



FY25 ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

Salt Lake City
Department of
Economic
Development





FY25 ANNUAL REPORT

Salt Lake City Department of Economic Development

2024-2025



Staff, Mayor, + Council Directory

Erin Mendenhall
Mayor

Lorena Riffo-Jenson, JD, MPH
Director

Jacob Maxwell
Deputy Director

Jolynn Walz,
Executive Manager
Dr. Atim Enyenihu,
Strategic Industry Advisor-Technology & Innovation
Katie Matheson,
Communications and Diplomacy Officer
Joshua Paluh,
Marketing and Communications Coordinator
Mariah Johnson,
Special Projects Coordinator

Arts Council Staff

Felicia Baca,
Executive Director
Laurel Cannon Alder,
Deputy Director
Wendy Evanoff,
Office Facilitator
Lindsey Day,
Office Facilitator
Renato Olmedo-González,
Public Art Program Manager
Susan Campbell,
Community Investment & Development Manager
Dawn Borchardt,
Performing Arts Program Manager
Todd Oberndorfer,
Visual Arts Coordinator
Andrew Shaw,
Special Projects Coordinator
Amy Childress,
Public Art Program Coordinator
Siri Vlasic,
Wake the Great Salt Lake Project Coordinator
Cayden Turnbow,
Marketing and Digital Coordinator
Deanne Coles,
Gallery Assistant

Business Development Staff

Roberta Reichgelt,
Director
Peter Makowski,
Deputy Director
Will Wright,
Project Manager
Andie Feldman,
Project Manager
Ibrahim Ramazani,
Project Coordinator
Kiara Polee,
Project Coordinator

Salt Lake City Council

Victoria Petro,
District 1
Alejandro Puy,
District 2
Chris Wharton,
District 3
Eva López Chávez,
District 4
Darin Mano,
District 5
Dan Dugan,
District 6
Sarah Young,
District 7

Boards

Art Design Board

Wisam Khudhair,
District 1
Jen Lopez,
District 2
Tiffini Porter,
District 3
Michelle Buhler,
District 4
Michael Mejia,
District 4
Colour Maisch,
District 5
Nate King,
District 7

Arts Council Board

Torle Nenbee,
District 1
Hannah Nielsen,
District 1
Gabriella Huggins,
District 2
Susan Koles Rickman,
District 3
Cuauhtemoc Sandoval,
District 3
Lana Taylor,
District 4
Ryan Canter,
District 4
Ignacio Rosenberg,
District 4
Sabrina Martinez,
District 5

Arts Council Board

Kathy Davis,
District 6
Eugenie Jaffe,
District 6
Caitlin Tursic,
District 7
Matthew Coles,
District 7
Jeff Driggs,
District 7
Travis English,
District 7

Cultural Core Budget Committee

Isaac Gonzalez
Kathryn Carlisle-Kesling
Mohan Sudabattula
Seth Brown
Spencer Lawson
Claudia Loayza

Business Advisory Board

Alfonso Brito,
District 1
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 Kearn,
District 7
Kristen Lavelett,
Ex-Officio, Downtown Alliance
Anne Olsen,
Ex-Officio, Young Professionals Salt Lake City

Sister Cities Board

Ross Chambliss
Stacee Adams
John Wilson
Matilyn Mortensen
Ahimara Suarez
Jane Kim
Annie Quan
Nicole Pessetto
Sheri Sorenson
Olga Efimova

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.

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

Salt Lake City is writing a new chapter—one defined by intentional, human-centered economic development. Our commitment is clear: to grow not only in numbers, but in spirit, opportunity, and resilience. This past year, we've made bold moves to ensure our economic future is built with—and for—our people.

Our approach is grounded in three principles: people, place, and partnerships. These aren't just pillars of strategy—they're reflections of who we are as a city. We've seen this in action with initiatives like Open Streets, which began as a response to the challenges of the pandemic but has since transformed into something much more enduring. By reimagining Main Street as a pedestrian destination, we've created space for local businesses, artists, and communities to connect and thrive.

At the same time, we know growth must be inclusive. Programs like our Construction Mitigation Grants ensure small businesses are supported during periods of change. Because we believe those who've built Salt Lake City should always have a place in its future. We're also turning to the power of creativity to tackle complex challenges. Wake the Great Salt Lake, our public art initiative, brings attention to urgent environmental concerns while supporting local artists and activating public spaces.

In Salt Lake City, art is not only culture—it's economy. Across the city, our Special Assessment Area expansions and corridor revitalization studies—like those along North Temple—demonstrate our commitment to equitable development. These investments allow neighborhoods to shape their own identities and futures, and ensure prosperity is shared across our entire city.



On the global front, we've taken deliberate steps to strengthen our international ties. From renewing our Sister City relationship with Matsumoto, Japan, to transferring the Foreign Trade Zone to World Trade Center Utah, we are positioning Salt Lake City as a gateway for innovation and global commerce.

