

The Power of Community-Engaged Research

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There are many complex issues that communities face every day, ranging from housing to food insecurity to an accessible legal system. One approach to address these issues is to combine the work done by research institutions and community organizations to develop data-driven solutions.

This is the approach taken by Jayme Walters, director of Utah State University's Transforming Communities Institute. The TCI collaborates with community partners to address pressing issues and improve wellbeing for members of the community.

The TCI is already seeing results in its local community. During her presentation, Dr. Walters highlighted the institute's involvement with:

- The William A. Burnard Warming Center, which provides refuge from freezing temperatures in Cache Valley during the winter months.
- The Bear River Region LGBTQ+ Community Research Initiative, a multi-year research effort to better understand the community factors that impact the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals in Northern Utah.
- The USU Food Security & Student Nutrition Access Center Study, an effort to understand the levels of food insecurity among college students and to identify opportunities to support student-focused resources.

- The Community Justice Advocate Program, an ongoing effort to train and certify social workers to deliver affordable legal services."

