



Utah Community Action™

1307 South 900 West Salt Lake City, Utah 84104
(801) 359-2444 www.utahca.org

UCA Mediation Success Story 1

The tenant was part of a household of five with three daughters. The family was employed but experienced an unexpected medical emergency when husband suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. As a result, the family temporarily lost income and was unable to pay rent, leading to an eviction notice.

Despite the crisis, the partner remained engaged and proactive. They applied for Utah Community Action's (UCA) mediation assistance immediately. The tenant communicated consistently with mediation staff, provided required documentation, and contributed the family's only savings toward the outstanding balance. We connected the client to community resources that could assist with paying for some portion of the rent while the husband recovered from the hospitalization.

UCA provided critical mediation and case management support by working with the landlord and attorney to negotiate a pay-and-stay agreement and coordinate rent assistance. Staff addressed documentation challenges, clarified account balances, and helped prevent additional fees while assistance was pending. Once requirements were met, the family required only one month of assistance to recover from the medical emergency and regain stability.

Through a combination of the family's financial contribution, continued employment, and coordinated mediation and assistance, the eviction was stopped and the family remained housed. This case demonstrates how timely intervention, clear communication, and collaboration can stabilize housing for working families facing a temporary but serious crisis.



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UCA Mediation Success Story 2

The tenant applied for mediation assistance after falling behind on rent because they had a reduction in hours at work. Our mediation services focused on helping the client navigate the eviction process, court requirements, and negotiate with the landlord to prevent a lock out.

Mediation support included explaining how to file a legal response, walking the client through court timelines, and providing guidance on communicating with the landlord's attorney. With this support, the client successfully filed a response with the court and confirmed receipt with opposing counsel.

As the case progressed, mediation staff remained actively involved by monitoring court filings, clarifying procedural updates, and coordinating communication with Utah Eviction Law to explore resolution options. The client was coached on how to negotiate terms in court, including payment options and a reasonable move-out timeline. Through continued advocacy, mediation staff worked with the attorney's office to clarify arrearage amounts and ensure proposed stipulation terms accurately reflected the balance owed.

Prior to the court hearing, mediation facilitated a stipulated agreement that allowed the client time to relocate and establish a payment plan to remain in good standing. Although housing retention was not possible, mediation prevented a default judgment, reduced stress, and supported a safer, more organized transition—mitigating additional legal and financial consequences.

UTAH

#24*

In **Utah**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$1,523**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$5,077** monthly or **\$60,930** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

\$29.29
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING
WAGE

FACTS ABOUT UTAH:

STATE FACTS

Minimum Wage	\$7.25
Average Renter Wage	\$20.52
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	\$29.29
Number of Renter Households	321,551
Percent Renters	29%

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS

	HOUSING WAGE
Summit County	\$34.77
Salt Lake City HMFA	\$33.62
Ogden-Clearfield HMFA	\$29.46
St. George MSA	\$28.56
Wasatch County	\$28.02

MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; HMFA = HUD Metro FMR Area.

* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage. Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

162

Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

134

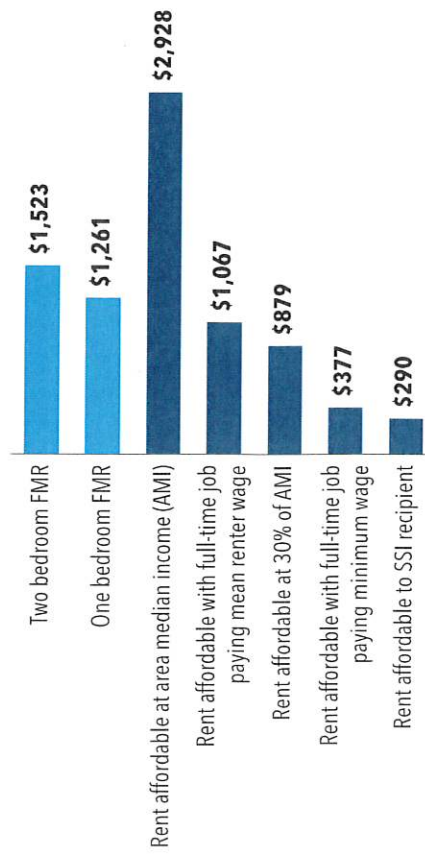
Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

4

Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

3.3

Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)



Landlord Tenant Mediation Program

Since launching our mediation program in 2015, Utah Community Action has demonstrated that early intervention can assist families to maintain stable housing and avoid evictions. Recognizing this success, the Utah State Legislature provided funding in 2021 to expand the program statewide. We ask you to continue to support this evidence-based, proven program and invest in solutions that **prevent housing instability and homelessness** for families and communities throughout the State of Utah.



