



JANUARY - MARCH 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 1st quarter of 2019 and cumulative progress since the program's inception in October of 2018.



COMMUNITY EVENTS (Town Hall Meetings)

This Quarter



11 town halls
184 participants
3 new counties

Cumulative Data



21 town halls
394 participants
11 counties

RURAL TALENT NETWORK

COMMUNICATION APP

220 new members convening on the **Slack** commutation app. Now Utah's largest network of remote workers.
507 total members

IN THE NEWS

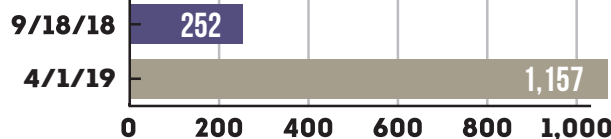
17 news releases this quarter (24 cumulatively)

CAREER COACHING SESSIONS

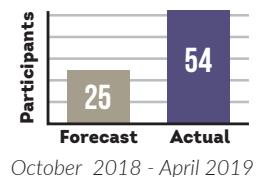
>150 individual sessions since October 2018



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



AVERAGE COURSE ENROLLMENT



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

This Quarter



50 meetings
749 leaders
4 new counties

Cumulative Data



88 meetings
1,039 leaders
15 counties

SCHOLARSHIPS



34 scholarships have been awarded since the program's inception, with an estimated value of over \$10,000

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.



382 COURSE ENROLLMENTS

The 7TH

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



Students have come from 12 DIFFERENT RURAL COUNTIES



14
26

new jobs generated this quarter
cumulative



The economic impact of these rural jobs is equivalent to over 2,400 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

- Support from economic development, government, education, and civic partners has been firm and growing, with over 1,000 leaders having attended some type of partnership meeting.
- Enthusiasm and support continue to be extremely high from community members with almost 400 residents attending town halls in 11 different counties.
- While not reflected on this particular report, full-time employment opportunities are expanding in partnership with the Rural Economic Development Incentive (REDI). Future reports will include jobs produced through the ROI program as well as some of the jobs from the REDI partnership.
- Class graduates are working in new jobs as remote workers, entrepreneurs, and freelancers. Out of 110 students who responded to an employment survey, 26 have found remote work, 10 are already working remotely, and 21 are looking for work.



- 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

Success is a Family Affair: Five people from the same family took the *Master Remote Work Professional* course in January. They were recently spotted at a local event in Emery County selling their goods. They now have an online presence and a physical store. They reported that the ROI program successfully introduced the skills and tools needed to run a successful business and are now working to get busy enough to expand.

Single Mom Gets a New Start: A single mother with a new baby and four other children recently found a new job. With five children, it is almost impossible to work outside the home, and, if you are lucky enough to find a good job, much of the salary is consumed by child care. This mom from a small town in Washington County recently found new hope after completing the ROI program. Following her career coaching sessions, she was able to obtain a part-time position, paying \$18 per hour, that allowed her to work completely from home while being a full-time mother.

COMING SOON

A new certification course, the "Master Remote Work Leader," is in development. This 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.