

Relief program offers training to Utahns in need

By **Vanessa Mlikota** - November 17, 2020

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Salt Lake Community College's School of Applied Technology and Technical Specialties offers many training and educational options. SLCC used CARES Act funding to create short-term training programs for unemployed Utahns. (Courtesy of SLCC Institutional Marketing)

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the nation, many businesses shut down, leaving millions of workers, including college students, unemployed and struggling financially. But for unemployed workers in Utah, there may be hope for the future.

The [Learn & Work in Utah](#) program aims to offer training to unemployed residents and those struggling during the pandemic. Students in the Utah System of Higher Education, which includes most two- and four-year schools in the state, are eligible for participation.

Participating schools select the number and type of programs, which are designed to be short-term and provide some quick, financial relief. Applicants can choose from a broad range of career areas.

At Salt Lake Community College, the program serves students who are unemployed, furloughed or seeking opportunities for career enhancement due to the negative economic impact of COVID-19. Those who qualify receive the opportunity to obtain skills that will help them find jobs in health care, business, information technology, energy, manufacturing and advanced materials, or public safety and transportation, along with professional development training.

The courses will be offered in an online or hybrid format to lessen the chance of transmitting COVID-19.

A representative from the School of Applied Technology department said the program was designed to help any individual that has been impacted by COVID to learn a skill and get back into the workforce. The representative also said students typically finish in a few months.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration also provides funding for the program, though federal support is expected to end Dec. 1. Students are encouraged to enroll before this date, though the program will still run through the spring. Once enrolled, students should expect to be done by June.

Zac Petit, an SLCC student, said he'd benefit from the program right now.

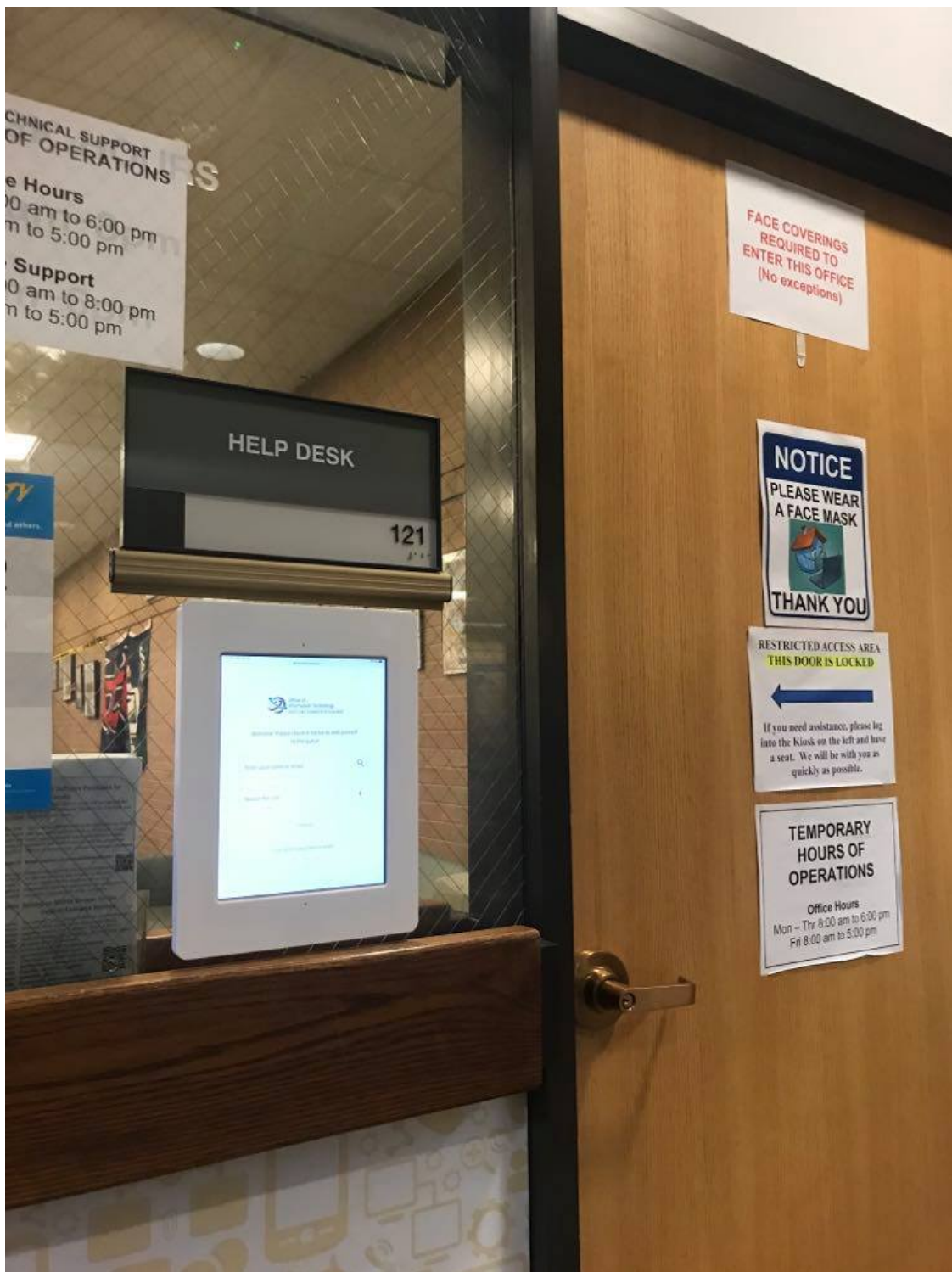
"I lost my job back in March. I can barely even afford my tuition, much less my rent and bills," Petit said. "Something like this could be good for people who are in the same situation as me."

