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Utah selected for new USPTO community engagement office location

Grand opening of new community engagement office to serve as innovation center for local/regional innovators

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ALEXANDRIA, VA — The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) today announced the selection and grand opening of a new community engagement office location in Utah to serve innovators in part of the eight-state area formerly serviced by the Rocky Mountain Regional Outreach Office. The eight-state area included: Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Nebraska. The new community engagement office is located at The University of Utah.

The USPTO reimagines its community engagement footprint as an agile model to meet innovators where they are.

The University of Utah is an R1 institution with one of the strongest commercialization pipelines in the Mountain West. It has significant federal research activity at more than $781 million in fiscal year 2025 (FY25) and has an aggressive plan for growth. The university also provides industry partnerships spanning biotech, AI, advanced engineering, and energy in addition to the S.J. Quinney College of Law with an intellectual property (IP) specialization.

"America's leadership in innovation begins in the communities where ingenuity thrives, and universities are where breakthrough ideas take shape. Researchers, innovators, and funders need expansive eligibility to meet the on-rush of new technology, access that fosters participation, and engagement that begins at the earliest stages of discovery. With today's announcement, we are adding another top university and startup ecosystem partner to help translate research into real-world impact and drive the next generation of American economic growth," said John A. Squires, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO.

The University of Utah within Salt Lake City provides access to robust research activity, a highly developed commercialization ecosystem, and the opportunity for the USPTO to leverage access in

supporting all inventors, including a statewide outreach footprint, rural engagement, and partnerships within industry, tribal communities, and small businesses.

The community engagement office at The University of Utah will carry out the strategic direction of the USPTO's Office of Public Engagement and ensure the USPTO's initiatives and programs are tailored to the area's ecosystem of industries and stakeholders.

The community engagement office will work closely with IP practitioners and services, startups, and job-growth accelerators. It will also collaborate with local STEM organizations on outreach and educational programming.

"We are delighted to welcome The University of Utah to our growing engagement community alongside Montana State and kicked off by the longstanding partnership between the USPTO and the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law. And, by building out and refining our engagement model, the agency is saving over $3.3 million annually," said Director Squires.

"This partnership reflects the University of Utah's long-standing commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship," said University of Utah President Taylor Randall. "By hosting the USPTO on our campus, the University is helping ensure that inventors, students, startups, and established businesses across Utah have greater access to the tools and knowledge they need to protect ideas and bring new technologies to market."

In October 2025, the USPTO issued a **request for comments** seeking public input regarding the locations for one or more community outreach offices (now referred to as community engagement offices) in the eight-state area formerly serviced by the Rocky Mountain Regional Outreach Office that the USPTO statutorily established under the **Unleashing American Innovators Act of 2022**. The purposes of the community outreach offices, as stated in the Act, include:

1. to partner with local community organizations, institutions of higher education, research institutions, and businesses to create tailored community-based programs that provide education regarding the patent system and promote the career benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship; and
2. to educate prospective inventors, including individual inventors, small businesses, veterans, low-income populations, students, rural populations, and any geographic group of innovators that the Director may determine to be underrepresented in patent filings, about all public and private resources available to potential patent applicants, including the patent pro bono program.

The University of Utah was selected based upon meeting the USPTO's stated criteria of having:

1. robust research activity and graduate-level programs of study in areas which lead to innovations, IP, and IP-intensive companies/industries;
2. availability and concentration of existing commercialization and business development resources (innovation ecosystem); and
3. ability to support all innovators.

Utah is ranked among the fastest-growing innovation economies in the country with a high volume of individual and first-time inventors who would immediately benefit from a USPTO presence. The new community engagement office will serve as an extension of the agency's outreach operations.

“The USPTO must be right there. Our new community engagement model provides critical access at lower cost, with higher touch and greater presence. This is how we build a bold, resilient, and forward-looking IP infrastructure for the next century — one that is responsive, agile, and ready for whatever comes next,” said Director Squires.

The USPTO’s community engagement offices will be designed as centers for the cultivation and expansion of vibrant innovation, investment, and entrepreneurship supported by IP.

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