

2023-2024

Annual Report

Salt Lake City Department of
Economic Development



DEPARTMENT of
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT





Staff, Mayor, & Council Directory

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Advisor-Technology & Innovation

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Katie Matheson, Communications and

Diplomacy Officer

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Communications Coordinator

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& Development Manager

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Coordinator

Andrew Shaw, Special Projects
Coordinator

Amy Childress, Public Art Program
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Siri Vlastic, Wake the Great Salt Lake
Project Coordinator

Deanne Coles, Gallery Assistant

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Chris Wharton, District 3

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Darin Mano, District 5

Dan Dugan, District 6

Sarah Young, District 7



Boards

Arts Council Board

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Hannah Nielsen, District 1
Sarah Longoria, District 2
Susan Rickman, District 3
Katherine Potter, District 3
Lana Taylor, District 4
Travis English, District 5
Thomas Kessinger, District 5
Sabrina Martinez, District 5
Kathy Davis, District 6
Richard Taylor, District 6
Jeff Driggs, District 7
Matthew Coles, District 7
Caitlin Tursic, District 7

Art Design Board

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Tiffini Porter, District 3
Meggie Troili, District 7

Colour Maisch, District 5
Angela Dean, District 3
Michael Mejia, District 4

Business Advisory Board

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Brittany Dew, District 2
Isaac Atensio, District 2
Jeff Carleton, District 3
Andy Robertson, District 3
Pook Carson, District 4
Abudujannah Soud, District 4
Sheridan Mordue, District 5
Barri Allaire, District 6
Scott Lyttle, District 7
Jocelyn Kearl, District 7
Kristen Lavelett, Ex-Officio, Downtown Alliance
Bryce Wurtsbaugh, Ex-Officio, Suazo Business Center
Anne Olsen, Ex-Officio, Young Professionals Salt Lake City

Cultural Core Budget Committee

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Isaac Gonzalez
Grace Lin
Lia Summers
Kathryn Carlisle-Kesling
Spencer Lawson

Sister Cities Board

Ross Chambless
John Wilson
Matilyn Mortensen
Ahimara Suarez
Annie Quan
Joe Zeidner
Nicole Pessetto
Sheri Sorenson
Olga Efimova
Ricardo Becerra

Mission

The Department of Economic Development is working hard to make Salt Lake City a better place to not only build a business, but to also build a life. The Department consists of two divisions—the Business Development Division and the Salt Lake City Arts Council (“Arts Council”). These divisions, along with departmental staff, have aligned resources and streamlined processes to grow and nurture a city that fosters gainful job creation, thriving business districts and neighborhoods, and a diverse arts and culture scene.

Guiding Principles

Plan Salt Lake, Salt Lake City Council 2015

Balanced Economy

A balanced economy that produces quality jobs and fosters an innovative environment for commerce, entrepreneurial local business, and industry to thrive.

Strong Creative Culture

Vibrant, diverse, and accessible artistic and cultural resources that showcase the community’s long-standing commitment to a strong creative culture.



Letter from the Director

I am pleased to present our Fiscal Year '24 Annual Report, reflecting on a year of substantial progress and envisioning a future filled with promise. Soon, the North Temple Economic Impact Study will be completed and will provide crucial insights to drive further community-based development in this pivotal area, ensuring it becomes a vibrant hub for commerce that is guided by the hopes and dreams of the residents and local businesses there. Complementing this, the Main Street Pedestrian Promenade Study, which was completed earlier this year, highlights our commitment to creating a people-friendly environment that enhances the quality of life, brings families and empty nesters to the heart of our city, and stimulates local businesses. The success of our activation initiatives and the Open Streets program has been undeniable, leading to increased foot traffic and a significant boost in sales tax revenue, demonstrating the tangible benefits of a more engaged and active city center.

Our workforce development initiatives, particularly our partnership with the Salt Lake City School District and the Salt Lake Education Foundation, continue to bear fruit as we prepare the next generation for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow by connecting students with the booming tech industry—a goal of Mayor Mendenhall's Tech Lake City initiative. The Salt Lake City Arts Council's \$1 million Bloomberg grant is a testament to our thriving cultural scene. This grant will fund

compelling art projects centered around the shrinking Great Salt Lake, raising global awareness and inspiring action on this critical environmental issue.

Additionally, our Sister Cities program is growing stronger. With notable milestones like last summer's visit from our oldest sister city, Matsumoto, Japan, we are fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange. These partnerships and initiatives underscore our holistic approach to development, combining economic growth with cultural and educational enrichment.

