

UTAH FOUNDATION research • analyze • inform

**JANUARY 2025** 



#### UTAH FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024

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Shawn Teigen, *President* Christopher Collard, *Research Director* Ashley Marshall, *Research Analyst* Megan Keating, *Outreach Coordinator* 

#### **About the Utah Foundation**

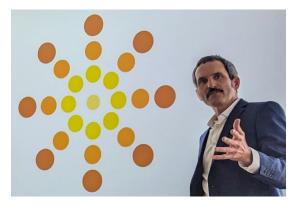
Since 1945, leaders, legislators, and community members have relied upon the **illuminating**, **independent**, **and nonpartisan public-policy research** produced by the Utah Foundation to support informed decision-making on topics that matter most. As a 501(c)3 with broad community support and a 56-member board, the Utah Foundation exists to empower **civic engagement as the foundation for enhanced quality of life for Utahns**.

Known for its signature products such as the Quality of Life Index, Utah Priorities Project, and Social Capital Index, the Utah Foundation has released more than 80 research reports since 2020 on topics ranging from energy and education to taxation and transportation. Access all research, podcasts, videos, statistics, and more at utahfoundation.org.

#### A WORD FROM THE UTAH FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

**It has been quite a year.** The annual report is the place to learn all about what we accomplished in 2024. In the following pages you will see us define our success "by the numbers" as well as in qualitative ways. I'd like to highlight three accomplishments in particular.

**First.** We had a stellar year with media outreach... perhaps the best media year ever with at least 220 stories or mentions. In addition, we ramped up our interactions with policymakers. Not only have we focused on strengthening relationships with legislators, but we presented to innumerable local officials as part of our Healthy Communities Roadshow and the 2024 Utah Priorities Project Roadshow.



**Second.** Every four years, the Utah Foundation conducts a series of surveys to discover which topics are most important to Utah voters. We call this the Utah Priorities Project. 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the project – and the most successful ever. We kicked it off with a wonderful annual luncheon, we released two major reports and 17 research briefs, and we shared all of that with people throughout the state. In addition, we released six other major reports on other important policy topics.

**Third.** How do we do this consistently year after year? We have a fantastic group of staff, interns, volunteers, partners, and supporters. In the words of two of our Trustees:

Last year was a high-water mark for the Utah Foundation. An engaged board and topnotch staff provided more information to more Utahns than ever before. A highlight for me was the 20th anniversary of the Utah Priorities Project – clearly signaling what matters most to voters. – Annalisa Holcombe, 2024 Board Chair

In 2025, the Utah Foundation helped policymakers and the public better understand key issues affecting Utah residents. From comprehensive reports on housing affordability to healthy community roadshows, the Utah Foundation provided thoughtful and objective information, standing out in a world increasingly dominated by biased opinions and misinformation. – Kelly Mendenhall, 2024 Vice Chair and 2025 Board Chair

**We owe it all to you.** Thank you for your support. And a special thanks to the anonymous donor who provided a generous donation in honor of David Ingraham. Without you, our Board of Trustees, our members and sponsors, and other great Utahns, we would not be able to do what we do best:

#### Research. Analyze. Inform.

## **By the Numbers**



## **5 Key Findings**

The Utah Foundation's Board of Trustees not only determines each year's research agenda – it also determines the most important findings for the year. Nearly two-thirds of the board voters picked the number one choice.



Cost of living and political dysfunction topped the list of most important issues for Utah voters in 2024. Read more in our *Priced Out and Fed Up* report.

