The Purpose and Benefit of Land-grant (Extension) Universities

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Utah State University is a land-grant university. That term often causes blank stares, since many people have never heard of land-grant universities, much less understand their purpose and the benefits they provide. To help raise awareness of what land-grant universities are and what they can do for the residents of Utah (and any other state), here’s an explanation.

What is a land-grant university?

A land-grant (or Extension) university or college is an institution that provides research-based programs and resources for residents within their state. There is at least one land-grant institution in every state and territory of the United States, as well as the District of Columbia. Each one is designated by the state legislature or Congress to receive benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, and 1994.

For over 100 years, land-grant status for universities has allowed grants/funding to be provided to produce practical research and information for the residents of each state. Due to the unavailability of higher education in many locations in the past, the initial intention of having land-grant universities was to provide practical education to agricultural and industrial workers. Now educational resources are provided to a much broader audience on a wide variety of topics.

According to the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities, “The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education.”

Over the years, land-grant status has implied several types of federal support. The first Morrill Act provided grants in the form of federal lands to each state. The states used the proceeds from selling those federal lands to establish a public institution to fulfill the act’s provisions. At different times, money was appropriated through legislation such as the second Morrill Act and the Bankhead-Jones Act, although the funding provisions of these acts are no longer in effect.

A key component of the land-grant system is the Agricultural Experiment Station program, created by the Hatch Act of 1887. The Hatch Act authorized direct payment of federal grant funds to each state to establish an Agricultural Experiment Station in connection with the land-grant institution there. The amount of this appropriation varies from year to year and is determined for each state through a formula based on the number of small farmers there. A major portion of the federal funds must be matched by the state.

What is the Purpose of Land-grant Universities?

The purpose of a land-grant university is to provide readily available, research-based programs and educational resources with the goal of improving the lives of the individuals, families, and communities within the state.

Land-grant Universities Offer Helpful Programs and Resources

What Does a Land-grant University do?
Land-grant universities in each state across America provide research-backed programs, courses, events, research, and other resources that are available to the public on various relevant topics including:

**Agriculture**
- Agronomy (Crops)
- Ag Waste Management
- Agribusiness & Ag Economics
- Animal Health
- Beekeeping
- Livestock
- Coping with Farm Stress
- Dairy
- Diversified Agriculture
- Equine (Horses)
- Irrigation
- Poultry
- Production Horticulture
- Rural Tax Education
- Pest Management
- Small Farms
- Weed and Plant Management

**Natural Resources**
- Agronomy (Crops)
- Water-Efficient Landscaping
- Community-Based Conservation
- Field Guides
- Forestry
- Outdoor Recreation & Tourism
- Permaculture
- Rangelands
- Range Plants
- Stream-Side Science
- Sustainability
- Tree Species
- Biomass Resources
- Nature
- Water Impacts
- Water Quality
- Wetlands
- Wildlife Conflicts

**Business and Community**
- Finance (Personal and Family Money Management)
- Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning
- Remote Work Training and Information
- Women & Leadership
- Small Business Development Centers

**Food**
- Canning
- Create Better Health
- Running a Food Business
- Food Preservation
- Food Safety
- Food Storage
- Hunger Solutions
- Nutrition
- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education

**Health and Wellness**
- Aging Resources
- Health & Wellness Resources
- Opioid Epidemic Resources for Mental Health
- Mental Health Education

**Gardening**
- Gardens & Centers
- Pests
- Tree Species and Information
- Water-Efficient Landscaping
- Yard & Garden Resources

**Home**
- Emergency Preparedness
- Home Buyer Education
- Healthy Living
- Sewing
- Child Cleanliness

**Personal Finance**
- Personal & Family Finance Resources
- Debt Reduction Tools
- Finance Resources for Moms

**Relationships**
- Divorce Orientation
- Healthy Relationships
- Marriage Resources
- Relationship Resources

**Youth**
- 4-H Programs
- Youth Activities & Education
Benefits of a Land-Grant University

Land-grant universities provide many benefits to individuals, families, and entire communities which include such things as:

- In-person and online educational courses (paid and free)
- Free tips on topics through emails, social media, websites, video tutorials, and more
- Free in-person and virtual events
- Readily available and practical research on a variety of topics
- Caring and knowledgeable experts who are available to help in each county

A Land-grant University Example

One example of a land-grant university is Utah State University. Founded in 1914 as part of the Smith-Lever Act, USU Extension plays a primary role in helping USU fulfill its land-grant mission. Though more than 100 years old, USU Extension is as vital as ever, and perhaps even more so, due to the increased diversity and complexity of the issues people encounter today. The integration of teaching, research, and public service enables USU Extension to respond to critical and emerging issues with research-based, unbiased information.

Two additional examples of land-grant universities include Texas A&M University and the University of Florida. See a comprehensive list of all the land-grant universities in the United States below.

