

USU Blanding Offers Google Career Certificates

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SPARC

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By Ysabel Nehring | September 21, 2021



Utah State University Blanding's technical education program is excited to offer [Google Career Certificates](#) that prepare people for entry-level positions in data analytics, project management, user experience design, and introductory and advanced IT support. Best of all, participation in the certificate programs does not require a degree, previous experience, or formal enrollment in the university.

After selecting a certificate program, individuals complete Google-designed courses at their own pace, which can be completed within 3-6 months. To complete the certificate, professionals also enroll in the Rural Online Initiative (ROI) course offered through USU Extension which teaches skills essential to success as a remote worker. Those who complete the ROI course are awarded a Master Remote Work Professional certificate in addition to their Google Career Certificate.

The program is \$39 a month, and scholarships are available for individuals who qualify, including those from rural areas or underserved communities. Scholarship awards include access to the USU Blanding Small

Business, Professional Development, Application, Resources, Certification or SPARC community workspace, which offers working and studying spaces, access to IT support, state-of-the-art equipment, laptop rentals, high-speed internet, and printing services. Following certificate completion, graduates who are hired for a remote position have an additional complementary year of access to the SPARC community workspace.

Graduates of the Google certificates program have access to the Google Career Certificates Employer Consortium, a job board of over 130 companies, including Amazon, Target, Verizon, and Google, all committed to considering graduates for entry-level positions spanning multiple sectors.

The Google Career Certificates program at USU Blanding is offered in collaboration with the Utah Department of Workforce Services. During the certificate program, Workforce Services will work with students to help enhance their resume and interview skills to prepare for a successful job search. Through the department's current On-the-Job Training program, businesses can receive reimbursement for training eligible new hires for up to 100 hours and 50 percent of training costs, including new hires who have completed a Google certificate.

"There is a monumental shift in the workforce right now," said Meghan McFall, director of USU Blanding's SPARC Building and Small Business Development Center consultant. "Remote work is becoming commonplace, and we want to support San Juan residents with the infrastructure to take full advantage of this economic opportunity."

According to data from LinkedIn, [remote job postings increased fivefold](#) from May 2020 to May 2021 (see article at tinyurl.com/remote-work-demand). This job market shift presents a unique opportunity for people in rural areas such as San Juan County.

"Up until now, the route to success for rural residents was getting a degree and then moving away to find a well-paying job," said McFall. "However, with remote work, individuals can get a high-paying job without leaving their home, family, or culture behind."

Seeing this shift, USU Blanding developed the SPARC programs focused on filling the professional skills gaps in the local area. Data previously gathered by USU Blanding indicated that the greatest needs in San Juan County were job-specific skills training and high-quality internet access, and more than half of residents did not have access to the internet or a computer.

Thanks to grant funding and state and community partnerships, USU Blanding offers a solution to these needs in the form of the SPARC programs, including a variety of professional certificates, the community incubator and coworking space, business consultations, and other resources to support San Juan County's economic development.

"These resources are really for everyone," said McFall. "Whether you are unemployed, underemployed, or looking to make a career change, USU Blanding has resources to help you find success. Our focus is on preserving and supporting San Juan County as a community."

To learn more about or apply for the [Google Career Certificate program](#) or other SPARC resources, visit caas.usu.edu/avte/sparc or contact Meghan McFall through email at meghan.mcfall@usu.edu or by phone at (435) 678-8102.

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