YOUR DOLLARS COUNT

For every **\$1** invested in the Landlord Tenant Mediation program, **\$33** in savings are realized.*

DIRECT MEDIATIONS

Facilitates mediation between landlords and tenants to reach mutually beneficial housing solutions. Both parties avoid costly court fees and lengthy eviction proceedings.

2021 - 2025

- 3,145 households benefited with success rate of over 85%
- 2,078 retained their housing
- 598 Reached a stipulated move-out agreement, avoiding an eviction order

PROPOSED 2026

- Meditations for over 1,150 households
- More than 85% of evictions will result in a no eviction order

THE IMPACT

Once funding is secured, UCA can confidently **aid housing stability, foster economic mobility, and prevent homelessness** in Utah.

EVICITION CALENDAR MEDIATIONS

Reduces court backlog by resolving cases more efficiently with stipulated agreements and minimizing prolonged eviction proceedings and repeated filings.

- 90% of cases in which clients appear on the 3rd District eviction calendar are mediated by UCA
- 85% of those cases resolved through stipulated agreements

- Establish occupancy hearings in all 7 of Utah's Judicial Districts
- Estimate savings of over \$12 million for tenants and the courts

HOUSING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Educates tenants and landlords about their obligations and responsibilities. Enhances landlord-tenant relations and reduces conflicts.

- Over 6,000 workshops attended by tenants and landlords throughout the state

- Provide housing education to over 4,000 households
- Establish a statewide eviction expungement program
- Launch housing education workshops in high schools

THE ASK

UCA is seeking **\$750,000** annual investment from the Utah State Legislature.

There are many faces of eviction.

67% of households had income prior to the crisis that led to an eviction notice

43% of households have kids

29% of households are single parents

9% of households over 62+

Utah Community Action's mission is to **empower individuals, strengthen families and build communities** through education and self-reliance programs.

THE HIGH COST OF EVICTION

In FY 2025, over 8,400 evictions were filed in Utah. The average judgment amount was **\$12,873**.**

* Utah Community Action. 2024. SOCIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS of the services delivered by the Eviction Education and Mediation Services Operations of Utah Community Action.

** Data provided through the Utah State Court.



Dear Members of the Utah Legislature,

On behalf of the Utah Bar Foundation, I am writing to express our strong support for continued legislative funding for Utah Community Action's statewide Landlord-Tenant Mediation Program.

The Utah Bar Foundation is a charitable foundation, completely separate from the Utah State Bar, that provides funding to organizations that offer free civil legal-aid or mediation services to lower income Utahns, promotes legal education and knowledge of the law, and supports initiatives that improve the administration of justice.

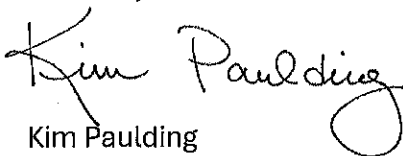
The Utah Bar Foundation has granted program funding to the Utah Community Action statewide Landlord-Tenant Mediation Program for several years and has recently awarded a one-time larger grant to maintain their state housing mediation program as other funding for the program has ended.

In 2024, an independent economic impact study evaluated the effectiveness of Utah Community Action's Landlord-Tenant Mediation Program. The findings demonstrated that the program delivers significant value to the State of Utah, identifying that for every \$1 invested, approximately \$33 in savings are realized through avoided court costs, reduced eviction-related expenses, and improved housing stability.

Beyond its fiscal impact, the program plays a critical role in preventing homelessness by helping landlords and tenants resolve disputes early and avoid eviction. The program reduces strain on Utah's courts, supports responsible property management, and helps families maintain stable housing—outcomes that benefit communities statewide. The Foundation respectfully encourages the Legislature to appropriate continued funding to ensure this effective statewide housing mediation program remains available to Utah residents.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to solutions that strengthen Utah's legal and housing systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Paulding". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name and title.

