



UTAH FOUNDATION

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Utah has Nation's Strongest Middle Class

The Beehive State Unique in the West with Large Homegrown Population

(March 23, 2022) – Today, the Utah Foundation releases the fifth report in its Utah Social Capital Series with *The Soil of Common Ground: Social Cohesion in Utah*. This installment focuses on social cohesion; the previous installments focused on civic engagement, social trust, community life and family life.

The Soil of Common Ground presents data and analysis in three areas: economic stratification, language and the extent to which the population is homegrown. It looks at Utah's performance on these measures over time, comparing the Beehive State both to the seven other Mountain States and to the nation at large.

Among the findings of the new report:

- Utah has a remarkably strong middle class. As of 2019, Utah's middle class remained not just ahead of the nation as a whole – but ahead of every other state. In fact, not only was Utah No. 1, it was outperforming the second strongest state by a notable margin.
- Utah's percentage of children with limited English proficiency is in the bottom half of all states. This contrasts somewhat with the adult population; Utah has the 22nd highest share of adults with limited English proficiency.
- The share of Utah residents born in the state ranks 19th highest in 2019. Utah is unique among Mountain States in its robust population of state natives; most states in the region are well below average on this count, and some rank among the very lowest. Utah's proportion of state natives is more than double that of neighboring Nevada.

Utah Foundation President Peter Reichard said that Utah's robust middle class is part of what makes the state special, but he warned against complacency. He said the Utah Foundation's ongoing work on post-secondary educational attainment goes to the heart of sustaining a strong middle class.

“The nation's middle class has gradually been shrinking, and some American cities have become highly stratified,” Reichard said. “If Utah wants to avoid becoming a place of haves and have-nots, more of our young people need to obtain the credentials to fully participate in the economy and achieve middle-class status.”

The Soil of Common Ground: Social Cohesion in Utah is available on the Utah Foundation website at www.utahfoundation.org. Special thanks to the **George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation** and the **Lawrence T. & Janet T. Dee Foundation** for providing project-based support to the Utah Social Capital Series.

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Founded in 1945, the Utah Foundation's mission is to produce objective, thorough and well-reasoned research and analysis that promotes the effective use of public resources, a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns. The Utah Foundation seeks to help decision-makers and citizens understand and address complex issues. The Utah Foundation also offers constructive guidance to improve governmental policies, programs and structures.

The Utah Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization.