



REMOTE ONLINE INITIATIVE



Extension
UtahStateUniversity



Annual
Program Report
2023

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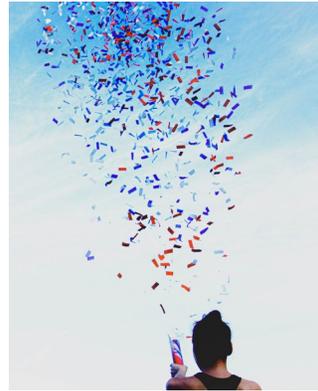
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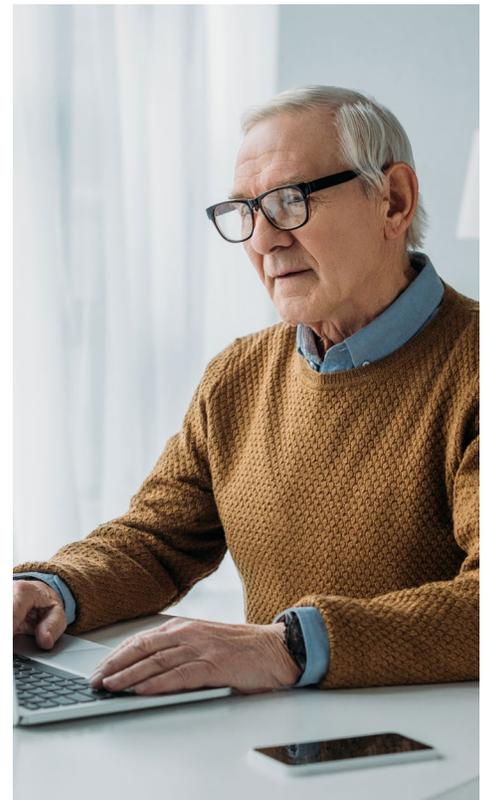
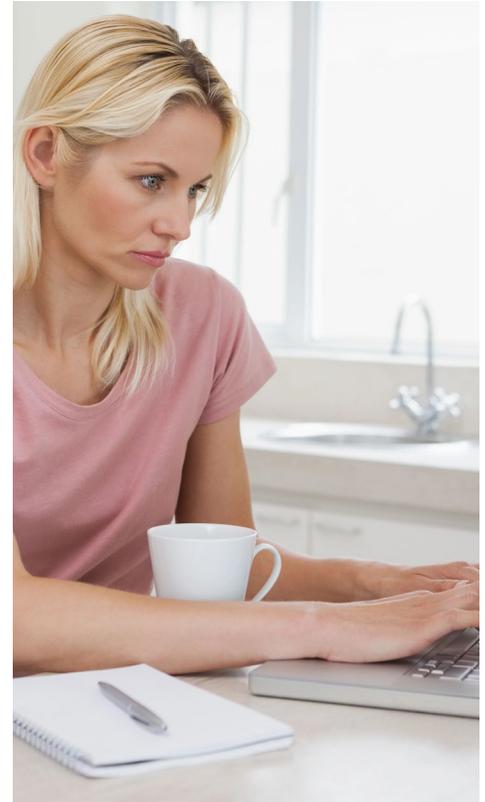
This report contains the progress and success of USU Extension's Remote Online Initiative (ROI) in 2023. Our goal is clear: *to enhance and diversify the economies of Utah's rural areas through specialized remote work training*. With a dedicated team of 17, we've hit our key performance targets this year, a testament to our collective effort and focus. Continuous evaluation is at the heart of ROI, ensuring our program delivers real impact. This report covers our remote work certification courses, alumni success stories, and vision for 2024. Our current courses include:

- Certified Remote Work Professional® (CRWP).
- Certified Remote Work Leader® (CRWL).
 - Part of this course falls under the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act grant, which focuses on educational remote work training for communities affected by COVID-19.
- Certified Remote Sales Professional® (CRSP).
 - Since January 2023, this has been a partnership with MarketStar, funded through Talent Ready Utah's *Utah Works* program.
- E-commerce Accelerator® (ECA) mentoring service.

Looking ahead to 2024, our commitment to equipping rural Utahns with remote work skills and career mentoring remains unwavering. We've seen the positive impact of remote work in these communities – improved quality of life and a newfound eagerness to adapt to the evolving landscape of work. Their stories inspire our continued growth and pursuit of new partnerships and opportunities.

I invite you to explore this report and the remarkable character and potential of people in Utah's rural communities. Through the ROI program, we're fostering a vibrant future where geographic boundaries don't limit success. Your support is vital in this mission to empower and uplift the lives of rural residents.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



Sincerely,

Paul Hill, Ph.D.

*Extension Professor and Program Director
Utah State University Extension
Remote Online Initiative*

THE REMOTE ONLINE INITIATIVE

OUR MISSION

To empower rural Utah with education and remote work opportunities for a vibrant future.

OUR VISION

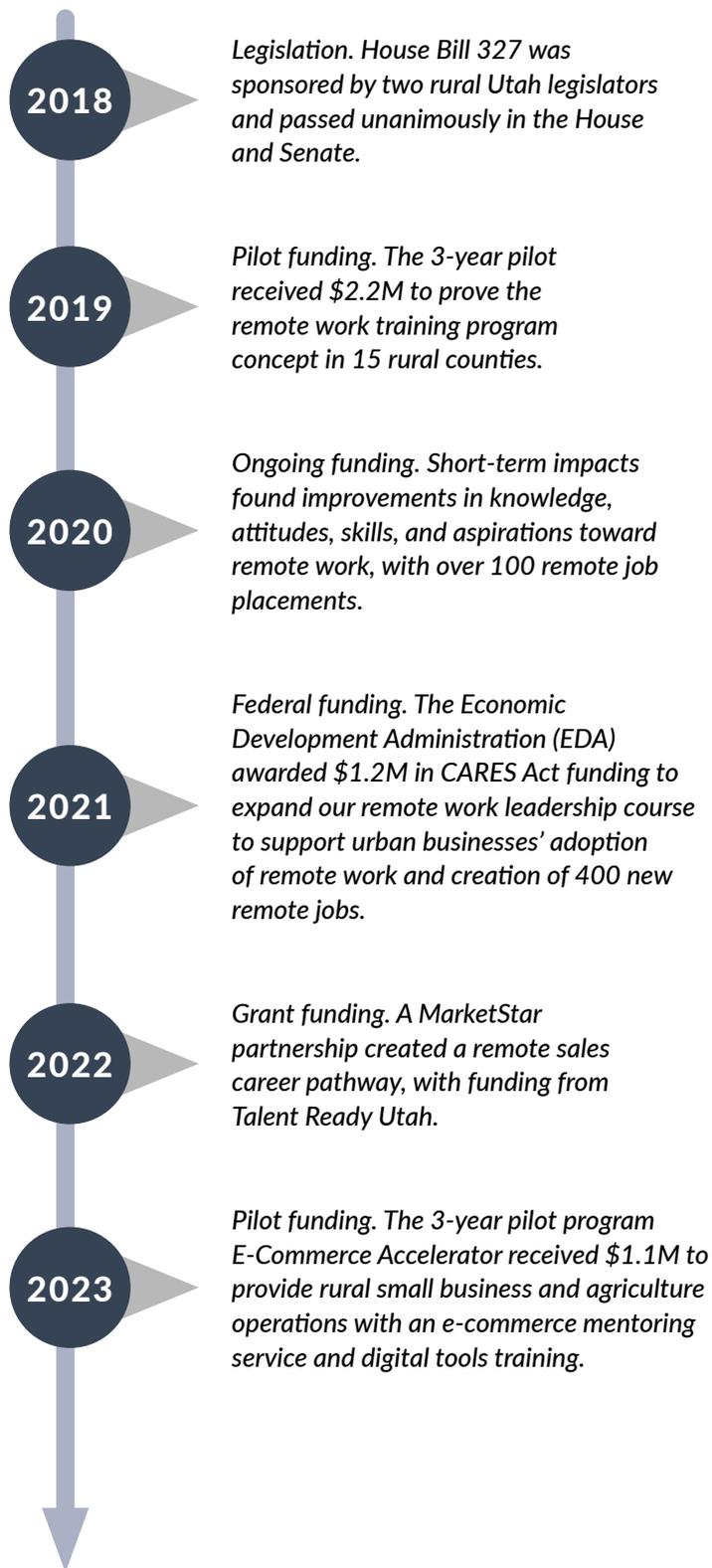
A connected Utah where location is no barrier to career or business success.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Remote Online Initiative (ROI) is a program dedicated to rural workforce development through remote work training. In the 2018 legislative session, House Bill 327: Rural Online Initiative was passed and signed into law by Governor Gary R. Herbert. Funding was then appropriated to Utah State University Extension for program development and delivery across 15 targeted rural counties. Official training for rural residents began on October 1, 2018. Since then, the ROI program has expanded to serve 21 rural Utah counties. Figure 1 shows a brief timeline of ROI's progression since 2018.



