



Salt Lake City Uses Smartsheet to Improve Community Engagement and Support for the Homeless Community

Salt Lake City is the capital and largest city in Utah. The county seat of Salt Lake County, the city has more than 209,000 residents.



Smartsheet has made it so much easier for us to communicate with our local partners and community members. When people contact us, we can respond faster and give them better information. Smartsheet helps us do our work more effectively.



Stephen Fanale, Community Engagement Coordinator at Salt Lake City

Customer:

Salt Lake City

Industry:

Government

Organization Size:

Large (1,000-9,999 employees)

Region:

North America

Website:

slc.gov

Like many U.S. cities, Salt Lake City, Utah is striving to support a growing population of homeless people. The city's Homeless Engagement and Response Team works to provide shelter, education, and other resources for the city's homeless population. *"Our team tries to mitigate concerns for both the housed and unhoused population, by hosting resource fairs, supporting a micro-shelter community, and collaborating with homeless service providers throughout the city,"* says Stephen Fanale, community engagement coordinator, Salt Lake City.

Background

When reports come in from community members about encampments or other issues with the homeless population in the city, Fanale and his team are responsible for tracking and partnering with other departments and organizations across the city to resolve those issues. *"We had about 7,000 reports come in this past year, and Smartsheet helped us easily track and process those reports so we could address each problem,"* Fanale says.

Before adopting Smartsheet, Salt Lake City struggled to manage the reported issues and communicate effectively back to the community as well as with internal and external partners. *"We used spreadsheets, email, and mapping software, but our processes weren't centralized and it was very time-consuming to produce reports,"* says Fanale. Lack of real-time data was also a problem. *"We had to go to our mapping software and pick out certain locations where problems had been reported, and by the time we created our own reports, the information was outdated,"* Fanale says.

Solution

After the city's IT department showed Fanale how Smartsheet could help and worked with Fanale and his team to understand the basics of the tool, Fanale was eager to learn more. *"We quickly realized how it could automate and standardize our processes,"* he says.

After adopting Smartsheet, the Homeless Engagement and Response Team began using it to track reports of homeless encampment issues and to manage the waste cleanup process throughout Salt Lake City. They capture data from community reports submitted through a mobile app, coordinate with organizations, and track the time to resolve all in Smartsheet. The team uses automated workflows to send notifications to the appropriate organization. *"We contract organizations to clean up bio waste, and they use Smartsheet to input where and when they clean it,"* says Fanale. *"We use Smartsheet to track who is assigned to a cleanup and how long it takes."*

The Homeless Engagement and Response Team also relies on Smartsheet to manage outreach referrals to the micro-shelter community and active cases. When a call comes to the mayor's office or parks department, that information is put into Smartsheet and an automated email notification is sent to the assigned responder. *"As an example, if a community member uses the mobile app to report a problem near a school, a community liaison or police officer in that*

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district gets notified automatically. Similarly, if someone reports biological waste, the organization responsible for cleanup receives the notification," Fanale says.

Better visibility to real-time data

With Smartsheet, the Salt Lake City Homeless Engagement and Response Team has quick, easy access to up-to-date data on everything from micro-shelter referrals to trash and biowaste pickup progress.

"We can now make faster and better decisions at the click of a button with Smartsheet forms, reports, and dashboards, so we can get help to people who need it by sending homeless outreach teams to the right place at the right time," Fanale says.

Using Smartsheet, Fanale and his team can also view map data to quickly determine where to send people to help clean up areas based on reports. *"It's definitely easier for us to visualize districts throughout the community and get things cleaned up more effectively,"* says Fanale.

With Smartsheet dashboards, they are able to easily provide real-time status updates on community activity to city council members, local homeless resource centers, and other partners. *"Our main dashboard shows how many active homeless camps we have by district, as well as the average time it takes to clean up trash,"* says Fanale.

Faster response times

"With better access to accurate information in Smartsheet, the Homeless Engagement and Response Team is able to respond faster to community needs. Because we use Smartsheet to get our data faster, it only takes us half the time to respond to reports coming in from the community," says Fanale. *"We're saving 450 hours a year on that process."* The Smartsheet solution also helps local partners clean up districts faster because they receive automated notifications immediately when reports are submitted. *"The trash and biowaste organizations we work with can clean up an area within two days of report being entered,"* Fanale says. *"That used to take a full week to do."*

With the time savings from Smartsheet, Fanale and his team can focus more on new projects and initiatives. *"One of my co-workers is developing a new education program, and she has much more time to work on that because of Smartsheet,"* he says. *"We're also working with the county to develop a task group to address unsheltered homelessness, and we've been able to play a much bigger role in writing the plan because of the extra time we have."*

In a Nutshell:

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Serving the community more effectively

Smartsheet gives the Homeless Engagement and Response Team a clearer picture of what is happening across the city through dashboards and reports. *“We’re funded by tax dollars, so city residents like to see where their money is being spent,”* says Fanale. *“With Smartsheet, we can show them our data, which is helpful to people with questions or concerns.”*

Fanale says his team can communicate more closely with the Salt Lake City community, ultimately leading to better outreach. *“Smartsheet has made it so much easier for us to communicate with our local partners and community members,”* he says. *“When people contact us, we can respond faster and give them better information. Smartsheet helps us do our work more effectively.”*

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