counties are too small to participate in the ACS. Therefore, in order to compare the four counties (Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele) we must go back to 2000.



# Secondary Data Findings

## WORSENING TRENDS

The following problems demonstrate a significantly worsening trend from 2000 through the most recent data available. These trends warrant special attention for these issues.

**Insufficient Income:** Inflation-adjusted median household income appears to be declining in the four counties, while the proportion of individuals living in poverty is increasing. Wages statewide have been declining relative to the U. S. average.

**Lack of Affordable Health Care:** Growth in health care costs and health insurance costs have been outpacing income growth. The proportion of uninsured persons has increased in all four counties and statewide as health insurance costs have increased and as fewer employers have been able to offer affordable health insurance to their employees.

**Lack of Affordable Housing:** Housing prices have been increasing much faster than income. A higher proportion of owners and renters have a “housing cost burden”, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. Low-income households, which are most likely to have a housing cost burden than others, have been especially hard hit.

**Language and Cultural Barriers:** The proportion of the population in the four counties that is not proficient in English, is foreign-born or is ethnic or racial minority is steadily increasing. However, even with these populations increasing, the challenges and barriers they face are becoming significantly worse, exacerbating the problems that these populations encounter when attempting to integrate into the American culture.

**Lack of Access to Mental Health Care:** Funding changes have exacerbated an already existing gap in mental health services for persons who do not qualify for Medicaid, but who do not have the income or insurance to afford the mental health services they need. While the proportion of the population in need of mental health services does not appear to have changed significantly, access to those services has declined.

In addition to the five problems listed above, the following problems were also identified as problems with a clearly worsening trend: **1. Lack of Parenting Skills, 2. Lack of Services for the Elderly, 3. Lack of Support for People with Disabilities**



# Secondary Data Findings

## WIDESPREAD IMPACTS

The following problems affect large proportions of the overall populations of the four counties:

**Insufficient Income:** About one-fourth of individuals in the four-county area are in poverty or near poverty (those living below 200% of the poverty level - \$41,300 for a family of four).

**Lack of Affordable Housing:** In 2000, 36% of renters, 20% of homeowners with a mortgage and 6% of home owners without a mortgage had a housing cost burden (housing costs equal to 30% or more of household income) in the four-county area. This means that in 2000 about 24% of the total population was devoting a burdensome proportion of their overall income to housing costs. With the recent rise in housing costs and the decline in median income, this proportion has most likely increased from 2000 to the present.

**Lack of Affordable Health Care:** Although the Utah Health Status Survey and the U. S. Census suggest that between 11% and 15% of all persons in the four-county area are uninsured, many individuals who have insurance still have trouble paying medical costs and may not receive necessary treatment because of high costs. A 2003 national study reports that 33% of persons ages 19 to 64 in the West have gone without necessary treatment because of the cost. An even higher proportion, 36%, reported that they had medical bill problems or medical debt. These data indicate that about 24% (midpoint between a low of 11% and a high of 36%) of all individuals are affected by this problem.

**Breakdown of the Family:** About 18% of Utah adults have been divorced, and, in 2000, about 16% of children in the four-county area were living in single-parent households. While divorce rates are one measure of family breakdown, it is often the end result of other dysfunctional family dynamics, including domestic violence and substance abuse. Based on these figures, it is estimated that about 18% of all persons in the four-county area have been directly affected by such family issues. It is important to note, however, that UWSL does not wish to imply, through this measure, that divorce itself is a persistent social problem, but rather that economic, emotional and social challenges are often exacerbated by family dissolution.

**Barriers to Education:** In 2000, about 14% of adults in the four-county area did not have a high school diploma. In addition, researchers estimate that Utah's graduation rate for 2002-2003 was only about 77%. Data suggests that about 17% of all individuals are impacted by barriers to education that prevent them from attaining a minimal level of education (high school graduation).

In addition to the five problems listed above, several other problems were identified as impacting a significant proportion of the population (more than 10% of all individuals):

**Domestic violence – 16%**

**Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development – 15%**

**Lack of access to mental health care – 14%**

**Language and cultural barriers – 13%**

Note: The trends or percent of persons affected were not able to be determined for lack of life skills using secondary data sources.

***It is important to note that insufficient income, lack of affordable housing and lack of affordable health care appear on both lists – these are problems that have both worsening trends and widespread impacts.***

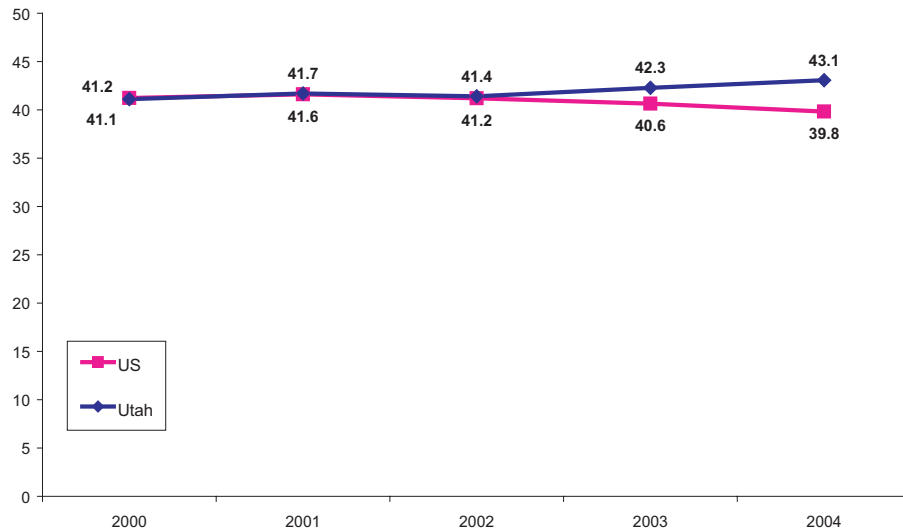
# Secondary Data Findings

## Sampling of secondary data sources and measures for each of the 17 priority problems:

### • Adult and Juvenile Crime

Utah's total crime rate (per 1,000 persons) has increased from 41.1 in 2000 to 43.1 in 2004. During the same time period, the crime rate for the U. S. overall fell from 41.2 to 39.4. In 2004, Utah's total crime rate surpassed the U. S. total crime rate.

Total Crime Rates per 1,000 Persons, Utah and US

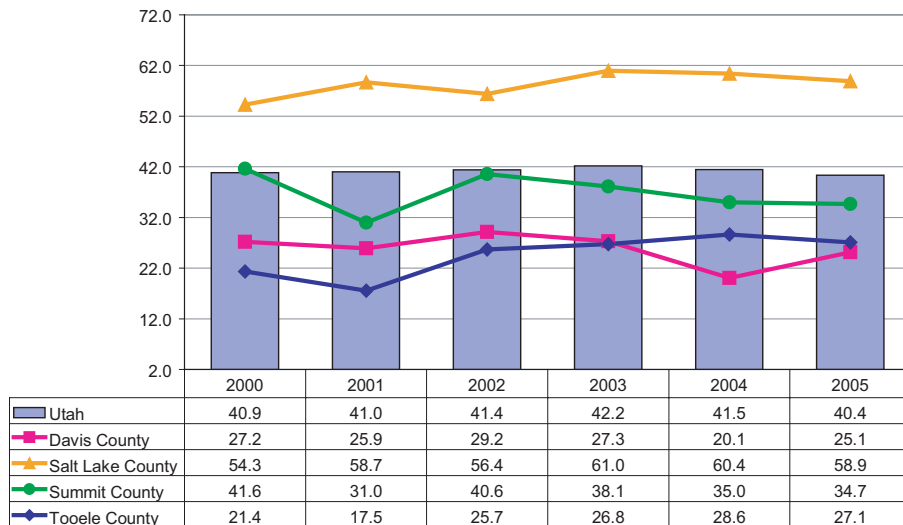


Source: Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Of the four counties, Salt Lake County has the highest crime rate at 58.9 crimes per 1,000 persons in 2005, which is well above the state average

From 2000 to 2005, crime rates increased in Salt Lake and Tooele counties and decreased in Davis and Summit counties

Crime Rate per 1,000 Persons for Reported Index Crimes



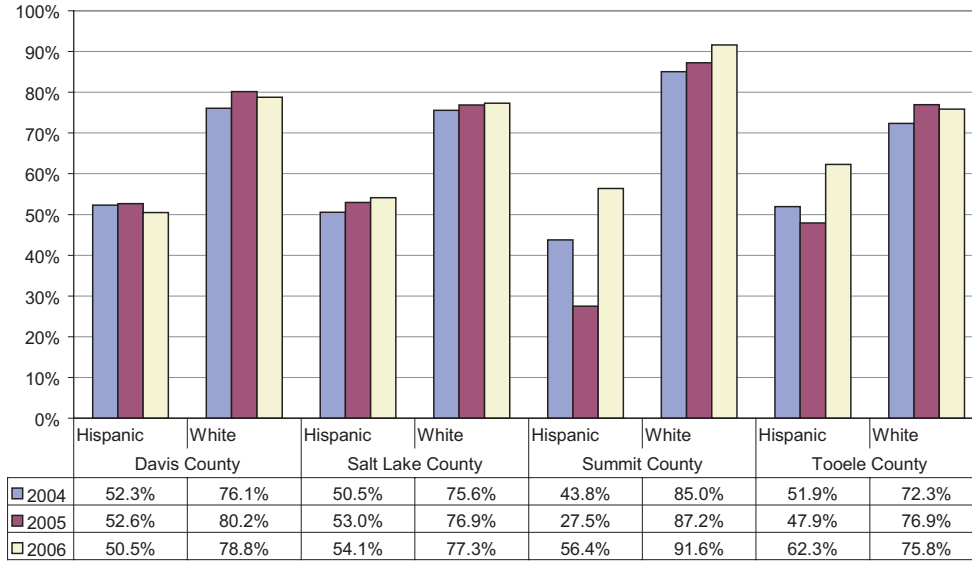
Source: Utah Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Identification

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Barriers to Education

In 2006, Summit County had the highest percentage of White students scoring at the proficient level or above in grade 4 mathematics (92%) while Tooele County had the lowest (76%). For Hispanics in 2006, Tooele County had the highest percentage scoring proficient or above (62%) and Davis County had the lowest percentage (51%).

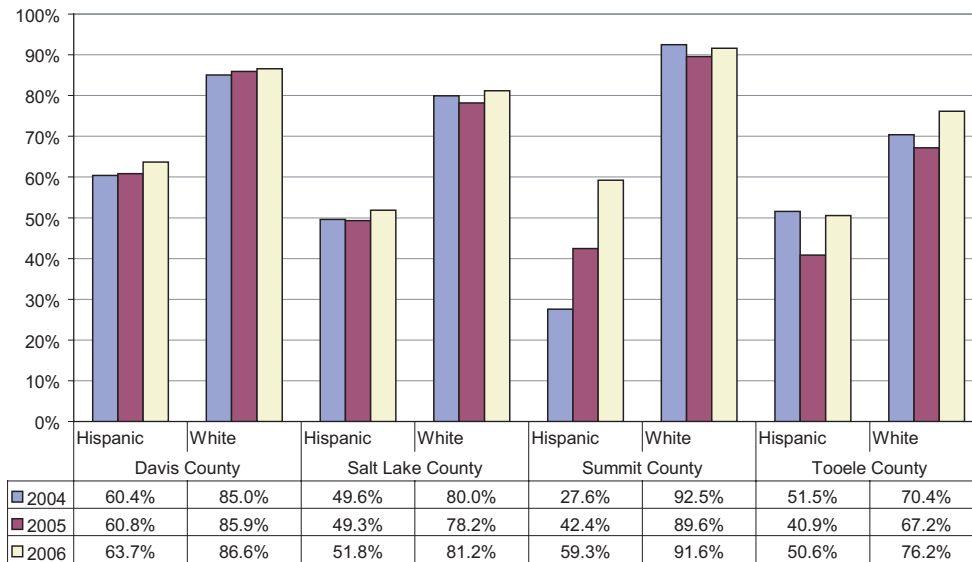
**Percent Proficient on State Core CRT (Criterion Referenced Test),  
Grade 4 Mathematics**



Source: Utah State Office of Education

In 2006, Summit County had the highest percentage of White students scoring at the proficient level or above in grade 8 language arts (92%) while Tooele had the lowest (76%). For Hispanics in 2006, Davis County had the highest percentage scoring proficient or above (64%) and Tooele County had the lowest percentage (51%).

