

USU Extension Launches New Course to Help Young Workers Build Durable Skills

Shelby Ruud

10/14/2026

```
$(document).ready(function(){ $(''.pdf-wrapper').hide();
$(''.pageTitle').addClass('text-bold'); });
```

Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are becoming some of the most valuable skills a young worker can bring to the job.

The USU Extension Center for Rural Economic Development & Emerging Technologies (CREDET) recently launched [Durable Skills for Workplace Excellence](#), a new online course that helps teenagers and young adults build the people skills employers look for most.

Created by USU Extension professors Paul Hill and Jared Hawkins, *Durable Skills for Workplace Excellence* is self-paced, takes about two hours to complete, and costs \$25.

The course includes five modules covering professionalism, communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and productivity, with exercises learners can apply immediately in their jobs. Participants earn a certificate of completion.

"Durable skills hold their value in any job, in any industry, through every wave of new technology," Hawkins said.

"When young people learn to communicate clearly, manage their time, and contribute to a team, supervisors notice quickly. Every module includes exercises they can apply on their very next shift."

The course directly addresses the needs identified in the study "A Discrepancy Evaluation of Workforce Capacity and Emerging Skills: A Utah Case Study," published in *Administrative Sciences*. In that study, employers identified communication, teamwork, and analytical problem-solving as the most critical skills for the next 5 to 10 years, and over half (58%) said demonstrated skills matter more than degrees in hiring decisions.

The need is especially pressing for young people. Only 53% of Utah teens worked at any point during 2024, down from 67% in 1990.

"Fewer teens are working today than a generation ago, which means they have fewer chances to practice the skills that careers are built on," Hill said. "Employers told us these durable skills are exactly what they struggle to find. This course gives youth and young adults a practical start and pathway to develop those skills and apply them at work right away, whether they are starting their first job or working toward a promotion."

A facilitated, in-person version of the course will be released in March 2027. USU Extension experts will offer the six-hour program over four weeks in select counties throughout the state.

Visit the USU Extension [Durable Skills for Workplace Excellence](#) page to learn more and sign up.

Contact

Paul Hill
paul.hill@usu.edu

Jared Hawkins
jared.hawkins@usu.edu

More Extension Updates

- [Extension News](#)
- [Gardening](#)
- [Recipes](#)
- [Personal Finance](#)
- [Relationships](#)
- [Our Impact](#)

[Tips Sign Up](#) [Take a Course](#) [Donate to Extension](#)