Kim Paulding
Executive Director



Jennifer Wilson
Salt Lake County Mayor

**AGING &
ADULT SERVICES**

Kelly Colopy
Department Director
Human Services

Paul Leggett
Division Director
Aging & Adult Services

January 27, 2026

Re: Utah Community Action Housing Mediation Program Partnership

To whom it may concern,

Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services (AAS) is the federally designated Area Agency on Aging for Salt Lake County. Since 1972, AAS has provided services, leadership, and advocacy to address issues impacting older adults and their ability to age independently. We fulfill our mission of promoting independence through advocacy, engagement, and access to resources by offering senior centers, evidence-based health and wellness programs, in-home supportive services, caregiver assistance, home-delivered meals, senior transportation, volunteer opportunities, a housing liaison program, and other services for older adults.

AAS has had the privilege of working with Utah Community Action's (UCA) Housing Mediation Program for several years. This partnership has a profound impact on AAS' older adult clients through outcomes such as preventing evictions, postponing lease non-renewals, and providing critical rental assistance. This partnership has helped keep at-risk older adults safe and housed. UCA's Housing Mediation program is also a top referral for our outreach team, which hears from many individuals who ultimately work directly with UCA to resolve housing issues.

We value this partnership because older adults who are at high-risk of losing housing are among the most vulnerable individuals we serve. UCA's Housing Mediation program provides seniors with a sense of hope and guidance in getting them through what are often the most stressful situations of their lives. Knowing that UCA is there to help guide and support them is a huge relief for AAS' clients. What is more, establishing and maintaining appropriate housing is a critical step in enabling AAS' caseworkers to provide additional aging supports and services.

AAS strongly supports UCA's efforts to work with older adults and people of all ages to obtain and maintain housing. UCA is a valued partner that has demonstrated the ability to produce and manage effective, successful programs. We support their efforts to grow and sustain their valuable work in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Leggett".

Paul Leggett
Division Director

**SALT LAKE COUNTY
GOVERNMENT CENTER**
2001 South State St., Ste. S1-600
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4575
Phone (385) 468-3200
Fax (801) 487-
TTY: 7-1-1



CARR | WOODALL

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

January 21, 2026

Re: Utah Housing Mediation Program

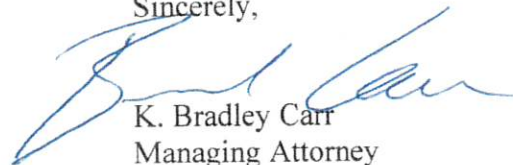
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my unconditional support for the Housing Mediation Program. I practice as a landlord attorney and appear regularly on the unlawful detainer calendar. Based on my ongoing, firsthand experience with these matters, I believe this program is not only effective, but essential.

Each week, the mediation program meaningfully decreases the burden on the Court by helping parties resolve unlawful detainer cases without the need for contested hearings or court orders. In my view, without the program's consistent involvement, the unlawful detainer calendar would likely require several additional hours of Court time each week, almost certainly increasing the overall cost by more than what is currently spent to fund the program. Mediation promotes earlier resolution, reduces unnecessary litigation, and allows the Court to focus its limited resources on cases that truly require judicial intervention.

From a practical standpoint, the program also serves as an important buffer between counsel and the opposing party. In unlawful detainer matters, the party being evicted is almost always self-represented. The mediation process provides a structured, neutral setting that improves communication and reduces conflict, which in turn makes it far more likely that we can reach a workable resolution without requiring a court order. I strongly and unconditionally recommend continued support and funding for this program.

Sincerely,



K. Bradley Carr
Managing Attorney

CARR WOODALL
1309 South Jordan Parkway, Suite 200, South Jordan, Utah 84095
brad@carrwoodall.com
(801) 254-9450



Utah Community Action
C/O Heather Lester
Housing Mediation Coordinator

01/21/2026

**Housing Authority of
Salt Lake City**

1776 South West Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah
84115

VOICE 801-487-2161
FAX 801- 487- 3641
TDD 801-487-3361

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Utah Community Action's (UCA) Landlord-Tenant Mediation program.

For the past 7+ years Heather Lester has made a direct impact on the federal grants that I supervise through the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City (HASLC).

When we first began the TANF Rapid Re-Housing program, we referred clients to her monthly tenant workshops. When clients expressed concerns about their landlords, her mediation services were always our first suggestion.

I have attended many of the mediation workshops that she has taught at various housing conferences. She is knowledgeable, engaging, fun, and inspiring. Everyone seems to enjoy her presentations. Her discussions are fact-driven and neutral; never promoting the viewpoint of the tenant or the landlord.

