
Issue Brief – USTAR Technology Outreach Program

NUMBER CRA-07-002

SUMMARY

Intent language in Senate Bill 75, *USTAR Initiative* (2006 General Session), directs the USTAR Governing Authority to use up to \$4 million annually of its total \$19.25 million ongoing appropriation to fund a technology outreach program. Since forming in last July, the Governing Authority has identified locations for five technology centers, developed a framework for the program, and begun hiring program staff. The USTAR Technology Outreach and Innovation Program will aim to connect USTAR research and technologies to regional colleges, universities, businesses, and entrepreneurs and encourage local commercialization of these technologies.

OBJECTIVE

This issue brief describes the scope of the USTAR Technology and Innovation Outreach Program, provides a progress update, and identifies other programs with similar purposes.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Scope of the Technology Outreach Program

The six objectives of the USTAR Technology Outreach and Innovation Program are outlined in UCA 63-38g-202, *Technology Outreach Program*. The Program:

1. Brokers ideas, new technologies, and services to entrepreneurs and businesses throughout a defined service area;
2. Engages local entrepreneurs and professors at applied technology centers, colleges, and universities by connecting them to Utah's research universities;
3. Screens business ideas and new technologies to ensure that the ones with the highest growth potential receive the most targeted services and attention;
4. Connects market ideas and technologies in new or existing businesses or industries or in regional colleges and universities with the expertise of Utah's research universities;
5. Assists businesses, applied technology centers, colleges, and universities in developing commercial applications for their research; and
6. Disseminates discoveries and technologies originating at Utah's research universities to local entrepreneurs, businesses, applied technology centers, colleges, and universities.

The Analyst recommends that, during the 2007 Interim, the USTAR Technology and Innovation Outreach Program present details on how these objectives will be fulfilled and how success will be measured to the Economic Development and Revenue Appropriations Subcommittee.

Program Progress

The USTAR Governing Authority has made considerable progress in establishing the outreach program. It has identified Weber State University, Salt Lake Community College, Utah Valley State College, and Utah State University's Uintah Basin Campus as outreach center sites. A center serving southern Utah will be located at either Dixie College or Southern Utah University. In addition to identifying sites for the outreach center, the authority has program director and directors for the Weber State and Salt Lake centers. Director candidates for the remaining centers have been narrowed down and the authority plans to make final selections soon.

Related Programs

The USTAR website identifies four Governor's Office of Economic Development programs that aim, along with USTAR, to strengthen Utah's position in the knowledge economy: the Utah Fund of Funds, the Centers of Excellence, the Economic Cluster Initiative, and Utah Business Link. The Utah Fund of Funds encourages venture capital firms to invest in Utah start-up companies; the Centers of Excellence Program assists in the movement of research originating in Utah universities to Utah businesses; the Cluster Initiative works to align industry, research universities, capital, talent, technology and government around industry sectors; and Utah Business Link is an online tool that provides access to a number of business resources. Further information on other economic development programs in Utah is available in Dr. Andrea Wilko's report, *An Overview of Economic Development Incentives*, which is available online at: <http://www.le.utah.gov/interim/2006/pdf/00002151.pdf>.

It is crucial that USTAR Technology Outreach and Innovation Program efforts complement rather than duplicate the efforts of other economic development programs and therefore the Analyst recommends that USTAR and the Governor's Office of Economic Development coordinate their efforts and report their progress to the Economic Development and Revenue Subcommittee during the 2007 Interim or 2008 General Session.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Analyst recommends the following actions by the Economic Development and Revenue Subcommittee:

- Direct the USTAR Governing Technology and Innovation Outreach Program to report its plans to fulfill the objectives listed in UCA 63-38g-202 and how success will be measured to the Economic Development and Revenue Appropriations Subcommittee during the 2007 Interim.
- Direct the USTAR Governing Technology and Innovation Outreach Program and the Governor's Office of Economic Development to coordinate efforts to avoid duplication and to report on progress during to the Economic Development and Revenue Subcommittee during the 2007 Interim or 2008 General Session.