



# Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

## Statewide Economic Development Strategy – 2023 Prepared by the GOEO team | June 2023



Unified Economic  
Opportunity Commission

## Introduction

During the One Utah Summit held on May 10, 2022, Gov. Cox unveiled the [Utah Economic Vision 2030](#), developed by the Unified Economic Opportunity Commission (UEOC). The vision outlines the state's strategies for the year 2030, which is to “create the strongest economy in the world while maintaining a world-class quality of life and cultivating opportunities for all Utahns.”

According to the vision, the state is experiencing significant population and economic growth, leading to the emergence of a new Utah. The document emphasizes that accommodating this growth is the most critical economic challenge in the foreseeable future. It further states that Utah's approach to coordinating and managing this growth over the next decade will establish a precedent for economic and community planning in the coming century. Looking ahead to 2030 and beyond, the primary opportunity and challenge for Utah's leaders will be finding a balance to leverage the momentum of America's fastest-growing economy without placing excessive strain on the state's communities.

While this strategic vision presents various themes and strategies, they all focus on coordinated and optimal growth. The burden for executing the state's economic strategy does not fall to an agency or group; instead, it falls on all of those who have a role in supporting Utah's economy. Coordination is the quintessence and innovation within this strategy.

This strategy provides a comprehensive approach to economic growth and opportunity. But as with any strategy, its efficacy and credibility depend on stakeholders working together. Utah's founding pioneers adopted this strategy. The use of the hive as the state symbol, the word "industry" recognized the entire hive would benefit from industry success. As this vision was established, we define the hive as “our industries, communities, and individuals.”

Under [63N-1a-301](#), the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) is responsible for implementing this statewide economic development strategy developed by the UEOC and providing a written report annually that gives an overview of the performance and efficacy of the strategy. This report details the annual activities and implementation of the confluence of economic opportunity with the strategies outlined in the Utah Economic Vision 2030. The data provided is primarily associated with the state's fiscal year of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023 (FY2023) and becomes the baseline for future year comparisons.

As part of GOEO's analysis of its programs to ensure alignment with the prevailing economic conditions expected in the next fiscal year, we asked the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to provide an [economic insight report](#) and recommended economic strategies for the future. This report was presented at the first UEOC meeting following the general legislative session.

## 8 Economic Vision 2030 Strategies

### 1. Strategy: Education and Talent Pipeline

**Purpose:** Better align K-12 and post-secondary education with industry and create the best talent pipeline for Utah businesses to provide opportunities for all Utahns.

**Action:** Help students gain market-relevant skills; provide more work based-learning programs; create additional business and education partnerships.

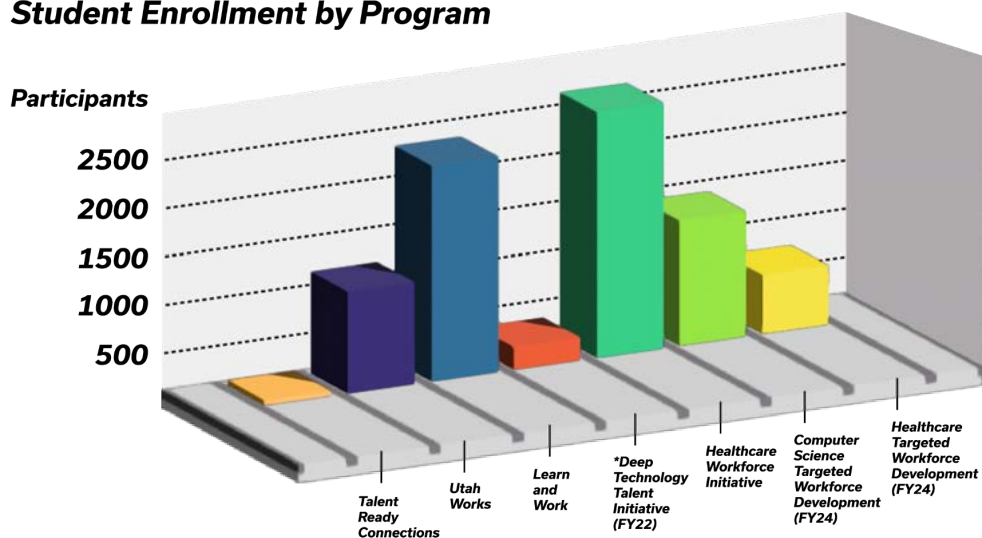
**Metric:** Increase work-based learning, students enrolled and completers, and placements in targeted industry programs.

**Annual Overview:** Under the Talent Ready Utah portfolio, 8,427 individuals over multiple years were able to participate in programs designed to address targeted business needs while training in a high-skill and high-wage workforce. This will serve as a baseline moving forward, and it’s expected that future years will increase enrollment and begin providing completion data for the programs.

These efforts were dispersed throughout the state system of higher education and afforded opportunities in both urban and rural areas. The programs were developed to focus on targeted industry needs allowing for a seamless transition from training to full-time employment upon completion.

The main programs used to accomplish this effort are outlined in the chart below. They incorporated goals such as providing skill-based training to youth and adult learners, allowing industry and education to co-develop training programs for high-demand careers, developing multidisciplinary training programs with stackable credentials, and expanding computer science and healthcare programs to include emerging specialties.

**Student Enrollment by Program**



- \*Deep Tech enrollment is the most recent data from FY2022
- \*Healthcare Targeted Workforce Development enrollment is as of FY2024
- \*Computer Science Targeted Workforce Development enrollment is as of FY2024

Other workforce development programs have also augmented the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) efforts previously mentioned. For example, GOEO offered Industrial Assistance Account funding to various partners to support their targeted training efforts. These programs are led by industry associations collaborating with their members to develop local leadership, support small businesses, and offer micro-grants to companies offering training programs.

USHE also created, through legislative funding, the Computer Science for Utah initiative and awarded \$13 million to K-12 local education agencies to implement their Computer Science master plans. The goal is to expand computer science education across the state down to the third-grade level. This will increase students' exposure to computer science, cognitive learning skills, and overall digital literacy across the state. In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 559,527 students served across more than 30 school districts. This effort should support all students as they enter the targeted industry programs outlined above.

## 2. Strategy: Community and Economic Planning

**Purpose:** Planning for economic growth is critical to maintaining Utahns' quality of life.

**Action:** Coordinated efforts on economic growth; housing solutions; enhanced planning for infrastructure, transportation, and water; and incentives for housing and economic opportunity.

**Metric:** Coordinate regional and state plans.

**Annual Overview:** Numerous essential strategies and initiatives have been implemented to concentrate on statewide community and economic planning. These include:

- The [Cox-Henderson's One Utah Roadmap](#) (versions 1 and 2) focuses on the administration's top priorities, including economic opportunity, education, rural, health, equity and opportunity, and streamlined government.
- The [Unified Economic Opportunity Commission](#) (UEOC) develops, directs, and coordinates Utah's statewide and regional economic development strategies. The commission informs policy decisions and works toward consensus building, bringing together the legislative and executive branches, education, local governments, and subject matter experts to develop meaningful solutions to some of the state's most pressing economic challenges.
- [Guiding our Growth](#), a statewide conversation about how we can keep Utah a great place for our families and communities as we grow. Led by the Governor's Office of

Planning and Budget (GOPB), the conversation is a broad effort to explore what actions make sense in the face of our ongoing population increase.

