Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Statement on HUD Equal Access Proposed Rule Change

The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness supports and is committed that all individuals who are experiencing homelessness may choose to access emergency shelter and housing services, regardless of gender identity.

Earlier this year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a proposed update to the 2016 portion of the Equal Access rule for HUD-funded housing services. Current rules state that “all HUD-funded housing services [are to] be provided without discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.”

The proposed update would “[allow] shelter providers that lawfully operate as single-sex or sex-segregated facilities to voluntarily establish a policy that will govern admissions determinations for situations when an individual’s gender identity does not match their biological sex.” We believe this proposed update would allow discrimination of transgender/gender non-binary individuals.

According to the 2015 Utah Transgender Survey, 43% of transgender individuals in our state have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. It is critical that these individuals remain fully protected and not be denied access to safe and secure shelter or housing on the basis of gender identity.

The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH) stands firm in its commitment to ensure shelter and housing services to transgender and gender non-binary individuals experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, Utah State law protects individuals against discrimination based upon gender identity. In accordance, SLVCEH will not be enacting any local policy changes based on this proposed rule, and we strongly advocate for the 2016 HUD Equal Access protections to fully remain in place without the proposed update.