As we prepare for the 2034 Olympics, our city is on an exciting path of transformation. Reflecting on Mayor Mendenhall's 2024 State of the City Speech, we are indeed setting the stage not just for tomorrow, but for the next 10, 20, and even 50 years. "The state of this city is strong. It is unwavering. It is undaunted." These words resonate deeply with our mission and the accomplishments detailed in this report. Together, we are building a resilient and vibrant Salt Lake City, ready to face the future with confidence and determination.



Lorena Riffo Jenson, JD, MPH
Director of Salt Lake City Department of
Economic Development

ARPA Community Grants

In March 2021, the U.S. Government passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which supports state and local recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency. ARPA funding provides assistance to small businesses, nonprofits, and industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality that were impacted by the pandemic. The Salt Lake City Department of Economic Development created a Community Grant Program to disburse \$2M of the ARPA funds, which provided limited, one-time financial assistance to eligible small businesses, artists, artisans, creative workers, and nonprofits in Salt Lake City that were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or related shutdowns.

The funding received by successful applicants helped them promote, expand, and provide their services in a more stabilized environment. Doors were kept open, new performances and contracts were created, updated equipment was purchased, and these businesses continue to add to the rich culture and vibrancy that is Salt Lake City.



Performance Measures

360

Total Number of Applicants

83

Female Applicants

84

Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) applicants

95

Arts Business Applicants

64

Grants Awarded

Recipient Testimonials

Due to the generosity of this grant, we have made great progress towards our stated goals and objectives during this initial reporting period. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are important pillars of our organization and this grant has allowed us to expand our work in that area even further... We have been able to hire even more small businesses/performing artists from diverse backgrounds that have really elevated our museum offerings. We have also been grateful and excited to bring more diverse art mediums/instructors to our art classes due to the generous proceeds of this grant funding. All of the above have exponentially enriched our space, programming, and the experience of our patronage... Through the opportunities facilitated by this grant, previously underserved individuals and businesses have experienced notable growth and recognition, contributing to their revitalization in the post-pandemic landscape.

Alexx Goeller, Director of Philanthropy, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum

"I think one of the biggest ways the Artist Foundry is helping folks recover is just by creating community... Coming through the isolation of the pandemic, its prolonged impact and ripple effects, and then the strikes, the landscape of filmmaking has completely changed. Folks are... turning toward each other and the community to share resources and stories, find collaborators and supporters, and not feel alone in this moment of survival."

Amanda Madden, Artist Foundry Manager, Utah Film Center



Arts Council

This year, the Salt Lake City Arts Council was honored as one of eight cities nationwide to receive a \$1 million Public Art Challenge Grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The City's winning proposal, Wake the Great Salt Lake, will feature temporary public artworks by local and regional artists addressing the ecological challenges of the shrinking lake.

Other notable Public Art projects from the year include the installation of Day Christensen's Apricot in the Marmalade District, as well as initiatives supporting emerging public artists like the Foothills Trailhead Bike Rack Mural project and Sidewalk Poetry: Sense of Salt Lake. The Salt Lake Twilight Concert Series, recognized as the "Best Concert Series" by City Weekly, achieved record-setting attendance with over 43,000 attendees last year. Similarly, the Living Traditions festival celebrated its 38th year welcoming nearly 34,000 visitors to experience diverse cultural performances, food, and crafts.

Finally, the Arts Council reaffirmed its commitment to local artists and arts organizations by distributing over \$380,000 through various grant programs in all seven City Council districts, reinforcing the city's commitment to artistic growth and community engagement.

Products & Services

- **Finch Lane Gallery**
- **Public Art Program**
- **Twilight Concert Series**
- **Outreach & Engagement**
- **City Arts Grants Program**
- **Busker Festival**
- **Cultural Core | The Blocks**
- **Wake the Great Salt Lake**
- **Living Traditions**

Performance Measures

69,941

Total Attendees

1,617

Artists Served

99

Grants Awarded



“As a once undocumented student from Guadalajara, I never imagined I would have a solo exhibition in Salt Lake City so early in my career. The staff at the Arts Council acted as mentors and supporters, and I hope I can return that favor to others in the community.”

Pablo Ayala, Finch Lane Exhibiting Artist

From mentee Topui Otuafi: “For me, at least, the mentorship program came at the perfect moment in my life. A few months ago, I was trying to find a way to get into art on a more serious level. I found out about this program around the same time as I felt that desire, and I was accepted to be a part of it. Well, I definitely do not regret it! My desire to learn more about art and to create it has grown tremendously since I started, and it has positively impacted my self-confidence and my relationships with others. I am forever grateful for this program!”