#### 2023 General Legislative Session:

Going into the 2023 general legislative session, the UEOC coordinated with hundreds of stakeholders to develop meaningful solutions to some of the state's most pressing economic challenges. Aligned with the [Gov. Cox FY24 Budget Recommendations](#), the UEOC helped develop over 50 policy recommendations. The [UEOC's 2023 Accomplishment](#) document outlines the legislative and funding accomplishments related to community and economic planning rooted in UEOC recommendations. Highlights include:

- Nearly \$500 million to address statewide water conservation needs, including \$200 million for agricultural water optimization, \$40 million for water reuse and desalination, \$50 million for Wasatch Front aqueduct resilience, and \$50 million for water infrastructure projects.
- An increase to the education budget of \$578 million in ongoing revenue and \$339 million in one-time funds, a nearly 20% increase. That includes \$236 million for a 6% increase in the value of the weighted pupil unit. The Legislature appropriated \$15 billion for public education and education programs from all sources.
- Over \$200 million in new money for affordable housing and homelessness initiatives.
- More than \$2 billion toward infrastructure and transportation improvements.
- A \$400 million tax-cut package plus another approximately \$239 million in various tax decreases, including \$32.7 million to lower the state tax on gas by two cents per gallon, \$51 million in a low-income housing tax credit, and \$146 million to maintain the decreases of the basic property tax levy freeze ([source](#)).

#### Statewide GOEO programs and coordinated regional and statewide initiatives:

- **Shared Local Administrator**  
\$1.58 million in ongoing funding. This new program funds 10 shared administrators who help align local ordinances with state code, optimize revenue sources and expenditures, promote best practices in local government, create long-term strategic plans, and complete a wide range of other tasks.

Outcomes: This program began on July 1, 2023

- **Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zones (HTRZ)**  
Creates a new development tool (HTRZ) to help address Utah's housing crisis by facilitating mixed-use, multi-family, and affordable housing developments within a

1/3-mile radius of fixed commuter rail stations. An HTRZ allows a city to use tax dollars to develop housing around existing public transit stations, like TRAX and FrontRunner.

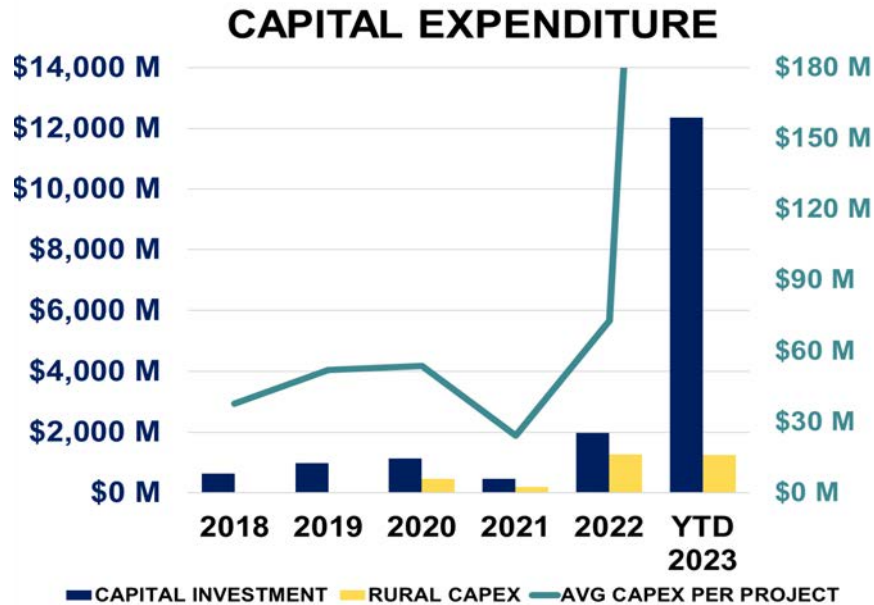
Outcomes: Three communities' HTRZ plans have been approved. These plans more than doubled the number of housing units that would have occurred without a property tax incentive. The three communities have proposed to add approximately 23,000 housing units versus the status quo of around 11,000 housing units. In the plans, communities pledged over 2,500 units to be available to individuals with Area Median Income between 60% and 80%. The office is expected to continue to review and facilitate these plans through the next fiscal year until statutory limits are reached on the number of projects per county.

- **Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) and Rural Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (REDTIF)**

The Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity administers the Utah Legislature's Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) tax credit program. It provides a post-performance tax credit that offers companies a reduction in their marginal tax rates, up to 30% of new state tax revenues (Utah sales, corporate income, and state payroll withholding taxes), during a defined period (typically 5 to 10 years). Created by the Legislature in 2005, the EDTIF program is for companies offering high-wage jobs — paying at least 110% of the average county wage. By design, the program has a multiplier effect, creating additional jobs supporting corporate expansion across Utah's diverse economy.

The tax credit is available to Utah companies expanding and other businesses relocating or establishing additional operations in Utah. Utah-based companies have most often used the tax credit. Since its inception, about two-thirds of the program's tax credits have gone to Utah-based companies to help them expand and create more jobs for Utahns.

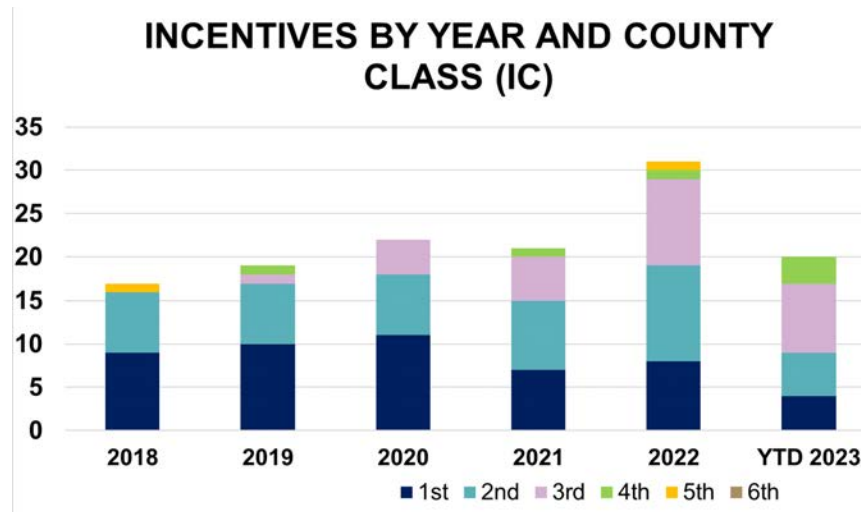
Outcomes: Utah experienced a greater than 500% increase in new capital investments this fiscal year compared to the [previous year](#). The average capital expenditure per project rose due to increased investments in industries such as technology and automation. From July 2022 to June 2023, 16 companies participated in the state's EDTIF/REDTIF program and are collectively projected to create 3,630 new jobs, make \$12,347,247,968 in new capital investments, pay more than \$574,641,262 in new state tax revenue, and provide \$4,083,879,940 in new state wages over the next 20 years.



“This has been a historic and prosperous year for Utah’s economic growth,” said Ryan Starks, executive director of the Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity. “We met new milestones, including the largest economic investment in Utah history with the expansion of Texas Instruments. The EDTIF and REDTIF tax incentive programs continue to attract investments from companies representing a variety of industries, and I want to express thanks to our team for their collective efforts.”

In FY2023, the EDTIF program remained strong. Utah maintained its status as one of the best locations for businesses looking to expand. Trends for the year included more projects that chose locations away from the Wasatch Front and into rural Utah.

The Rural Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (REDTIF) tax credit program is a recent rural modification of the EDTIF program that allows projects located in rural areas to qualify for more significant incentives. With this tool, the state has seen unprecedented economic opportunities flow to its more rural communities. The projected capital investment in rural Utah from announced projects in FY2023 amounts to more than \$1.2 billion, the same as in 2022, with more than double the capital investment of 2017-2021 combined that rural Utah has seen from state incentives. Counties and municipalities participate in the incentives process by promoting, coordinating, and offering suitable locations and official positions on where and how they want to develop. With their support, GOEO has approved 23 REDTIF projects since 2021, projecting 10,708 new high-paying jobs in the following counties: Beaver, Box Elder, Cache, Iron, Juab, Tooele, and Uintah.



