



UTAH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH • ANALYZE • INFORM

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

JANUARY 2021

UTAH FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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About Utah Foundation

Utah Foundation's mission is to produce objective, thorough and well-reasoned research and analysis that promotes the effective use of public resources, a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns. Utah Foundation seeks to help decision-makers and citizens understand and address complex issues. Utah Foundation also offers constructive guidance to improve governmental policies, programs and structures.

Utah Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization.

Support Our Work

Utah Foundation relies on the support of business and civic leaders and average citizens to produce the high-quality, independent research for which we're known. To become a member or sponsor one of our projects or programs, contact us at 801-355-1400.



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CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

150 S. State St., Ste. 444
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
utahfoundation.org

Born in Challenging Times, Rising to the Occasion in 2020

In September 1945, Utah Foundation was born, motivated by the desire of business and civic leaders to confront the challenges of post-war demobilization. In 2020 Utah Foundation celebrated its 75-year anniversary, but fittingly also spent the year confronting the great economic, public health and social challenges the pandemic has visited upon Utah. The result was one of the most productive years in the organization's storied history. We produced 12 major reports, seven briefs, 12 podcasts and three videos. We provided the core analyses for the output of a group of civic leaders focused on economic renewal. We created a citizen redistricting tool. We published 12 op-ed articles in the daily papers. We put on three events. Last but not least, upon the onset of the pandemic, we launched a new series of mini-briefs called Significant Statistics, completing 15 briefs in that series alone. As 2021 begins, we already have in hand a long and potent to-do list.

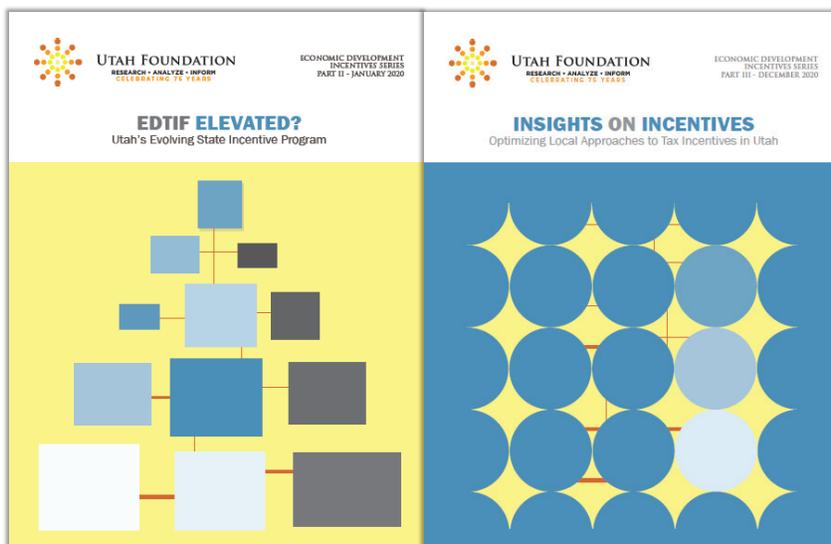
BY THE NUMBERS:

12

MAJOR REPORTS

The Economic Development Incentive Series: Bringing Transparency

We opened the year with the second report in our Economic Development Incentive Series, *EDTIF Elevated? Utah's Evolving State Incentive Program*. The report highlighted areas where the state EDTIF program has improved in recent years and the challenges that remain. We closed the year with the next part in the series, *Insights on Incentives: Optimizing Local Approaches to Incentives in Utah*. Using the analytical framework established in the state-level report – that an incentive program should be strategic, coordinated, effective, efficient and transparent – the report compared local governments in Utah to the nation at large. In response to Utah Foundation's analysis, the Utah Office of the State Auditor drafted new guidance to ensure better compliance with national accounting standards pertaining to incentives, boosting transparency and accountability. The series received project-based support from Salt Lake County, the Utah League of Cities and Towns, and the Salt Lake and Utah Valley chambers of commerce.



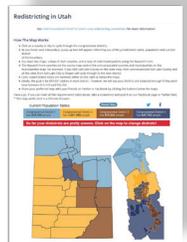


Building on Our Tax Policy Work

In February, we responded to the unraveling of a major tax reform effort with a report highlighting the issues that remained unsolved. This continued a multi-report effort around the state’s tax structure, an area where Utah Foundation has established itself as an honest broker providing straight-shooting analysis on the pros and cons of various reform actions.