Figure 1. ROI Program Timeline



ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

The ROI covers several educational courses that empower rural communities and businesses to take advantage of remote work opportunities. The initiative began with the Certified Remote Work Professional (CRWP) course and later expanded to include the Certified Remote Work Leader (CRWL) and Certified Remote Sales (CRS) courses, and recently, the E-Commerce Accelerator (ECA) mentoring service for agricultural and rural small businesses.

Certified Remote Work Professional® (CRWP):

This 1-month course teaches participants the skills required to find a remote job and function successfully in a remote work environment. Participants learn everything from effective communication techniques for team collaboration to specific software tools commonly used in telework settings. They learn how to identify scams and prepare for legitimate remote interviews. Scholarships for additional training are available at the end of the course to enhance participants' professional skill sets.

Certified Remote Work Leader® (CRWL):

This 1-month course is designed for businesses located along the Wasatch Front. It trains organizational leaders on the best practices and core skills for effectively creating remote work environments in their organizations and leading hybrid-remote and fully distributed employees.

Certified Remote Sales Professional® (CRSP):

This 1-month, 45-hour, specialized training is designed for Utah CRWP graduates. These graduates benefit from a streamlined career path with professional training in remote sales. Participants learn about key concepts and techniques necessary to succeed in a remote sales job.

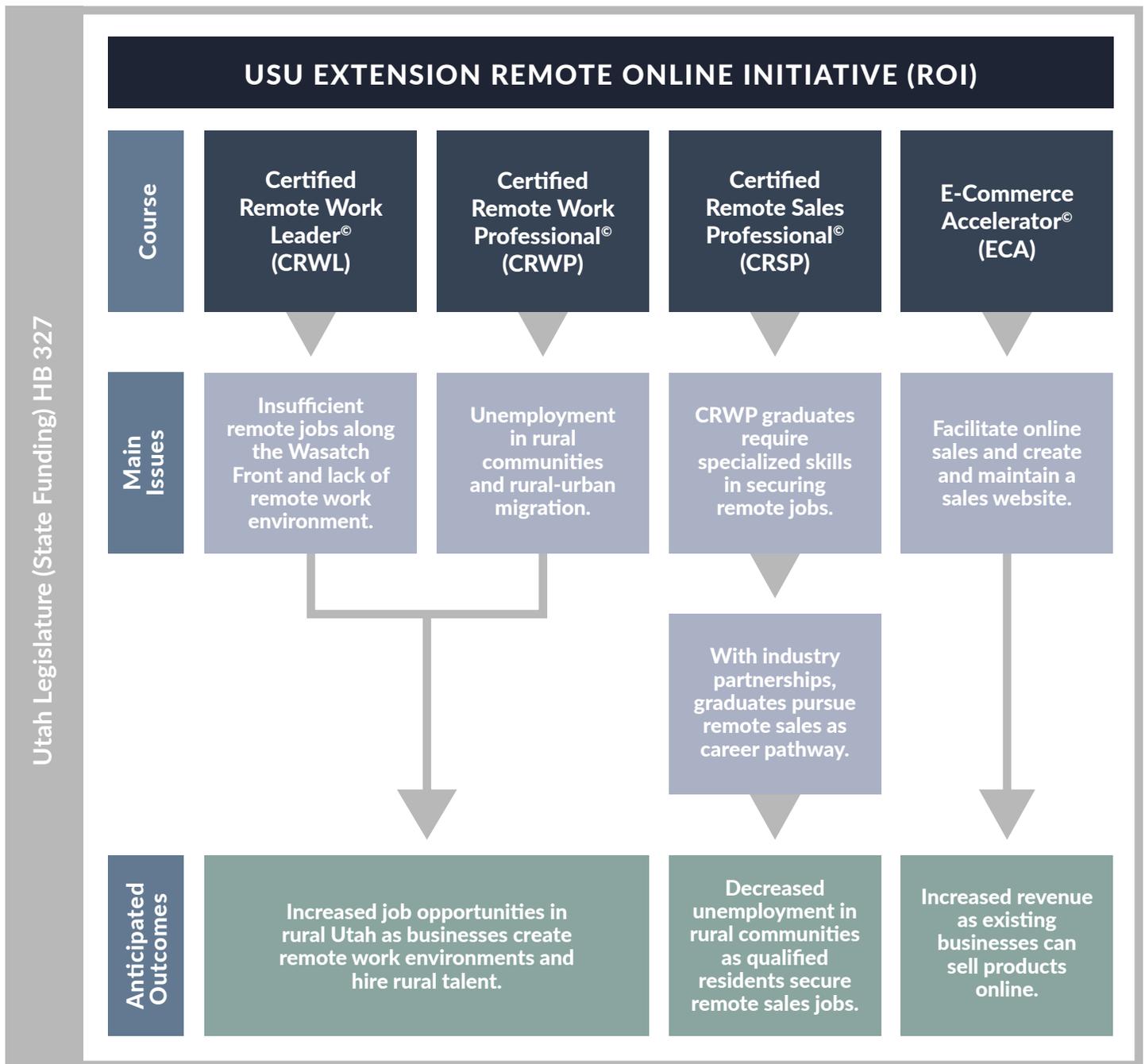
E-Commerce Accelerator® (ECA):

This new 6-week comprehensive e-commerce mentoring service helps agricultural and rural small businesses grow via online sales. The service seeks to help businesses create an online sales website, with the goal of increasing sales revenue. Participants learn how to select the appropriate e-commerce platform for their business, set up their first online store, and integrate it with their existing in-store sales systems. Each milestone moves the business closer to selling its product(s) online.

Figure 2 on page 5 is a conceptual model that shows how ROI courses connect to overall economic development in rural Utah.