- Utah’s Coordinated Action Plan for Water**

[Utah’s Coordinated Action Plan for Water](#) is a collaborative effort to “Establish a statewide water cooperative action plan that prioritizes conservation, storage, agriculture preservation, and use optimization.” This plan is a groundbreaking effort to plan for our state’s future directed by Gov. Cox and undertaken by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Agriculture and Food. This document will guide the work of executive branch agencies.

Outcomes: The plan was released in four chapters throughout 2022. The introduction to the plan and Chapter 1, Investing in Infrastructure, was released on Jan. 12, 2022. Chapter 2, Vibrant Communities, was released on Apr. 27, 2022. Chapter 3, Productive Agriculture, was released on July 27, 2022. The full report was released on Nov. 30, 2022. Utah’s Coordinated Action Plan for Water will be assessed, reviewed, and refreshed as needed.

GOEO is assisting the four-part plan of Investing in Infrastructure, committing to vibrant communities through efficient water use, productive agriculture, and healthy waters and watersheds. Specifically, programs tied to investing in infrastructure and efficient water use are the local matching grant, strategic innovation air and water grant, and the water infrastructure project.

- Department of Natural Resources Israel Water Mission**

Gov. Cox led a trade mission to Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from Sept. 8-17, 2022, to help Utah businesses capitalize on emerging opportunities and build economic bridges.



Outcome: Following the governor-led trade mission to Israel, DNR and GOEO coordinated a return trip with a delegation of Utah water experts. Israel leads the world in water innovation, and the Utah delegation spent five days learning best practices from global experts. Utah attendees included representatives from DNR, Utah State University, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Colorado River Authority, Utah Senate, Utah House of Representatives, and various water conservancy districts. In Israel, the delegation met with government leaders, WaterTech and AgTech companies, and educational institutions to tour research and development centers, desalination plants, and wastewater treatment facilities.

- **State of Utah Coordinated Action Plan for Economic Vision 2030**

Representatives of GOEO, and GOPB, along with the state's seven Associations of Government, business, and economic development professionals representing all state geographic areas, provided input for the coordinated action plan. Engagement sessions included stakeholder interviews and workshops, several on-site meetings, roundtable discussions, a statewide business survey, and weekly inter-departmental input over 10 months. The planning effort aimed to review updated research and analyses, examine post-pandemic challenges, and articulate the competitive advantages and unique value proposition for the state and its regions. The purpose of this was to align state, regional, and local efforts to accomplish mutual priorities.

This [report](#) advances the Economic Vision 2030. The purpose is to unify the goals and direction of state government with those of seven regions in the state. This involves, among other things, aligning each region's existing Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies developed by each of the state's Association of Governments (AOG). The overarching objectives are to optimize growth and expand prosperity throughout all counties.

Outcomes: The state of Utah has begun the process of integrating its core economic development functions with its enviable, larger asset base. A strong organizational effort is needed to pull the efforts together to provide the tools necessary to prepare Utah's economic development professionals to meet tomorrow's challenges. GOEO will be leading this effort with a strong stakeholder team.

This collaborative effort explores new ways to coordinate better support services and funding for local projects utilizing the AOG framework. For example, GOPB and GOEO are coordinating with Six County AOG on a pilot program to establish planning and infrastructure priorities with two communities and one county. Projects would be proposed and evaluated against set criteria and presented to a board that would select final projects and help match state funding sources to advance those projects. The pilot program tests the concept of aggregating decision-making and resource deployment amongst multiple state agencies to achieve greater synergies and community impact.

- **Guiding Our Growth**

A [statewide conversation](#) about keeping Utah a great place for our families and communities as we grow. The conversation is a broad effort to explore what actions make sense in the face of our ongoing population increases.

Outcomes: The effort started in fall 2021 when the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) was asked to work with community partners to develop a proposal for a statewide growth conversation. GOPB teamed up with organizations from all over the state, providing a variety of perspectives and expertise areas to complete this task. These groups include the state’s seven associations of government, Utah League of Cities and Towns, Envision Utah, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, Utah Land Use Institute, and the Department of Workforce Services. This statewide conversation was initiated in July 2022 and will run through December 2023. The effort is organized into three phases. Public and stakeholder participation opportunities are included in all three phases. The generous support of the Utah Legislature funds the effort.

### 3. **Strategy: Economic Opportunity for All**

**Purpose:** Increase earning potential to create additional economic opportunities while supporting a solid business workforce.

**Action:** Enhance training and education opportunities for underserved populations while creating partnerships for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Metric:** Increase the percentage of minorities and women enrolling in and completing targeted industry programs.

**Annual Overview:** The state has executed a myriad of initiatives targeted toward economic upward mobility of minorities and women. We continue to develop data to ensure we are on a successful trajectory. Initial data that establish a baseline include:

1. **Immigrant labor population:** Immigrants are an important part of the labor market and contribute to economic growth. In Utah, immigrants comprise 11% of the labor market in skilled and unskilled workers, as opposed to 17% nationally. The Utah Center for Immigration & Integration is working to increase pathways for immigrants in Utah in key sectors like healthcare and manufacturing. Numerous initiatives are in play to increase Utah’s immigrant labor participation.
2. **National ranking on diversity:** Utah is the [34<sup>th</sup> most racially and ethnically diverse state](#) in the U.S., just below Pennsylvania and above several larger states like Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin.
3. **National ranking of women’s equality:** Utah has been named as the worst state in the nation for women’s equality year after year by [WalletHub](#). Their assessment is based on

17 key indicators across three equality categories: workplace environment, education and health, and political empowerment.

Statewide GOEO programs and initiatives coordinating opportunity for all:

- **A Bolder Way Forward**

Several GOEO team members lead committees and working groups as part of the Utah Women & Leadership Project's [A Bolder Way Forward](#) initiative.

Outcomes: This initiative will begin executing in FY2024

- **APEX Training/Outreach**

The Utah APEX Accelerator's mission is to help Utah businesses successfully compete in the government marketplace by providing knowledgeable and outstanding customer service. GOEO has APEX offices located throughout the state.

Outcomes: Last year, our [APEX Accelerator](#) team hosted a diverse vendor training for nearly 100 socially and economically disadvantaged businesses to learn about free resources and services to pursue new government contract opportunities.

Additionally, APEX has a federally mandated FY2024 objective to increase equity and inclusion in the following areas with specific goals for each:

- Increase the number of Defense Industrial Base (DIB) and Government Industrial Base (GIB)-ready Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB): 29 businesses
- Increase the number of DIB and GIB-ready Historically Under-utilized Business Zone (HUBZone): 15 businesses
- Increase the number of DIB and GIB-ready Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB): 22 businesses
- Increase the number of DIB and GIB-ready Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB): 31 businesses
- Promote subcontracting opportunities for SDB, HUBZone, SDVOSB, WOSB, and other underrepresented small businesses.
- Encourage and support participation in Mentor-Protégé Program.

- **Workforce Initiatives**

The state's Talent Ready Utah initiative provides programs supporting women and minorities enrolling in and completing workforce training and certificate programs.

Outcomes:

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) was awarded \$139,580 through Talent Ready Utah's Utah Works program for its manufacturing curriculum, which teaches

manufacturing-specific English as a Second Language (ESL). This program served over 370 students during FY23.

SLCC was also awarded \$211,560 through the Healthcare Workforce Initiative in FY2023 for its Expanding On-ramp Access to Healthcare Workforce Education Pathways – Certified Nursing Assistant program, which allowed them to serve students in West Valley who did not previously have access and includes wrap-around services such as ESL, evening and Saturday classes, and transportation services.

Increased earning potential is one metric for a healthy business workforce. Another is training and specialized education openly available to provide additional opportunities for professional growth.

- **Building Belonging in the Workplace**

This program aims to identify and promote actionable solutions to racial disparities by engaging with communities of color and catalyzing private, philanthropic, and public partnerships.