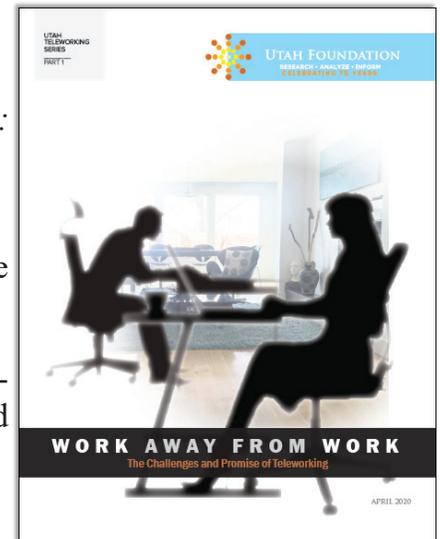
Letting Utahns Try Their Hands at Redistricting

In March, following the Legislature’s passage of a bill on Utah’s new redistricting commission, Utah Foundation issued a brief explaining how the new commission will operate. We also created an online tool that allows Utahns to try their hand at congressional redistricting. Thousands have used the tool.



A Quick Response to Assist Employers

In early April, in response to the pandemic, we released the report *Work Away from Work: The Challenges and Promise of Teleworking*. Our telework series was already slated as a priority for 2020 before the pandemic hit. Seeing that Utah employers had an immediate need for guidance, we sped up the portion of the project pertaining to the benefits and pitfalls of telework, with direct advice for employers. The next report in that series, focused on teleworking in the context of air quality, is forthcoming in 2021. The series received project-based support fromUCAIR.



Getting Timely Data to the Public, Policymakers and the Press

In early May, seeing that the public, policymakers and the press were looking for guidance on the impacts of the pandemic, we launched a new series of briefs called Significant Statistics. We released 15 installments this year, on topics ranging from public health to jobs and the economy.

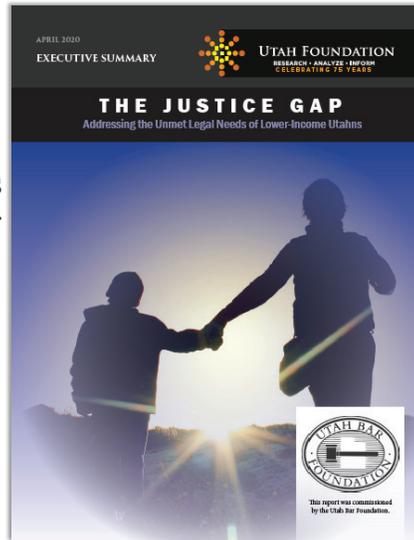
BY THE NUMBERS:

15

SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS RELEASES

Consulting Work

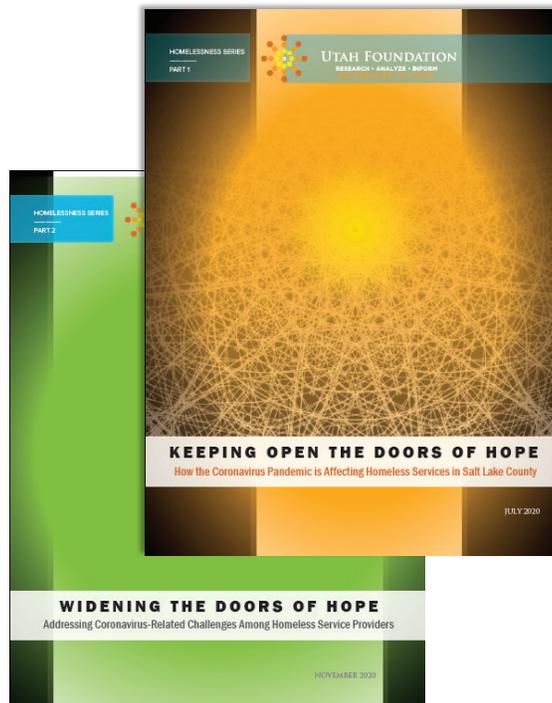
As part of its portfolio, Utah Foundation undertakes consulting work and projects commissioned by public and private entities. We completed several commissioned reports this year, including a report on local revenues for Ogden City and Weber and Davis counties and a report on employee benefits, commissioned by a private company. A third report, *The Justice Gap: Addressing the Unmet Legal Needs of Lower-Income Utahns*, was commissioned by the Utah Bar Foundation. The Utah Supreme Court and others in the legal community warmly embraced the report. In addition, we provided the core analysis for the report *Utah Rising: Initiatives for a Broad and Rapid Economic Revival*; that report was issued by Utah Economic Response Task Force. We also provided the core analysis for a forthcoming follow-up report, focused on the top economic priorities.