**Percent Proficient on State Core CRT (Criterion Referenced Test),  
Grade 8 Language Arts**



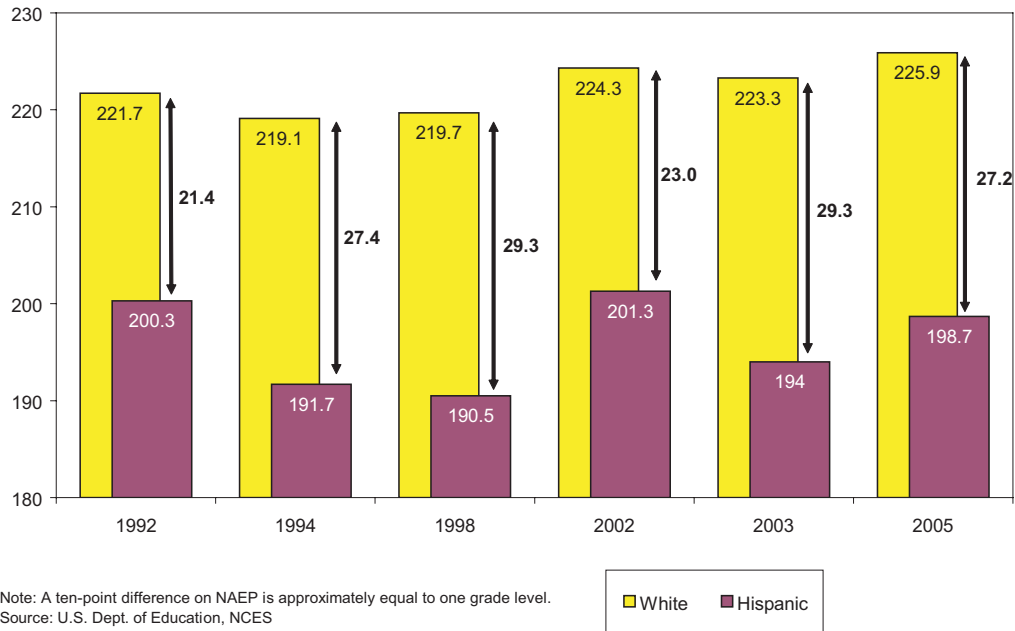
Source: Utah State Office of Education

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Barriers to Education

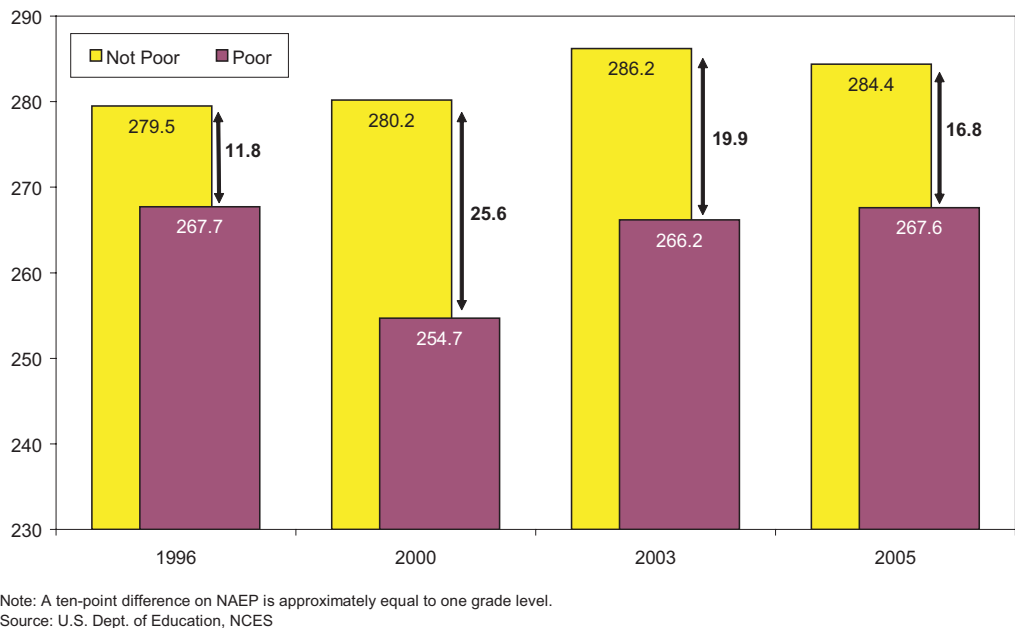
In 2005, Utah Hispanics scored nearly three grade levels below Whites in fourth grade reading. Utah's White-Hispanic achievement gap was the eighth largest in the nation.

Utah's White-Hispanic Achievement Gap in Reading, Grade 4 (NAEP)



The Utah poverty achievement gap in eighth grade math was 17 in 2005, or less than two grade levels. The U. S. poverty achievement gap (27 in 2005) has historically been considerable larger than Utah's gap. Utah's poverty achievement gap was the 3rd smallest in the nation.

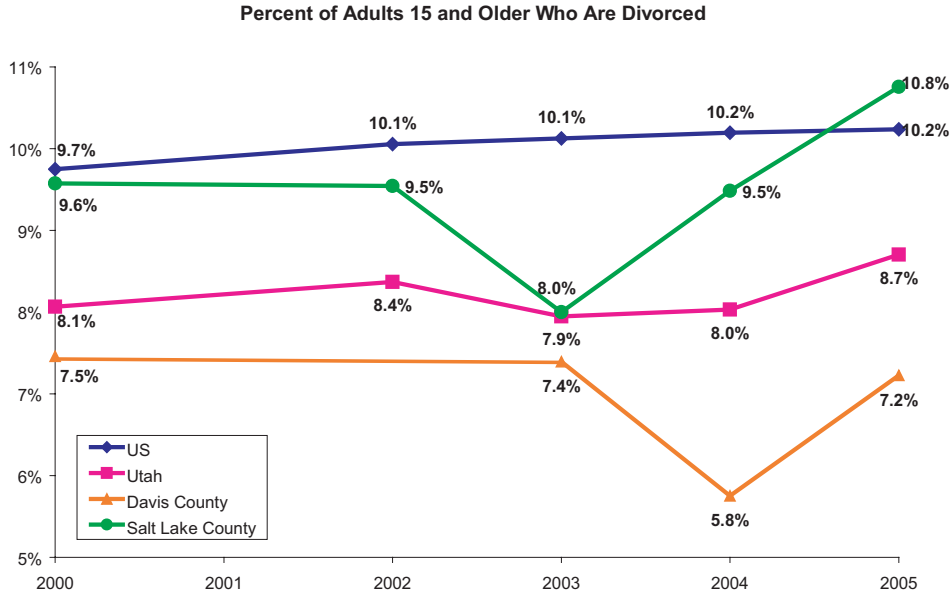
Utah's Poverty Achievement Gap in Math, Grade 8 (NAEP)



# Secondary Data Findings

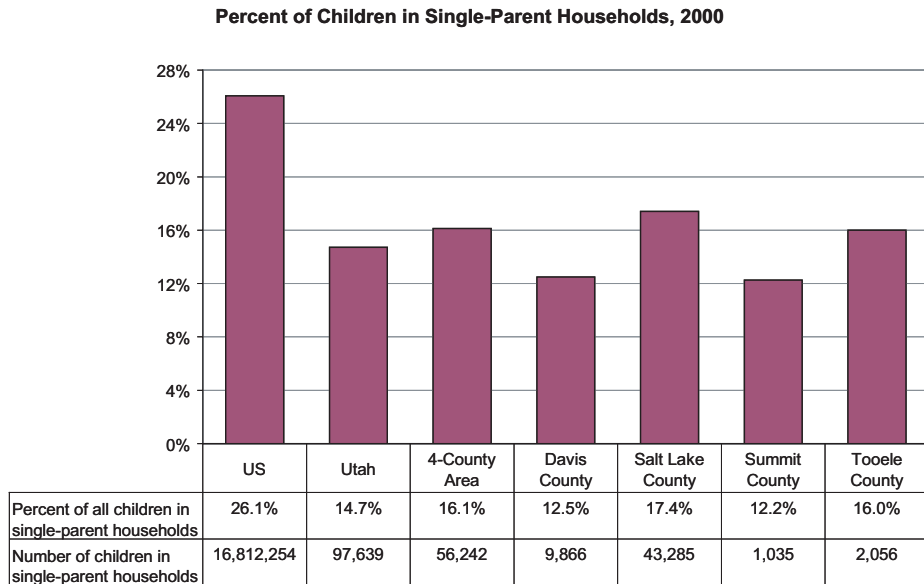
## • Breakdown of the Family

The proportion of Salt Lake County adults who are divorced now surpasses the national average. From 2000 to 2005, the proportion of adults who are divorced increased for the nation, the state and Salt Lake County. The proportion decreased slightly for Davis County during this period.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

The proportion of children in single-parent households (in 2000) is well below the national average for Utah and the four counties. In 2000, over 56,000 children (16% of all children) in the four-county area were living in single-parent households.



Source: U.S. Census

Note: It is important to note that UWSL does not wish to imply, through this measure, that divorce itself is a persistent social problem, but rather, that economic, emotional and social challenges are often exacerbated by family dissolution

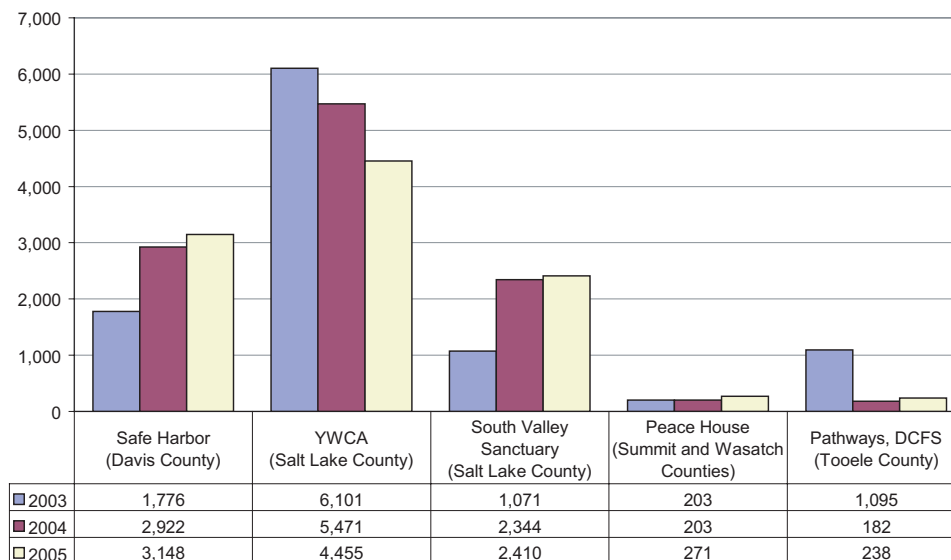


# Secondary Data Findings

## • Domestic Violence

In 2005, the five shelters shown in the graph below received a total of 10,522 calls. From 2003 to 2005, the number of calls to Safe Harbor, South Valley Sanctuary and Peace House steadily increased, while calls to YWCA steadily decreased. During the same period, the number of crisis calls to all Utah shelters increased from 35,457 to 44,804 (a 26% increase).

