



RURAL ONLINE INITIATIVE™

Impact Report to the Utah State Legislature

September 15, 2020

Purpose & Goals

To ~~connect~~ empower rural communities through remote work.

The Rural Online Initiative (ROI) is a forward-thinking, innovative program designed to prepare Utah's rural workforce for the future of work by providing education and specialized training to prepare individuals to succeed in a rapidly changing economy.

Program History

Funding H.B. 327

3-year pilot program
July 1, 2018

Leadership Course

Master Remote Work Leader
certificate
February 2020

Professional Course

Master Remote Work
Professional certificate
October 2018

4-H Remote Skills Camp

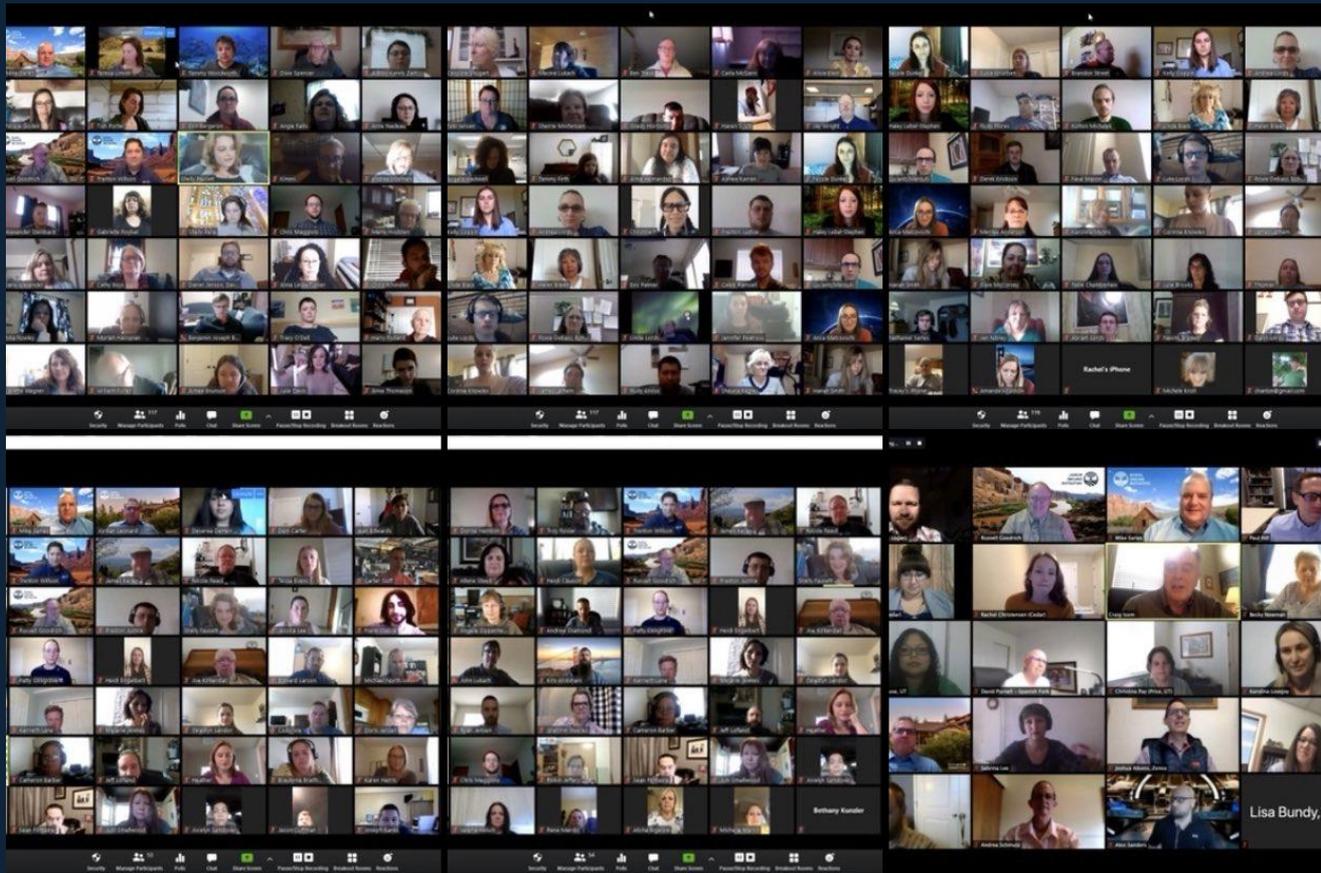
For College & Career Readiness
June 1, 2020

