



Utah Marriage
Commission
at Utah State University

Check out our healthy relationship
resources at **StrongerMarriage.org**



Research-based relationship education strengthening Utah families.

WHO WE ARE

The Utah Marriage Commission (UMC) is a statutory organization funded by marriage license fees and grants and directed by volunteer professionals and experts appointed by the Governor. UMC is hosted by Utah State University, and commission efforts are supported by USU Extension staff.

Founded in 1998, UMC exists because strong, stable marriages are consistently linked to stronger, more stable societies.

WHY MARRIAGE MATTERS ACCORDING TO RESEARCH



Better physical & mental
health outcomes



Increased economic stability &
reduced poverty risk



Improved child well-being &
educational outcomes

WHY UMC MATTERS



Provides prevention-focused education.



Supports relationships at any stage.



Strengthens families before crisis occurs.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

5,455

Marriage license
discounts provided



10,500+

Participants attended
relationship webinars



9,350+

RELATE & READY
assessments completed



160,000+

Podcast downloads

100+

Courses and educational
programs created



EVIDENCE-BASED RESOURCES

Resources are research-based, brief, and publicly available at StrongerMarriage.org, including:



12 Full-length e-courses



100+ Mini courses



160+ Podcast episodes



90+ Expert-led webinars

Plus, **FREE** access to RELATE, the world's most validated relationship assessment, and **3 USBE-approved** Success Sequence lessons for Utah classrooms.

UMC delivers measurable impact, policy-relevant research, and scalable education that helps Utah individuals, couples, and families flourish.

Learn more at **StrongerMarriage.org**

Removing the Marriage License Funding Cap

Restoring Legislative Intent and Eliminating Unnecessary Administrative Inefficiencies

Issue Background

The Utah Marriage Commission (UMC) is a statutory organization established in 1998 to strengthen Utah marriages and families through free, research-based relationship education. UMC operates in partnership with Utah State University as its host institution.

In 2018, Utah statute designated revenue from Utah marriage license fees as a dedicated funding source for UMC operations. At that time, a \$400,000 annual cap was placed on the amount of funds that could be transferred for UMC use, with any revenue above the cap redirected to the General Fund.

In fiscal years 2024 and 2025, marriage license revenues exceeded the cap. This revealed practical challenges related to legislative intent, administrative processing, and fiscal planning, and has prompted consideration of whether removing the cap would better align statutory intent with administrative practice.

At a Glance

Issue Area	With the \$400K Cap (Current Law)	Without the Cap (Proposed Change)
Legislative Intent	Funds designated to strengthen Utah marriages cannot be fully used for their intended purpose once the cap is reached.	Funds flow as originally intended, strengthening marriages and honoring legislative purpose.
Administrative Functioning	When the cap was reached in 2025, state finance systems continued sending funds, requiring halted payments and later reversals.	Funds flow continuously with no reversals, eliminating unnecessary administrative disruption.
Budgeting & Planning	Monthly, unpredictable revenue makes it unclear when the cap will be reached, complicating annual budgeting and staffing decisions.	Predictable revenue allows responsible planning, smoother budgeting, and better use of public funds.
Fiscal Management	Funds must be stopped mid-year and restarted later, creating inefficiencies across fiscal years.	Funds can be managed continuously across years, regardless of marriage volume fluctuations.
Operational Efficiency	Staff time is diverted to managing cap-related workarounds rather than delivering services.	Staff time is focused on service delivery and outcomes, not administrative fixes.



Utah Marriage
Commission
at Utah State University

Potential Uses of Additional Funds

If UMC were to receive additional funds beyond historical levels (there is no way to predict if or when this will happen again), those funds would be used to continue and expand existing initiatives already underway. These include

- **Raising public awareness** of existing free, research-based resources through digital, broadcast, and out-of-home media.
- **Partnering with businesses** to offer resources through Employee Assistance Programs.
- **Updating and producing new content** to address emerging relationship needs using current research.

Additional areas of focus may include:

- **Continuation of National Marriage Week**, a long-standing statewide initiative.
- **Promoting the Success Sequence** in Utah high schools.
- **Relationship and dating education** for college and emerging adult populations.

Conclusion

Removing the cap would not change the purpose of these funds, but would allow them to be managed more predictably, more efficiently, and more in alignment with their original designation.

Questions? Learn more about our work on our website, strongermarriage.org, or contact our Program Coordinator, Rian Gordon, at rian.gordon@usu.edu.



Utah Marriage
Commission
at Utah State University