Outcomes: Our team supported and worked with the [Center for Economic Opportunity & Belonging](#) to create [a toolkit for building cultures of belonging](#) in the workplace.

- **One Utah Summit**

The Economic Summit, Energy Summit, Global Forum, and Utah Rural Summit combined to create a biannual summit called the One Utah Summit. The One Utah Summit occurs every spring and fall, alternating between southern and northern Utah locations. The summit's purpose is to bring together the state's best and brightest government and business leaders to discuss Utah's economic development trends and topics.

Outcomes: With several partners, our office has led discussions with hundreds of industry leaders on diversity, equity, and inclusion in a thriving workforce. Nubia Peña, Senior Advisor to Gov. Cox on Equity and Opportunity and director of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, moderated the "One Utah Strategies for a Thriving Workforce" breakout session. The discussion on the importance of focusing on a diverse workforce as well as strategies, included leaders from the public and private sectors including Brock Blake, Lendio; Natalie El-Deiry, GOEO's Immigration and New American Integration; Dave Neilsen, Overstock; and Mindy Young, Equality Utah.

- **Governor's Industry Roundtable**

This is a continuation of the roundtable luncheons with industry. The roundtable is focused on economic inclusion, expanding access to quality jobs, and growing leadership pathways for increased representation in conjunction with Nubia Peña.

Outcome: The roundtable was hosted at the Governor's Mansion on May 31, 2023. As Utah continues to grow, companies are tasked with considering the changing needs of our diversifying workforce and creating initiatives that generate inclusion, support, and retention of great talent. Nine companies were invited to discuss how they are working through the challenges and investing in programs, practices, and policies that support a labor force that can remain competitive and attractive to current and future employees. After the roundtable discussion, Gov. Cox, Nubia Peña, and GOEO staff visited three of the companies at their respective businesses to further the ongoing discussion.

- **Statewide Digital Connectivity Plan**

Our [Utah Broadband Center](#) works with stakeholders who are delivering statewide broadband access. The center administers programs and grants to help communities gain or improve broadband infrastructure, access to digital devices, and digital literacy education, thereby increasing education, workforce skills, healthcare, commerce, and economic opportunities.

Outcomes: Under the oversight of the legislatively appointed Utah Broadband Center Advisory Commission, the Utah Broadband Center developed a new statewide five-year Digital Connectivity Plan that will augment the efforts of the federal Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. The state will receive \$317.4 million to ensure all broadband serviceable Utah locations have high-speed internet access. The Digital Equity Act (DEA) program was offered in addition to the state BEAD program. The primary goal was to promote digital equity and inclusion throughout the state. A total of 33 Broadband and Digital Access Planning grants were awarded to local and statewide entities to complete local broadband and digital access strategic plans, amplifying the state's BEAD and DEA efforts. They seek to address community vision, partnerships, gap assessments, and other components of the community.

Local outreach was completed with all 29 counties and the eight federally recognized tribes. Most outreach events were held in person, and responses were used to develop the state's broadband plan. One-on-one meetings were held with every internet service provider, and unserved and underserved broadband areas in the state were identified. Nearly 300 stakeholders joined our federal partners to attend the Internet for All: Utah Broadband Confluence, where the five-year plans were published for public comment.

- **Center for Immigration and Integration**

The purpose of this office is to be a one-stop resource for individuals and businesses seeking immigration guidance and information on Utah's foreign labor rules and regulations. The center coordinates with state and federal government partners to facilitate the successful use of foreign labor programs and coordinates with other entities engaged in international efforts.

Outcomes: The New American Task Force, under the leadership of our Center for Immigration and Integration, surveyed over 6,500 internationally trained professionals and Utah newcomers to help identify ways these workers can contribute to Utah's workforce. In addition, the center convenes a group of over 120 stakeholders statewide to inform and make recommendations on immigration and integration, emphasizing workforce and economic opportunity.

- **Suazo Business Center**

The [Suazo Business Center](#) enrolled 190 students in business development classes, according to its 2022 annual report. The center offered 27 courses. The students were 75% female and 25% male.

The center's client impact supports more female entrepreneurs than males (53% compared to 47%). Its services helped low-to-moderate income households (97%), and over 96% of clients classify as minorities.

- **Utah Innovation Center**

The [Utah Innovation Center](#) serves as a catalyst for technology innovation in Utah.

Outcomes: The center held events or gave presentations in collaboration with the Women's Business Center of Utah, Suazo Business Center, Kinect Capital's WeROC conference, and ShePlace & SheMoney. The team also mentored women entrepreneurs for the WeROC (Women Entrepreneurs Realizing Opportunities for Capital) conference as they prepared to pitch their businesses to investors.

The center provided three microgrants to women-owned companies and two to minority-owned businesses during FY2023. It provided two nonrecourse loans to minority-owned companies during the same period.

In FY2023, the Utah Innovation Center began a concerted effort to identify and conduct outreach to underserved populations in the technology innovation space. The center's outreach includes contacting 22 groups and conducting 14 calls or meetings to target outreach events to connect with minorities and women to access the center's services. Based on these efforts, plans for FY2024 include outreach events for targeted groups intending to increase the number of minorities and women participating in the center's offerings.

- **Utah Small Business Credit Initiative**

The [Utah Small Business Credit Initiative \(USBCI\)](#) is a new federal loan program. It includes \$69 million in funding to expand access to capital for small businesses in Utah, especially for underserved communities.

USBCI helps expand access to capital for small businesses emerging from the pandemic, create high-paying jobs, and build ecosystems of opportunity and entrepreneurship in Utah. We anticipate the program will stimulate up to \$690 million of private investment in Utah's small businesses.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 authorized and funded this initiative. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity works closely with the U.S. Department of the Treasury to administer this initiative.

Outcomes: USBCI offers loans with a target size of \$25,000 to \$3 million to Utah small businesses through two lending programs: a Capital Access Program and a Loan Participation Program. Each program provides capital to Utah small businesses, with a federally mandated goal of reaching 29% of loan deployments in underserved communities. We include socially and economically disadvantaged businesses in the program's implementation through USBCI's active community engagement process.

The initiative has several lending partners under contract. Lenders will offer loans to businesses in FY24, which will provide metrics and data later this fiscal year.

- **Inspire In Utah Campaign**

[Inspire In Utah](#) is an initiative to help support women entrepreneurs and women in the workplace at every level.

Outcomes:

Resources for Women – The website provides resources for women to support business success. We have gathered vital resources for networking, training, funding, and employment.

100 Companies Championing Women – As part of Inspire In Utah, the initiative focuses on recognizing and highlighting the stories of 100 Utah companies that offer family-friendly policies and practices, as well as women-specific initiatives known to impact the recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing of women employees, managers, and leaders. Through sharing the success stories of these 100 companies, the initiative aspires to create a positive ripple effect, encouraging more businesses in Utah to adopt inclusive and progressive policies that benefit both their employees and the overall business ecosystem. In July 2023, Gov. Cox and our office hosted a recognition luncheon celebrating the companies of the 2023 cohort. Applications for 2024 opened as of August 2023 for a second round of companies until spring of 2024 or until 100 companies are selected.

- **Utah’s Business Diversity Summit**

Hosted by the Salt Lake Chamber and other partners (including GOEO), the event features expert speakers on business diversity. It aims at fostering more diversity in businesses across the state. The summit targets businesses with and without well-established diversity programs. The event provides attendees with resources and networking opportunities.

Outcomes: In partnership with the Salt Lake Chamber, our team helped organize and support Utah’s Business Diversity Summit for the second year. The summit was held in connection with the One Utah Spring Summit. Team members presented and participated in the conference on fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion to create economic opportunities for all Utahns.