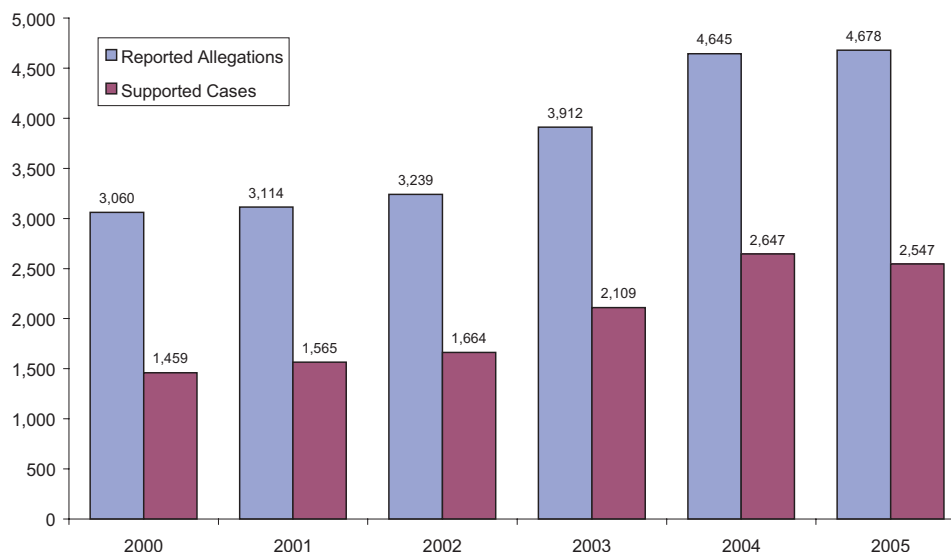
Number of Domestic Violence Calls per Shelter, 2003-2005



Source: Governor's Violence Against Women and Families Cabinet Council

In 2005, there were over 2,500 supported cases of child abuse related to domestic violence, representing over 4,700 child victims. From 2000 to 2005, the number of reported allegations of domestic violence increased from 3,060 to 4,578, an increase of 53%. During the same period, the child population increased by less than 10%.

Domestic Violence Related Cases of Child Abuse

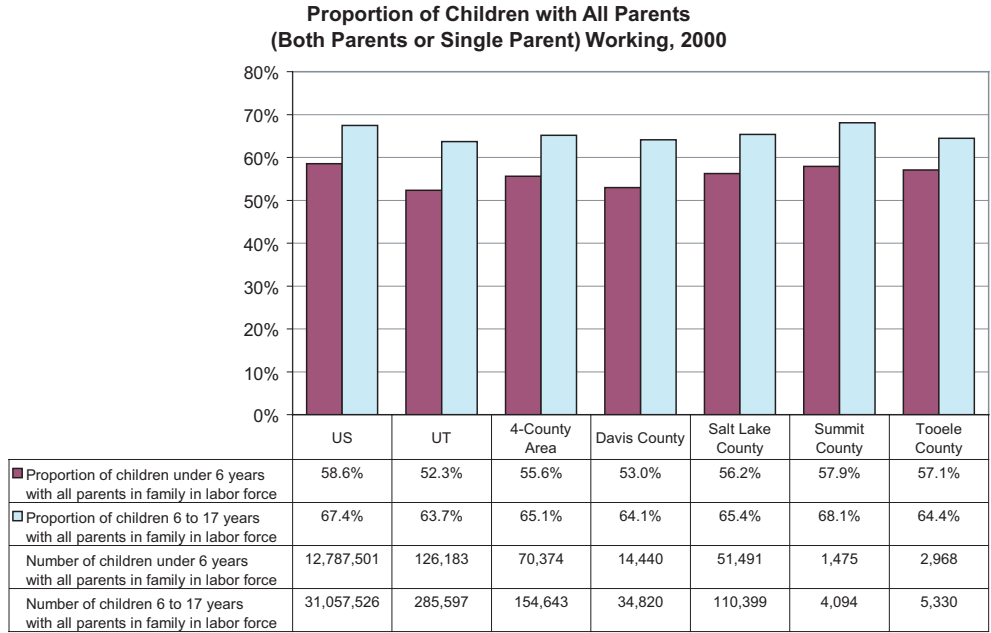


Source: Governor's Violence Against Women and Families Cabinet Council

# Secondary Data Findings

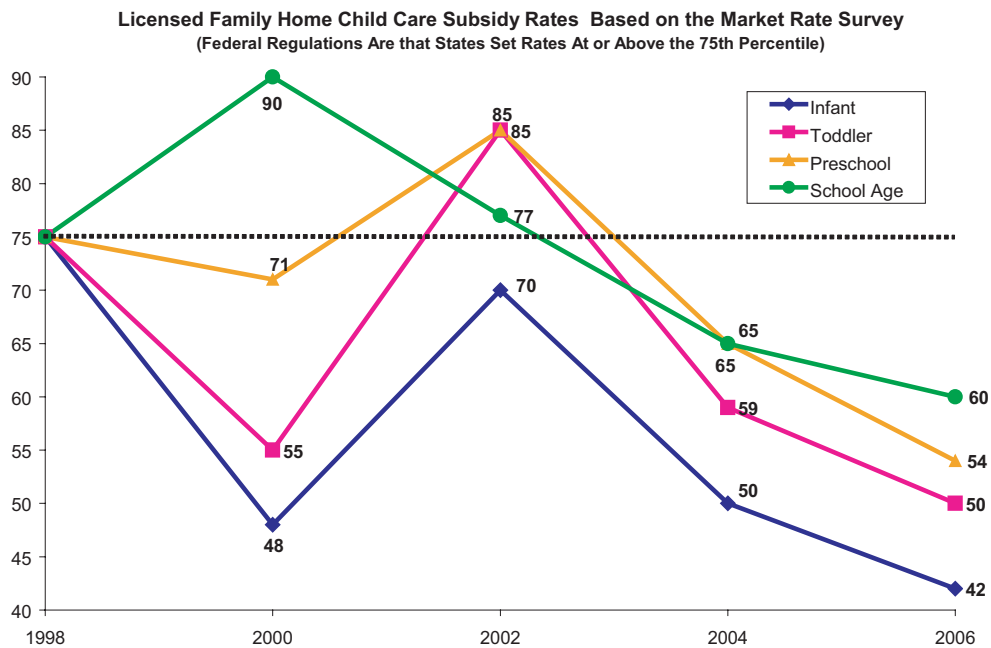
## • Inadequate Opportunities for Child and Youth Development

In 2000, for all four counties, the proportion of all children under age 17 with both parents (or one parent in the case of children living with only one parent) in the labor force was above the state average. For the combined four-county area, there were over 224,000 children with all parents in the workforce.



Source: U.S. Census

Federal regulations suggest that states set rates at or above the 75th percentile when setting subsidy rates to ensure parents equal access to child care settings. In 2006, subsidy rates for all four age categories (infant, toddler, preschool and school age) fell far below the recommended federal regulation levels.



Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services, Office of Work & Family Life

(Federal Regulations are that States Set Rates At or Above the 75<sup>th</sup> Percentile)

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Insufficient Income

Utah's median family income is ranked 25th among the 50 states, which is slightly less than the national average. For one-earner families, Utah compares well to the nation, but for two-earner families, Utah is nearly in last place in the rankings.

### Median Family Income in the Past 12 Months by Number of Earners in Family, Utah, 2005

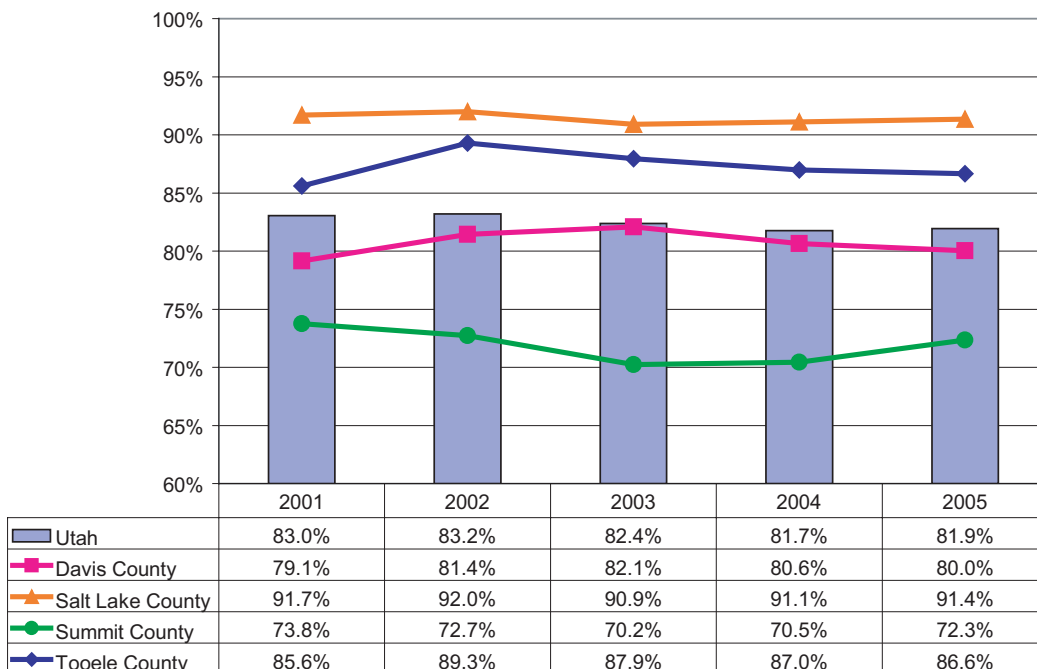
	Utah Median Income	US Median Income	Utah's ranking
<b>Total:</b>	\$54,595	\$55,832	25
<b>No earners</b>	\$33,493	\$26,761	3
<b>1 earner</b>	\$40,922	\$38,827	18
<b>2 earners</b>	\$57,309	\$70,405	46
<b>3 or more earners</b>	\$85,212	\$86,996	22

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005

One of the major concerns about incomes in Utah is that the average annual pay in Utah is around 82% of the national average. This ratio has been persistent for some time. Tooele and Davis county incomes show a decline from 2002 to 2005 as a percent of the national average.

Summit County wages are a concern at only 72% of the national average in 2005.