Master Remote Work Professional Course

638 certificates awarded

(as of June 2020)

- 30 hours of learning modules
 - 9 remote work projects
 - 4 interactive workshops
 - 819 enrollments
 - 80% completion rate
 - 1330 expressed interest (i.e., barriers, challenges)
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Brian

County: Carbon

Remote Job: Customer Service Manager

Company: Hubstaff



Jessica

County: Emery

Remote Job: Business Support

Company: American Maintenance



Erin

County: Duchesne

Remote Job: Virtual Administrative Assistant

Company: The Bullock Agency



Althea

County: Washington

Remote Job: Legal Administrative Specialist

Company: Veterans Benefits Administration

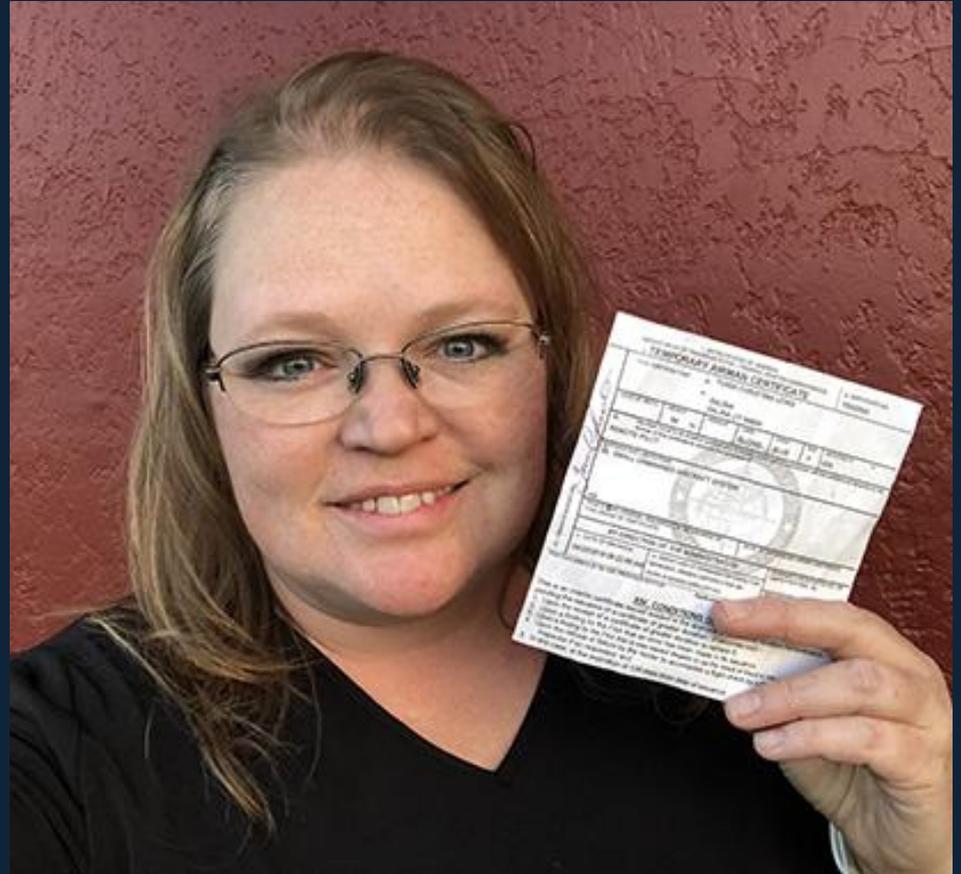


Tonia

County: Sevier

Remote Job: UAV Pilot and Videographer

Company: Entrepreneur & Freelancer



Carri

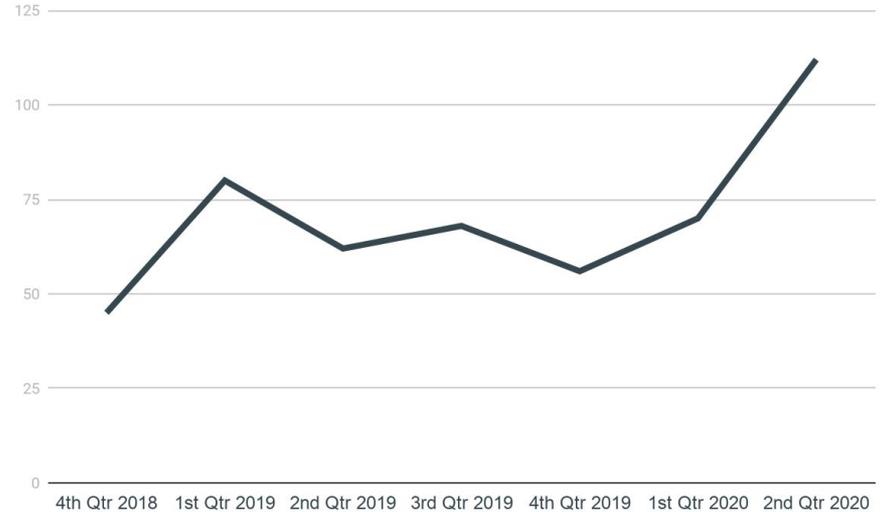
County: Iron

Remote Job: Accountant

Company: LedgerGurus



Master Remote Work Professional Course



Master Remote Work Professional Course

Participant details

- 72% female
 - 51% over age 40 yrs old
 - 69% no remote work experience
 - 93% felt remote work skills were very important
 - 68% resided in rural county avg. of 16 yrs
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Master Remote Work Professional Course