Visit the [SLCC Learn & Work in Utah page](#) to learn more about the available programs.

SLCC Help Desk slammed with calls as students, faculty go mostly online

By Carol Chatwin - November 17, 2020

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The Help Desk offices are located in the Technology Building on the Taylorsville Redwood Campus. (Carol Chatwin)

The Technical Support Help Desk at Salt Lake Community College survived an onslaught of calls for assistance in the months after the majority of students and faculty moved to online classes.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the Information Technology department would receive 200-250 calls and help tickets a day, according to Gus Calder, manager of Technical Support and IT Training. Then, in mid-March, as things moved away from campus to an almost entirely online setting, the department started getting about 500 calls and help tickets a day.

Calder said the department had been preparing for employees to work from home in the weeks before the school transferred online after Spring Break.

"It was more of an impact of trying to help people work from home than it was an impact on us doing our jobs," Calder said.

To help the IT department work most efficiently, Calder advises students, staff and faculty to always start with the basics before calling in.

"Restart your computer," Calder said. "Bear with us, we're trying as hard as we can to make sure [students, staff and faculty] are able to do their jobs and succeed."

Calder said he reminds his team often that people contact them when things don't work and are often stressed.

"People call us, and they're frustrated, our job is not to get frustrated back at them," he said. "We want to be able to help — just give us a little understanding, because it's tough, especially with everything going on."



Gus Calder, the IT manager at Salt Lake Community College, sits in his office during a workday at Taylorsville Redwood Campus. SLCC dealt with a higher volume of calls during last spring semester when classes shifted online because of COVID-19. (Carol Chatwin)

Suzanne Jacobs, associate professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, said she has only had good experiences working with IT.

"They are amazing, plus they have a sense of humor about it, which is great," Jacobs said.

Jodie Jones, assistant professor of communication, said the IT department delivered invaluable support as faculty transitioned from in-person to online classes.

"I can't praise them enough," Jones said.

However, Jones worries students may not know the IT department is available to help.

"I've walked many students down [to the IT department] and said, 'here is someone that can help you.' And they didn't even know [the IT Help Desk] existed," Jones said.

Calder said his team appreciates students, staff and faculty, too.

"Without them, we wouldn't have a job," he said. "Thank you for helping us grow and to help you to grow."

Calder explains that they enjoy helping others with their tech problems.

"It's good to be diverse because it keeps us growing as an IT organization, it forces us to keep up to date with the new technologies," he said.

Calder also noted that feedback requested in surveys sent via email after a help ticket closes helps the department know how to do better.

Students, faculty and staff can [visit the IT help page](#), call 801-957-5555 for support or [submit a help request](#).