

Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
2020 Annual Report



Utah Governor's Office of
Economic Development

Utah Film Commission

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The Utah Film Commission was established in 1974 to support the state's rich legacy of filmmaking. The office markets the entire state as a destination for film, TV, and commercial production by promoting the use of professional local crew and talent, support services, locations, and state incentives in collaboration with regional stakeholders.

The Film Commission also serves as a liaison to the broader entertainment industry by supporting local film organizations and events, most notably the annual Sundance Film Festival, and facilitating production needs across the state. With more than 1,500 productions created in-state, Utah has an undeniably deep and lasting commitment to the entertainment industry. It includes iconic films such as *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid*, *Thelma & Louise*, *Easy Rider*, and *Forrest Gump*.

Initiatives

- 53% of film permits were issued in rural Utah areas. Film production is a statewide industry that contributes to all sectors. We're ensuring that all counties have the resources they need to attract new film productions.
- There are 13 public and private Utah universities that offer some kind of film and digital entertainment program with nearly 4,000 students currently enrolled. Connecting higher education with industry creates more opportunities for students to enter the industry after graduation.
- Utah Film Commission's Next Level Grant Program provides funding and footing for local directors and producers to take their project to the next level.

Film Incentive Program

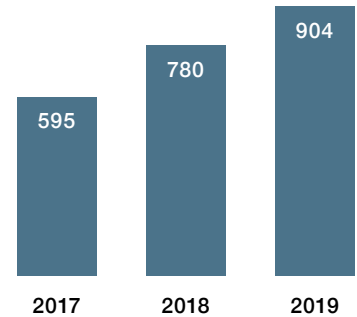
To encourage film industry growth across the state, the Utah Film Commission utilizes the Motion Picture Incentive Program (MPIP). Per statute, the key objectives of the MPIP are to promote the use of in-state locations, crew and resources, and to provide incentives to compete with other states and develop a strong motion picture industry presence. The program receives ongoing annual funds of \$1.5 million in cash and \$6.79 million in tax credits. The MPIP offers a 20% to 25% tax credit for productions that meet specific criteria, including the strength of the production company, quality and suitability of the project, economic benefit, and the number of jobs created.

The demand for film production in Utah has grown. The Utah Film Commission continues to receive more requests for film incentives than can be accommodated with allocated monies. With the remaining funds available, the Film Commission strives to attract a wide variety of productions, prioritizing a diverse slate that yields a higher quality and quantity of jobs.

Programs

Film Permits Across Utah

Reported Permits



2019 Permit fee revenue: **\$139,208**

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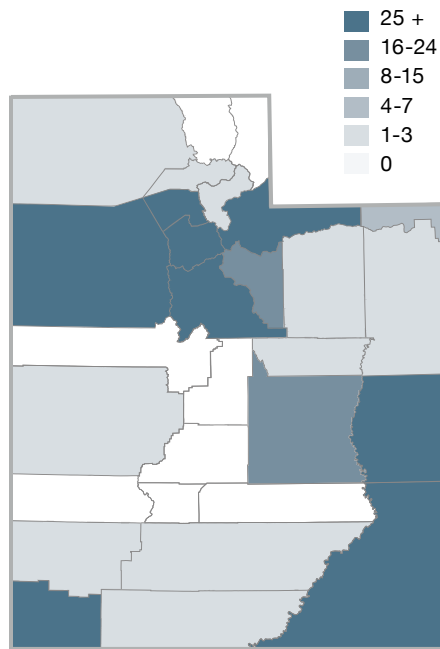


Programs

Achievements

- Since Utah's current film incentive program (MPIP) began in FY 2012, \$378 million has been spent in-state by studios such as ABC, AMC, Disney, Fox, and HBO.
- 19 productions received state film incentives to shoot in Utah, including a mix of local and out-of-state feature films, TV series, and documentaries.
- 900+ film permits were approved across the state (54% of film permits occur in rural Utah).
- Out of a total spend of \$66.4 million, \$23.8 million was spent in rural Utah by productions that received a state film incentive.
- A record six television series filmed in-state in fiscal year 2020, including the third season of the highly acclaimed television series *Yellowstone* starring Kevin Costner. This series spent more than \$100 million in Utah over the past three years and created hundreds of jobs each year.

Film Permits Issued by County



Workforce Development

There are 13 public and private universities in Utah that offer film and digital entertainment programs, with nearly 4,000 students currently enrolled. The Film Commission has created many workforce development programs that create a school-to-industry pipeline and provide trained crew for incoming productions.

Utah continues to grow as a hub for television and feature film production, as evidenced by the growth in both overall industry annual wages (\$148 million, a 24% increase over the past three years according to DWS data) and the size and quality of productions that choose our state as a location. Increased interest in Utah as a filming destination has meant that resources such as crew, infrastructure, and incentives are often in short supply over the past three years. Now that demand exceeds supply, we will continue working to determine the best, most sustainable approach to the incentive program and ensure a balance between out-of-state and local productions that utilize the state's film incentive.

Film production remains a reliable economic driver that can impact both the Wasatch Front and rural Utah. The Utah Film Commission is adapting resources to meet new challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. These include moving workforce development online, providing virtual location scouts, and consulting with production companies on new filming restrictions. These tactics will allow us to continue providing services to the film industry and promote Utah as America's film set.

Rural (54%)	490
Urban (46%)	414



Film Incentive Impact

	FY 2018 (18 Projects)	FY 2019* (19 Projects)	FY 2020 (19 Projects)*
Utah production days	3,241	3,449	4,770
Utah hires	5,329	7,258	7,008

* Contains estimates as some projects are not yet complete

	FY 2018	FY 2019*	FY 2020*
Total incentive awarded	\$13,016,239	\$6,138,323	\$7,677,575
Total Utah spend	\$73,484,138	\$54,359,169	\$66,384,855
Total spend in rural Utah	\$20,116,474	\$24,365,737	\$23,781,711

* Contains estimates as some projects are not yet complete

Programs



Spotlight

For fans of holiday made-for-TV films, Utah plays a significant role as Anytown, USA. Filming locations from 25th Street in Ogden and Main Street in Bountiful, to the quaint towns of Midway and Heber have set the stage for many of the movies that premiere on the Hallmark or Lifetime channels.

Since 2012, over 20 filmed-in-Utah holiday movies have premiered, including 2014's *Christmas Under Wraps* with Candace Cameron Bure, which is one of the highest-rated premieres on the Hallmark Channel with 5.8 million viewers. Many Utah filmmakers and producers have helped to bring these productions to the small screen over the years.

“I remain committed to bringing film to Utah,” commented local producer of several Hallmark channel productions, David Wulf. “It’s my home and my community, and I love any opportunity to work in film here. Utah’s crews, landscapes, and business-friendly community makes it the perfect place to film.”

One byproduct of these holiday movies’ popularity is the attention it brings to our state and the potential of film tourism. Landscapes and cityscapes in Utah have been seen by hundreds of millions of people around the world. A recent study found that 49% of visitors were aware of films or television series that were made in Utah. Of those, 71% said that those shows influenced their decision to visit Utah. Ultimately, 35% of all visitors report that a film or television series influenced their decision to come to Utah. Many of the films shot in Utah feature lesser-known vistas and unusual places encouraging visitors to get off the beaten path.





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