Participant details

- **54%** believed adequate wages were not available in their local region
 - **59%** reported job opportunities were not aligned with career goals
 - **62%** had no intention of leaving their region in search of better career opportunities
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Short-Term Outcomes

Knowledge

- Communication: (t = 13.31, p < .001)
 - Compliance (t = 33.43, p < .001)
 - Critical thinking (t = 27.59, p < .001)
 - Productivity (t = 31.51, p < .001)
 - Remote Job Development (t = 13.46, p < .001)
 - Teams (t = 14.31, p < .001)
 - Workday (t = 25.84, p < .001)
 - Workflow (t = 6.54, p < .001)
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Short-Term Outcomes

Attitudes

- **52%** of participants desired higher incomes between \$35,000 - \$49,999 and \$50,000 - \$74,999
 - **85%** of participants felt favorably towards seeking remote work employment opportunities
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Short-Term Outcomes

Skills

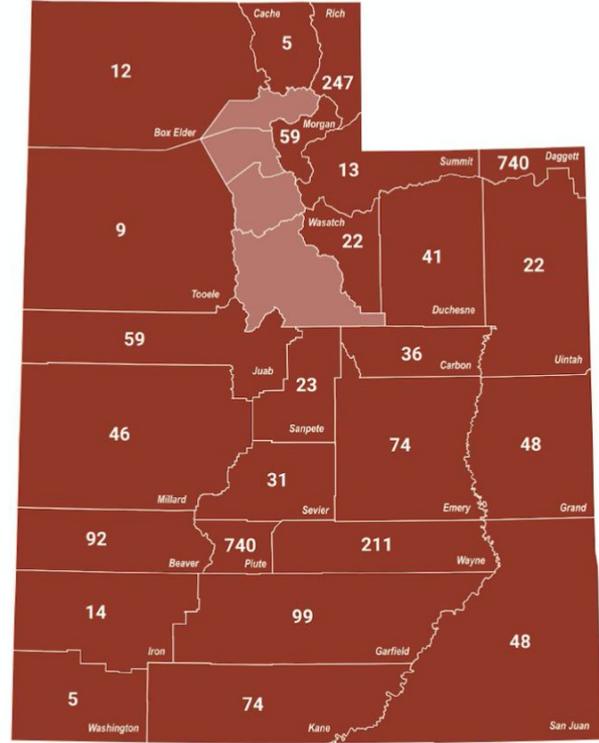
- Work-life balance (M = 4.06, SD = 0.59)
- Productivity (M = 4.28, SD = 0.57)
- Problem solving (M = 4.14, SD = 0.65)
- Digital communication (M = 4.19, SD = 0.62)
- Online technology (M = 4.07, SD = 0.61)
- Teamwork (M = 4.11, SD = 0.66)
- Career management (M = 4.25, SD = 0.58)