Data is challenging to curate for underserved communities or socially and economically disadvantaged business owners. A statewide approach to gathering this data is an opportunity for research funding in Utah.

#### 4. Strategy: Low Regulations, Low Taxes

**Purpose:** A stable regulatory and tax environment is critical to ensuring Utah remains a global business destination.

**Action:** Keep taxes and regulations at an appropriate minimum. Ensure the state has enough revenue to pay for future growth.

**Metric:** Complete an annual review of the state's overall tax burden compared to other states (Office of Regulatory Relief).

**Annual Overview:** In March 2023, [WalletHub](#) ranked Utah the 27th highest state for overall total tax burden at 8.08% based on property taxes, individual income taxes, and sales and excise taxes as a share of total personal income in the state. Alaska had the lowest overall tax burden, at 5.06%. The state with the highest overall tax burden was New York, at 12.47%. Below are the rankings in relation to neighboring states.

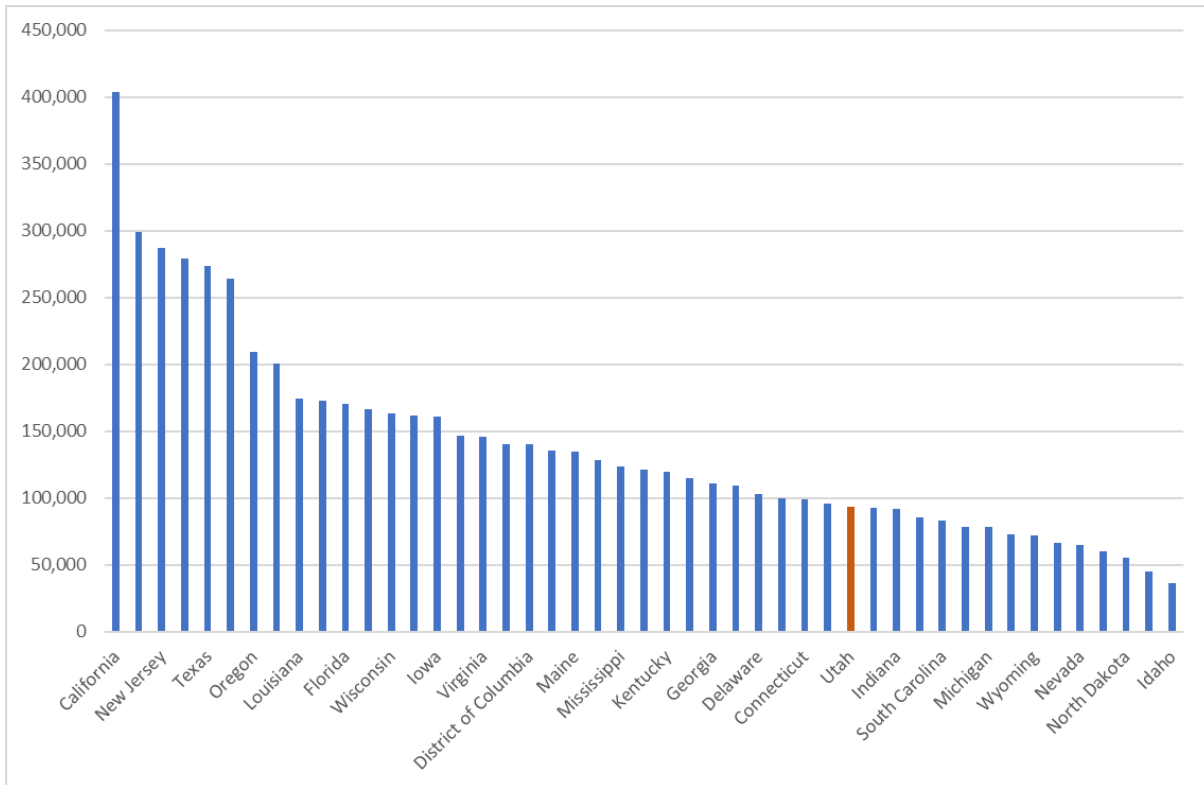
Regional Rankings		
	Rank	Total tax burden
Wyoming	45	6.42%
Arizona	34	7.62%
Idaho	33	7.64%
Nevada	32	7.69%



Utah	27	8.08%
Colorado	24	8.28%
New Mexico	14	8.83%

In 2022, the Mercedes Center at George Mason University ranked Utah as the 15th least-regulated state by measuring the regulatory restrictions in state code by counting the words and phrases: shall, must, may not, prohibited, and required.

Highest to lowest regulated states by Mercedes Center at George Mason University



This data and rankings will serve as a baseline moving forward.

Statewide GOEO programs coordinating low regulation:

- **Utah Office of Regulatory Relief**

To assist with the regulatory restrictions within the state, the [Office of Regulatory Relief](#) administers a general regulatory sandbox. A regulatory sandbox creates a safe space for businesses to experiment with new and innovative ideas in the market without the burden of regulatory barriers. As a sandbox participant tests its idea, state regulators collect data about how well the business and idea work without burdensome regulations.

Regulators evaluate the experiment's results at the end of the predetermined period. Once regulators have gathered all the facts, they provide them to the Legislature.

The Office of Regulatory Relief also invites residents and businesses to suggest laws and regulations that could be modified or eliminated to reduce regulatory burden. Feedback and suggestions can be sent to [regrelief@utah.gov](mailto:regrelief@utah.gov).

**Outcomes:**

Sandbox Waivers – Since its inception, the office has approved two applications. Additionally, during the 2023 legislative session, Utah passed [House Bill 289](#) to create the state's Noncustodial Blockchain Registry within the Office of Regulatory Relief. Based on the recommendation of the Blockchain and Digital Innovation Task Force, noncustodial blockchain companies can apply to be added to the registry and receive a certificate of registration from GOEO. The Noncustodial Blockchain Registry consists of business names and their authorized agents in the state, if any. An online application has been created for this initiative.

## 5. Strategy: Strong Targeted Industries

**Purpose:** Building targeted industries helps ensure those industries remain resilient and keep Utah's economy as the premier global economy.

**Action:** Develop and recruit headquarters, strengthen workforce programs, support innovative tech development, and help create higher-paying jobs for Utahns.

