

MEDA REMOTE WORK WORKING GROUP
Advancing REMOTE WORK in Montana

Wednesday, November 4, 2020
3:30pm – 4:30pm

Participants: Heather DePriest, Jodi Bruns, Anne Boothe, Tara Mastel, Paul Hill, Joel Schumacher, Liz Moore, Barbara Stiffarm, Chris Manos, Anne Boothe, Lisa Haas, Brent Donnelly, Paul Hill, Jodi Bruns, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. ROI

Following introductions, Paul Hill, Utah Extension and Program Director for ROI shared information and details about the program. Paul said they had long been focused on business recruitment but the shift is to encourage remote workers and figure out co-working spaces as well as incentives.

Utah is very conservative but the legislators took a risk. The idea came from a rural county commissioner with some clout; a respected legislator brought it forward and the legislation passed. Pilot program for two years with \$2.2 million. They had 130 rural job placements which had an impact of 5,000 created if in an urban setting.

In Utah, jobs lost in the recession were recovered, but left rural areas. ROI is seen as an equalizer by encouraging remote work. It is an investment in human capital.

Paul noted some were not able to become remote workers due to poor internet speeds.

Q: What are some of the types of jobs and how are they connected?

A: People can be rejected for the program if they don't have some skills and have no internet connection. There are a lot of accountants, bookkeepers, business entrepreneurs, marketing, ecommerce/retail, software and IT, education, medical coding, etc.

Q: Is there a match-making service?

A: We do have trained program coordinators or job coaches that help. They are working with Jodi in ND, for example, to take cases. There is a charge for the course. Sometimes people need to skill up; courses are provided for this, too.

Remote Certificate.com How to get a remote job.

Q: Do you work with existing tech companies?

A: Yes. They look for the best possible talent.

Q: How do the co-work spaces work?

A: Rural Co-Working Innovation Center grant. Run by State of Utah...

<https://business.utah.gov/rural/> explains grant

Q: What are the incentives?

A: same page REDI - (look on the flyer) Must hire person, pay them for a year, and then you get the incentive of \$7,000 per person per year. The company Purple – hired 900 people to work in manufacturing, and they maxed the limit. Paul said when someone applies for the grant, the staff for the grant alerts ROI that they will need remote workers.

North Dakota

Jodi shared what is happening in ND.

In the middle of March, ND heard about Utah's ROI. They signed up for remote certification course and knew they had to bring it to ND.

They offered the course for the first time in August. They registered through ND Extension; they work with UT State Extension when someone registers. ND has four program coordinators – 20 people per month are taking the course so they divide the students among the four. They serve as the mentor for each person, help with homework, etc. The program uses Slack to find remote work opportunities. People are underemployed and under paid. Jodi used an example of editing gigs; Slack provides a continuous stream of job openings. Canvas is also used.

Q: How is it funded in ND?

A: Charge for the course. Offered a grant to the first 100 people so the course only cost \$50. Self directed and self paced.

Q: Who is signing up?

A: Mostly people who are already working but know they will be working remote, i.e., educators.

Is ND an affiliate of UT? Yes. Perdue, Kansas State, and Iowa are starting with Utah as well. SD as well.

Q: What is the cost?

A: Outside of UT, \$199.

Benefits of this program:

<https://joe.org/joe/2020october/rb4.php>

Paul said you need people with the time to be Program Coordinators. UT success has been from Program Coordinators to spread the work, provide remote work town halls, and then take it all online. It mimics remote work teams.

ND: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/>

Q: Is there train – the – trainer options? Yes - can get certified.

A: <https://extension.usu.edu/remoteworkcertificate/leader/index>

Note: Paul Hill said they do work with UT SBDC network, MACo-like organization, Chambers, etc. They give them the course for free just to share the news of the course.

ND Program Managers just went through the course and work closely with UT Program Managers.

Extension is a big family so it is easier to go through extension. They do have a nonprofit that is an affiliate,

Here is the affiliate page and costs:

<https://extension.usu.edu/remoteworkcertificate/affiliate>

As for Montana, we do not have very many community development specialists. Perhaps SBDC in Montana would be a better avenue.

Next steps:

- a. ROI: Ask Paul and Jodi to present again to those who might be key players.
- b. This committee's marketing remote work – may get a boost from the NextGen Broadband Committee efforts.
 - a. Innovation Hub – contains remote work videos
- c. Hear back from Todd O'Hair on Make Montana Home.

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