Rank

Average

#### Cost of living and political dysfunction issues were of highest concern for Utahns.

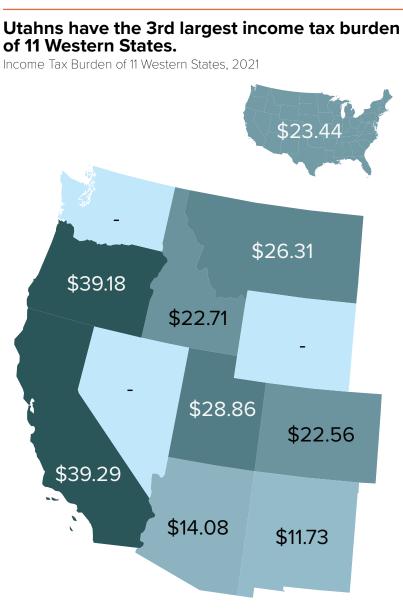
17 Ranked Issues of the 2024 Utah Priorities Project

Category	Issue of concern	Average ranking	range
Most	Housing affordablity	1	1-2
Important	Politicans listening to voters	2	1-2
High Importance	Earning enough to pay for non-housing needs	3	3-5
	Government overreach	4	3-5
	Partisan politics	5	3-8
	Having enough water (other than the Great Salt Lake)	6	5-8
Important	Kindergarten-12th grade education	7	5-8
	Air quality	8	5-10
Medium Importance	State and local taxes	9	8-14
	Immigration	10	7-14
	Homelessness	11	9-14
	Roads and transportation	12	9-14
	Crime	13	9-14
	Abortion and women's rights	14	9-15
Low Importance	Crowded neighborhoods	15	14-15
Least	The Great Salt Lake	16	16-17
Important	Transgender rights and access	17	16-17

Source: Utah Foundation survey.

# 2

Utahns' personal income rose the fastest of any state from 2016 to 2021. Utahns' tax burden also rose over the same time period meaning **the tax collections increased even faster than residents' record personal income growth.** Read more in our *Balancing the Burden Report.* 

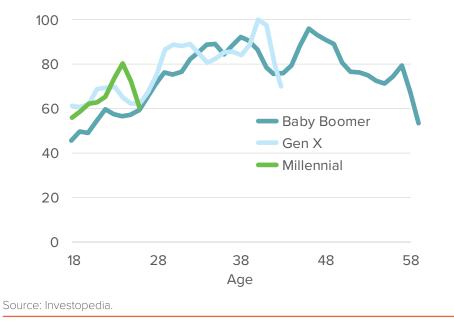


Source: The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Utah Foundation calculations.



Compared to older generations, **millennials saw the largest decrease in housing affordability during peak household formation years.** Read more in our <u>Moving Utahns Toward Homeownership:</u> Benefits, Rates, Affordability, and Obstacles report.

#### Millennials saw the largest decrease in affordability in their peak household formation years.



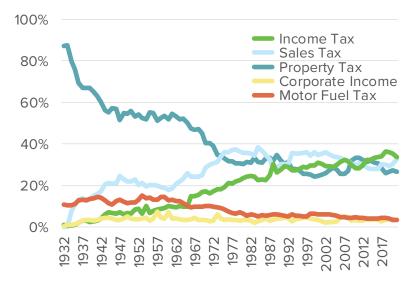
Generational Home Affordability Measured from the Age of 18



Utahns' property tax burden in 2021 was \$22.76 per \$1,000 of personal income – **the lowest property tax burden in the past 100 years.** Read more in our *Balancing the Burden Report.* 

#### Utah tax burden shares converge in the '90s.

Utah Historical Tax Burden Components by Share



Source: The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Utah Foundation calculations.

## 5

Half of the Utah Priorities Project's survey respondents think the policies of the Republican party threaten the nation's well-being and half of voters believe the Democratic party threatens it. One in six Utah voters think both parties do. Nonetheless, Utahns believe that there is a way forward. **Three-quarters of Utah voters agree that compromise is how things get done in politics, though conservatives are less likely to agree.** Read more in our <u>Partisan Politics brief.</u>

#### Conservatives are less likely to support compromise.

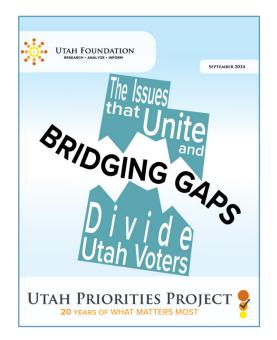
Whether Voters View Compromise as "How Things Get Done" or "Selling Out"

