

Hey SLC, Can You See Us Now?



A PhotoVoice Project
Prepared by Kaden Coil, University of Utah
with support from The Road Home

About The Project:

In collaboration with The Road Home to inform Salt Lake City's housing plan, *Housing SLC*, the University of Utah Department of City & Metropolitan Planning met with single parents experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

During engagements, participants were asked to take photos of “*What home means to them*” and “*What they would like the city/community to know*”.

These are their stories.

Rejected

Life does not prepare you for a global pandemic. Life does not prepare you for accidents, for ACL and meniscus tears. It doesn't prepare you for knee reconstruction surgery- and 2 months of immobility. Life does not prepare you for the virus that almost kills you, wrecks your knee rehabilitation; brings weeks of breathing problems, weakness, and months of weight loss from parosmia. It doesn't prepare you for the moment you're suddenly a 24 hour mom and 60 hour a week employee. The moment you put in your notice because your health is faltering both mentally, and physically. It doesn't prepare you for the loss of your foster parent. The loss of the only real loving parent you ever had, and ever will. It doesn't prepare you for the moment you zero out financially. The moment you realize you are about to lose your home. It doesn't prepare you for the moment you realize you're alone. You have no family to turn to and no choice but to keep moving forward, to make it work- no matter what. You are never prepared for your health to fail. Housing is health. One cannot fully exist without the other. People are human- not robots, we can't just keep going and going. We need better solutions.





The Essentials

Keep your most important items in a laundry basket small enough to take in and out of any place you need to go. (Be okay with the fact that anything you leave in your car might get stolen). Keep additional laundry baskets for the rest of your items- boxes become soiled and tear easily. Blankets, pillows, pillowcases, a dog bed, and blow-up mattress are a must. Life becomes harder when your sleep lacks.

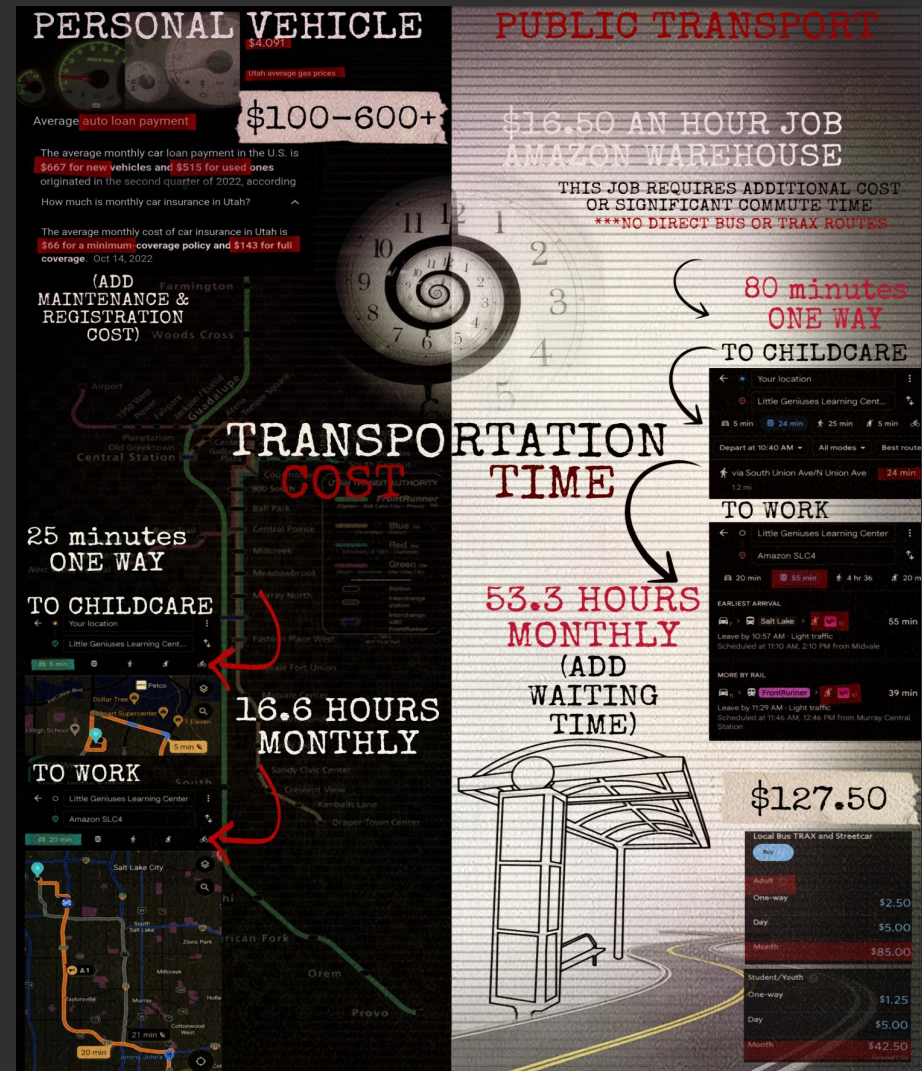


Home

Our vehicle has become our home at points where we had to sleep in and at times when we had nowhere to go.