Average Annual Pay as Percent of U.S. Average

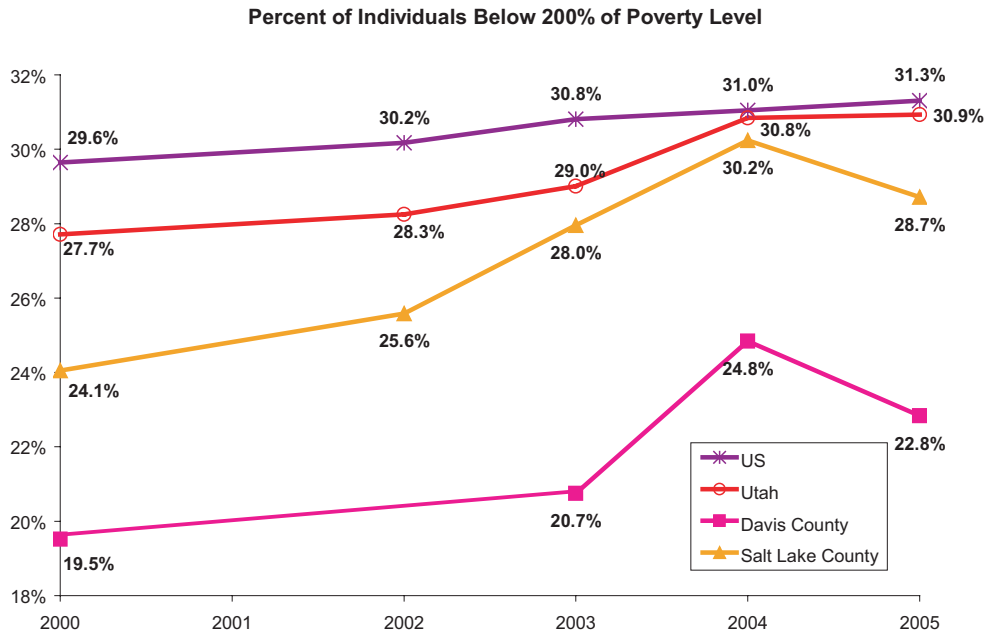


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Insufficient Income

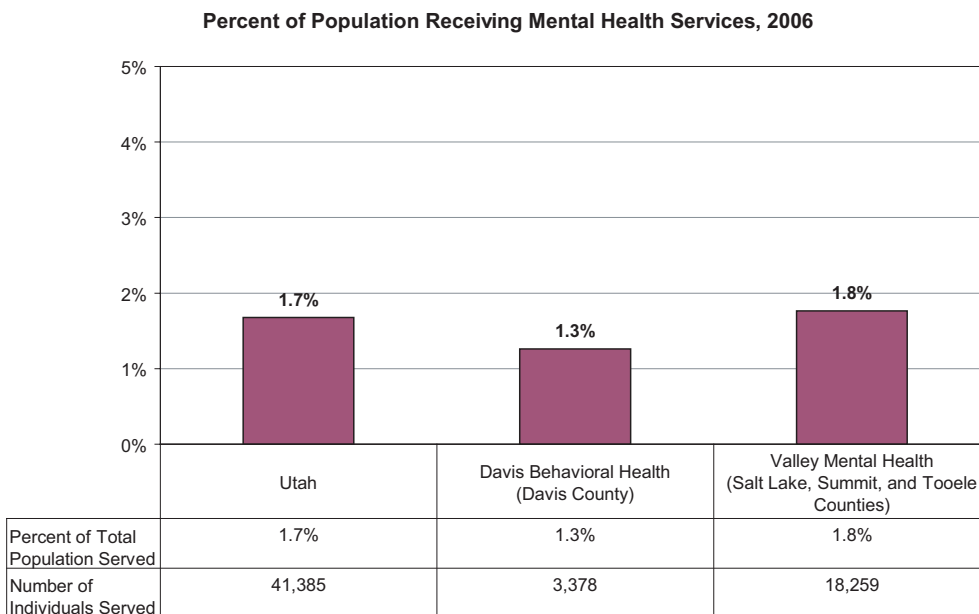
The proportion of individuals below 200% of the poverty level is growing from 2000 to 2005 for Salt Lake and Davis counties and statewide. The rise in Utah's population living in near poverty is rising faster than the U. S. as a whole.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

## • Lack of Access to Mental Health Care

Statewide, less than 2% of the total population receives public mental health services. In Davis County, about 1% receives public assistance. Based on a 2005 study on drug use and health, the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health estimates that 12% of Utah's adults are in serious psychological distress and may be in need of mental health treatment.



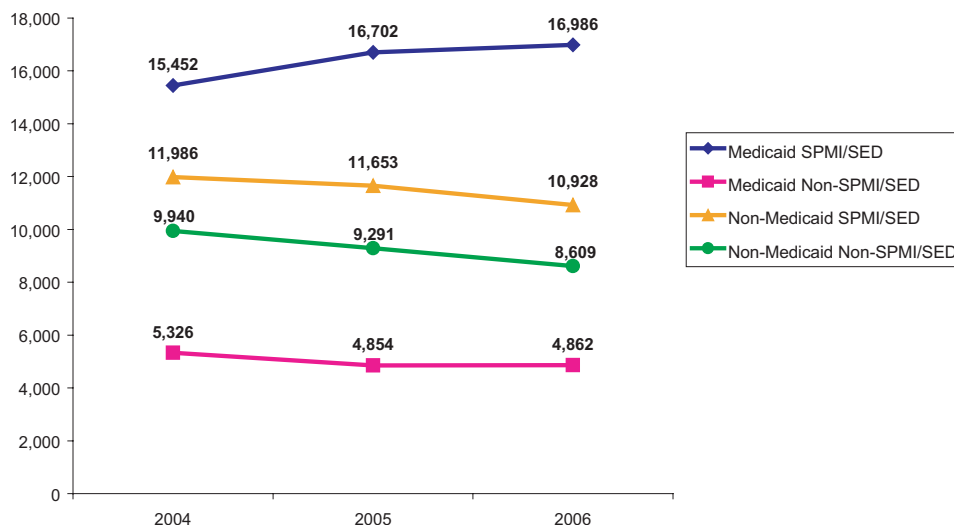
Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Access to Mental Health Care

Between 2004 and 2006, Utahns experienced decreased opportunities to receive early intervention mental health services. The decrease in services is largest among non-Medicaid clients. The decrease in services correlates to a steep increase in emergency room visits by persons with a diagnosis of substance abuse or a behavioral disorder.

Decrease in Clients Receiving Community Mental Health Services, Utah

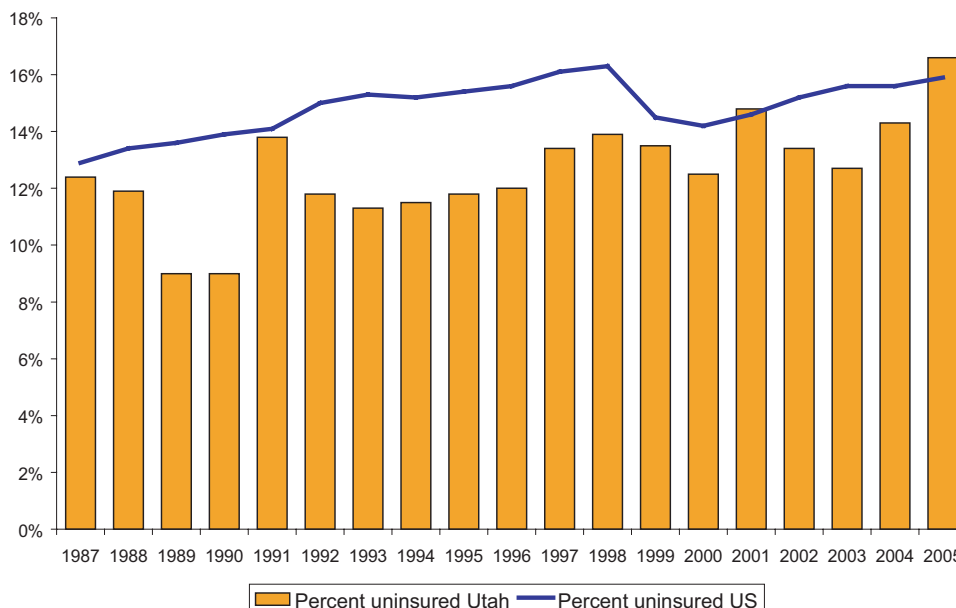


Note: SPMI = Seriously and Persistently Mentally III (Adults); SED = Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (Youth and Children)  
Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

## • Lack of Affordable Health Care

Historically, Utah's uninsured rate has been below the national average. In 2005, however, Utah's percentage of uninsured persons surpassed the national average for only the second time in almost 20 years. From 2003 to 2005, the uninsured rate for the nation remained about the same, but increased by almost 4 percentage points for Utah.

Percent Uninsured US and Utah -- All People

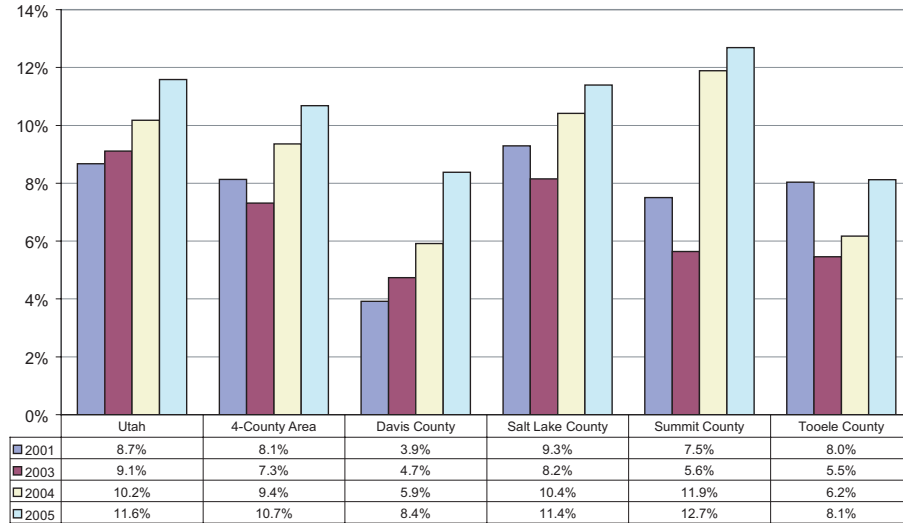


# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Affordable Health Care

From 2001 to 2005, the uninsured rates for Davis, Salt Lake and Summit counties have increased significantly. Tooele County's rate has increased since 2003.

Proportion of Uninsured Persons, Utah and Four-County Area



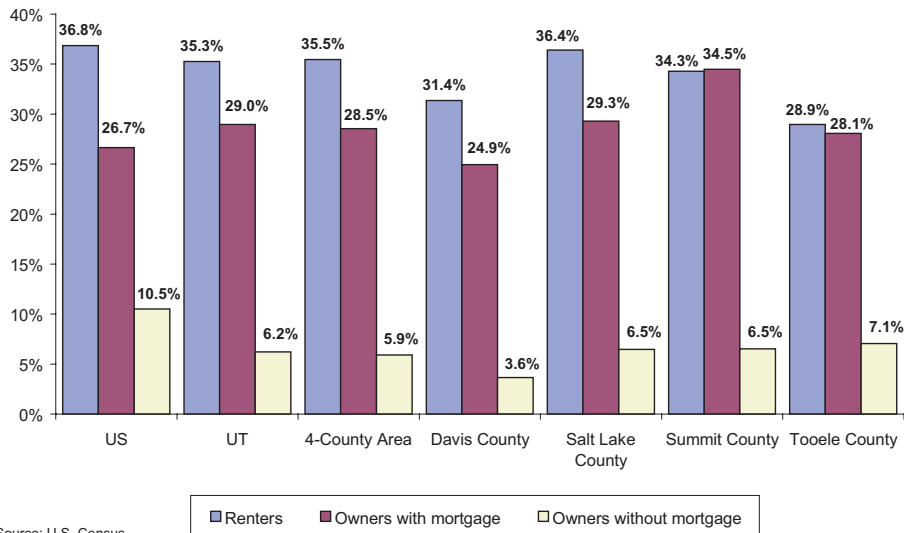
Source: Utah Health Status Survey, Office of Public Health Assessment, Utah Department of Health

## Lack of Affordable Housing

The proportion of owners with a mortgage with a housing cost burden surpasses the national average for Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele counties. For Davis, Salt Lake and Tooele counties, renters are more likely to have a housing cost burden than home owners. For the four-county area, 36% of renters, 29% of owners with a mortgage and 6% of owners without a mortgage have a housing cost burden. Source: U. S. Census

The proportion of renters, owners with a mortgage, and owners without a mortgage increased in Davis and Salt Lake Counties from 2000 to 2005. By 2005, in Salt Lake County, 43% of renters, 36% of owners with a mortgage and 10% of owners without a mortgage had a housing cost burden.