Figure 2. Conceptual Model of the ROI Program



DEVELOPMENTAL PILLARS ADDRESSED BY ROI

<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employment. • Increased median income. • Attainable housing (live where affordable). 	<p>Community Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced rural-urban migration. • Improved community tax base. • Vibrant communities. 	<p>Quality of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased family time. • Better work-life balance. • Community service. • Sense of well-being.
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CERTIFIED REMOTE WORK PROFESSIONAL[®] (CRWP) COURSE



The target counties in the ROI program's service area are divided into three rural geographic regions, with a program coordinator assigned to each region. The division of rural regions and coordinators are as follows:

- Southeast (Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, Grand, San Juan, Uintah) - Jordan Leonard.
- Southwest (Iron, Kane, Garfield, Piute, Rich, Wasatch, Washington, Box Elder) - Jake Marino.
- South central (Beaver, Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne, Tooele) - Trenton Willson.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE GOALS

Key performance indicators for 2023 were as follows:

- Secure three to four Utah job placements per month from each region.
- Report 120 Utah job placements.
- Cumulatively report 520 Utah job placements over the life of the program (5 years).

RESULTS

With a cumulative 503 Utah job placements reported at the end of 2023, the course nearly met its lifetime goal. A new annual goal of 120 job placements is set for the end of 2024, which will result in a cumulative 623 Utah job placements over the life of the program.

Table 1 shows the number of Utah graduates who found remote work since the program started in October 2018:

- In rural Utah counties, 465 remote jobs were created, with a county impact of 25,968 jobs compared to urban Utah counties.
- In urban counties, 38 remote jobs were created, resulting in 503 remote jobs for all Utah counties. That is, out of 596 rural Utah jobseekers actively looking for remote work, 465 rural Utah participants found remote work, a 78% job placement rate.

Table 1. Total Utah Job Placements for the CRWP Course by Region (October 2018–November 2023)

REGION	TOTAL JOBS FOUND
Southeast (SE)** (Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, Grand, San Juan, Uintah)	193
Southwest (SW)** (Iron, Kane, Garfield, Piute, Rich, Wasatch, Washington)	139
South central (SC)** (Beaver, Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne, Tooele)	133
Urban counties (Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Utah, Summit, Weber)	38
Total	503
County impact (SE, SW, SC regions only)*	25,968

*When adjusted for population sizes, 465 non-Wasatch Front** (rural) jobs are similar to 25,968 jobs in urban Wasatch Front counties
 Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2020. Analysis is based on the goal of reducing unemployment by 0.5%. Statistics are based on the county labor force's current rate of unemployment and extrapolated number of jobs required.



Table 2 presents a breakdown of the number of jobs in each rural county needed to reduce the unemployment rate by 0.5%. It shows ROI's anticipated reduction in unemployment with remote job placements in rural counties, given unemployment figures. Six counties met the goal to reduce the unemployment rate by 0.5%—Beaver, Carbon, Daggett, Emery, Garfield, and Piute.

Table 2. Anticipated ROI Contribution to Reduced Unemployment in Rural Utah Counties

RURAL COUNTIES UNDER ROI'S PURVIEW	NO. PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED*	NO. JOBS NEEDED FOR 0.5% DECREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE*	ROI JOB PLACEMENTS (NO. GRADUATES WITH REMOTE WORK)	ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION TO REDUCTION IN UNEMPLOYMENT (%)**
Beaver	112	14	16	114
Carbon	445	43	49	114
Daggett	18	2	5	250
Duchesne	603	39	23	59
Emery	203	22	56	255
Garfield	269	13	16	123
Grand	587	31	11	35
Iron	1,115	125	26	21
Juab	172	29	13	45
Kane	206	19	3	16
Millard	192	30	17	57
Piute	30	2	5	250
Rich	40	6	0	0
San Juan	554	27	25	93
Sanpete	472	63	43	68
Sevier	416	49	35	71
Tooele	1,667	175	5	3
Uintah	1,228	67	24	36
Wasatch	1,046	81	0	0
Washington	4,201	396	89	22
Wayne	108	7	4	57

*Unemployment values were internally obtained from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (Go Utah). Unemployment numbers represent the most recent data for 2020, available April 2021. **These values may have contributed to the reduction in unemployment.

CRWP COURSE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Since October 2018, there were 2,509 participants enrolled in the CRWP course, with 2,229 successfully completing the course (89% pass rate).

Short-Term Outcomes

An evaluation of short-term outcomes from October 2018–October 2023 captured changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations toward seeking remote employment.

Knowledge tests were administered to participants before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the course. **All participants showed statistically significant differences between pre- and post-tests for all nine modules.** This result indicates significant increases in participants' knowledge after completing the CRWP course. Table 3 displays these results.

Table 3. Pre- and Post-Test Knowledge-Gain for CRWP Participants (October 2018–October 2023)

MODULE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	MEAN PRE-SCORE	MEAN POST-SCORE	<i>d</i>
Building a Virtual Career	27.14	<.001	12.71	17.14	3.18
Communication	26.85	<.001	16.78	18.28	2.63
Compliance	59.28	<.001	14.70	18.65	3.00
Critical Thinking	52.13	<.001	15.63	18.61	2.56
Productivity	59.23	<.001	14.83	18.64	2.91
Remote Job Development	34.86	<.001	18.20	20.79	3.29
Teams	29.40	<.001	16.83	18.35	2.32
Workday	47.09	<.001	14.14	17.67	3.61
Workflow	24.15	<.001	16.01	17.76	3.31



ATTITUDES



On average, participants felt **neutral** toward their current jobs, and 63% desired a higher income.



Participants desired higher incomes between \$50,000–\$100,000+. This suggests an opportunity for improving job satisfaction through meaningful remote employment.

83% felt seeking remote work opportunities was favorable.

73% felt seeking remote work opportunities was beneficial.

62% did not have remote work experience.

93% indicated it was important or very important to acquire remote work skills.

56% believed job opportunities were available in their local region that matched their long-term goals.

57% believed adequate wages were available in their local region.

When asked about which ideal employment situations were most important,

82% said flexible hours.	78% said good manager relationship.	76% said personal growth.
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SKILLS

On average, participants had high overall scores across all skills assessed. After the course, participants felt they had better abilities to:



Balance their professional and personal lives
(M = 4.07, SD = .61).



Manage their professional and personal productivity
(M = 4.25, SD = .64).



Solve problems
(M = 4.16, SD = .67).



Communicate digitally
(M = 4.18, SD = .68).



Use online technology
(M = 4.17, SD = .63).



Work as a team member
(M = 4.14, SD = .68).



Manage their careers
(M = 4.24, SD = .60).

ASPIRATIONS

After completing the course:



felt their value as a remote worker improved.



felt empowered to seek remote work.



had intentions to seek remote work opportunities.

Medium- and Long-Term Outcomes

A short survey was sent to all 324 graduates of the CRWP August 2022 to June 2023 cohorts (N = 347). With a 31% response rate, 100 participants completed the survey (n = 100). Below are the medium- and long-term results for perceived cost-benefit, remote jobs, anticipated income, and commutes.

PERCEIVED COST-BENEFIT



paid to take the course.



thought the course was worth more than what they paid. This suggests those who paid thought **the personal benefits of completing the course outweighed the registration cost.**

REMOTE JOBS



29% of sample respondents found remote work, taking on average, three months to do so.



71% did not yet find remote work.



However, **44%** of those who did not find remote work yet said they were confident in their ability to do so.

ANTICIPATED INCOME



Overall, a participant who found remote work experienced a **9% increase** in median salary.

Total salaries across all respondents who found remote work also increased by **9%**.



ANTICIPATED INCOME

Roughly **56%** of those who found remote work believed their median salaries would likely increase by **25%** over the next year.

COMMUTE

60%



About **60%** of participants drove to a physical workplace before finding remote work.

47%



Since starting remote work, **47%** drove to a physical workplace, which reduced total miles driven per month by **13%** across all participants who found remote work.

FEATURED CERTIFIED REMOTE WORK PROFESSIONAL® SUCCESS STORIES



A New Career at Davinci Virtual

"I have learned so much about myself and my capabilities. I have discovered that with focus, determination, and perseverance, anything is possible. Even at the age of sixty-one now I look back on when I started my journey. I was 57 and had been out of the workforce for some time due to much-needed surgeries, therapy, healing, and still receiving disability. I knew I did not want to live my life being on disability, and I needed to take action. I thought I was not incapable of working but knew I couldn't go back to the work I was used to. I thought working at home would be something I could do. I decided to take an accounting course [and] after completing [it], I had a tough time getting an at-home job.

Looking back, I can confidently say that this program has been one of the best decisions and rewarding experiences of my life. I was excited to see where this class would benefit me in my search for an at-home position. I applied for two jobs after the course and got both. I chose to work for Davinci Virtual. I believe that having the certificate helped me get both jobs. By giving me the knowledge and skills to work remotely.

I work on the Green Team, which provides over a thousand clients as a professional receptionist. Taking calls, and messages, transferring calls, keeping accurate notes. sending emails to clients when they are not available to take the call, etc.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement of those who have been there for me every step of the way. Their unwavering belief in me has been a source of inspiration and motivation. I am also grateful for the lessons I have learned from my failures and setbacks, which have helped me grow and become a better version of myself."

- VALERIE VALERIO, VIRTUAL ASSISTANT; BEAVER COUNTY, AUGUST 2020 COHORT



Enjoying Remote Work With the Rural Financial Group

"I am working as an Independent Life Insurance Agent with the Rural Financial Group and love it. Most of my insurance work is in Vernal and Daggett County. I was working full time at an office when I took the class, but it helped me realize that remote was what I had been looking for. I also learned a lot from the class, and have utilized much of what I learned. Most of my work is done through Zoom, and the modules on communication and teamwork were very beneficial. Also, being made aware of time management and finding that work-life balance was impactful. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you're free and there's a lot of value in that knowledge before going remote. My favorite part of my new job is that the harder you work, the more you get paid, and I didn't get that at the office. Although it took me some time to find a remote job, I enjoy what I do now, the flexibility it gives me at this stage of life, and thanks to the ROI team for their role in helping me get here!"

- TAMARA TWITCHELL, LIFE INSURANCE AGENT; UINTAH COUNTY, APRIL 2019 COHORT

CERTIFIED REMOTE WORK LEADER[®] (CRWL) COURSE



The target areas for this course are businesses located along the Wasatch Front region or companies approved for the Rural Economic Development Incentive (REDI) program from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity. This area has high employment opportunities. As such, helping these businesses connect to remote work talent would help increase remote job opportunities for rural Utah residents.

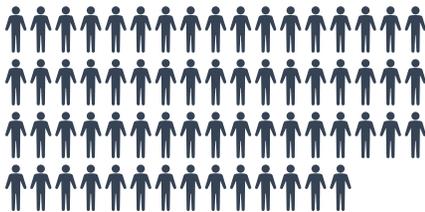
OVERVIEW OF COURSE GOALS

Leading, lagging, and key performance indicators for 2023 were as follows:

- Recruit at least 15 businesses per cohort (90 participants).
- Ensure 80% of participants successfully created remote work plans (pass rate).
- Report a total of 600 new remote job hires or job conversions from onsite to remote.

Recruitment goals were near achievement, with

87
participants
enrolled in all six
cohorts over 2023.



1,315
new remote
job hires/
conversions

Note. We provide quotes where we can to support the numbers we report; however, there are external factors that also account for remote hires and conversions. The new remote hires/job conversions reported are, to the best of our ability, accurate.

CRWL COURSE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The CRWL course is offered every other month. Since February 2020, there were 307 course enrollments, with 264 successful completions (86% pass rate).

Short-Term Outcomes

An evaluation of short-term outcomes from April 2020–October 2023 captured changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations toward creating remote work environments in their organizations.

Knowledge tests were administered to participants before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the course. **All participants showed statistically significant differences between pre- and post-tests for all seven modules.** This result indicates significant increases in participants' knowledge after completing the CRWL course. Table 4 displays these results.

Table 4. Pre- and Post-Test Knowledge-Gain for CRWL Participants (April 2020–October 2023)

MODULE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	MEAN PRE-SCORE	MEAN POST-SCORE	<i>d</i>
Change Management	16.26	<.001	9.84	12.22	2.33
Communication	8.06	<.001	11.61	12.69	2.18
Conflict Management	10.81	<.001	13.11	15.40	3.42
Culture	19.19	<.001	13.40	17.05	3.16
Learning and Development	13.78	<.001	8.44	10.29	2.10
Performance Management	10.64	<.001	8.28	9.25	1.50
Vision	17.19	<.001	7.03	9.44	2.40



ATTITUDES



felt the creation of a remote work environment was important to their organization.

Overall, participants felt favorably toward creating remote work environments in their organizations. Respondents were asked about their level of agreement in creating a remote work environment, viewing remote work as an innovation. On average, participants had favorable overall mean scores for:

- **Relative advantage** (M = 4.00, SD = .57).
- **Compatibility** (M = 4.11, SD = .67).
- **Complexity** (M = 3.40, SD = .72).
- **Observability** (M = 4.48, SD = .54).
- **Trialability** (M = 4.01, SD = .84).

These results suggest that participants perceived remote work practices as:

- **Better than their current practices.**
- **Consistent with their existing values and experiences.**
- **Neither complex nor easy to implement.**
- **Highly visible as other businesses engage in remote work.**
- **Easily implemented on a trial basis.**

The percentage of participants who said they would likely hire qualified remote workers from Utah:



Before course completion



Upon course completion

The percentage of participants who said they were likely to create remote work job positions in their organizations:



Before course completion



Upon course completion

SKILLS

On average, participants had high overall mean scores across all skills assessed.

Upon course completion, participants perceived they had better abilities to:



Influence a remote work culture within their organization (M = 4.65, SD = .42).



Communicate with remote employees (M = 4.65, SD = .48).



Manage remote employees' performance (M = 4.51, SD = .57).



Manage change (M = 4.52, SD = .57).



Lead with a vision within remote work environments (M = 4.58, SD = .51).



Inspire learning and development within a remote work environment (M = 4.52, SD = .59).



Manage conflict within a remote work environment (M = 4.49, SD = .55).

ASPIRATIONS



felt their value as a remote work leader improved.



felt empowered to hire remote workers.

Medium- and Long-Term Outcomes

An evaluation of medium- and long-term outcomes from April 2020–October 2023 showed that **96 unique companies** participated in the course. Across **22 companies**, approximately **2,904 new remote positions** were created.

Note. We provide quotes where we can to support the numbers we report; however, there are external factors that also account for remote hires and conversions. The new remote hires/job conversions reported are, to the best of our ability, accurate.



CRWL COURSE SUCCESS STORY



Conservice

The remote work leader course offered by USU Extension has been a transformative experience for me. It equipped me with the necessary skills and confidence to guide fellow leaders in my organization. The course specifically focused on enhancing engagement among our remote employees, significantly contributing to our retention strategies. It also provided me with valuable insights into identifying roles best suited for remote work, alongside strategies for effective change management within our teams. Additionally, the course presented an excellent platform for networking, allowing me to connect with and learn from other professionals. The knowledge and techniques I acquired have been instrumental in me supporting and boosting engagement/retention of over 1,000 remote employees and their leaders, thus marking a substantial impact on our operational dynamics.

- JIM N. ENOW, HR BUSINESS PARTNER - OPERATIONS; CONSERVICE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) CARES ACT GRANT

The ROI was awarded \$1.2 million in funding by the EDA in June 2020 to support educational remote work training for communities affected by COVID-19. As a 3-year grant, it expanded part of the CRWL course toward aiding business leaders located in eight urban counties outside the CRWL purview. These eight urban counties are Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele, Utah, Wasatch, and Weber.