Transportation

Homeless or not- it's almost essential to have a car. Stable housing means not wasting an additional 40-50 hours a month that you don't have to spare- on lengthy transit times, transfers, waiting times. Assuming you make the right stops and your 3 year old is cooperative- (trust me, he's not- once you leave the train its global meltdown)- then you want to assume that all weather will also cooperate with the public transit system; you make it to daycare and work on time- and pick up on time (yes, you'll get yelled at and kicked out of daycare for that too). Be ready to traverse the freezing dark mornings in the winter. Seems friendly enough but carry pepper spray because more than once- you'll get chased at 5am when there are no streetlights. Public transportation sounds great on paper but is more of a nightmare once you exit college. Moving on to owning a personal vehicle. If you want one that runs amazingly- be prepared to fork out \$500 or more on a loan per month. For any car. If you get a used one it's almost the same- the math makes no sense there but I'm sure a car dealer could elaborate (not really). Insurance is a must. If you have a loan full coverage is required. +\$120.00. Annually, inspection/emissions & registration is required. +\$100 (more for some). Expect the unexpected. If your car didn't have issues before you were homeless it will now. The cost will vary. From personal experience it's been anywhere from \$20 - \$1300. Pray it's \$20. Then also pay for an oil change and tire rotation every 5,000 miles, and \$4.04 a gallon of gas. Old Betsy (my car) gets 18 miles to the gallon. No matter the cost you'll be thankful you have a car- because you will most likely sleep in it at one point or another. I spend extra time praying with my entire being that somehow my car will make it just a little longer. If I can just get a few more months, one more year. Whatever it will give me. At this point in my journey there's absolutely no way I could survive with public transportation. I don't even think I've mentioned the fact that somehow in this whole mess we call life, you also have to make time for appointments that are only available during work hours and daycare hours. That you somehow have to take time off for- time off you don't have, can't take- and with public transportation would be essentially impossible unless you just took the whole day off. Somehow the stress has built up to boiling points on every aspect of our lives- because everything is overpriced (unless you're rich) - transportation included.





Murphy's Law

Expect the unexpected—if your car didn't have issues before, it will now. Pray to the heavens to get you somewhere safe before your car explodes, Utilize YouTube to attempt DIY solutions. Once or twice you'll be successful but eventually a professional will be required.



Respite

A hotel we are very thankful for The Road Home helped us out with while we get a place of our own.



Hand Wash

Being homeless, you do not get to wash clothes the normal way.

Health or Housing

Health to me is directly correlated to housing. If your health goes south, so does your stability. Imagine this- you make \$200 a month more than before and lose your medicaid. The next month- you blow out your knee and require a \$24,727.00 knee surgery. You have no savings because you were never allowed to save. If you had savings you made too much for assistance. Luckily- at that point I still had insurance. I couldn't walk for 2 months, then began rehabilitation. I wasn't prepared to get covid- and didn't expect it to be as detrimental as it was on my entire body. I almost died- suffered breathing problems and parosmia- and reinjured my knee 2 months later. I started working tons of over time- because I was couch bound. My increase in pay got a closure of Medicaid. At that point I was going to find something else but was saved by the emergency pandemic moratorium. Medicaid DOES NOT cover dental as an adult unless you're pregnant, disabled, blind, 65 or receiving treatment from doing drugs. SURPRISE!! You barely started saving money- you aren't a drug addict, so your teeth are going to suffer. I've ALWAYS kept up on my teeth. In 2020 I got a bunch of work done at a discount dentist. They ruined my entire mouth- filled cavities that didn't exist, the fillings all turned blue and started falling out. I had to have all of it redone. They missed some, which I didn't know. I've needed a root canal for 2 years- my face will swell up every three months, and my gums are constantly draining. That can kill you by the way- but it's definitely a luxury so just pretend it doesn't exist. Which I've done- for 2 years. My jaw is infected so I'm sure that's a portion of my exhaustion. One root canal and cap costs the same amount as 1.5 months worth of rent. I'm not sure what will ever change on that landscape, but who needs teeth anyway?

U of U HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
Account # [redacted]
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VISIT DETAILS
Patient: [redacted]
Insurance: MEDICAID UTAH

Pharmacy	\$1,215.00
Medical Surgical Supplies And Devices	\$8,897.00
Durable Medical Equipment	\$100.00
Operating Room Services	\$7,142.00
Anesthesia	\$1,042.40
Other Imaging Services	\$675.00
Emergency Room	\$12,192.76
MEDICAID UTAH INSURANCE PAYMENT	\$0.00
Contractual	\$8,800.00
MEDICAID UTAH INSURANCE	\$0.00
CONTRACTUAL	\$21,537.40
Total	\$24,727.40

Uninsured	\$3,558.00	\$3,554.00	\$0.00	\$4.00
	\$24,885.40	\$24,727.40	\$0.00	\$158.00
				\$158.00

Salt Lake City where the median rent for a one-bedroom is **\$1,740**. According to the 30% rule, your monthly wages should be at least three times this amount, equalling **\$5,920 per month**, or **\$71,040 annually**.

ORAL HEALTH IS NOT A LUXURY

Dental care is a covered service for eligible Medicaid members who are pregnant; disabled; blind; age 65 or older; eligible for Targeted Adult Medicaid and are receiving treatment in a Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program; or qualify for Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT). Learn more about dental benefits here.

HEALTH OR

MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY

Family Size	Maximum Income Per Month (Before Taxes)*	
	PER MONTH	PER YEAR
1	\$2,147	\$25,760
2	\$2,903	\$34,840
3	\$3,660	\$43,920
	\$4,417	\$53,000

HOUSING?



Support

Having a pet helps out a lot. For us, it was this dog that became our Emotional Support Animal, which has helped my daughters through this.



The End Game

When someone is hospitable enough to offer you shelter-repay them with good deeds. Clean their house, do their yard work, make them a meal (if possible). Use the sleepless nights to find a way out of this mess. Research EVERYTHING-how to become a superhero, possible outreach programs, and resources. Build a business from your phone. Expect failure, a win or two-more failure; just don't lose sight of the end game.