Kalanii Tukuafu, FY23 Artist Career Empowerment Grant – Mentorship program for Pacific Islander



Business Development



Over the past year, the Business Development Division focused its support on the small business community while also working to attract major investment from impactful projects. The demand for small business financing remained steady, and the Economic Development Loan Fund supported five new loans to small businesses totaling \$1M that will anchor our vibrant and bustling neighborhoods. As major road reconstruction projects continued into heavier commercial corridors throughout Salt Lake, the team increased outreach and engagement with impacted small businesses and distributed approximately \$700,000 in grants. The Division supported a surge of capital investment in advanced manufacturing to Salt Lake City's Westside, assisting companies with zoning and permitting.

The Business Development Division continues to work on major initiatives that catalyze important corridors of Salt Lake City, while also highlighting well-regarded but lesser-known ones. The Division completed a conceptual design study for a pedestrian promenade on Main Street, which aims to limit vehicular traffic and provide more opportunities for commerce, arts, and recreation in the heart of Salt Lake City's downtown core. As part of the celebration for National Small Business Week, the Division hosted a Commerce and Culture event that brought community partners and small business owners on food tours in Districts 1 and 7, featuring Salt Lake City's unique, diverse business community.

Products & Services

- Economic Development Loan Fund
- Open Streets Program
- Main Street Promenade Conceptual Design Study
- Business Districts & Special Assessment Areas
- North Temple Economic Revitalization
- Construction Mitigation Grant

Performance Measures

252

Site Visits to Prospective
& Local Businesses

230

New Leads
Generated

154

New Opportunities
Created by Leads

17

Wins Investment
Successes with Companies



• eats •



≡ FAIRMAT

NATURE'S BAKERY

Red Fuego



THE WICK LAB

ELEVATE

Loki COFFEE

Matteo



Shades BREWING



BOBA GURU

Leavity BREAD & COFFEE

“We wouldn’t be in business if it wasn’t for the EDLF, thank you Salt Lake City. We are proud to be a part of the Salt Lake food community.”

Todd Bradley, Owner/Baker, Leavity LLC



“I am thrilled about Nature’s Bakery’s strategic expansion with the establishment of a cutting-edge baking facility in Salt Lake City. As a self-manufacturer, this facility joins our existing bakeries in reflecting our commitment to innovation and quality and underscores our confidence in the thriving business environment of Utah. We look forward to contributing to the local economy, cultivating community, and creating job opportunities as we further our brand purpose of nourishing families and enabling them to thrive.”

Steve Gardiner, CEO of Nature’s Bakery

Tech Lake City + Workforce Development

Tech Lake City aims to position Salt Lake City as the premier place for technology and innovation, spanning many sectors including life sciences, biotech, fintech, software, aerospace, and renewable energy. According to a November 2023 Kem C. Gardner report, there are 1,600 life sciences companies in Utah, the majority in Salt Lake City. The life science industry contributes \$21.5 billion in revenue to the state's GDP and pays 48% higher salaries on average. Salt Lake City is committed to working upstream to spark interest in these career paths in the K-12 education space and to foster continued interaction and pathways for students to get there. Connecting Salt Lakers to these advanced skills builds economic resilience and gives the city a globally competitive edge.

An event that continues to support this strategy is Human Innovation Day. This is an annual STEM-focused event where Salt Lake students are introduced to the thriving Healthcare Innovation industry careers, internships, and opportunities. This year, 46 students toured ARUP Laboratories and Recursion at the event. They also participated in a question-and-answer session with professionals, including our own technology and innovation advisor, graduate and undergraduate students in the life sciences.

