

STRONG ECONOMIES, RESILIENT COUNTIES

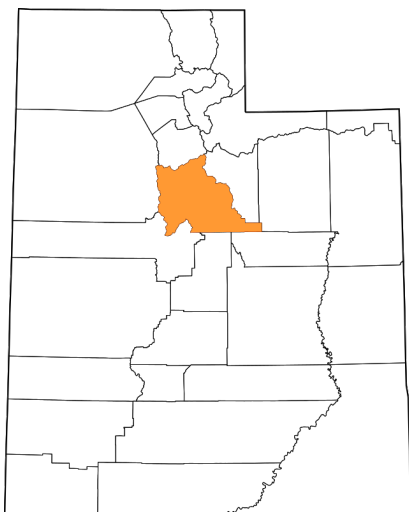
The Role of Counties in Economic Development



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UTAH COUNTY, UTAH

Workforce Development to Boost the Technology Sector



The second most populous county in Utah, Utah County enjoys a rapidly growing technology industry, part of the “Silicon Slopes” region in the state of Utah. In 2010, the Provo-Orem metropolitan area, containing Utah County, ranked 11th in the country based on the density of information and communication technology start-ups. In the county, the number of technology and information jobs rose by 20 percent between 2007 and 2012. The rapid growth of this industry requires a constant supply of highly skilled workers. To this goal, Utah County partnered with the Utah Valley University (UVU) and Mountainland Applied Technology College (MATC) to create workforce development programs and support the growing industry.

Utah County undertakes economic development efforts through a partnership with the Economic Development Corporation of Utah (EDCUtah). This active role for Utah County in economic development is relatively new, as economic development has been traditionally the responsibility of the state and cities in the state of Utah. In the mid-2000s, Utah County Commissioners decided to involve more the county in economic development activities, to support the rising technology sector and job creation in the county. The county offers the right environment for this industry, with low tax and utility rates, a growing and well educated population and local universities with existing technology educational activities. In 2007, Utah County Commissioners decided on a cost effective way to undertake economic development efforts through a partnership with EDCUtah. Formed in 1987 as a private, nonprofit organization, EDCUtah is a public/private partnership, with decades of experience working with the private sector, state and local governments, marketing the region to businesses. The partnership allowed Utah County to work with EDCUtah's existing client base and benefit from its vast experience in the field.

The county also leverages the state's initiatives and support for economic development. For example, while the county alone cannot provide large incentives to potential businesses, Utah County has been able to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tools in partnership with the state. The continuing collaboration between the state and county strengthens Utah County's ability to attract and retain businesses.

- Population, 2013: 551,891
- County Board size: 3

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Workforce Development through UVU and MATC Partnership

The rapid rise of demand for highly skilled workers for the growing technology industry led county officials to support new workforce development programs at UVU and MATC. The technology firms inform Utah County of existing vacancies, at some point estimated at more than 2,000 job opportunities in the technology field in the county. In response, county officials encouraged Utah Valley University (UVU), a regional state university that functions as the region's community college, to host several assessment forums with the business community, city and county representatives. These forums revealed the need for a better alignment between educational programs and their contribution to the region's talent pipeline with workforce expectations and demands.

The county's role as a channel of communication between the business community and these institutions to workforce development continues today. In response to industry input, UVU created and expanded workforce development programs including business marketing and sales analytics degree tracks. Additionally, UVU manages a Business Resource Center (BRC) that supports and incubates entrepreneurial activities and leverages available services, assets and resources to accelerate existing businesses. Utah County also supported the creation of career pathway programs for local high school students at UVU and MATC, a local vocational school.

Although its economic development efforts are relatively new, Utah County has seen success through its partnerships. Utah County sought partnerships with knowledgeable and experienced entities, such as EDCUtah.

With its technology sector experiencing robust growth, Utah County partnered with UVU to provide workforce development programs so that its residents can benefit from continued job growth in the technology industry.



UVU president addresses more than 150 business, civic and educational leaders at the ribbon cutting event at UVU's Business Resource Center(BRC).