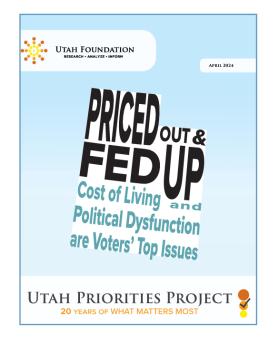
All Utahns	25%	75%			
Very liberal	3%	97%			
Somewhat liberal	7%	93%			
Moderate	21%	79%			
Somewhat conservative	35%	65%			
Very conservative	53%	47%			
Compromise in politics is really just selling out on what you believe.					
Compromise is how things get done in politics, even though it sometimes means sacrificing your beliefs.					

Source: Utah Foundation survey.

## **8 In-Depth Research Reports**

- 1. Bridging Gaps: The Issues that Unite (and Divide) Utah Voters
- 2. Priced Out and Fed Up: Cost of Living and Government Dysfunction are Voters' Top Issues





These reports were made possible by:



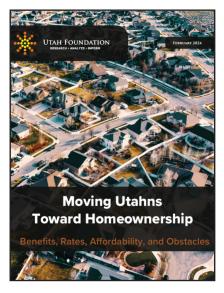


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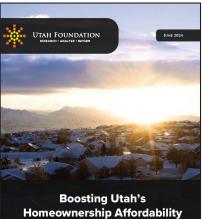


## **8 In-Depth Research Reports**

- 3. Moving Utahns Toward Homeownership: Benefits, Rates, Affordability, and Obstacles
- 4. <u>Boosting Utah's Homeownership Affordability: Strategies and Solutions for State and Local</u> <u>Governments</u>



These reports were made possible by:



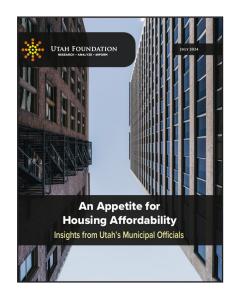
Homeownership Affordability Strategies and Solutions for State and Local Governments



5. <u>An Appetite for Housing Affordability:</u> <u>Insights From Utah's Municipal Officials</u>

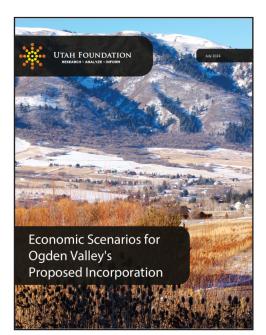
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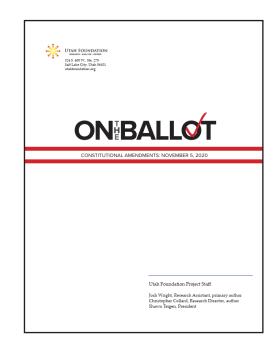


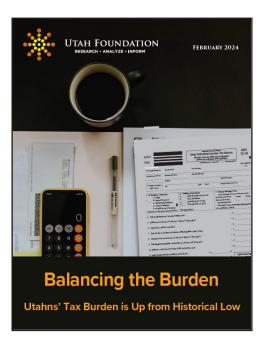


## **8 In-Depth Research Reports**

- 6. Economic Scenarios for Ogden Valley's Proposed Incorporation
- 7. On the Ballot: Constitutional Amendments
- 8. <u>Balancing the Burden: Utahns' Tax Burden is Up from Historical Low</u>