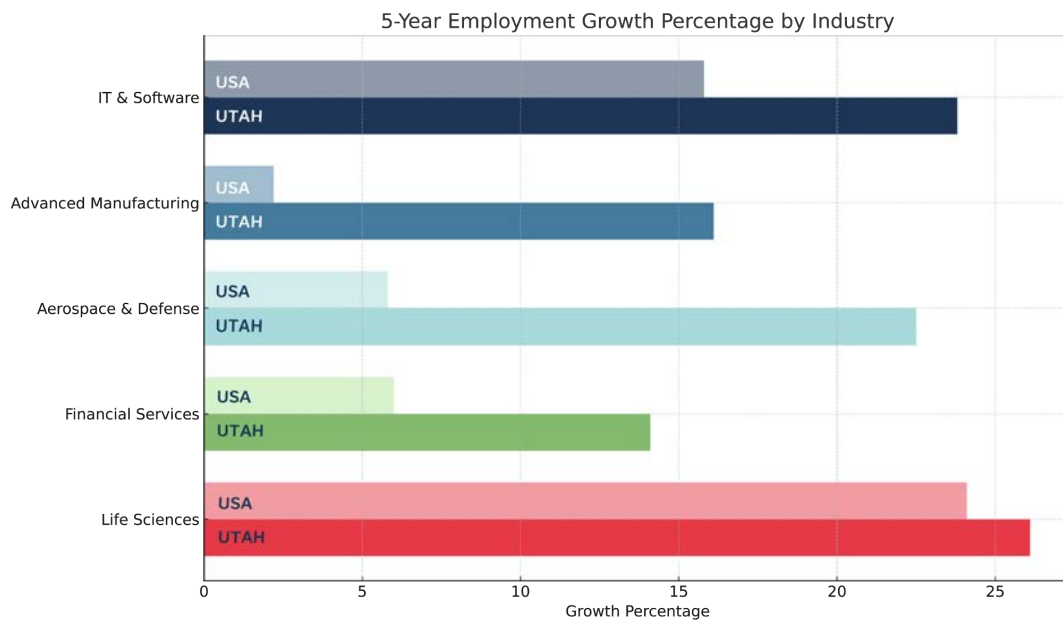
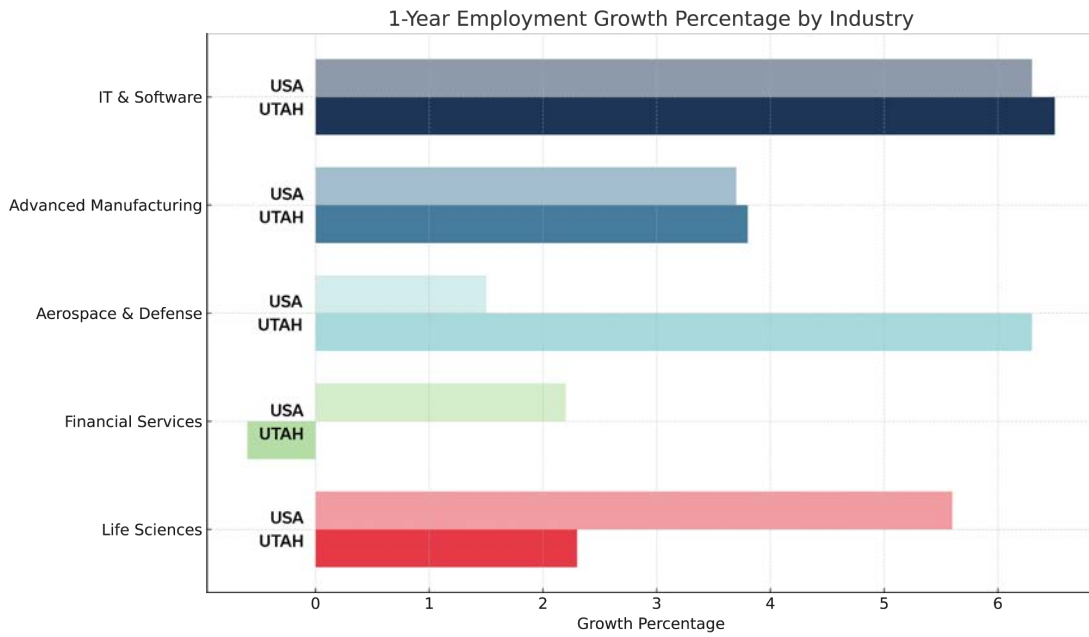
**Metric:** Experience growth in targeted industries to spur regional development.

**Annual Overview:** Utah strives to establish sustainable advantages in emerging and mature sectors. The state brings together stakeholders and formulates strategies to support and enhance specific industries within its robust and diverse economy. Programs catering to industries, communities, and individuals play a crucial role in shaping the state's future economic landscape. A key aspect of these programs is the state's focus on targeted industries. GOEO will assess and present its targeted industry plan to the legislative standing committee, the governor, and the cabinet. The most recent review occurred in 2020, and subsequent evaluations will be conducted every five years. GOEO relies on recommendations to identify targeted industries, which Kem C. Gardner and EDCUtah independently review. Below is a list of Utah's current targeted industries.

- Advanced manufacturing
- Aerospace and defense
- Financial services
- Life sciences and healthcare innovation
- Software and information technology

Targeted industry performance outputs:

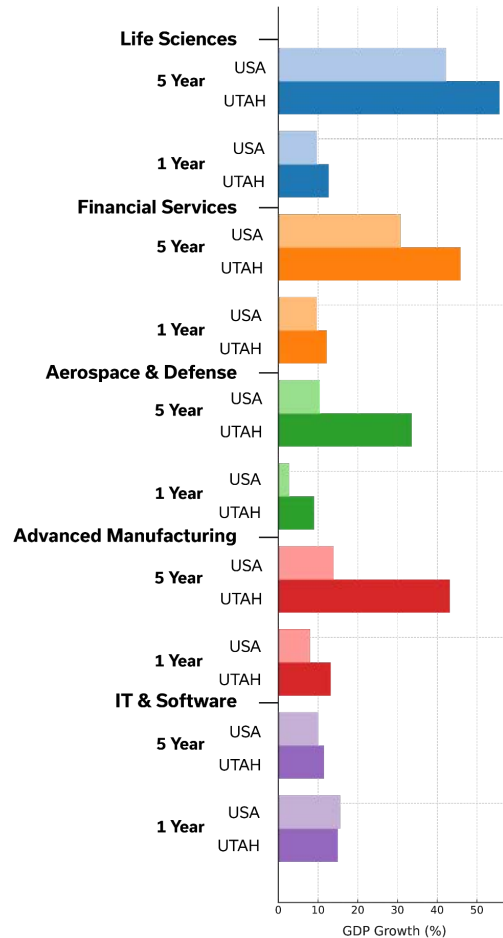
## Employment Growth



Source: JobsEQ, Data as of 2022 Q4

# GDP Growth

**GDP Growth Comparison: Utah vs. USA**  
Targeted Industries



Source: JobsEQ, Data as of 2021

Statewide GOEO programs and initiatives supporting strong targeted industries:

- Corporate Recruitment and Retention**

GOEO has contracted with the Economic Development Corporation of Utah (EDCUtah) to assist with Utah's corporate recruitment and retention efforts. As a statewide economic development organization, EDCUtah specializes in corporate recruitment, economic research, site selector marketing, and community development. Under this partnership, corporate recruitment and retention efforts align with the state's targeted industries.

Outcomes:

Global Strategy Outreach – For FY22-23, 103 domestic and 46 international recruitment meetings were held. This resulted in nine new projects. Outreach recruitment strategically focused on California (Bay Area) and New York City.

Industry Profiles – Utah has the most diverse state economy in the nation, and several verticals are the engines that drive our growth. Through our partner, EDCUtah, we’ve produced concise, highly visual [profiles](#) for every major industry in Utah.

Economic Development (and Rural) Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF/REDTIF) tax credit program – the EDTIF program is available for companies expanding in targeted industries in urban counties. Additionally, the office may authorize tax credits to rural communities (note that non-retail projects may be approved under REDTIF for rural areas outside of these targeted industries.) In FY23, the average capital expenditure per project rose due to increased investments in our targeted industries, such as technology and automation. We met new milestones, such as an agreement with [Texas Instruments](#), who plan to add 800 new, high-tech jobs and invest \$11 billion in Utah. This investment is the most significant economic investment in Utah history. The following outlines EDTIF/REDTIF awards associated with our targeted industries.

**EDTIF/REDTIF Award Data:**

Targeted Industry	Jul ‘22 - Jun ‘23
Advanced Manufacturing	4
IT/Software	1
Financial Services	2

- **Governor’s Industry Roundtables**

GOEO organizes roundtable discussions with Gov. Cox and targeted industry leaders. This is vital to understanding the needs of our targeted industries regarding issues with state policy, regulations, ecosystem gaps, workforce needs, etc.

Outcomes: Governor Roundtables held with a targeted industry focus:

8/24/22: Life Science – Medical Device – addressed EPA issue with sterilization and workforce

11/30/22: FinTech – Digital Identity, personal data security, national recognition of Utah Hub

1/25/23: Aerospace/Drone – Autonomous regulations, Innovation, Labor

4/26/23: Entrepreneurship – Where Utah excels/falls short, resources and policies.

## 6. Strategy: Startup State

**Purpose:** Startups and entrepreneurs are pulling the global economy, and Utah must continue investment to foster new businesses.