The key performance indicator includes:

- Over the 3-year grant, create 450 remote job positions.
- Each fiscal year, this breaks down to 150 remote jobs.

EDA OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The requirements for this grant were met in 2022. Across 12 and seven companies, respectively (within the EDA service region), approximately 896 new remote positions and 738 new hybrid job positions were created.

MarketStar had over 200 more remote positions in their company after completing the CRWL course.

Note. We provide quotes where possible to support the numbers we report; however, there are external factors that also account for remote hires and conversions. The new remote hires/job conversions reported are, to the best of our ability, accurate.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) CARES ACT GRANT SUCCESS STORIES



MarketStar

"Utah State University Extension's remote leadership course provided valuable insights into effective remote team management that I have applied in my role at MarketStar as we have hired 257 new employees. The content was well-structured, the instructors were knowledgeable, and the interactive discussions enhanced my learning experience. I highly recommend for those new to navigating remote work challenges."

- JENNIFER GOODEN, DIRECTOR OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT; MARKETSTAR

CERTIFIED REMOTE SALES PROFESSIONAL[®] (CRSP) COURSE

The Utah Works 2-year grant (awarded in 2022) through Talent Ready Utah provides funding for graduates of ROI™s Certified Remote Work Professional (CRWP) course to become a certified sales professional via a 1-month, 45-hour, specialized training course. These graduates will benefit from a streamlined career path that starts with professional training and ends with a successful job placement in remote sales. With a well-established need to boost economic development in Utah's rural communities, the CRSP course facilitates a direct link to the ROI's overall goal of decreasing unemployment and increasing incomes in rural communities. The CRSP course aims to equip CRWP graduates with the competency to begin a career as a remote sales professional with the project's partner company, MarketStar, or other companies that hire sales personnel. This course began in January 2023.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE GOALS

The key performance indicator includes:

- Train 200 remote sales professionals with MarketStar over the 2-year grant.
- Each year, this breaks down to 100 remote sales professionals.

Note. With changes in MarketStar's hiring capacity during 2023, CRSP graduates are supported in their search for a remote sales job with other hiring companies.

CRSP COURSE OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Since January 2023, there have been 60 course enrollments, with 45 successful completions (75% pass rate) and four graduates securing a remote sales position with MarketStar.

Short-Term Outcomes

An evaluation of short-term outcomes from January 2023–October 2023 captured changes in participants' knowledge and skills toward remote sales as a career path.

Knowledge tests were administered to participants before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the course. **All participants showed statistically significant differences between pre- and post-tests for all four weeks' content.** This result indicates significant increases in participants' knowledge after completing the CRSP course. Table 5 gives a breakdown of these results.

Table 5. Pre- and Post-Tests Knowledge-Gain for CRSP Participants (January 2023–October 2023)

MODULE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	MEAN PRE-SCORE	MEAN POST-SCORE	<i>d</i>
Week 1	9.00	<.001	7.14	9.25	1.68
Week 2	13.69	<.001	5.57	9.08	1.87
Week 3	10.69	<.001	7.25	9.42	1.40
Week 4	14.77	<.001	6.53	9.65	1.38

Participants were asked about their confidence to perform activities needed to apply concepts and techniques learned in the course. Upon course completion, participants perceived they had the confidence to perform the activities displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Pre- and Post-Tests Confidence of CRSP Participants (January 2023–October 2023)

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETELY CONFIDENT	FAIRLY CONFIDENT	UNSURE	SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT
	(n)%				
Use the 4-step sales process as a tool to get commitment from a prospect.	(17) 38.6	(24) 54.5	-	(3) 6.8	-
Communicate effectively with customers over the phone and email.	(20) 45.5	(22) 50	-	(2) 4.5	-
Identify potential customers and opportunities.	(16) 36.4	(24) 54.5	(3) 6.8	2.3	-
Apply best practices to make a good first impression on qualified customers.	(23) 52.3	(18) 40.9	(1) 2.3	(1) 2.3	(1) 2.3
Use techniques that will help you get to the decision-maker quickly.	(19) 43.2	(20) 45.5	(1) 2.3	(3) 6.8	(1) 2.3
Handle any customer objection with minimal or no disruptions.	(18) 40.9	(22) 50	(1) 2.3	(3) 6.8	-
Use social selling for lead-generation on social media platforms.	(15) 34.1	(19) 43.2	(7) 15.9	(2) 4.5	(1) 2.3
Use Salesforce to manage existing customers and track and convert leads.	(14) 31.8	(25) 56.8	(4) 9.1	-	(1) 2.3

CERTIFIED REMOTE SALES® PROFESSIONAL (CRSP) SUCCESS STORIES



A New Beginning at Anytime Fitness

“The [CRSP] course was very helpful because it prepared me for my position and gave me confidence to succeed. I received a dollar raise within the month of being hired. My boss gives me praise constantly because of my work. Thanks to this course, I have gone from having no job and being pregnant to a management position in which I have learned different sales techniques and computer tools that help me in my job. I believe there is still a lot more to come, of which I am excited for, in using my new learned skills. Thanks to everyone who helped make this possible!”

- MADDISON NEWMAN, SALES MANAGER; WEBER COUNTY, JANUARY 2023 COHORT



A Big City Opportunity at MarketStar for a Rural Utahn

“Living in rural Utah we do not have as many options when it comes to employment. USU Extension’s ROI program has given me the opportunity to work remotely and provided me with a path to a career that would usually only be available from a larger city. I’ve met some great people along the way who truly want to see their students and classmates succeed. Take one step towards them and they’ll take two towards you!”

- MATT PETTUS, AUTOMOTIVE NATIONAL ACCOUNTS MANAGER (EXXON MOBILE TEAM); CARBON COUNTY, FEBRUARY 2023 COHORT

SPECIAL FEATURE

4-H ENTREPRENEURS™ PROGRAM AND 4-H BRIGHT IDEAS CONTEST

USU Extension offers career readiness as a major program area for youth across Utah. In 2021, a new program, 4-H Entrepreneurs™, was created to strengthen the career pathway by equipping youth with the knowledge and confidence to employ themselves and their peers as they prepare to enter the workforce. The program is currently offered in 26 sites across 17 Utah counties by facilitators who teach four 2-hour workshops. Graduates can sell their products and services directly to the public at county fairs and local farmers markets. In 2023, 4-H Entrepreneurs served over 385 youth and successfully helped 196 program graduates start small businesses. This year, 4-H Entrepreneurs received both the state and Western Regional awards for the National Extension Association of 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYPD) Excellence in Workforce Development Programming.

The ROI supports the 4-H Bright Ideas Contest, an event that began in 2022 to give 4-H Entrepreneurs a chance to win startup funding for their small businesses. The 4-H Bright Ideas Contest has been instrumental in helping youth (K-12) develop and pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges. The contest aims to eliminate barriers for youth entrepreneurs who live rurally by allowing participants to compete virtually or in person, with no cost to enter. The ROI has sponsored cash prizes for remote contestants and will continue to support these efforts.



"We are grateful for ROI's support for 4-H Entrepreneurs™ and 4-H Bright Ideas. We are excited to be reaching youth in all areas of our state and offering opportunities to participate remotely. We look forward to combining our efforts with ROI to offer even more workforce education to Utah's youth in the future!"

- KELSEY ROMNEY; PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXTENSION ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Scan here for the 4-H Entrepreneurs™ & 4-H Bright Ideas Contest Impact Report.