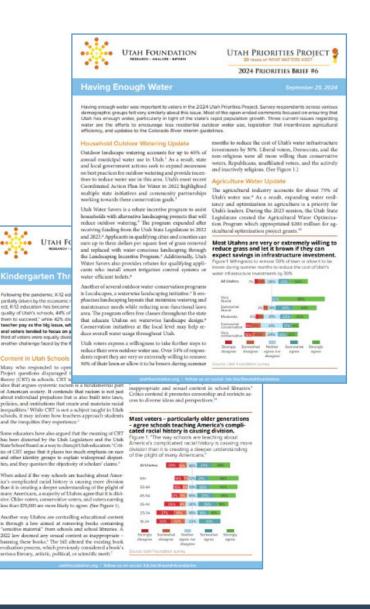




## **17 Research Briefs**

#### **2025 UTAH PRIORITIES PROJECT ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST TO UTAHNS**

- 1. Housing Affordability
- 2. Politicians Not Listening to Voters
- 3. Earning Enough to Pay for Non-Housing Needs
- 4. Government Overreach
- 5. Partisan Politics
- 6. Having Enough Water
- 7. Kindergarten Through 12-Grade Education
- 8. Air Quality
- 9. Taxes and Government Spending
- 10. Immigration
- 11. Homelessness
- 12. Transportation
- 13. <u>Crime</u>
- 14. Women's Issues
- 15. Crowded Neighborhoods
- 16. The Great Salt Lake
- 17. Transgender Rights and Access



## **1 Very Successful Annual Luncheon**

We hope you were able to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Utah Priorities Project at the Grand America Hotel to discuss what matters most. We had about 250 attendees.

The Annual Luncheon included a conversation with **Governor Spencer J. Cox** about the state's policy priorities, as well as a discussion with:

- Carly Maloney, a Viewmont High School teacher and Utah's 2024 Teacher of the Year.
- **Dr. Brian Steed**, Executive Director of the Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water, and Air at Utah State University and Utah's Great Salt Lake Commissioner.
- Steve Waldrip, the state's Senior Adviser for Housing Strategy and Innovation.



Photo: Jeffery D. Allred, Deseret News

The event included our annual awards ceremony honoring two outstanding Utahns with the Insight Award:

- Natalie Gochnour, Associate Dean of the David Eccles School of Business and Director of the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah.
- **Deneece Huftalin**, President of Salt Lake Community College.

We also honored the **Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation** with our Civic Cornerstone Award.





## **56 Board Members**

We are grateful for our 56 board members and innumerable other supporters.

In December, we said goodbye to our Board Chair, **Annalisa Holcombe**, with much appreciation for her work. For 2025, we welcome:

- Kelly Mendenhall, Director of Regulatory and Pricing at Enbridge, as our Board Chair.
- **Benjamin Brown**, Manager of Public Affairs at Fidelity Investments, as our Treasurer.
- **Carlton Christensen**, Board Chair of the Utah Transit Authority, as our Vice Chair.

Our board members provide leadership, topical expertise, and unique insights as they direct and support our research products.



## **13 Staff, Interns, and Volunteers**

During 2024, we had five staff members. We said goodbye to John late in the year. We wish him the best!

In addition, we had six great interns and two wonderful volunteers. We could not have done it without them.

- Trevor Eckhoff, volunteer
- Krishnam Goel, volunteer, West High School
- Micaela McElrath, Brigham Young University
- Maimia Natividad, University of Louisville
- Melissa Nieto, University of Louisville
- Ella Sjoblom, University of Utah
- Josh Wright, Brigham Young University
- Kyler Zarate, University of Utah



## 2 Roadshows

#### **Healthy Communities Roadshow**

During these events, we brought together state, regional, and local partners as well as community leaders to learn and discuss how we can build healthy communities. We spoke at nine events to over 450 Utahns. We also presented our research at an additional virtual webinar.



Participants learned about our recently released Health Communities Series, the Healthy Utah Community Designation run by Get Healthy Utah, and Guiding Our Growth by Utah's Office of Planning and Budget.