Short-Term Outcomes

Aspirations

- **98%** felt their value as a remote worker improved after completing the MRWP course
 - **96%** felt empowered to seek remote employment after course completion
 - **76%** intended to seek remote work after completing the course
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Remote Job Placements



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017. Map numbers derived by dividing number of county jobs needed into the average number of jobs needed in a Wasatch Front County. Analysis based on the goal of reducing unemployment by .5%. Statistics based on county labor force, current rate of unemployment and extrapolated number of jobs required. Average Number of Rural Jobs to Reduce Unemployment by .5% is 67. Average Number of Wasatch Front Jobs to Reduce Unemployment by .5% is 1479. Ratio of Rural to Wasatch Front Jobs Needed to Reduce Unemployment by .5% is approximately 22 to 1.

Updated: January 29, 2019

Remote Job Placements

- **134** since October 2018
- Economic equivalency of **4,954 jobs** relative to urban counties
- **76%** intended to seek remote work after completing the course

Program Impacts

Those who found remote work

- **90%** were satisfied with their remote job position
- **36%** increase in total salaries
- **40%** believe their salaries would increase by **30%** over the next year

Those who did not..yet

- **46%** were actively searching for opportunities
 - **68%** were confident in their ability to find remote work
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Master Remote Work Leader Course

February - September 2020

- 4 cohorts
- 135 certified
- 62% female
- 46 avg. age
- Deliverable: remote work plan

Master Remote Work Leader Course

Knowledge

- Change Management: (t = 4.05, p < .001)
 - Conflict Management (t = 5.34, p < .001)
 - Culture (t = 5.10, p < .001)
 - Learning and Development (t = 3.58, p < .05)
 - Performance Management (t = 4.90, p < .001)
 - Vision (t = 7.64, p < .001)
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Master Remote Work Leader Course

Attitudes

- Relative Advantage (M = 4.24, SD = 0.38)
 - Compatibility (M = 4.13, SD = 0.72)
 - Complexity (M = 3.31, SD = 0.61)
 - Observability (M = 4.44, SD = 0.58)
 - Trialability (M = 4.05, SD = 0.68)
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Master Remote Work Leader Course

Skills

- Remote Work Culture (M = 4.73, SD = 0.36)
- Communication (M = 4.74, SD = 0.35)
- Performance Management (M = 4.70, SD = 0.43)
- Conflict Management (M = 4.65, SD = 0.42)
- Vision (M = 4.74, SD = 0.40)
- Change Management (M = 4.65, SD = 0.49)
- Learning & Development (M = 4.65, SD = 0.54)

Master Remote Work Leader Course

Aspirations

- **100%** of participants felt their value as a remote work leader improved
 - **96%** felt empowered to hire remote workers
 - **91%** were likely to create remote work job positions
 - **87%** would hire qualified remote workers from rural Utah
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COVID-19 Response

- **FREE** courses for all Utahns during COVID-19
- **205** participants in April
- **110** participants in May
- **130** participants in June
- **123** participants *converted* jobs to remote (Follow-up Survey)

Addressing Negative Net Migration



Projects in Process

- 4-H Remote Skills Camp (summers)
 - Reformed & Remote (training for incarcerated populations)
 - Remote Job Search: Skills for Success (online course)
 - E-Commerce (online workshops)
 - Expansion from 15 to 21 rural counties
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New bill would have state employees work from home on bad air days



SALT LAKE CITY — Working from home could become something more regular for many people especially if a new bill passes that would have state employees work from home on bad air quality days.

“Take the state out of the problem in air quality. When we have bad air, there’s no reason we should be asking state employees to get on the roads,” said the bill’s sponsor, State Senator Dan McCay.

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