Owners and Renters with a Housing Cost Burden, 2000  
(Census defines a housing cost burden as paying 30% or more of income for housing)



Source: U.S. Census

(Census defines a housing burden as paying 30% or more of income for housing)



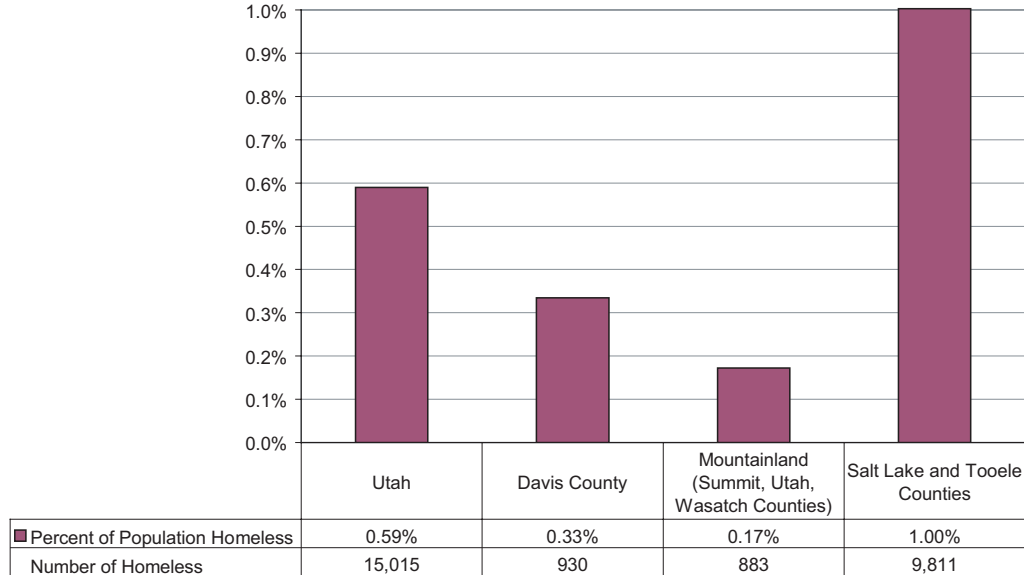
# Secondary Data Findings

## Lack of Affordable Housing

Statewide, about 0.6% of the total population was homeless in 2006. In Salt Lake and Tooele counties, about 1% of the population was homeless. In the four-county area, there were a total of about 4,100 school-age children who were homeless. This is a point-in-time estimate collected by the Utah Department of Education.

Statewide, there were nearly 4,000 people on waiting lists for shelter, including 2,700 persons in Salt Lake and Tooele counties alone.

Number of Homeless and Percent of Total Population Homeless, Annualized Estimates, 2006



Source: Utah Department of Community and Culture

### Housing Shortages: There are significant shortages of low-income housing in the four-county area.

- Salt Lake County reports a 1.5 to 3.5-year wait for section 8 housing and 1 to 2 years for public housing
- Davis County reports a 1 to 2.5-year wait for section 8 housing and a 6 to 12-month wait for public housing
- Tooele County reports an indefinite wait for section 8 housing unless the applicant has preference because of some condition (disabled, elderly, attending school, etc.). They also report an indefinite wait for public housing because they have only 22 units total and a very low turnover rate. Source: Housing Authorities of Salt Lake, Davis and Tooele counties



# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Life Skills

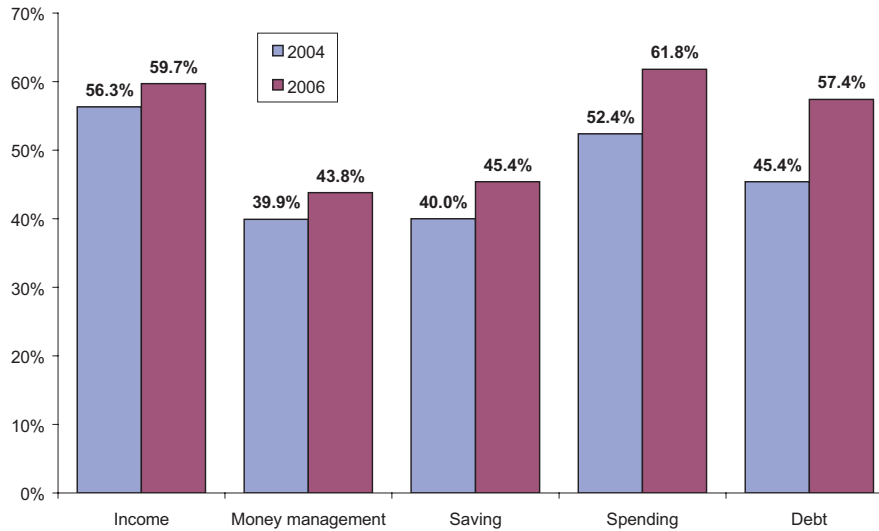
While Utah 12th graders improved their performance in all five subject areas on a financial literacy survey from 2004 to 2006, the percentage of students answering questions correctly in all five areas is very low:

**2004 – 46.8% answered correctly**

**2006 – 53.6% answered correctly**

White Utah students performed significantly better than Hispanics, Blacks or Asians. Source: Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy

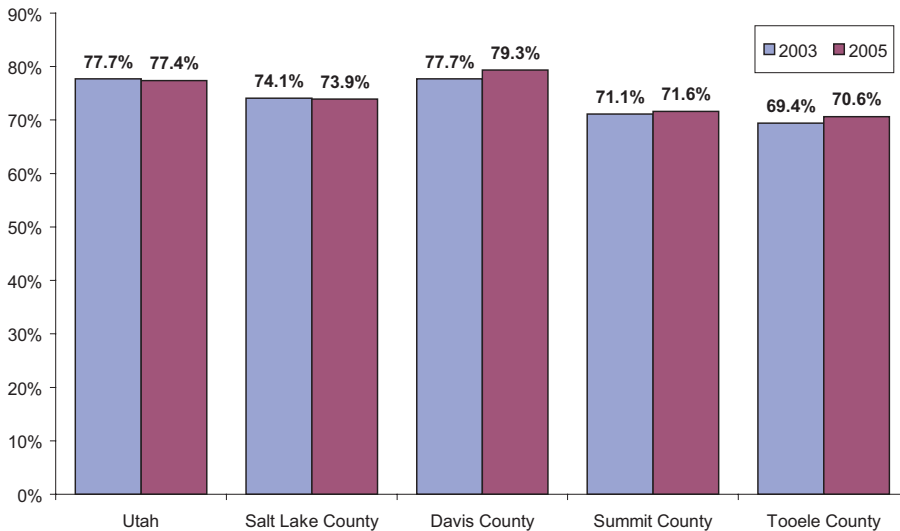
**Financial Literacy Survey of Utah 12th Graders: Percent of Questions Answered Correctly by Subject**



Source: Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy

Overall, about 78% of young people consider themselves to be socially competent. The numbers do not vary much from county to county, but are somewhat lower in Summit and Tooele counties than the other counties or the state as a whole.

**Percent of Young People (Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) Who Are Socially Competent and Who Engage in Positive Interpersonal Relations with Peers**



Source: Utah Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey Project

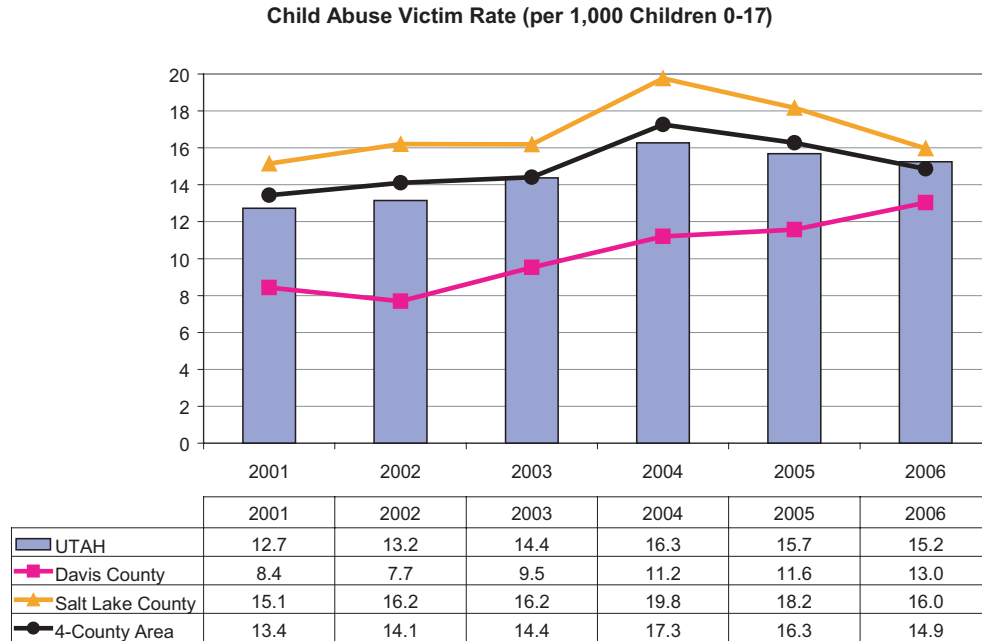
**Life Skills Curriculum:** In January 2006, the Utah State Office of Education published a K-12 Life Skills curriculum. The guide to “knowledge, skills and dispositions for success” discusses seven domains:

- Thinking and reasoning
- Social and civic responsibility
- Character
- Aesthetics
- Communications
- Systems skills
- Employability

# Secondary Data Findings

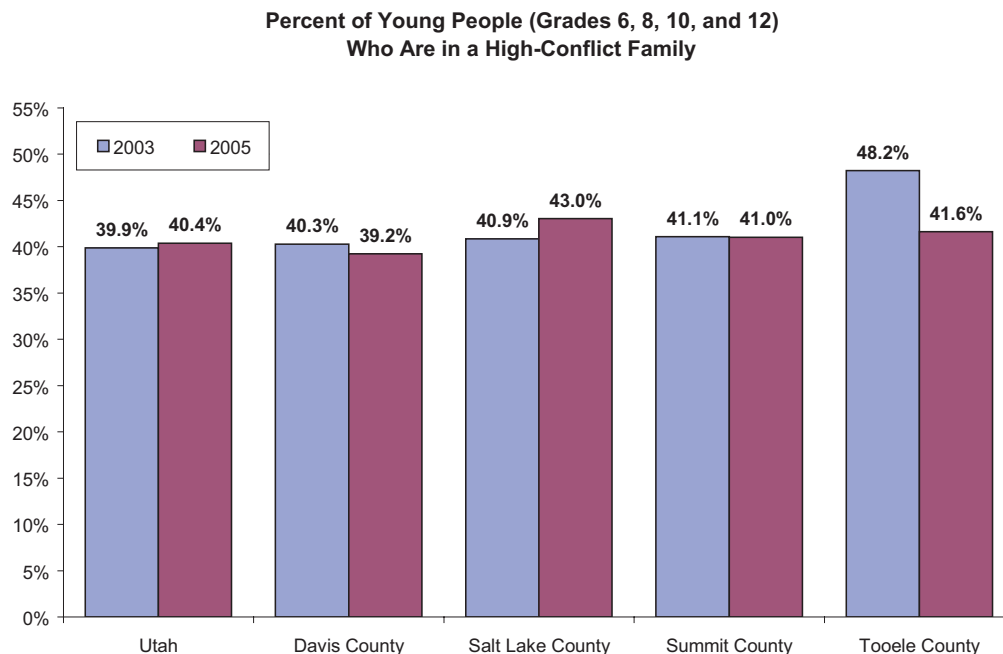
## • Lack of Parenting Skills

The number of child protective services cases in the four-county area increased by 11% from 2001 to 2006. During the same period, the child population increased by about 7%.