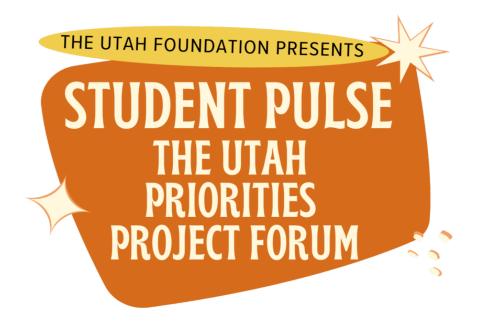
## 2 Roadshows

#### **Student Pulse: The Utah Priorities Project Forum**

We successfully wrapped up the 2024 Utah Priorities Project Roadshow at six college campuses, where we **delivered eight presentations**. Along the way, we **presented to over 400 students and community members**, sharing insights on the issues that matter most to Utahns.



"Getting our research in front of young people is perhaps the most rewarding part of my job," said Utah Foundation President Shawn Teigen. "Our mission is about engaging and informing Utahns, which is tied nicely to inspiring our future civic leaders with 'what matters most' from the Utah Priorities Project."



Thank you to everyone who joined us, asked questions, and shared their perspectives. Your engagement helps us create a stronger, more informed community.

## **200+ Media Mentions**

#### **119** linked media mentions and over **100** additional tracked mentions, including:

The <u>"Path to the White House"</u> discussion with Max Roth from Fox 13.



The <u>"Roads to Understanding"</u> from KSL, which used the 2024 Priorities Project as a basis for its weeks-long television series.

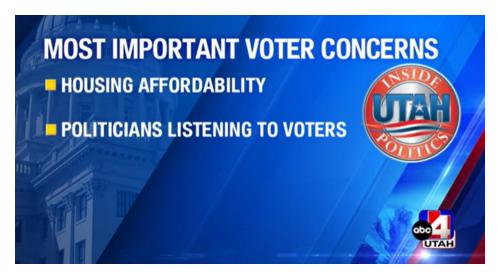
KUER's <u>State Street podcast</u> about climate change.



## **200+ Media Mentions**

#### And:

Brian McElhatten of <u>Inside Utah Politics</u> spoke with Research Director Christopher Collard about the 2024 Utah Priorities Project.



UPR's Access Utah with Tom Williams discussion about the 2024 Utah Priorities Project.

Finally, we are regularly featured on the Rod and Greg Show (with Rod Arquette and Greg Hughes), including on September 5th to talk about where Utah voters are aligned in the 2024 Utah Priorities Project: <u>Do Utah Voters Agree Across Party Lines?</u>



## **153 Social Media Posts & 10% Follower Growth**

#### On Twitter

<u>Our best mention</u> was a post from Brigham Tomco at the Deseret News, with a whopping 11,000 views:

<u>One of our best-viewed posts</u> was referencing our Utah Priorities project kickoff at our Annual Luncheon, with a link to a Brigham Tomco article garnering 1,611 views.

Though that came in behind <u>our top-viewed</u> <u>post</u> about our tax burden report noting that "Utahns' property tax burden in 2021 was \$22,76 per \$1,000 of personal income – the lowest property tax burden in the past 100 years" – with 3,164 views.

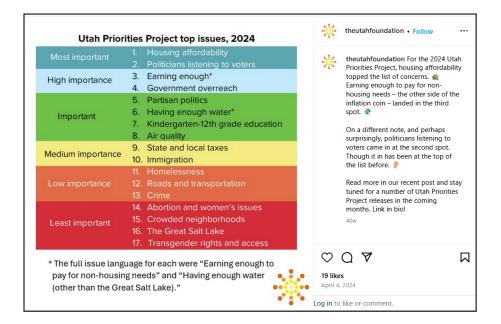
Our other two highlights are from our friends at the Salt Lake Tribune and the



Utah News Dispatch. <u>Emily Anderson posted</u> about "one of Utah voters' top concerns" of 2024 Utah Priorities Project with 3,454 views, and <u>Katie McKellar posted</u> about the top issues of the Project – with 3,624 views.