Student Connection Impact

46

Human Innovation Day High School Attendees

31

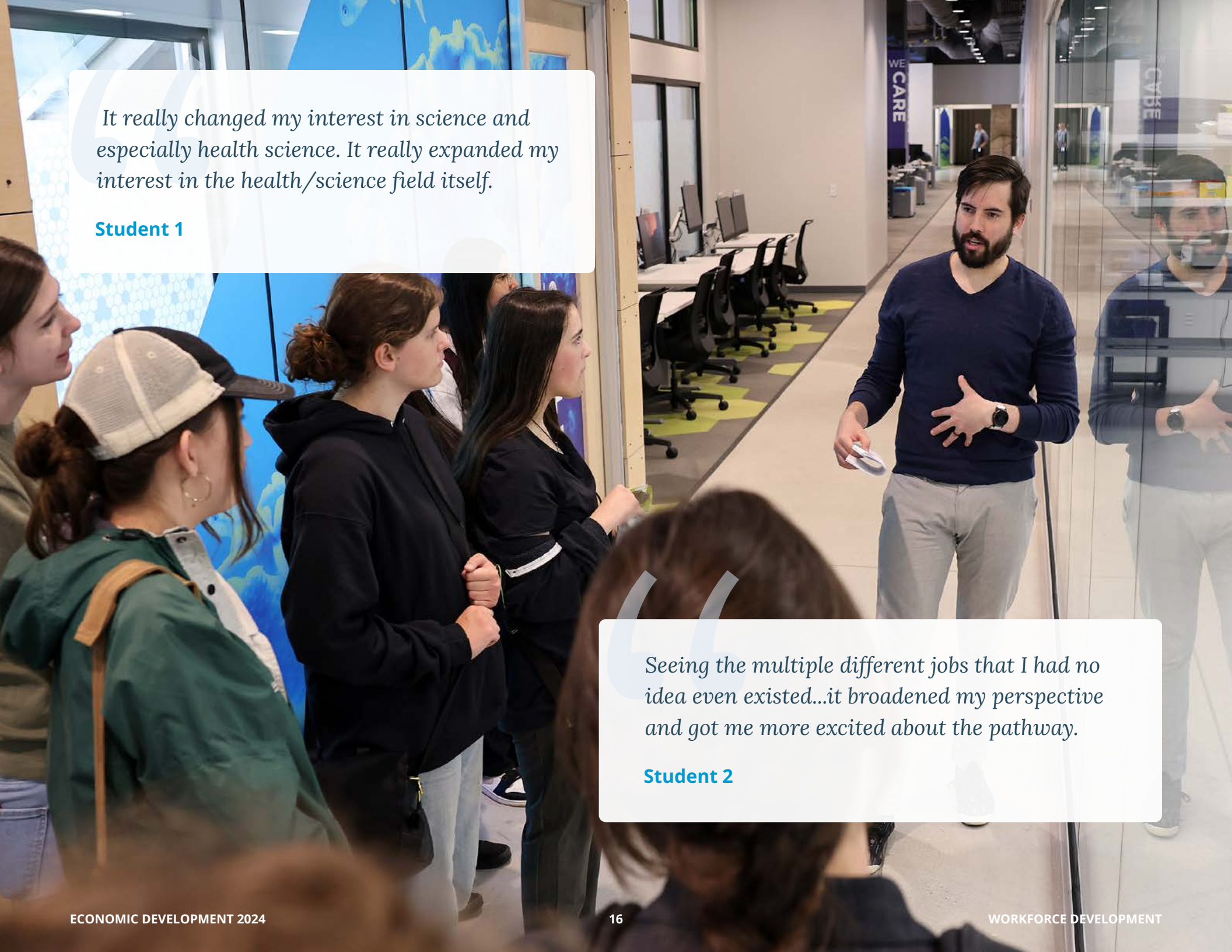
Female Students

25

Students from Diverse Backgrounds

100

Middle School Students Enrolled in Project Uplift



It really changed my interest in science and especially health science. It really expanded my interest in the health/science field itself.

Student 1

Seeing the multiple different jobs that I had no idea even existed...it broadened my perspective and got me more excited about the pathway.

Student 2

Sister Cities

This past year was a time of revitalization for Salt Lake City's Sister Cities program. In July 2023, Salt Lake City and the Sister Cities board organized a successful visit with a delegation from Salt Lake's oldest sister city, Matsumoto, Japan, from which various economic and cultural exchange opportunities can flourish. Progress was made on preparing a training event for firefighters in the Sister City of Trujillo, Peru, and new and promising opportunities for exchanges with Torino, Italy, are in the works, along with efforts at reconnecting with Chernivtsi, Ukraine; Keelung, Taiwan; and Izhevsk, Russia. The Board and Economic Development staff are hard at work developing specific protocols for fostering clear and genuine communications with Sister City counterparts and other international dignitaries, the Board bylaws were updated, and a process to receive and review requests for new Sister City partnerships is in the works.

As Salt Lake City moves closer to "welcoming the world" again as the host city for the 2024 Winter Olympic Games, the city's flagship diplomacy program, Sister Cities, stands ready to support the City's leadership with the exciting prospect of cultivating the City into an international center for the Winter Olympics and beyond.







DEPARTMENT of
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

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