Source: Utah Department of Child and Family Services; Population Estimates from Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

Based on student responses to questions regarding their families in 2005, about 40% of middle and high school students were living in a family with a high level of conflict. Salt Lake County had the highest percentage with 43%, while Davis County had the lowest at 39%.



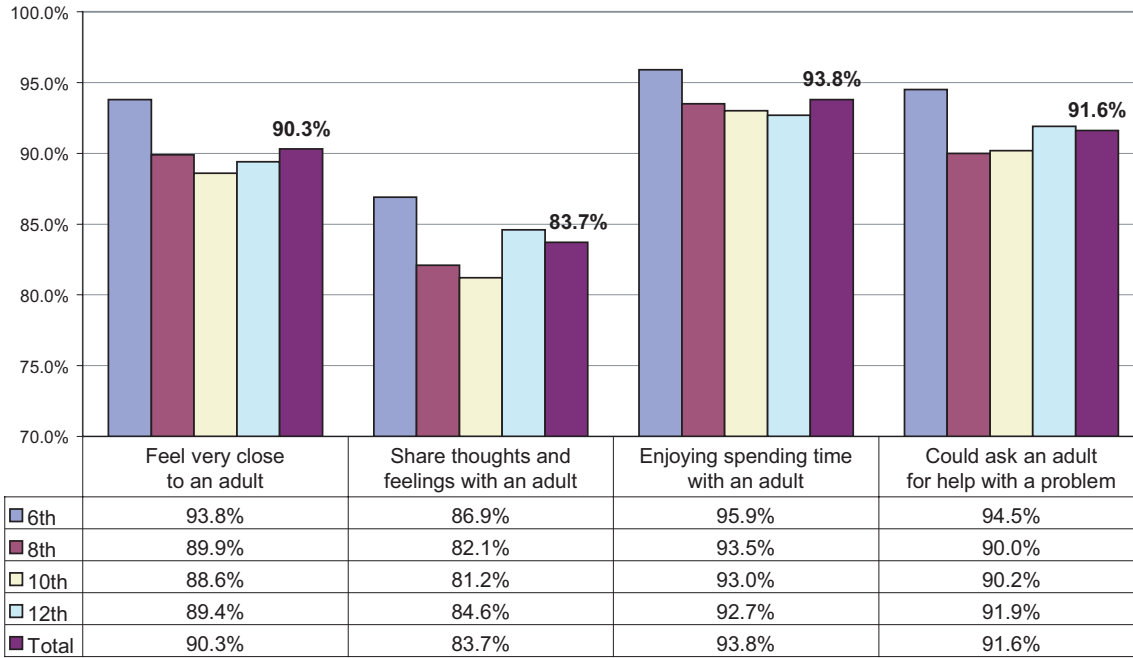
Source: Utah Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey Project

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Positive Role Models

Statewide, the great majority of students feel bonded to adults in their lives. Of the grade levels represented, sixth grade students are most likely to feel close to an adult, while tenth grade students are least likely.

**Utah Student Bonding with Adults in Their Lives  
(Parent, Relative, Teacher, or Neighbor), 2005**



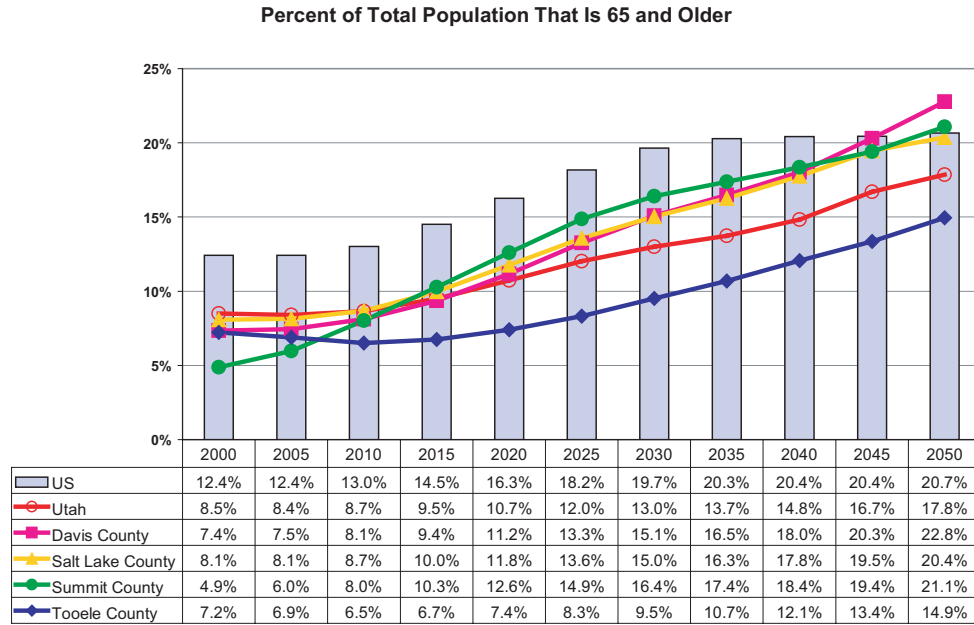
Source: Utah Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey Project



# Secondary Data Findings

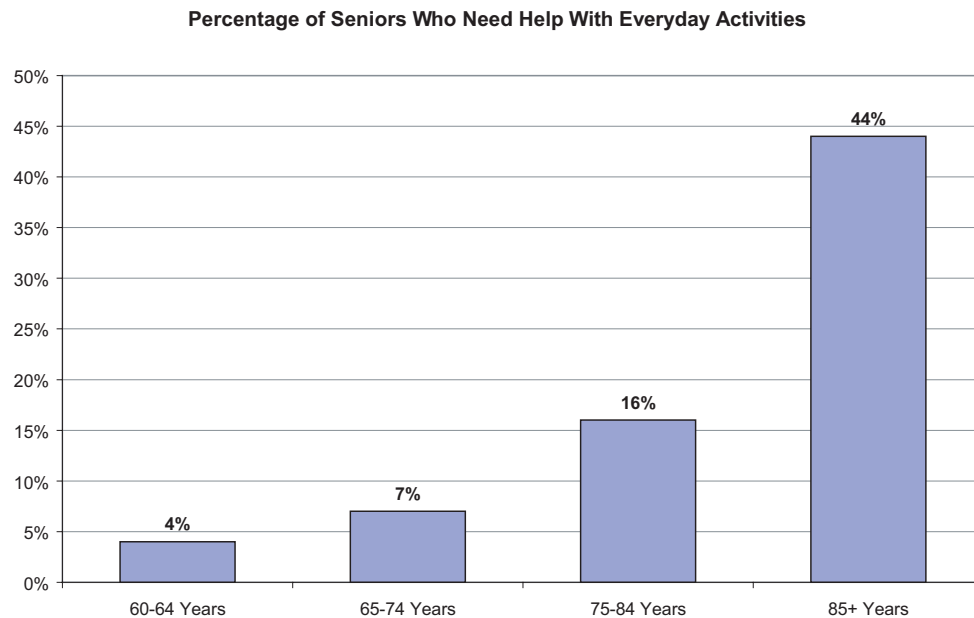
## • Lack of Services for the Elderly

Although Utah has a very young population, Utah's elderly population is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the nation. Utah is catching up to the national average in the proportion of the total population that is 65 or older. By 2050, the proportion of elderly in Davis and Salt Lake counties will surpass the national average.



Source: Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

The growth in the oldest age group is of the greatest concern because this age group experiences the highest incidence of disabilities that require assistance in order to remain independent. There are almost 19,000 people 60 and older with a functional impairment that restricts their activity to maintain their own home. About 11% of the 19,000 persons have an unmet need for in-home services.



Source: Salt Lake County Aging Services

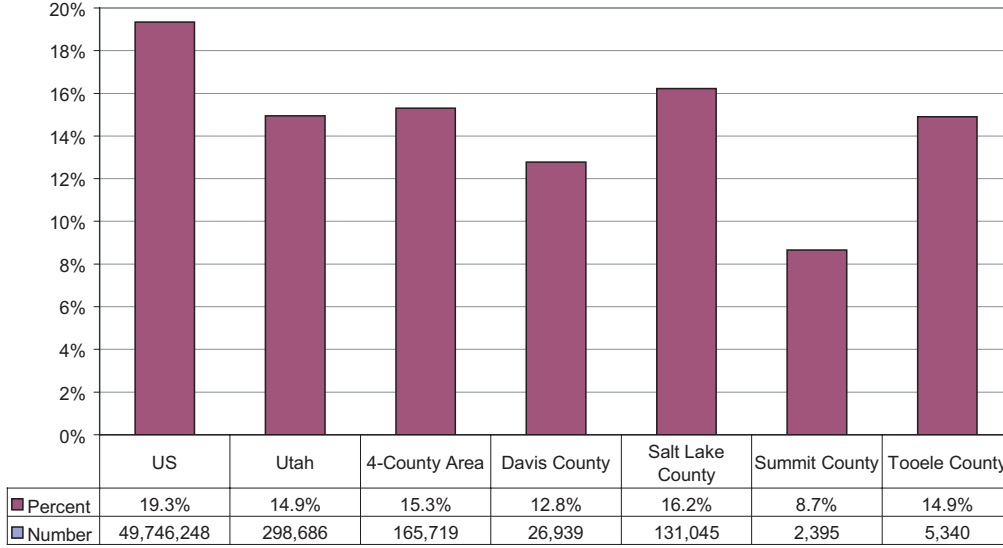


# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Support for People with Disabilities

The percent of the population above the age of five with a disability is below the national average for all four counties and for the state of Utah. Salt Lake County has the highest proportion of disabled persons at 16.2%, while Summit County has the lowest at 8.7%.

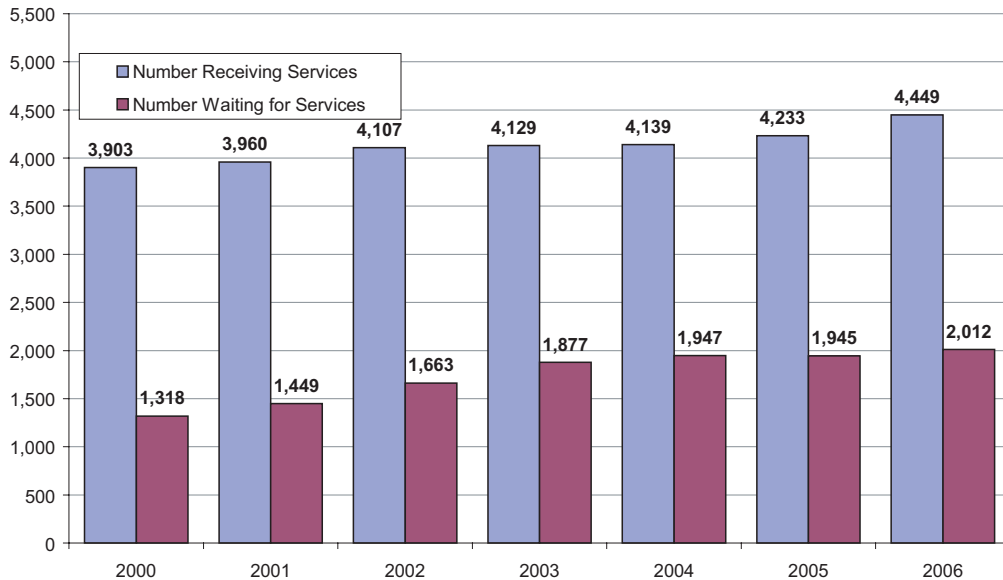
**Percent of Total Population over the Age of Five and Number of Persons with a Disability, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census

In 2006, over 2,000 individuals with an immediate need were waiting for services from the Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities. The number of individuals waiting for services increased by 53% from 2000 to 2006.