BY THE NUMBERS:
100+
MEDIA APPEARANCES

Working with Civic Leaders to Address Unfolding Homelessness Challenges

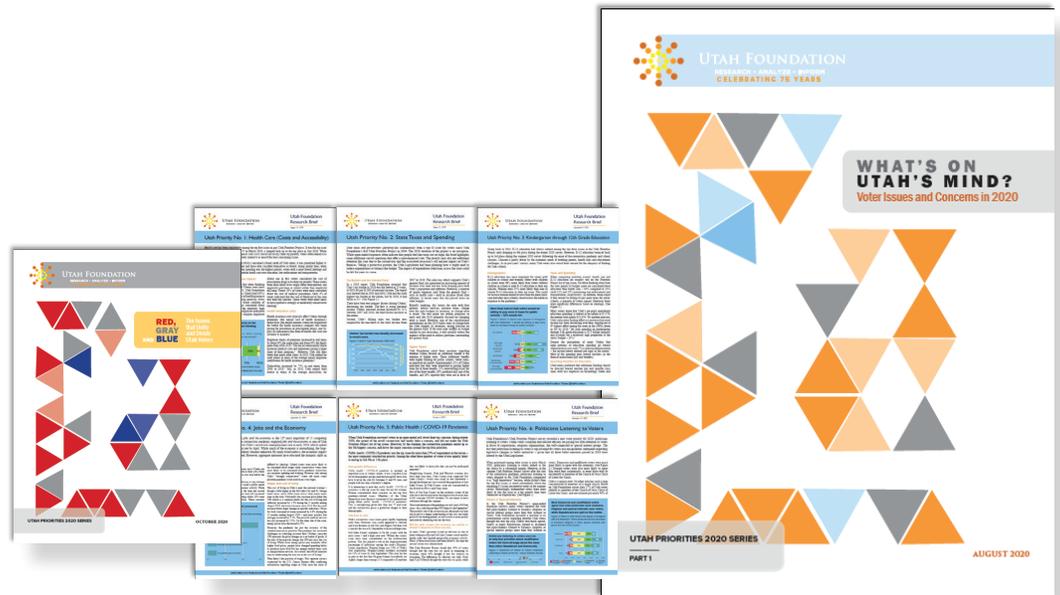
In July and November, we released the first two of three reports on homelessness, working with a Utah homelessness expert. This was originally conceived as a single report on service gaps to be released in the spring. But with the onset of the pandemic we worked with governmental and nonprofit leaders focused on homelessness at both the state and local levels to retool the project into a multi-part series that also addresses the challenges posed by the pandemic. A third report in this series will be forthcoming in 2021. The series received project-based support from the Hemingway and Sorenson Legacy foundations, as well as Salt Lake County.



SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2020, Utah Foundation staged two Breakfast Briefings and our Annual Luncheon, and embraced online meeting technology to address public health concerns. A June briefing focused on income inequality in Utah, while a November briefing focused on homelessness. Both briefings were sponsored by the University of Utah's College of Social and Behavioral Science.

Our Annual Luncheon and 75th Anniversary Celebration in September was a great success. Our keynote speaker was Efosa Ojomo, leader of the Global Prosperity research group at the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation, based in Boston and Silicon Valley. In 2019, Ojomo and the late Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen published *The Prosperity Paradox: How Innovation Can Lift Nations Out of Poverty*. At the event, Utah Foundation honored businesswoman and philanthropist Gail Miller with our 2020 Insight Award. The event also featured gubernatorial candidates Spencer Cox and Chris Peterson in a Q&A discussion moderated by KSL TV's Deanie Wimmer. Thanks to the many sponsors and other supporters of our Annual Luncheon, Utah Foundation's sole fund-raising event of the year.



Determining Utah Voters Priorities – Twice in One Strange Year

Beginning in early August, Utah Foundation released two reports and a collection of briefs in the 2020 Utah Priorities Project. This year, we faced a major problem: our survey was completed in February and early March, before the public was aware of the scope of the pandemic. With the help of our survey firm, Y2 Analytics, we launched a new survey, completed in July. What had started as a problem actually enriched the final product immeasurably, as we were now able to see where Utahns stood on the eve of the pandemic and compare it to new information. As a result, this year's quadrennial Utah Priorities Project may be the most potent yet. The 2020 Priorities series received project-based support from the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, the Larry H. Miller Group and Y2 Analytics.