About two years ago, we were awarded ERAP funding to reduce the number of evictions in Salt Lake County. Heather was instrumental in the success of this program. While mediating for clients at court, she referred them to our program. She negotiated with lawyers to reduce judgement amounts and eliminate fees. And she advocated for the tenants to make sure they understood their rights.

Heather Lester and her team truly make a difference for the members of our community. They are someone who can answer questions when every door seems closed. They are someone who will listen without judgement. They are someone who will offer support when hope seems lost.

As a community partner, we know that UCA's Landlord-Tenant Mediation program makes a difference for our clients. HASLC will continue referring clients to their program while its services are available. Should you want any additional information, please feel free to contact me at bmower@haslcutah.org or 801-428-0546.

Sincerely,

Brent E. Mower
Rapid Re-Housing Program Manager



Community Action Partnership of Utah
P.O. Box 496
Layton, UT 84041
801.433.3025



January 22, 2026

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of Utah Community Action's (UCA's) Landlord Tenant mediation program. The landlord-tenant mediation program balances addressing conflicts upstream (through tenant education and proactive dialogues with landlords) and responding to immediate/severe crisis that threaten household security.

As Statewide Coordinator of the state association for Community Action Agencies in Utah, I have observed the work of the Landlord Tenant mediation team. I frequently interact with landlord tenant mediation staff in advocacy meetings and network trainings. I can attest to the program's impact on renters throughout Utah. Housing case managers throughout the statewide network have reported that landlord tenant mediation enhanced their case management and kept their clients in housing.

In a climate where landlords and tenants have encountered hardships due to the pandemic the last several years and where the opportunity for conflict is increasing, I whole-heartedly support the UCA Landlord Tenant mediation team's efforts to stabilize households, protect landlord assets, and soothe difficult circumstances.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stefanie Jones

Stefanie Jones

Statewide Coordinator



Phone: 801-610-9879
Fax: 801-494-2058
Email: info@utahevicitionlaw.com
Web: www.utahevicitionlaw.com

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Re: Utah Community Action Referral.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to provide this letter in strong support of the Housing Mediation Program at Utah Community Action and the work their team performs in the landlord-tenant space.

As an attorney whose practice is dedicated almost exclusively to Utah landlord-tenant law, I regularly see the impact that Utah Community Action has had on housing stability, court efficiency, and overall outcomes for both tenants and housing providers.

The Housing Mediation Program plays a critical role in bridging the gap between parties who are often under significant stress and facing complex legal and financial circumstances. The program provides meaningful benefits not only to the parties involved, but also to the broader judicial system and community. In my experience, mediated resolutions are more likely to be complied with, reduce repeat filings, and result in more stable housing outcomes.

I support the continued funding of the Housing Mediation Program at Utah Community Action.

Sincerely,


Jeremy M. Shorts



Through Education, Advocacy, and Community Partnerships, the Utah Housing Coalition is dedicated to promoting equitable and sustainable communities to ensure all Utahans have a safe and affordable place to call home.

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Project Manager

To Members of the Legislature and Interested Stakeholders,

The Utah Housing Coalition (UHC) express our strong support of Utah Community Action's (UCA) Housing Mediation Program and its role in preventing housing instability and displacement across Utah. This program represents an effective, prevention-focused approach that promotes housing stability, reduces strain on the courts, and supports timely resolution of housing disputes.

UCA's Housing Mediation Program plays a critical role in eviction prevention by providing early, neutral mediation between tenants, landlords, and community partners. By facilitating communication, problem-solving, and connections to resources, the program helps resolve conflicts before they escalate to eviction filings or court proceedings, benefiting both families and the judicial system.

UHC also partners closely with UCA through housing education initiatives, community outreach, and the Landlord and Community Partners Coalition (LCPC). UCA's participation and insights, informed by its statewide mediation work, strengthen collaborative efforts to improve housing outcomes through education, coordination, and system-level solutions.

We value our partnership with UCA and recognize the Housing Mediation Program as an essential component of Utah's housing stability framework. UHC strongly supports the continuation and expansion of this program as a proven strategy to prevent eviction and promote long-term housing stability for Utah residents.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of effective housing solutions.

Sincerely,

TARA ROLLINS

Utah Housing Coalition

Promoting Affordable Housing to Ensure Healthy & Stable Communities

Utah Housing Coalition 230 S 500 W Suite 216 Salt Lake City, UT 84101
801.364.0077 www.utahhousing.org