**Number of Individuals Receiving Services and Number of Individuals Waiting with an Immediate Need for Services**



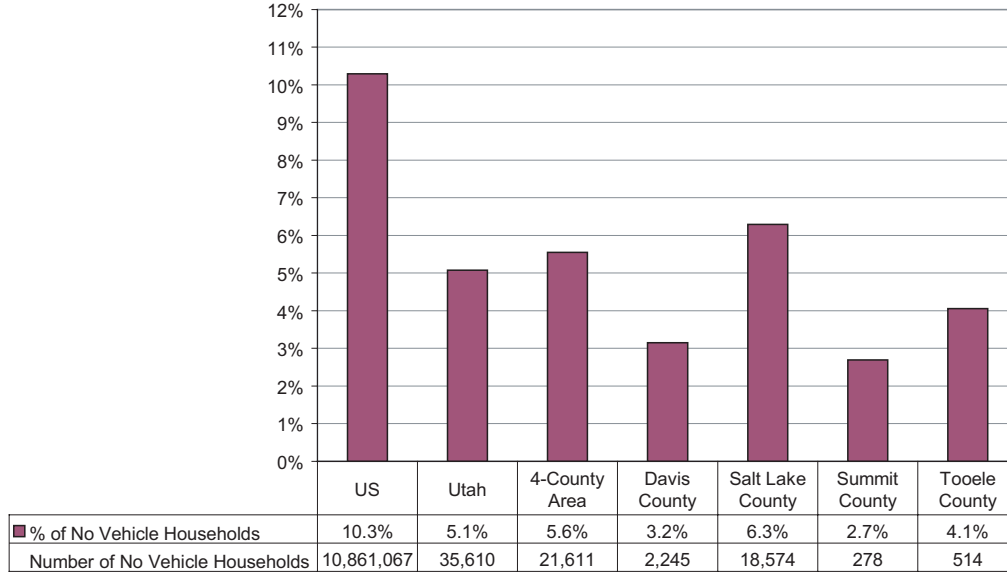
Source: Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Lack of Transportation

The proportion of households with no vehicle statewide and in all four counties is well below the national average.

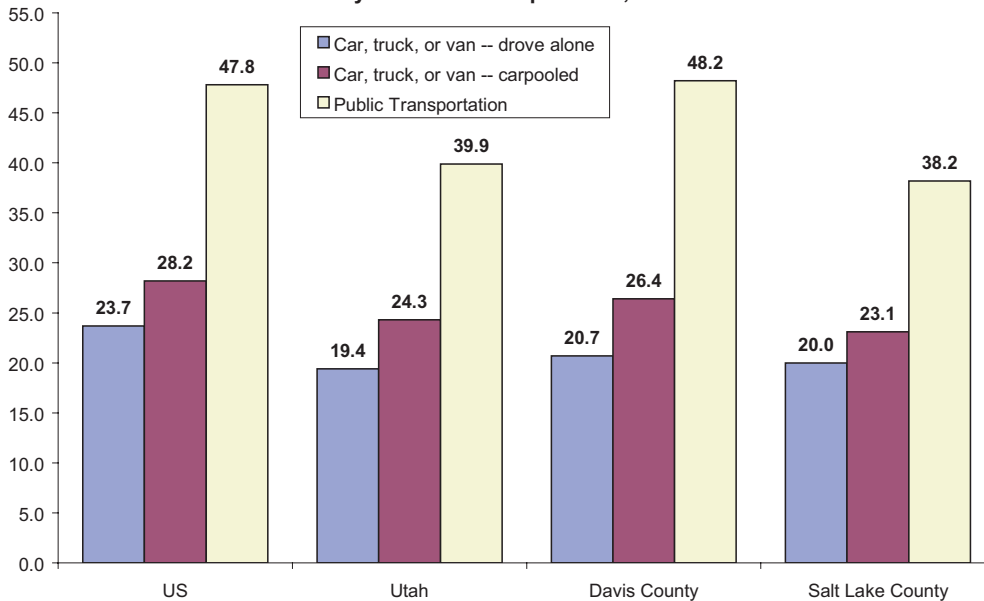
Percent and Number of Households with No Vehicle, 2000



Source: U.S. Census

In 2005, commuting times in the State of Utah, Davis County and Salt Lake County were below the national average. Persons taking public transportation spend about 40 minutes getting to work, while those driving alone spend about 20 minutes. In 2000, Hispanics in Utah were about twice as likely as Whites to depend on public transportation to get to work.

Mean Travel Time to Work (for Workers 16 and Over Who Do Not Work at Home) by Means of Transportation, 2005



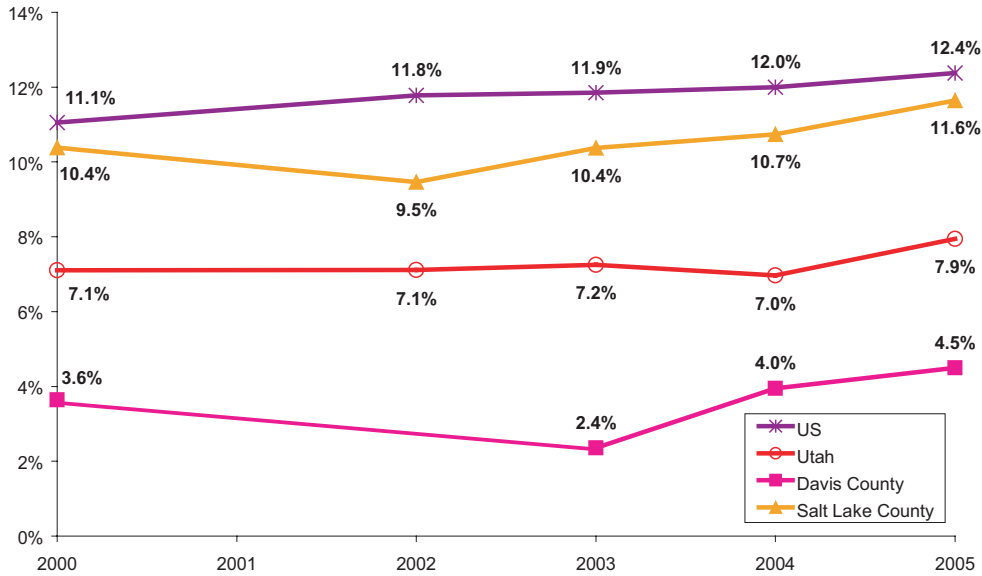
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Language and Cultural Barriers

All four counties have a lower proportion of foreign born persons than the national average. If the proportions of foreign born persons in the U. S. and Salt Lake County continue to increase at a similar rate, the proportion of foreign born persons in Salt Lake County will soon surpass the national average.

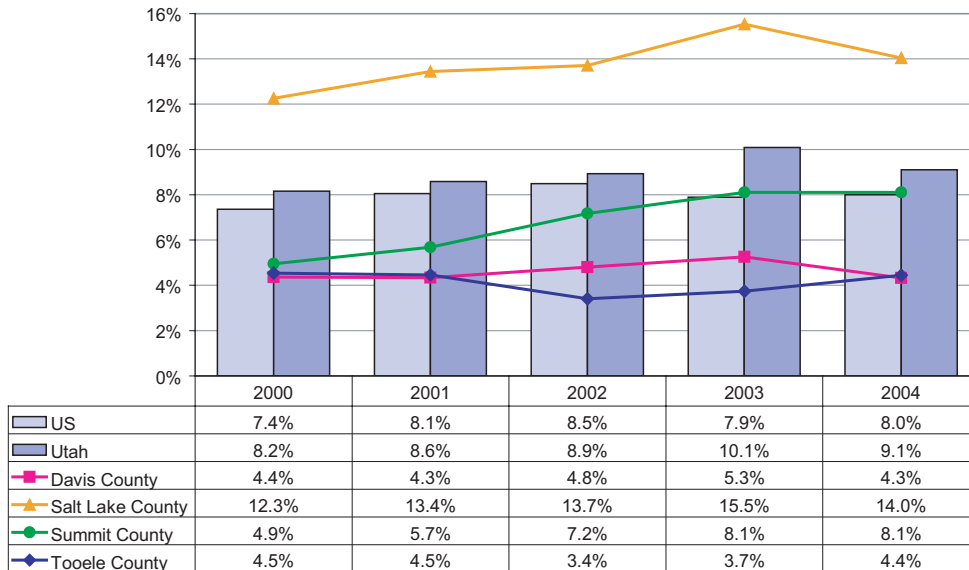
Percent Foreign Born, 2000-2005



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Salt Lake County has, by far, the largest percentage of students who are English language learners in the four-county area, 14% in 2004. From 2000 to 2004, the percentage of students who are English language learners increased in the U. S., Utah, and Salt Lake and Summit counties. The percent decreased slightly for both Davis and Tooele counties.

Percent of Students Who Are English Language Learners

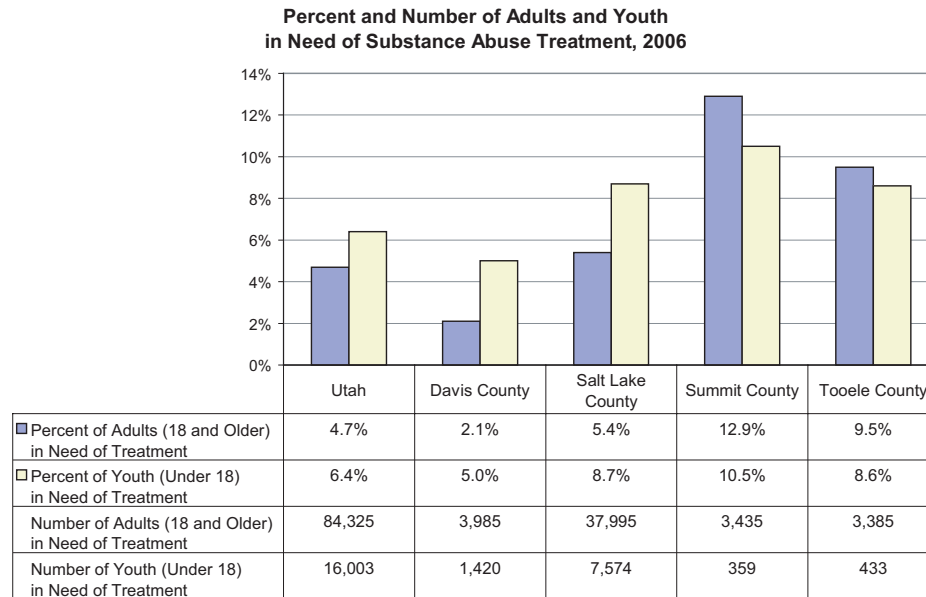


Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, NCES

# Secondary Data Findings

## • Substance Abuse

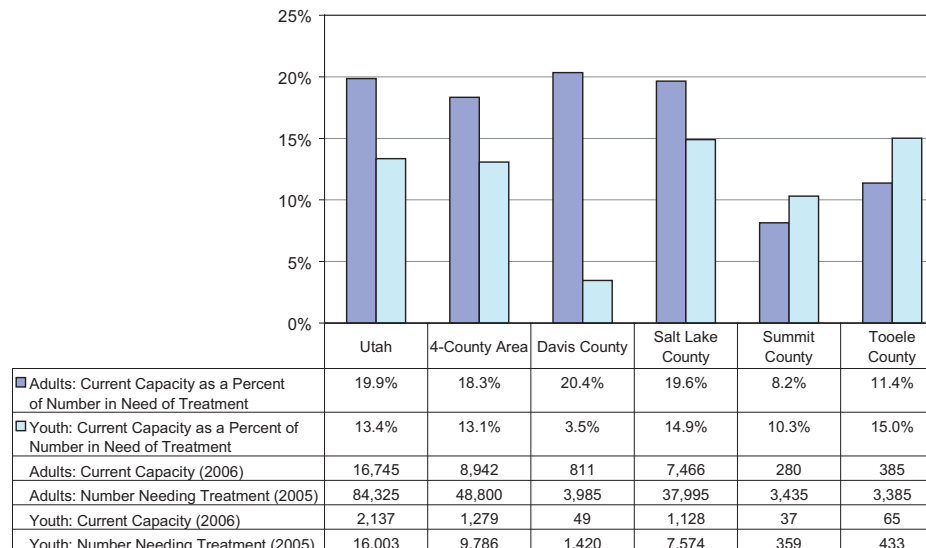
Based on the 2005 State Substance Abuse Treatment Needs Assessment Survey and the 2005 Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey, over 100,000 adults and youths statewide were in need of substance abuse treatment in 2006. Summit County has the highest percentage of people in need of treatment in the four-county area, while Davis County has the lowest.



Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Statewide, in 2006, less than 20% of adults in need of substance abuse services received public services, down from a high of 24% in 2002. In 2006, about 13% of youth in need of services received public treatment, down from 17% in 2004.

**Substance Abuse Treatment Capacity as a Percentage of Treatment Need, 2006**



Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

**For more in-depth information on the secondary data findings, please see pages 30 – 127 of the complete research study available on our website at [www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org).**

# Literature Review

## • Literature Review on Causation and Connections with the Four Core Issues

A comprehensive analysis of peer-reviewed academic studies on the relationships between the four core issues and other social problems, focusing specifically on the 17 priority problems. The following overview provides a brief summary of the literature reviews for each core issue:

**1. Insufficient Income:** Insufficient income affects almost all aspects of an individual's life. The problems associated with low income levels run the gamut from increased crime rates, lower levels of educational achievement, higher incidences of divorce, greater prevalence of domestic violence, and inability to obtain sufficient child care, poorer health outcomes, and greater substance abuse. Researchers have found that low wages and unemployment are strongly correlated with higher crime rates among less-educated men. Insufficient income negatively impacts the educational attainment of both adults and children in families. Unemployment, poverty and low income are also associated with divorce and may increase the likelihood that an individual will experience or commit domestic violence. Low income levels constrain the ability of parents to choose high-quality child care for their children. Finally, low income workers are less likely to obtain health insurance through their employers or to be able to afford individual policies. Low income status is correlated with poorer mental and physical health, as well as greater levels of substance abuse.

**2. People Lacking Life Skills:** Research demonstrates a relationship between life skills and income, substance abuse, domestic violence, crime and parenting skills. Studies have shown that individuals who participate in financial education report higher savings rates and greater net worth. Low income families, in particular, are more likely to open checking and savings accounts, save for a home or retirement, and avoid predatory lending after participating in financial education. Life skill training is considered a core component of many effective drug and violence prevention programs. Researchers have also concluded that a lack of life skills may be a barrier to leaving an abusive relationship, making individuals more susceptible to domestic violence. In addition, most effective parental education programs are those that address basic life skills so that parents are better equipped to handle the many stresses associated with parenting.

**3. Barriers to Education:** Barriers to education and lack of education are associated with high crime rates, higher rates of divorce, lower incomes, higher levels of substance abuse, and less parental involvement. Research demonstrates that increased educational attainment is associated with lower crime rates. In addition, lower levels of education have been correlated with (but are not necessarily causative of) increased likelihood of cohabitation, marrying at an earlier age, lower probability of getting married at all, and high incidences of marital dissolution. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with both decreased rates of illicit substance abuse and substance dependency. Finally, parents with a college degree (or higher) report greater involvement in their children's schooling and are more likely to read to their children.

**4. Inadequate Opportunities for Child and Youth Development:** Access to child care and early childhood education is an issue that has both economic and social importance. Quality care arrangements are critical in supporting the employment of families and encouraging the social and cognitive development of children. Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development affect educational attainment levels, crime rates, as well as worker productivity and earnings potential, both in the short term for parents, and in the long term for children. Research demonstrates that participants in quality early childhood education programs report more positive family lives and more extensive family involvement. Adequate child care positively affects both immediate family income levels (by improving employee productivity, decreasing employee turnover and absenteeism, and improving parental employment rates) and the future potential earnings of children. Quality early childhood programs encourage children's social and intellectual development, prepares children for school and allows mothers to obtain higher levels of education. Adequate child care or supervision for adolescents is linked with reduced crime rates (for both children and parents) and ensures that adolescents interact with positive role models. Many child care programs also improve life skills by incorporating life skills training into their educational curricula.

*For more in-depth information on the literature review on causation and connections with the four core issues, please see pages 128 – 148 and pages 198 – 200 of the complete research study available on our website at [www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org).*



# Focus Groups with Service Clients

Five focus groups were conducted with clients of the providers of social services in Salt Lake, Davis and Tooele counties. Due to weather conditions and other extenuating circumstances, it was not possible to conduct a focus group in Summit County, so a questionnaire was distributed to service recipients there. The purpose of each group was to gather input directly from people most impacted by the problems examined in this community assessment.

Focus groups participants were asked a pre-defined set of questions, including open-ended questions about their goals and barriers to reaching those goals, ranking of the 17 priority community problems and discussions about their top-ranked issues. The written questionnaire in Summit County asked for some of the same information, but due to the limitations of the format, it only asked detailed questions about the issue that each individual ranked as their top concern.

Six of the 17 priority problems were consistently included among the top concerns for participants in this process. They are listed in order of importance as follows:

1. Insufficient income
2. Lack of affordable health care
3. Lack of affordable housing
4. Substance abuse
5. Lack of transportation
6. Breakdown of the family

Concerns about **income**, **health care** and **housing** were clearly more prominent than any of the other issues. These three issues were often closely interrelated, with much of the income problems exacerbated by rapidly growing housing and health care costs.

Many participants expressed deep frustration that **Utah's strong, growing economy wasn't helping them**; these participants felt that good jobs were out of reach and they couldn't spare the time or expense to obtain the training and education needed to improve their job situations.



# Focus Groups with Service Clients

**Rising health care costs** were frequently discussed in these groups. They described rising insurance premiums eliminating the benefits of pay raises and increased co-payments and deductibles, making insurance impractical for them. They would like to see programs made available to people with incomes too high for Medicaid and expansion of dental services for low-income people. Some called for a federal universal care program.

**Housing costs** have become a more acute problem in the most recent two years, with many complaining about increased rents and that home ownership has gotten out of reach. Some of those with children complained about not being able to afford an apartment large enough for their children, especially when boys and girls are too old to share rooms. A common complaint was that waiting lists are much too long for subsidized housing or public housing. Those who were victims of domestic violence were pleased that they were treated as a priority in allocating housing assistance. Many would like programs to help with up-front costs, like deposits and first and last months' rent payments. They would like to see more housing developments include affordable units.

**Substance abuse** was clearly an issue affecting many other problems. Some participants related substance abuse to their own problems, with incarceration and with the crime that others bring to their neighborhoods. They attributed much of the abuse to desperation and hopelessness as well as “self-medicating” for mental illnesses. They would like to see more counseling services available to those who cannot afford to pay for it.

**Transportation** was a particularly noteworthy problem in the Tooele focus group; these participants felt isolated and unable to access services and job opportunities in the Salt Lake area. They would like to see more public transit options in Tooele. Other groups also noted transportation problems, especially in accessing child care, jobs and services they need.

**Breakdown of the family** was cited by many participants as a problem affecting them and those around them. However, those who had fled a domestic violence situation were sensitive to the “breakdown” label and want to be sure that others understand that they needed to break out of those relationships. These women cited substance abuse as a clear precipitator of domestic violence and family breakdown. Participants in several groups suggested expansion of programs that allow parents to have some time together to strengthen and maintain their relationships.

A common complaint about many of these issues was that people do not know about programs that might help them, and they would like solutions that focus on making more information available to them regarding programs and organizations available in the community.

These groups focused on public programs as solutions to many of their problems. They were disappointed by the political process not providing greater funding for social programs and wanted to see a greater array of programs available to meet their needs.

***For a detailed summary of each of the focus groups, please see pages 201 – 226 of the complete research study available on our website at [www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org).***

# Conclusions

It is somewhat surprising and disturbing that **none of the 17 priority problems identified in the 2004 Community Assessment appear to be improving**. A few have stable or indeterminate trends, but none can clearly be said to be improving.

In all components of this assessment, three problems are consistently listed as top priority, acute community issues: **insufficient income, lack of affordable health care and lack of affordable housing**. These are problems that are not only widespread in their impacts, but also are worsening at rapid rates, impacting more and more people.

Issues	Subject Experts		Secondary Data		Affected Populations
	Mean Rank	Overall Rank	Worsening	Widespread	Focus Groups
<b>Insufficient Income</b>	2	1	3	1	1
<b>Lack of affordable health care</b>	1	1	2	3	2
<b>Lack of affordable housing</b>	3	5	1	2	3

In addition, **lack of access to mental health care** and **substance abuse** were also very prominent in the rankings and were discussed frequently in the focus groups.

**Barriers to education** are noted as a top five issue in two of the research components. In the focus groups it was not ranked highly and was not discussed to a significant extent. This is probably due to focus group participants feeling more concerned about their immediate needs and finding it difficult to concentrate on long-term solutions to their problems. Clearly, the service professionals, as well as advocates and researchers, considered it a top issue. The data show it is a widespread problem and the research on core issues shows that it influences many other social problems.

**Breakdown of the family** was also a significant issue in terms of widespread impact in the data review and in discussions with the focus groups. This issue is particularly significant for single mothers and their children, who are often pushed into poverty or near poverty by the loss of an ex-husband's income.

Issues	Subject Experts		Secondary Data		Affected Populations
	Mean Rank	Overall Rank	Worsening	Widespread	Focus Groups
<b>Substance abuse</b>	4	4			4
<b>Barriers to education</b>		3		5	
<b>Breakdown of the family</b>				4	5
<b>Lack of access to mental health care</b>	5		5		
<b>Language / cultural barriers</b>			4		
<b>Lack of transportation</b>					5

# Recommendations

It is the recommendation of the Utah Foundation that United Way of Salt Lake (UWSL) continue to invest in and work to achieve community-level impact around the following priorities, including UWSL's continual objective to provide a safety net for people and families in crisis.

## 1. Improving financial stability

## 2. Building life skills

## 3. Opening doors to education

## 4. Strengthening child and youth development

## 5. Protecting and meeting basic needs

Doing so will leverage change in many other social problems. In pursuing its work, UWSL may also wish to consider addressing mental health issues and substance abuse issues as problems that also could produce leverage in solving some of the other community problems described in this report.

Additionally, it is recommended that United Way of Salt Lake, as well as the community at large, continue to provide a “safety net” of services for the problems that **protect and meet the basic needs** of people for whom these problems are widespread and worsening. As reported by the participants in the focus groups, it is not possible for them to focus on long-term solutions to their problems until their immediate needs are met.



**The complete research study  
is available on our website at  
[www.uw.org](http://www.uw.org)**



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