**Action:** Support more patent and tech privatization efforts, strengthen entrepreneurship education in schools, recruit more early-stage capital to the state, and increase mentorship opportunities.

**Metric:** Increase the number of patents, new startups, and venture capital.

**Annual Overview:** The University of Utah Research Foundation was the top patent earner in Utah last year. The university was issued 38 patents from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office within the state, comprising 19.7% of all patents considered for the statewide analysis. The University of Utah Research Foundation won patents in 2022 for [bone implant technology](#) and a magnet-propelled "[soft" robot](#) capable of traveling through the human body.

In 2022, venture capital available in Utah ranked No. 12 at \$2.54 billion in the U.S., whereas California, New York, and Massachusetts held the top three spots, Virginia (\$3.1B) ranked just above Utah, and New Jersey (\$2.34B) ranked just below.

[Grow Utah](#) lists Utah investors and funding sources categorized under the following headings, with dozens of resources:

Investors:	36 Utah-based investors
University and student-led funds:	7
Utah accelerators:	4
Other Utah funding sources:	12

The site lists hundreds of entrepreneur groups, associations, incubators, university organizations, and meetups across the Utah entrepreneur ecosystem.

Utah Department of Commerce	Business Registration 2022
Corporations	8,770
LLCs	66,470
LPs	228
LLPs	213
LLLPs	14
BTs	513
LCAs	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>76,211</b>

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Statewide GOEO initiatives support Utah as the Startup State:

- **Entrepreneur-In-Residence**

In January 2023, Gov. Cox appointed Brad Bonham, a member of the GOEO Board, as the state's first entrepreneur-in-residence. In this role, Bonham will advise on entrepreneurship education, culture, and resources within the state and recommend how to enhance the state's entrepreneurship ecosystem. Bonham presented his strategy to Gov. Cox in May 2023. Bonham works with GOEO and its Utah Innovation Center to accomplish the governor's charge. Additional purpose, action, and metric data will be recommended to the UEOC for statewide economic development strategy updates.

Outcomes: Execute a statewide startup brand to reinforce Utah's unique selling proposition as the world's startup capitol will begin in FY2024.

- **Utah Technology Innovation Fund**

The Utah Innovation Center helps drive the state's technology innovation ecosystem opportunities through the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. This non-dilutive funding mechanism – both grants and contracts – is dedicated to the research and development (R&D) of new technology.

Across the nation, startups and small businesses from diverse technology areas and markets compete for this federal funding to stimulate technology innovation and provide broad societal impact.

The Utah Innovation Center helps the state's small technology businesses to successfully win R&D funding and commercialize life-changing technologies that benefit us at home and around the world.

Outcomes: FY2022, the Utah Innovation Center is proud to have facilitated Utah small businesses receiving over \$50 million in direct funding and \$100 million in follow-on funding. In addition, the Utah Innovation Center team promotes technology-based economic development efforts by connecting and collaborating with members of Utah's world-class industry, higher education, and entrepreneurship support organizations. The team offers its services statewide, free of charge, giving Utah's technology-oriented companies a distinct advantage in today's competitive environment.

## 7. Strategy: Rural Affairs

**Purpose:** Utah must provide economic opportunities throughout the state. Rural economic opportunity and job creation often lag behind the state.

**Action:** Invest in rural infrastructure, build economic growth and diversification, and provide mentoring to rural communities.

**Metric:** Decrease rural unemployment rates, increase the number of communities with plans, and invest in infrastructure projects.

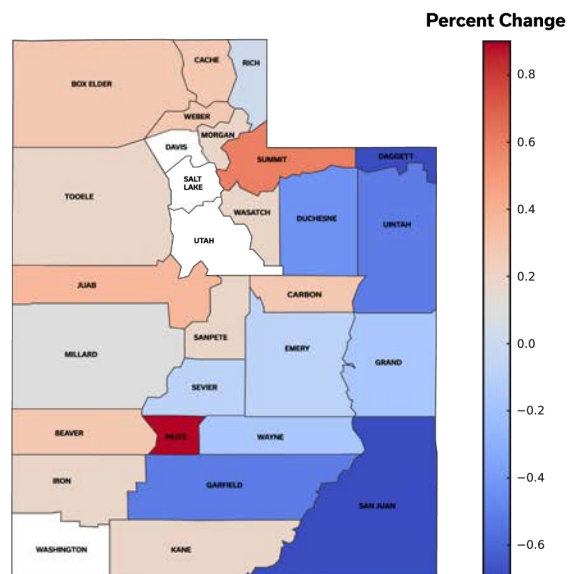
**Annual Overview:** GOEO has created the “outreach manager” service model in the past year. This has been a huge success with outreach managers residing in the areas they are serving. They provide mentorship to these rural communities, resource information, economic development assistance, etc. They are immersed in their communities and dedicated to providing needed resources and economic opportunities for all of Utah’s rural counties.

Unemployment rates fell in the following counties in June 2022 vs. June 2023: Carbon, Emery, Garfield, San Juan, Uintah, and Wayne.

### Year Over Year Unemployment Rates in Rural Utah Counties

June 2022 – June 2023

County	June 2022	June 2023	% Change
Beaver	2.30%	2.70%	0.4
Box Elder	1.80%	2.20%	0.4
Cache	1.60%	2.00%	0.4
Carbon	3.10%	3.50%	0.4
Daggett	4.20%	3.50%	-0.7
Duchesne	3.00%	2.60%	-0.4
Emery	2.90%	2.90%	0.0
Garfield	5.80%	5.30%	-0.5
Grand	2.90%	2.80%	-0.1
Iron	2.10%	2.40%	0.3
Juab	1.70%	2.20%	0.5
Kane	2.00%	2.30%	0.3
Millard	1.90%	2.10%	0.2
Morgan	1.60%	1.90%	0.3
Piute	3.20%	4.10%	0.9
Rich	2.20%	2.30%	0.1
San Juan	4.30%	3.60%	-0.7
Sanpete	2.30%	2.60%	0.3
Sevier	2.50%	2.50%	0.0
Summit	1.70%	2.30%	0.6
Tooele	2.10%	2.40%	0.3
Uintah	3.60%	3.10%	-0.5
Wasatch	1.90%	2.20%	0.3
Wayne	3.90%	3.80%	-0.1
Weber	2.10%	2.50%	0.4





### Rural Community Plans:

Over the past year, representatives of GOEO and GOPB, along with the state's seven Associations of Government, business and economic development professionals representing all geographic areas of the state, provided input for the development of the [State of Utah Coordinated Action Plan for Economic Vision 2030](#). The purpose is to unify the goals and direction of state government with those of seven regions in Utah. This involves, among other things, aligning each region's existing comprehensive economic development strategies developed by each of the state's Association of Governments (AOG). The overarching objectives are to optimize growth and expand prosperity throughout all counties. GOEO will be leading this effort with a strong stakeholder team.

Additionally, under our Utah Office of Tourism, the tourism industry's post-pandemic leisure and hospitality job recovery continued through 2022. Rural areas saw healthier recovery early on, with urban areas following. In 2022, statewide leisure and hospitality jobs surpassed 2019 levels by 4.9%. Rural growth during that time outpaced urban growth, 6.4% versus 4.2%, with rural growth decelerating from 2021-2022. Note: "urban" includes Salt Lake, Weber, Davis, and Utah counties; "rural" includes all other counties; "leisure and hospitality" includes NAICS 71\* and 72\*.

### Statewide GOEO programs and initiatives supporting rural affairs:

- **Rural Opportunity Program**

The Rural Opportunity Program was created to include three grant funding opportunities that benefit rural Utah. They are the Rural County Grant, the Rural Communities Opportunity Grant, and the Rural Employment Development Grant. Over \$11 million from these three grants was awarded in FY23.

