

## The Failed Criminalization of Homelessness: The Need for New Interventions and the Implementation of Salt Lake City's Kayak Court

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**Abstract :** Criminalization creates sizable barriers to housing and perpetuates the cycle of homelessness. Not only does criminalization leave people on the streets and in shelters indefinitely, but it also unnecessarily costs the taxpayers. Homelessness is a growing issue throughout the world, and criminalizing these human beings is a violation of basic human rights. While this may seem like an insurmountable obstacle, there is something that can be done while fighting that battle. While they are under-researched as a whole, specialty courts, specifically homeless courts, are a growing vessel that can address some of the barriers associated with the criminalization of homelessness. They divert individuals away from jail while connecting them to services that will help their situation instead of hindering it. The model being used in Salt Lake City, while similar to others throughout the United States, stands alone in its outreach efforts and should be paving the way for the rest of the world. The following will look at criminalization and different ways of addressing it, and, finally, Salt Lake City's current operations, including the unique outreach court: Kayak Court.

**Keywords :** barriers to housing, criminalization, cycle of homelessness, homeless court, diversion, kayak court

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