



APRIL - JUNE 2019

EXTENSION
UtahStateUniversity

Rural Online Initiative

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the 2018 Utah General Legislative Session, H.B. 327 and H.B. 390, the Rural Online Initiative (ROI) and the Rural Economic Development Incentive (REDI) respectively, were signed into law by Gov. Gary R. Herbert, changing the landscape of rural economic development. Funding for the ROI was appropriated to Utah State University Extension for program development and delivery across targeted rural counties.

The focus of the ROI program is to prepare Utah's rural workforce for the future of work with education, training, and services for online opportunities in remote employment, freelance work, and e-commerce. The following is a synopsis of the progress of the ROI program, including results from the 2nd quarter of 2019 and cumulative progress since the program's inception in October of 2018.



COMMUNITY EVENTS (Town Hall Meetings)

This Quarter



12 town halls
185 participants
5 new counties

Cumulative Data



33 town halls
579 participants
16 counties

RURAL TALENT NETWORK

COMMUNICATION APP

Program participants convene on the Slack communication app to network and share job and program information as part of Utah's largest network of remote workers.

595 total members

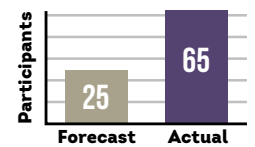
IN THE NEWS

10 news releases this quarter (34 cumulatively)

CAREER COACHING SESSIONS

>300 individual sessions since October 2018

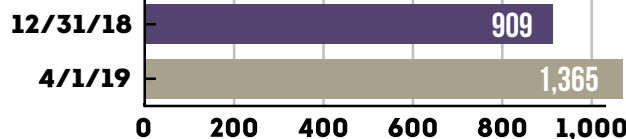
AVERAGE COURSE ENROLLMENT



October 2018 - June 2019



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS (Government, Business, Education, & Civic Leaders)

This Quarter



19 meetings
283 leaders
2 new counties

Cumulative Data



107 meetings
1,322 leaders
17 counties

SCHOLARSHIPS



56 scholarships have been awarded since the program's inception, with an estimated value of over \$13,000

THE ROI TEAM

The ROI team is made up of a senior program coordinator overseeing a team of three program coordinators and one project coordinator assigned to serve 17 counties with remote work education programming.

MASTER REMOTE WORK PROFESSIONAL

ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSE

After meeting the skill requirements and earning their certificates, ROI clients are assisted with job placement in partnership with Utah's Department of Workforce Services.



593 COURSE ENROLLMENTS

The 9TH

Master Remote Work Professional online certificate course cohort began in June 2019



Students have come from 16 DIFFERENT RURAL COUNTIES



12
38

new jobs generated this quarter
cumulative



The economic impact of these rural jobs is equivalent to over 3,700 jobs on the Wasatch front.
Source: GOED & DWS data



NEW COHORTS for the Master Remote Work Professional courses begin each month in 2019.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS



- After completing the Master Remote Work Professional certificate course, 95% of participants reported that their value as a remote worker improved and they felt empowered to seek remote work.
- Follow-up surveys have noted that a number of class participants took the training for personal interest and to prepare for a future jobs. Of the participants who responded that are actively looking for work, 38 found new employment, 10 are currently working as remote workers, and approximately 19 are still looking for work.
- Support from economic development, government, education, and civic partners has been firm and growing, with over 1,300 leaders having attended some type of partnership meeting.
- Enthusiasm and support continue to be extremely high from community members with almost 600 residents attending town halls in 16 different counties.
- Program employees are interviewing class graduates. Podcasts of program participants and success stories will be added to remoteworkcertificate.com.
- Over 100 different types of resources and virtual tools have been curated for remote employees, job seekers, and freelancers at remoteworkcertificate.com/resources.

SUCCESS STORIES

Emery Resident Uses Website Skills to Help Local City & Businesses: A recent graduate of the ROI program from Emery County used the skills obtained in the certification program, along with a skill scholarship for supplemental software training, to grow and expand her website design business. She has now earned a contract with Price City and has also found work with local businesses who want to add a web presence to expand their business markets. Her skills have benefitted not only her family but also the local economy as rural businesses are now able to reach new clients.

ROI Expands Freelancing Opportunity for Rural Entrepreneur: Tonia Lewis, an entrepreneur and recent graduate from the Master Remote Work Professional Certificate course, was looking to expand her professional freelancing opportunities by learning how to create drone images to market virtual tours through the use of websites and apps. After learning remote work skills in the course, she was able to obtain a Skill Scholarship to help with the costs of a drone class at Snow College. With her new pilot certification, she is able to continue pursuing her passion in rural Utah and can now add drone videos to websites for businesses who could benefit from a 360 degree view of their trails, facilities, or services.

“This program gives me a lot of hope. Before learning about the ROI program, I had decided my only option was to leave the county and move to Salt Lake, but I can now see exciting possibilities and opportunities I had not even considered.”

-DUCHESE COUNTY GRANDMOTHER

COMING OCTOBER 2019

A new certification course, the “Master Remote Work Leader,” is in final development. This course will allow organizations to train managers and leaders to supervise remote workers, measure productivity, and create remote-work policies. A quarterly entrepreneurship course is also being developed and will be introduced this fall.