#### Outcomes:

##### Rural County Grant (RCG)

The RCG awards \$200,000 to each of the 24 rural counties in Utah. Each county, with the advice of their county economic opportunity advisory committees, plan and carry out projects and activities that enhance business and general economic development. These projects and activities include business recruitment, development, and expansion; workforce training and development; and infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development. In FY23, \$4.8 million was distributed to rural counties.

##### Rural Communities Opportunity Grant (RCOG)

The RCOG expands opportunities to rural communities – not only the rural counties but also the cities and towns within them. The RCOG is a competitive funding opportunity; each application is scored based on the quality of the application, the proposed budget,

the economic development projects and activities proposed, and the purposes, goals, and measurable outcomes related to improving the overall economy. Awards to rural communities may be up to \$600,000. In FY23, [over \\$6 million was awarded](#) to 18 rural communities for business recruitment, development, and expansion; workforce training and development; and infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development.

#### Rural Employment Development Grant (REDI)

The REDI grant is a direct-to-business opportunity. Growing businesses creating new jobs in rural Utah apply to receive \$5,000 to \$6,000 per new high-paying position they create after a 12-month employment retention period. Contracts for this grant extend across fiscal years, but in FY23, \$333,000 was paid out to employers creating rural jobs.

- **Utah Rural Jobs Act**

The Utah Rural Jobs program enables eligible small businesses in a rural county to expand and create high-paying jobs by providing flexible and affordable capital to small businesses in these areas.

The Utah Rural Jobs Act (RJA) provides flexible and affordable capital that enables eligible small businesses in rural Utah to expand and create high-wage jobs. The program has three types of participants:

1. Investors who provide capital investment to a rural investment company.
2. Rural investment companies that raise funds from investors to be invested in eligible small businesses.
3. Eligible small businesses that may receive up to \$5 million in capital through equity or debt loans for business development and expansion needs.

#### Outcomes:

The RJA provided over \$42 million in FY22 and is authorized to add another \$42 million in FY23. It is expected that this investment will generate \$84 million in investment loans to Utah businesses in exchange for \$48.72 million in tax credits.

- **Utah Office of Tourism**

The Utah Office of Tourism (UOT) provides programs and services to rural communities in the form of grants, marketing programs and services, pass-through funding, and services support.

#### Outcomes:

Grants for rural communities – 39 of the 59 co-op marketing grants (nearly 67%) totaling \$3.4 million were awarded to tourism industry nonprofit organizations in rural counties through the Utah Office of Tourism during the fiscal year. A total of 13 communities were awarded destination development sub-grants from the federal Economic Development

Agency (EDA) grant, with 10 of 13 being rural communities. A total of \$385,000 was awarded in fiscal year 2022/2023. Programs funded by the EDA grant were developed to benefit rural communities, including niche audience research to guide destination product development and a certified community program to indicate the potential of communities as tourism destinations to travelers and help train front-line staff.

Marketing – UOT FY23 Southern Utah advertising campaign, primarily promoting rural regions of Utah, led to more active, quality trips with higher average visitor spending and increased social media advocacy. Advertising influenced approximately 777,000 Utah leisure trips and about \$1.6 billion in visitor spending.

GOEO / UOT Job Creation – four new hires at GOEO and UOT are remote workers from rural Utah, including two outreach managers, a community and partner relations director, and grant specialist. These positions will provide mentoring to rural areas and across the state. Their background focuses on supporting and building the economy in rural Utah.

- **Rural Film Incentive Program**

In July 2022, the Utah Motion Picture Incentive Program expanded to include an additional \$12 million in tax credits earmarked for productions that shoot 75% of production days in select rural counties.

Outcomes: Rural incentive program by the numbers:

- \$93 million spend in rural counties
- Economic impact of greater than \$60 million annually
- Increased industry awareness and interest
- 1000+ jobs



## 8. Strategy: International Connections

**Purpose:** Maintaining and growing Utah's presence in the global economy is critical to the state's robust economy.

**Action:** Accelerate global growth for Utah businesses, attract international investment, expand Utah's global network, optimize supply chains for Utah companies, and elevate Utah's global status.

**Metric:** Increase the number of jobs supported by international trade (#/%), change in exports (\$ value/%), total trade volume (\$), business exporting (#/%), and foreign direct investment stock (\$).

**Annual Overview:** In 2022, Utah exported \$16,591,800,839 in goods and imported \$19,108,367,824 for a total of \$35,700,168,663 in trade volume. Since 2018, Utah’s exports have increased by 15.3% and by \$2.2 billion. However, the state did experience an 8.3% decrease in exports from 2021 to 2022 after a historic high in 2021. 20% of Utah jobs rely on international trade (433,000), and 3,064 Utah companies exported goods in 2020. In 2020, seven Greenfield foreign direct investment projects were announced in Utah from the following source markets: the United Kingdom, Spain, China, and Canada. With the support of World Trade Center Utah, 398 companies received assistance in utilizing international services.

**Utah Exports (World Total and Utah’s Top 3 Trade Partners)**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
World Total	\$14,390,033,926	\$17,367,499,159	\$17,688,504,684	\$18,106,348,578	\$16,591,800,839
United Kingdom	\$5,096,207,859	\$8,754,700,581	\$8,908,039,074	\$8,539,951,548	\$7,078,954,612
Canada	\$1,790,729,503	\$1,391,301,785	\$1,508,391,333	\$1,524,403,888	\$1,687,037,258
Mexico	\$725,477,024	\$766,246,380	\$944,960,014	\$1,142,929,064	\$1,082,916,348

Statewide GOEO programs and initiatives supporting international connections:

- **Trade Missions**

In partnership with World Trade Center Utah (WTC Utah), GOEO’s international team has organized two governor-led trade missions in the past fiscal year including one to Israel and the United Arab Emirates and one to France and the United Kingdom.

Outcomes: In the Middle East, 64 government, business, and community leaders participated in over 100 meetings, with companies focusing on connections in aerospace and defense as well as life sciences. A total of 41 businesses participated in 83 engagements throughout the European trade mission, focusing on life sciences, consumer goods, and innovation.

Besides key business connections, GOEO helped facilitate two trade agreements with foreign counterparts that will help increase international engagement for the state of Utah. Gov. Cox signed a Letter of Intent with Région Sud of France, supporting tourism and collaboration in new technologies, innovation, and healthcare. Utah then became the fifth state to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom, formalizing our relationship and focusing on our priority areas, including targeted industries, academic cooperation, supply chain resilience, and addressing further trade barriers.

- **Tourism**

The Utah Office of Tourism focused on inbound visitor recovery, with the team executing eight international missions and trade shows. These include Brand USA Travel Week EU, the Toronto Ski Show, the Netherland/Belgium Sales Mission, the Australia/New Zealand Sales Mission, the India Sales Mission, the Brand USA Mexico Mission, the Canada Media Mission, and the Governor’s Paris and London Trade Mission.

Outcomes: International deplaned passenger counts at SLC International Airport climbed above 2019 in 2022 (up 5%) and were 42.9% above the 2019 baseline in Q1 of 2023 (vs. Q1 of 2019).

- **Diplomatic Hosting**

International trade relies on relationships fostered through diplomacy, a highly formalized interaction governed by specific expectations and protocol. The partnerships and alliances developed through diplomatic relations are crucial to promoting Utah’s business community and recruiting foreign direct investment in the state. GOEO serves as the official diplomatic arm of the state of Utah.

Outcomes: In the past fiscal year, GOEO hosted 35 delegations from 42 countries. Many of these diplomatic visits included a business roundtable luncheon, co-hosted by GOEO and WTC Utah, for Utah businesses to meet diplomats and learn about expanding into international markets. One of these roundtables was a direct byproduct of the trade mission to the Middle East – the Minister of A.I. from the United Arab Emirates traveled to Utah to reconnect with the governor and meet with business and community leaders.



# Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity



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