Weber State University – Ogden, UT

Award Amount: $2,000,000
Project Name: Utah Computing Apprenticeship (UCAC) Project
Projected Apprentices to Be Served: 800
Industry Focus: Information Technology (IT)
Private Sector Partners include a business consortium consisting of such employers as O.C. Tanner, Bridge Investment Group, Smith Johnson, HealthEquity, doTerra, Larry H. Miller Sports & Entertainment, Dyno Nobel, and WCF Insurance, among others.

Type(s) of Apprenticeship Program Proposed: Apprenticeship, Pre-Apprenticeship

The Utah Computing Apprenticeship (UCAC) project seeks to establish Utah's first comprehensive apprenticeship model in Information Technology (IT). The project is building on several current initiatives, including a pilot apprenticeship program designed to address the IT workforce shortage in Utah, which the state funded through a Talent Ready Utah grant; and a separate, but aligned IT Pathways project, which is formalizing articulation from secondary schools to technical colleges to higher education institutions. UCAC also received state funding to create a pilot program for pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for high school students and adults using the U.S. Department of Labor-approved Apprenti model; the model includes policies, procedures, and a guidebook for mentoring that can be implemented by any industry in any geographic area, as well as a platform for analyzing outcomes to assist in scaling the model on a national level. UCAC is using Apprenti's Occupational Apprenticeship Standards (approved by the Office of Apprenticeship) to further support its ability to scale.

To meet the needs of rural apprentices nationwide, UCAC is tailoring Utah's nationally recognized AM STEM (Automated Manufacturing STEM) program, a virtual model that has proven effective in providing training opportunities to rural students, especially in areas facing teacher shortages.

The UCAC project, in partnership with Apprenti, is scaling its IT industry apprenticeship model in three phases. In the first phase, UCAC is deploying apprenticeships in the Salt Lake Metro and Ogden-Clearfield Metro areas in Utah. In phase two, the project will expand implementation to rural counties statewide through virtual and online training. Finally, in phase three, UCAC will collaborate with Apprenti to create a replication guide for implementing apprenticeships, which is designed to result in a scalable, IT industry apprenticeship model that will successfully train participants and serve rural areas, including a focus on supporting small businesses.

IHE consortium members include Weber State University (lead), Salt Lake Community College, and Davis Technical College.