Scan here for details about the 4-H Entrepreneurs™ program.



Scan here for details about the 4-H Bright Ideas Contest.

MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing marketing and engagement efforts encourage participation in all ROI courses. See Tables 7-8 for aggregated engagement efforts.

OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT

Table 7 shows marketing statistics for both the professional and leader certificate courses. These statistics include newsletter distributions, media stories, and social media posts.

Table 7. Marketing Statistics for the CRWP, CRWL, and CRSP Courses

TYPE OF EVENT/TOOL	TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL
Media stories/articles	Monthly	99, with national articles
Newsletter	Weekly distribution	Weekly subscribers: 6,613
Podcast	Monthly	4 seasons; 70 total episodes; 6,692 downloads
Social media	Daily engagement	2,549 subscribers; 5 social media platforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook: 788 followers; 690 likes • Instagram: 378 followers • Threads: 371 followers • YouTube: 112 subscribers; 30,197 views • LinkedIn: 900 followers
Virtual professional development sessions	Monthly	10 sessions; estimated 140 participants

REMOTE WORK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Training opportunities across all ROI courses are presented in Table 8. It includes aggregate enrollments and offerings for all courses at the end of 2023.

Table 8. Aggregate ROI Courses and Enrollments at Year's End 2023

COURSES	NO. TIMES OFFERED	NO. PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED
Certified Remote Work Professional (CRWP)	54	2,546
Certified Remote Work Leader (CRWL)	23	307
Certified Remote Sales Professional (CRSP)	9	67
Remote Job Search (RJS)	Ongoing (self-paced)	82

SCHOLARLY WORKS AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT



Scholarly engagement includes peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals, and ROI members often present topics related to remote work and program evaluation at national Extension conferences (Table 9). Scan the QR code for a full list of scholarly publications.

Table 9. Scholarly and Professional Engagement

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	NUMBER	JOURNAL/CONFERENCE/REPORT
Scholarly publications	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i> • <i>Journal of Extension</i> • <i>Journal of Human Sciences and Extension</i> • <i>Outcomes and Impact Quarterly</i>
Conference presentations	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utah Association of Counties (UAC) • Utah Legislature • Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) • National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE) • National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals (NAEPSDP) Conference • Epsilon Sigma Phi National (ESP) Conference • National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Annual Meeting



ROI'S REMOTE TEAMS SUMMIT 2023

PARK CITY, UTAH

Soon after ROI began teaching leaders and managers how to run remote teams effectively through its Certified Remote Work Leader course, the need for a community of Utah remote work leaders became clear. In order to begin building such a collaborative community, ROI held its first annual Remote Teams Summit in May of 2022. With positive feedback and support, the second annual Remote Teams Summit: Leading Remote was held on September 15, 2023, at the National Ability Center in Park City.

The Summit featured industry leaders who manage and train professionals in remote work environments. Their presentations addressed topics such as asynchronous management and team culture. Invited speakers included author Liam Martin, who cofounded the companies Time Doctor and Staff.com. He is also the founder of the international conference on remote work called Running Remote. Jeb Hurley, Ph.D., of Brainware Partners was also a featured speaker who taught attendees about building cultures of high performance and high trust. All speakers were well received, and the day wrapped up with Mark Cruth, who shared his experiences with building and running high-performing remote teams at Atlassian.

Attendees at the Summit were excited and highly engaged in presentations, as evidenced by a post-summit survey. They thoroughly appreciated and valued the sessions they attended. The general atmosphere was positive, as most attendees were excited about the location in beautiful Park City, and were highly satisfied with their decision to attend. Many also enjoyed the networking sessions, as they had opportunities to meet other attendees, speakers, and ROI team members. Best of all, everyone enjoyed the Aggie Ice Cream.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

"Overall it was a great event. I wish I would have won more prizes, but everyone does. We can't all be big winners. However, the event itself was a big win. Very well planned out. Diverse perspectives. Great partners. Good engagement with other participants."

"You really knocked it out of the park. I recommended it to folks I know who work with remote workers in Utah. Most of them work with teams who are off-shore or out-of-state, but I think that is the demographic who shows up at these events. I didn't see a lot of people who are remote workers. The crowd seemed to be the leadership of remote teams. I have been working remote for about 12 years. We have most of our team (about 10 people) offshore. We have hired Utahns over the years but most of our team is not from Utah. Thank you so much for putting this together. The USU swag was great!"

"It was one of the best conferences I've attended. Well worth the time. Details were carefully thought out, and each of the speakers between their skills and presentations were well delivered, clean, and inspiring."

"You did a great job. First time attending and it exceeded my expectations."



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

I am pleased to announce that the Remote Online Initiative program was recognized with two prestigious awards in 2023, reflecting its significant impact in connecting rural residents with remote jobs and assisting Utah businesses in adopting remote work practices. These achievements have been instrumental in addressing the economic disparities between rural and urban counties in Utah.

In April 2023, the ROI received the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) *Excellence in Extension Engagement Team Award*. This award is a testament to the program's success in improving the lives of rural residents and communities through innovative and impactful programming. The ROI's approach has not only helped reduce unemployment in rural areas but has also strengthened the Extension profession by providing a model of successful engagement that can be replicated in other regions. The award recognizes the ROI's excellence in applying scholarship to real-world challenges, leading to documented positive outcomes and impactful engagement strategies.

Following this award, in May 2023, the ROI was honored with the National Association of Community Development of Extension Professionals (NACDEP) *Excellence in Community Development Work Team Award* at both the regional and national levels. This recognition underscores the ROI's outstanding contribution to community development, particularly in the realm of remote work. The ROI program's success lies in its multifaceted approach, which includes not only assisting individuals in finding remote employment but also helping businesses transition to and create remote work opportunities. This holistic strategy addresses the tight labor market in urban areas while providing sustainable employment solutions in rural counties.

The ROI's courses are characterized by a scholarly and creative approach, effectiveness in instruction and research, and evidence of collaboration with various stakeholders to meet community development needs. Adapting the program to the evolving job market and using technology to bridge geographical gaps have been key factors in its success.

Overall, the ROI's innovative approach to job creation and community development has set a benchmark in the field of Extension and community development. These awards are a recognition of the ROI's commitment to creating sustainable, inclusive, and impactful solutions for the economic challenges faced by rural and urban communities in Utah.

Paul Hill, Ph.D.

ROI Program Director

AWARD	YEAR
<p>Excellence in Extension Engagement (Team) Joint Council of Extension Professionals</p> <p>NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>The award "recognizes an individual or team contribution that improves the lives of clientele and communities and strengthens the Extension profession through the application of scholarship in engagement." It focuses on programs with documented outcomes and impact, being shared and implemented by others in the Extension profession.</i></p>	2023
<p>Excellence in Community Development Work (Team) National Association of Community Development of Extension Professionals (NACDEP)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER (WEST) & NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes NACDEP members for (a) outstanding programs in any aspect of community development work, (b) program accomplishments related to scholarly and creative activities, (c) teaching and/or research effectiveness, and (d) evidence or collaboration with others who help meet community development needs.</i></p>	2023

FUTURE PLANS

The ROI program has significantly expanded since its inception, offering new and revised courses to meet evolving training needs in rural Utah. The ROI program will provide training and strategic support for statewide efforts to increase remote work opportunities and move jobs to rural Utah.