#### **On Instagram**

Our top Instagram post showed all top 17 items from the 2024 Utah Priorities Project:



### **153 Social Media Posts & 10% Follower Growth**

#### On LinkedIn

Our <u>top LinkedIn post</u> was about our 2024 Board Chair, Annalisa Holcombe. She is clearly a great asset for both the Utah Foundation and the broader Utah community.



We our happy to announce a new chair of our board, Annalisa Holcombe, senior vice president of advancement at Western Governors University!

Holcombe has 20 years of experience in higher education where she has garnered record-setting philanthropy, expanded strategic partnerships and created community relations programs that provide life-changing support for hundreds of students every year.

"Annalisa is a transformational leader whose character, leadership and devotion to a better Utah will significantly advance the Utah Foundation's vision of empowering civic engagement," said Utah Foundation President Shawn Teigen. "We are fortunate to have her at the helm of the board during this time of growth."

Read more about our new board leadership here: https://lnkd.in/gZhM5idY





#### **On Facebook**

On Facebook, <u>our top post</u> focused on the top three items from the 2024 Utah Priorities Project.

## **1 Busy Year Ahead**

Looking ahead to 2025, the calendar is filled with new reports and plenty of outreach events. The year will focus heavily on the 2025 Utah Social Capital Project – with related reports, an Annual Luncheon, and a roadshow. In addition:

- We will conclude the Utah Priorities Project with a report on Utah's delegates.
- We will release a report on healthcare cost transparency.
- We are in the final stages of producing reports on the future of post-secondary education as well as a report which seeks to help broaden the educational horizons of young Utahns.

This is just the beginning! In short, we are looking forward to another extraordinary year. Thanks to our friends and supporters who make this hard work possible.

#### Many Ways to Support

The Utah Foundation relies upon the support of business and civic leaders, foundations, and others to produce the high-quality and independent research for which we are known. To become a member or sponsor one of our projects or programs, please contact us at 801-355-1400.

You can also visit our website at utahfoundation.org to <u>sign up for our newsletters</u> and keep apprised of newly released reports and upcoming events. Follow us on<u>Twitter</u>, <u>LinkedIn</u>, <u>Facebook</u>, and <u>Instagram</u> to keep up to date with our newest work and get sneak peeks of what we are working on.





UTAH FOUNDATION RESEARCH · ANALYZE · INFORM

PLATINUM MEMBERS  $B\overset{\text{The}}{rent} \overset{\text{and}}{\underline{B}} onnie_{I}Jean$ GEORGE S. AND DOLORES DORÉ ECCLES Beesley Foundation FOUNDATION =N|3|2|0|6|=" Life Takes Energy® THE CHURCH OF Wheeler **JESUS CHRIST Call to Action** OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS FOUNDATION FOUNDATION GOLD MEMBERS Enterprise Mobility<sup>™</sup> **UTA** CLYDE **BUILDING AMERICA®** LARRY H. & GAIL Intermountain Power Agency Energy for Today & Tomorrow FAMILY FOUNDATION HEALTH UNIVERSITY OF UTAH Intermountain LAWRENCE T. & JANET T. Health ALYTICS **DEE FOUNDATION** SILVER MEMBERS American-Pacific Corp. **Garbett Family Foundation Staker Parson Companies** Deloitte **The Kanter Family Foundation** WCF Insurance Molina Healthcare **Fidelity Investments** Wells Fargo Northrup Grumman **BRONZE MEMBERS** Brigham Young University Magnum Development Utah Hospital Association Community Foundation of Utah my529 Utah Promise Cottonwood Heights Revere Health Utah State University Ronna Cohen & Stan Rosenzweig Davis County Chamber Utah System of Higher Education Denise Dragoo Salt Lake Chamber Utah Tech University Granite School District Salt Lake Community College Utah Valley University HDR Engineering Sandy City Wasatch Front Regional Council Snow College Holland & Hart Weber State University J Philip Cook, LLC Suazo Business Center West Jordan

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