This work reflects our belief that economic development is not just about buildings or balance sheets—it's about people. It's about designing a city that's livable, vibrant, and forward-thinking. One that honors its past, meets the moment, and builds boldly for the future.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Lorena Riffo-Jenson, JD, MPH

Director of Salt Lake City Department of Economic Development



Program Wrap + Disbursements

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Program

The Department of Economic Development is pleased to announce that the ARPA Grants Program has concluded. All funding has been disbursed and the final reporting to the United States Treasury has been submitted.

In January 2025, the Department of Economic Development finalized its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Program, disbursing a total of \$1,518,600, which awarded grants to small businesses, artists, and nonprofits to grant out to other grant recipients.

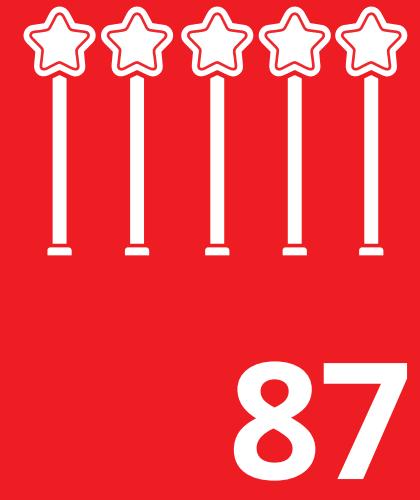




Salt Lake City Arts Council

The Salt Lake City Arts Council delivers a wide range of programs that **energize public spaces, support local artists and organizations, and ensure that arts and culture remain central to life in the City.**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FY25



Arts Council: Programs + Impact

Wake the Great Salt Lake – Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge

One of this year's most ambitious projects is Wake the Great Salt Lake, a bold public art initiative funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Twelve Utah-based artists and organizations received grants to create temporary public art installations that raise awareness about the shrinking Great Salt Lake. These activations were launched in October and will continue into the coming year. As the project's centerpiece, world-renowned artist, Olafur Eliason, will debut a symphony of disappearing sounds for the Great Salt Lake as part of Wake the Great Salt Lake. The Arts Council also successfully met its fundraising goal for the project.

Outreach + Engagement

Salt Lake City took the national stage by supporting the Visit Salt Lake bid in 2019 and hosting the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Conference, which brought over 5,500 ceramic artists to the city. The Arts Council's Finch Lane Gallery was honored to present Rebel Girl, a featured exhibition for the event.

Performing Arts Programs

The Twilight Concert Series celebrated its 37th season, with most performances held at the Gallivan Center and an expansion to Library Square for The Marias, piloting the Civic Campus concept. The summer season also featured performances at other Arts Council events, including the Living Traditions Festival, Busker Fest, Mondays in the Park, and the Jordan River Acoustic Music Strolls.

City Arts Grants

Through the Salt Lake City Arts Grants Program, 87 grants were awarded this year to artists and organizations. New eligibility for mural funding resulted in four community-based murals. Over the past four years, the Arts Council has supported or helped produce more than 40 murals in collaboration with other city departments through various funds.

Public Art

The Public Art Program continues to partner with neighborhood groups and city agencies to grow and maintain Salt Lake's public art collection. Highlights from this year include the restoration of the Bridges Over Barriers mural; the installation of Life on State, a series of eight neon artworks; six bike rack murals along the Bonneville Foothill Trail System; a major commission announcement for Pioneer Park; and significant repairs to artworks in the International Peace Gardens.

PRODUCTS + SERVICES:

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



“

I think this grant was an excellent use of city funding. The Road Home provides immense value to the community and disadvantaged populations in SLC. I know they had wanted a mural for years but couldn't secure funding, so it was deeply satisfying to help make that happen. The mural makes their building more welcoming, easier to find, and adds cultural vitality to this stretch of Main Street. Using Project Support funds for murals is a great evolution of the program, as murals have a lasting and wide-reaching impact on the community.

”

**TREVOR DAHL,
PROJECT SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENT ROUND 2**





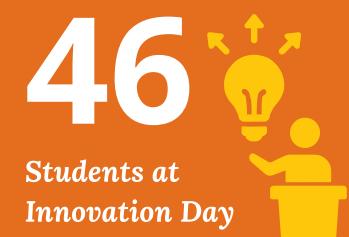
CONNECTION



VITALITY

Business Development + Workforce

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FY25



About + Impact

Shades
BREWING



CITY
Cakes®

STADLER

BRIDOR



AV

CLEANJOULE



COLD PLUNGE COFFEE
the cold bath cafe

CAFE PLOV & BORSCH

Himalayan Kitchen
NEPALI & INDIAN CUISINE



TRIPLE POINT
SECURITY

YOUR PARTNER FOR PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS
JSL

Over the past year, the Salt Lake City Business Development Division advanced its mission to support local businesses and attract new investment to the city. A major achievement was the launch of an online application for the Economic Development Loan Fund, which proved highly successful. In 2024, the program funded 12 loans totaling \$2.2 million, resulting in the creation of 142 new jobs. The Loan Fund continues to serve as a catalyst for small business growth, helping companies such as Cold Plunge Coffee and City Cakes establish and expand operations in neighborhoods across the city.