- **Continue to support Governor Spencer J. Cox's One Utah Roadmap by leveraging remote work to modernize and streamline state government and addressing rural matters.**

- As state employees are foundational to the success of state government, Utah is investing in new and existing infrastructure to support a modern workforce and remote work, especially in rural areas of the state.
- To address rural matters, economic growth, and diversification, Utah is providing more growth options for rural Utah by evaluating and identifying funding increases and expansion opportunities in rural investment programs that support remote work and entrepreneurialism. This includes USU Extension's Remote Online Initiative.
- To implement a state government structure that maximizes operational efficiencies and public services, Utah is re-examining government operations in the context of widespread remote work. In addition, the state is also embracing remote work and other practices to decrease environmental impact, increase productivity, and create job opportunities for Utahns across the state.



- **Train 200 sales professionals for remote jobs in partnership with MarketStar.**

- Through the new Certified Remote Sales (CRS) course funded by the Utah System of Higher Education, the ROI program will recruit, train, and mentor rural Utah residents for careers in remote sales. Those who complete the 1-month, 45-hour, specialized training course will receive job interview support from MarketStar talent acquisition professionals.



- **Implement the E-Commerce Accelerator (ECA) Mentoring Service.**

- The E-Commerce Accelerator (ECA) is a 3-year pilot program (beginning January 2024), that helps small businesses in rural Utah grow through online sales. It was created with legislative funding and is designed to assist agricultural and rural businesses by providing personalized training to navigate the digital world and increase sales revenue through e-commerce. The ROI program will evaluate the short-term impacts of this program and work with the legislature to expand the capacity of the program beyond the pilot.



- **Host the first Remote Workforce Summit in partnership with Snow College (May 10, 2024).**

- The Remote Workforce Summit is designed to serve as a pivotal professional development and networking event. It aims to connect a diverse target audience with valuable employment resources. The participants will include Snow College students, job seekers, high school seniors, BYU Pathway students, USU Extension clients, 4-H members, current and past participants of the ROI program, rural residents in neighboring counties, community leaders, stakeholders, and representatives from employment support agencies. This event is a unique opportunity for these groups to gain insights into remote work and its best practices, entrepreneurship, and online freelancing, thereby fostering a robust remote work ecosystem.



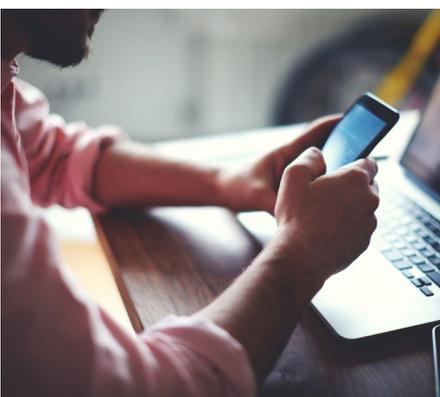
- **Support the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.**

- The *Utah Digital Connectivity Plan* and *Utah Digital Equity Plan* highlight the state's vision, goals, objectives, and strategies to help get all Utahns connected to affordable and accessible high-speed internet as well as access to digital tools and resources needed to succeed in the digital world. Both plans will guide the allocation of federal BEAD funding to the state for broadband and digital access expansion over the next five years.
- The ROI program aligns seamlessly with Utah's Digital Equity Plan by empowering rural residents with essential digital skills. These skills are crucial for full participation in the remote workforce. Through targeted training and support, the ROI program will help bridge the digital divide, ensuring rural communities are not left behind in an increasingly digital world. The ROI program plays a pivotal role in fostering digital independence and economic prosperity throughout Utah's diverse and expansive rural areas.



- **Support the Utah Works Grant Program.**

- In the upcoming year, the ROI program is committed to seeking additional Utah Works funding to expand our support for Utah companies by developing targeted short-term pre-employment and early employment remote work training courses. These courses will be designed specifically for rural workforce participants, aligning with our ongoing efforts to meet the evolving needs of businesses that contribute to job creation and economic growth within the state.



- **Support the Environmental Justice Rural Technical Assistance Center.**

- Through \$1 million in federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and in partnership with Montana State University Extension, the ROI program will explore opportunities to hire and train new staff to enhance community development and environmental stewardship. This 5-year grant project focuses on empowering marginalized and rural communities in Utah, providing them with access to essential resources and decision-making processes in environmental justice. This project will enable rural community leaders to actively engage and participate in environmental programs, access financial resources for justice programs, and address specific environmental challenges effectively.

PAST AWARDS

AWARD	YEAR
<p>Hermes Creative Award, Platinum Winner (Team) International Competition for Creative Professionals</p> <p>STATE WINNER</p> <p><i>This award honors the messengers and creators of the information revolution. Armed with their imaginations and computers, Hermes winners bring their ideas to life through traditional and digital platforms. Each year, competition judges evaluate the creative industry's best publications, branding collateral, websites, videos, and advertising, marketing, and communication programs.</i></p>	2022
<p>Award for Innovation (Team) National Extension Technology Community (NETC)</p> <p>NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes an individual or team demonstrating innovatively using technology integrated into delivering educational programs or in the administrative systems that support educational programs.</i></p>	2021
<p>Creative Excellence Award (Team) National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER (WEST) AND NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes an individual or team demonstrating creative excellence that is adopted by others, advancing the work of community development in innovative ways. For the purposes of this award, innovation is approaching emerging issues or addressing existing issues in exceptionally creative or novel ways that get results and that others want to emulate.</i></p>	2021
<p>Distinguished Team Award Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER (WEST) AND STATE WINNER (UTAH)</p> <p><i>This award recognizes outstanding efforts of Extension staff teams (two or more individuals) for responding to and incorporating into a specific educational program one or more critical issues. Critical issues may be defined by local, regional, state, or national need.</i></p>	2021
<p>Excellence in Workforce Development Programming Award (Team) National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding efforts by members in workforce development and career exploration programming and to strengthen the commitment to workforce development programming curriculum.</i></p>	2021

AWARD	YEAR
<p>Diversity Award (Team) Utah Association of Extension 4-H Workers (UAE4-HW)</p> <p>STATE WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes a team or individual for successful efforts targeting an underserved audience, identifying an educational need and the activities conducted to address the need, and the impacts of programming efforts.</i></p>	2021
<p>Diversity Award (Team) Utah Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (UEAFCS)</p> <p>STATE WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes a team or individual for successful efforts targeting an underserved audience, identifying an educational need, performing activities conducted to address the need, and reporting impacts from programmatic efforts.</i></p>	2021
<p>Marketing/Public Relations Award (Team) Utah Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (UEAFCS)</p> <p>STATE WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes a team or individual for successful efforts developing marketing materials and plans to bring greater visibility to USU Extension.</i></p>	2021
<p>Outstanding Contributor Award (Individual) National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals (NAEPSDP)</p> <p>NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This award is the most prestigious award given by the NAEPSDP. It recognizes individuals who initiate and develop creative ways to enrich the learning process. Efforts may focus on innovative programming or tools for staff development, evaluation, or administrative processes at the local, regional, state, or national level.</i></p>	2020
<p>Excellence in Extension (Individual) Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This annual national award is presented to individuals who have strived throughout their careers through their local, state, regional, or national responsibilities to achieve the benchmarks reflective of excellence in Extension educational programming. These include, but are not limited to, demonstration of high impact of programs; visionary leadership and anticipation of emerging issues for clientele and the system; commitment to diversity; and integration of programs in partnership with university colleagues and outside clientele.</i></p>	2020