How Many Land-grant Universities/Institutions are there?

There are 112 land-grant universities/institutions in the United States. Of these institutions, 19 are historically black and 33 are tribal. Each state and territory has one land-grant university that has been designated by the state legislature. Some states have more than one, due to the 2nd Morrill Act, and a few states have several because of the 1994 land-grant tribal colleges.

Which Schools are Land-grant Universities?

The below list of land-grant universities in the United States are broken down by each state which include:

**Alabama**
- Alabama A&M University, Normal
- Auburn University, Auburn Tuskegee University, Tuskegee

**Alaska**
- Ilisagvik College, Barrow University of Alaska, Fairbanks

**American Samoa**
- American Samoa Community College, Pago Pago

**Arizona**
- Dine# College, Tsaile
- University of Arizona, Tucson Tohono O’Odham Community College, Sells

**Arkansas**
- University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff

**California**
- D-Q University, (Davis vicinity)
- University of California System-Oakland as Headquarters, Oakland
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**Colorado**
- Colorado State University, Fort Collins

**Connecticut**
- University of Connecticut, Storrs

**Delaware**
- Delaware State University, Dover
- University of Delaware, Newark

**District of Columbia**
- University of the District of Columbia, Washington

**Florida**
- Florida A&M University, Tallahassee
- University of Florida, Gainesville

**Georgia**
- Fort Valley State University, Fort Valley
- University of Georgia, Athens

**Guam**
- University of Guam, Mangilao

**Hawaii**
- University of Hawaii, Honolulu

**Idaho**
- University of Idaho, Moscow

**Illinois**
- University of Illinois, Urbana

**Indiana**
- Purdue University, West Lafayette

**Iowa**
- Iowa State University, Ames

**Kansas**
- Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence Kansas
  - State University, Manhattan

**Kentucky**
- Kentucky State University, Frankfort
- University of Kentucky, Lexington

**Louisiana**
- Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge
- Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge

**Maine**
- University of Maine, Orono

**Maryland**
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Princess Anne

**Massachusetts**
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**Michigan**
- Bay Mills Community College, Brimely
- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Baraga
  - Michigan State University, East Lansing
- Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Mount Pleasant

**Micronesia**
- College of Micronesia, Kolonia, Pohnpei

**Minnesota**
- Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College, Cloquet
  - Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake
- Red Lake Nation College, Red Lake
- University of Minnesota, St. Paul
- White Earth Tribal and Community College, Mahnomen

**Mississippi**
- Alcorn State University, Lorman
- Mississippi State University, Starkville
Missouri
- Lincoln University, Jefferson City
- University of Missouri, Columbia

Montana
- Blackfeet Community College, Browning
- Chief Dull Knife College, Lame Deer
- Aaniiih Nakoda College, Harlem Fort Peck Community College, Poplar
- Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency
- Montana State University, Bozeman
- Salish Kootenai College, Pablo
- Stone Child College, Box Elder

Nebraska
- Little Priest Tribal College, Winnebago
- Nebraska Indian Community College, Winnebago
- University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Nevada
- University of Nevada, Reno

New Hampshire
- University of New Hampshire, Durham

New Jersey
- Rutgers University, New Brunswick

New Mexico
- Navajo Technical College, Crownpoint
- Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, Sante Fe
- New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque

New York
- Cornell University, Ithaca

North Carolina
- North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro
- North Carolina State University, Raleigh

North Dakota
- Fort Berthold Community College, New Town
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Fort Totten
- North Dakota State University, Fargo
- Sitting Bull College, Fort Yates
- Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt
- United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck

Northern Marianas
- Northern Marianas College, Saipan, CM

Ohio
- Central State University, Wilberforce
- Ohio State University, Columbus

Oklahoma
- College of the Muscogee Nation, Okmulgee
- Langston University, Langston
- Oklahoma State University, Stillwater

Oregon
- Oregon State University, Corvallis

Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania State University, University Park

Puerto Rico
- University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez

Rhode Island
- University of Rhode Island, Kingston

South Carolina
- Clemson University, Clemson
- South Carolina State University, Orangeburg

South Dakota
- Oglala Lakota College, Kyle
- Sinte Gleska University, Rosebud
- Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sisseton
- South Dakota State University, Brookings
Tennessee

- Tennessee State University, Nashville
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Texas

- Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View
- Texas A&M University, College Station

Utah

- Utah State University, Logan

Vermont

- University of Vermont, Burlington

Virgin Islands

- University of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix

Virginia

- Virginia Tech, Blacksburg
- Virginia State University, Petersburg

Washington

- Northwest Indian College, Bellingham
- Washington State University, Pullman

West Virginia

- West Virginia State University, Institute
- West Virginia University, Morgantown

Wisconsin

- College of Menominee Nation, Keshena
- Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa, Community College, Hayward
- University of Wisconsin, Madison

Wyoming

- University of Wyoming, Laramie

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