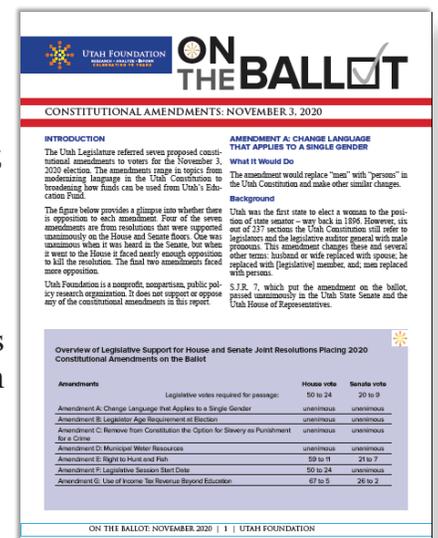
BY THE NUMBERS:

7

BRIEFS

Providing Voters with Critical Info

In 2019, Utah Foundation's Board of Trustees asked staff to begin providing unbiased analysis of key statewide ballot propositions; in 2020, Utah Foundation over-delivered, examining every constitutional amendment on the ballot. The report received more than its share of media coverage. It also helped Utahns make informed votes, with thousands of voters visiting our website for information on the amendments. Of particular interest was Utah Foundation's analysis of Amendment G, which expands the potential use of income tax revenues



BY THE NUMBERS:

3

ONLINE VIDEOS

Meeting Citizens Where They Are

In recent years, we have begun producing online videos summarizing our work; we produced three videos in 2020, on legal needs, on alternative fuel vehicles and on how we pay for water in Utah. We've also been producing

Utah Foundation closed 2020 ahead of pace on its goals for financial strength.

our “Utah Thrives” podcast on a monthly basis, covering topics in 2020 ranging from the state’s telework program to ballot items. We also write op-ed commentaries highlighting our work on a monthly basis, for the Deseret News, the Salt Lake Tribune and other dailies. Of course, we depend on our supporters to make our work possible. In 2020, despite the challenging times, they once again stepped up to keep the drive alive: Utah Foundation ended the year well ahead of pace on its goals for financial strength.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2021, the calendar is brimming with new reports in the works. These include the second installment in our telework series; a report on the state of Utah’s Hispanic population, called for by Hispanic leaders and commissioned by the state; additional briefs in our Utah Priorities series; a report on road usage charges as a means of paying for transportation infrastructure; two installments in our post-secondary attainment series; the second installment in our telework series; the third installment in our homeless series; a report on infill development; series of reports on social capital in Utah; a report on “missing middle” housing, with support from Salt Lake County; and a report commissioned by Western Resource Advocates on how Utah’s economy can thrive in a lower-carbon future.

That’s just part of what we anticipate for 2021. So we’re looking forward to another great year. Thanks to our supporters, who make it all possible.

BY THE NUMBERS:

12

OP-ED ARTICLES

BY THE NUMBERS:

12

PODCASTS



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Top 10* Utah Foundation Findings of 2020

1. Teleworking tends to have a positive effect on productivity and employee retention, as well as lowering absenteeism.
2. There is close agreement among Republicans, unaffiliated voters and Democrats as to the relative importance of both K-12 education and housing affordability issues. (Tie.)
2. The majority of Utah voters do not want lower taxes if it means fewer or lower-quality services. (Tie.)
4. While the constitutional amendment expanding the use of income taxes is coupled with companion legislation to provide a specific level of K-12 funding, barring other changes in state tax rates, passing the amendment could result in less revenue being guaranteed for education at large. The initial guaranteed amount could be changed through budget amendments or via statute. (Tie.)
4. More than half of Utah voters would be willing to pay more in taxes for public schools. (Tie.)
6. The top five priorities of Utah voters are health care (costs and accessibility); state taxes and government spending; K-12 education; jobs and the economy; and public health / COVID-19 pandemic. All are tied to the pandemic.
7. During the second quarter of 2020, Utahns spent \$800 million less on food services, arts and entertainment, accommodation, and retail clothing. However, this was almost completely counterbalanced by the \$700 million increase in spending on online sales alone. (Tie.)
7. Utah's top marginal personal income tax rate currently stands higher than that of any neighboring state except Idaho. Nevada and Wyoming do not impose personal income taxes at all. (Tie.)
7. Nearly half of the companies that have active EDTIF agreements are not taking advantage of the incentives. (Tie.)
7. The Utah Priorities Project's survey found that many voters believe that elected officials listen to business, religious or special interest groups more than they listen to voters. (Tie.)

*As determined by Utah Foundation's Board of Trustees in December 2020.



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