AWARD	YEAR
<p>Award of Excellence in Extension Programming (Team) Western Extension Directors Association (WEDA)</p> <p>REGIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>The purpose of the WEDA Award of Excellence is to recognize Extension outreach education programming that has achieved outstanding accomplishments, results, and impacts in addressing contemporary issues in one or more of the 13 states and four territories whose institutions are WEDA members. Recipients of this award include mature programs with documented impacts.</i></p>	2020
<p>Innovation and Creativity (Team) National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP)</p> <p>NATIONAL WINNER</p> <p><i>This award recognizes a NACDEP member or group of members developing an outstanding effort or program that integrates innovation and creativity in community development program design or implementation that shows demonstrated effectiveness. For the purpose of this award, innovation is understood as a method or practice that creatively addresses a community or implementation issue in a novel manner that demonstrates improvement in program results.</i></p>	2020

APPENDIX

Journal Articles

- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., Narine, L. K., & Spielmaker, D. M. (2022). A descriptive analysis of remote work adoption in the United States. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 10(3). <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/jhse/vol10/iss3/4/>
- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., Narine, L. K., Schmutz, A. T., Riskas, T. M., & Spielmaker, D. M. (2022). Evaluating Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Empowering organizational leaders through remote work. *The Journal of Extension*, 60(3), Article 12. <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.60.03.12>
- Schmutz, A. T., Campbell, A., Bean, A., Ali, A. D., Hill, P., & Swadley, E. (2022). Preparing rural youth for the future of work through remote work education. *Outcomes and Impact Quarterly*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.26077/594f-ed1a>
- Ali, A. D., Hill, P. A., Bria, D. C. (2021). Communicating program outcomes and impact using data visualization dashboards. *Outcomes and Impact Quarterly*, 1(4). <https://doi.org/10.26077/8163-0c3c>
- Ali, A. D., & Hill, P. A. (2021). The Rural Online Initiative: Short-term outcomes of Utah State University Extension Master Remote Work Leader course. *Outcomes and Impact Quarterly*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.26077/8062-3fa8>
- Ali, A. D., & Hill, P. A. (2021). The Rural Online Initiative: Remote work and COVID-19. *Outcomes and Impact Quarterly*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.26077/0402-9122>
- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., Narine, L. K., Spielmaker, D. M., & Schmutz, A. T. (2020). Evaluating Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Empowering rural communities through remote work. *Journal of Extension*, 58(5). <https://joe.org/joe/2020october/rb4.php>

Conference Presentations

- Hill, P. A. (2022, November). *The state of remote work and impact of the Remote Online Initiative Program in Utah* [Conference session]. Utah Association of Counties (UAC) Annual Convention, St. George, UT, United States.
- Ali, A. D. & Hill, P. A. (2022, November). *Evaluating medium- and long-term outcomes of a remote work Extension program* [Conference session]. National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals (NAEPSDP) Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, United States.
- Hill, P. A. (2022, September). *Opportunities for a growing Washington: Remote workforce, employer policies*. Association of Washington Business Policy Summit, Spokane, WA, United States.
- Hill, P. A., Bria, D. C., & Bean, A. (2022, August). *Empowering rural communities through remote work: An introduction to Utah's Remote Online Initiative program*. Extension Foundation, Online.
- Hill, P. A., Mottishaw, J., Weedon, D., & Borski, H. (2022, May). *How the 3rd largest employer in Utah adopted remote work: A panel discussion on the common issues facing leaders of remote employees*. Utah State University Extension, Remote Online Initiative's 1st Annual Remote Teams Summit, Provo, UT, United States.
- Hill, P. A. (2022, March). *Introduction to USU Extension's Rural Online Initiative*. Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) Webinar Series, Online.
- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., & Narine, L. K. (2022, June). *Remote work adoption by U.S. organizations and implications for Extension*. National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Annual Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.
- Ali, A. D., Hill, P. A., Bria, D. C., & Narine, L. K. (2022, June). *Reporting program outcomes and impact with data visualization dashboards*. National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Annual Conference, Indianapolis, IN, United States.
- Ali, A. D., Hill, P. A., Bria, D. C., & Narine, L. K. (2022, April 4–7). *The use of data visualization dashboards to communicate program outcomes and impact* [Poster submitted]. Association of International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) 38th Annual Meeting, Thessaloniki, Greece.

- Hill, P. A, Ali, A. D., Bria, D. C., & Narine, L. K. (2021, November 30–December 2). *Remote work adoption in Extension* [Roundtable discussion]. National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals Conference and Annual Meeting. (Virtual conference).
- Hill, P. A, Ali, A. D. (2021, May 14–19). *Short-term outcomes from USU Extension's legislatively funded remote work leadership course* [Paper presentation]. National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals 17th Annual Meeting, United States. (Virtual conference).
- Ali, A. D., Narine, L. K., & Hill, P. A., (2021, April 12–14). *Developing and piloting an index to assess program fidelity in Extension* [Paper presentation]. Association of International Agricultural and Extension Education 37th Annual Meeting, Thessaloniki, Greece. (Virtual conference). <https://aiaee.wordpress.com/2021conference/>
- Ali, A. D., & Hill, P. A. (2020, December 1–3). *Formative evaluation of a remote work program for Utah organizational leaders* [Paper presentation]. National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals Conference and Annual Meeting, Fort Lauderdale, FL, United States. (Virtual conference).
- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., Narine, L. K., Goodrich, R., & Swadley, E. (2020, October 6–8). *Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Training urban business leaders to hire remote workers from rural counties* [Paper presentation]. Epsilon Sigma Phi National Conference, Rochester, NY, United States. (Virtual conference).
- Ali, A. D., Hill, P. A., Swadley, E., & Narine, L. K. (2020, June 1–2). *Rethinking communication in Extension: A hybrid model for engaging with rural audiences* [Conference workshop]. National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals 16th Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, NH, United States. (Virtual conference).
- Ali, A. D., Hill, P. A., & Narine, L. K. (2020, April 20–23). *Fine-tuning the evaluation protocols for an innovative educational program in rural communities* [Paper presentation]. Association of International Agricultural and Extension Education 36th Annual Meeting, St. Petersburg, FL, United States. (Conference canceled).
- Hill, P. A., Ali, A. D., & Narine, L. K. (2019, December 3–5). *Assessing perceived competency improvements of participants in the Rural Online Initiative of Utah* [Paper presentation]. National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals Conference and Annual Meeting, Savannah, GA, United States.
- Goodrich, R., & Willson, T. (2019, October 8–10). *Upskilling rural America - Connecting rural communities with remote work* [Paper presentation]. National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, United States.
- Hill, P. A., Goodrich, R., Swadley, E., & Ali, A. D. (2019, August 26–28). *Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Connecting rural communities with remote work* [Paper presentation]. United Nations 68th Civil Society Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.
- Goodrich, R., & Swadley, E. (2019, June 9–12). *Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Connecting rural communities to remote work*. National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Annual Conference, Asheville, NC, United States.
- Hill, P. A. Goodrich, R., & Swadley, E. (2019, February 5–7). *Utah's Rural Online Initiative: Connecting rural communities with remote work*. Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Annual Meeting. San Antonio, TX, United States.

Professional Reports

- The Conference Board (2022). *Preparing rural Americans for the post pandemic economy: Lessons from Utah*. The Committee for Economic Development (CED) is the public policy center of The Conference Board. <https://www.ced.org/reports/preparing-rural-americans-for-the-postpandemic-economy-lessons-from-utah>
- Hill, P. A. & Goodrich, R. (2020). *Rural Online Initiative: Strategic plan for excellence*. Utah State University Extension. <https://usu.app.box.com/s/8p0zidkef2s4hzb4jnpvgvswxwxg2d97>
- Hanover Research. (2020). *Demographic and labor market analysis: Rural counties in Utah*. Utah State University Extension. <https://usu.app.box.com/s/s2pqfbbg460bnbi3i4xaoqf5ni167ddd>

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