With economic growth came significant infrastructure work, including increased road construction, which placed additional strain on local businesses. To offset these challenges, the Division's Construction Mitigation Grant Program awarded 229 grants—totaling \$687,000—to businesses impacted by roadwork projects.

Business attraction and retention also remained a strong focus. The Division successfully brought in new companies such as Bridor and Southwind Foods, while supporting the expansion of existing employers like Stadler Rail and Clean Joule. Together, these efforts generated more than \$570 million in new investment and over 1,500 jobs, with continued growth expected in the coming years.

In the downtown core, the Division worked to strengthen business activity and showcase elements of the Main Street Pedestrian Promenade Study by hosting the annual Open Streets on Main Street event. This popular program once again transformed Main Street into a pedestrian-only experience, attracting visitors from across Utah. The event featured local artists, performers, and outdoor dining patios created by downtown restaurants and bars, giving Main Street a vibrant new atmosphere and highlighting its potential as a lively cultural destination.

PRODUCTS, SERVICES + INITIATIVES:

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



“

We are grateful to the Department of Economic Development for allowing us to implement our project for their support and faith in us... We received the best service and support ever.

EXOTIC FAST FOOD LLC



STADLER US INC.

Salt Lake City was the obvious choice for Stadler's North American facility. Establishing ourselves and expanding here lets us better serve our largest U.S. customers and secure new contracts, take advantage of outstanding rail and transport links, a skilled workforce and strong state and local incentives. Now, by expanding our facility here, we are able to double our manufacturing capacity and offer even more careers for the local community.

“

Tech Lake City + Workforce Development

About + Impact

Innovation Day is designed to inspire the next generation of STEM leaders by creating early pathways into the growing Life Sciences and Tech industry in Salt Lake City.

This year, the event focused on middle school students, introducing them to the real-world applications of biotechnology in health, agriculture, and energy. Through hands-on activities, interactive sessions, and conversations with professionals from local biotech companies—including DiscGenics, CleanJoule, and Krado—students explored how science, sustainability, and innovation intersect.

By connecting students with real-world biotech applications and local professionals, Innovation Day creates awareness of future educational and career pathways in the life sciences.

 **DiscGenics™**

 **CLEANJOULE**

K R A D O



“

Salt Lake City has proven to be an ideal environment for Denali's growth, offering access to top scientific talent, advanced infrastructure, and a collaborative business community. Our new biomanufacturing facility expands our U.S. manufacturing capabilities and strengthens our supply chain control and operational efficiency, which accelerates our ability to bring therapies to patients.

RYAN WATTS,
CEO, DENALI THERAPEUTICS

Salt Lake City is rapidly emerging as a premier hub for life sciences innovation. Companies like Recursion exemplify the strength of Utah's ecosystem, a sector that contributes more than \$22 billion to Utah's annual GDP now supports over 180,000 jobs, growing by more than 5% each year for more than a decade. The combination of lower costs than coastal life sciences hubs, and an impressive talent pool spanning science and technology, makes Utah a great place to start and build a company in this industry.

KRISTEN RUSHTON,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, RECURSION

Having students participate in Innovation Day gives us an opportunity to introduce them to biotechnology. Many of our students want to go into that profession, but they also want to know that there's more to science. Exposing students to this field early, while they're still in middle school, is really critical.

JAMES YAPIAS,
DIRECTOR, SALT LAKE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

“



Sister Cities

About + Impact

Over the past fiscal year, Salt Lake City's Sister Cities program fostered meaningful international relationships through cultural exchange, education, and emerging economic collaboration. A delegation traveled to Matsumoto, Japan, to participate in a reciprocal visit marking 65 years of friendship—a milestone that highlighted decades of mutual respect and shared experiences.

The city also welcomed high school students from Matsumoto as part of the long-standing International Life School program, now in its 30th year. The students spent two weeks immersed in Utah's culture while staying with local host families.

Salt Lake City renewed its connection with its Sister City in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, with the mayors of both cities meeting virtually to reaffirm their commitment to friendship during challenging times. The program also took part in Salt Lake's Peruvian Independence Celebration in July, deepening ties with the local Peruvian community. Looking ahead, efforts began to foster economic connections by introducing Salt Lake City businesses to potential partners in Matsumoto and Torino, Italy—an exciting step toward expanding the scope of international collaboration.

THIS IS OUR CITY.



INTERNATION





DEPARTMENT of
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

451 South State Street, Room 128
Salt Lake City, Utah, 84111

www.slc.gov/ed

