

A Conversation with **Kori Ann Edwards**

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Kori Ann
Edwards

Go Utah

How did Utah minimize the impact of the pandemic on the state's businesses?

At the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (also known as Go Utah), one of our primary roles was to disburse state and federal financial relief to Utah businesses. Since the pandemic began, Go Utah has distributed over \$200 million in grants.

Our first pandemic relief program was the Utah Leads Together Small Business Bridge Loan program, and it was the first of its kind in the intermountain region (Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana). Go Utah distributed approximately \$12 million to 1,150 small businesses under that program in March and April 2020.

We focused on the health of Utahns and the economy as one challenge that we needed to solve, which is a primary reason why Utah has been named the number one state for economic outlook and recovery.

How was a cloud strategy critical to helping you meet your goals?

Leveraging a cloud-based platform that created a single source of truth provided Go Utah with the tools needed to manage the disbursement of relief funds in a step-by-step process. In addition, dashboards gave us a snapshot of fund deployment for each grant, evaluation tools helped ensure we were providing responsible awards, and funding and contract tools put everything in one place, which has been critical for meeting all the reporting requirements.

What lessons did you learn that can be applied to other challenges?

We found that the better we focused the aid, the more impactful the funding. For example, we were able to specify and evaluate what percentage of funds needed to get to rural Utah, what industries were hit the hardest and what levels of funding made the difference.

Additionally, Go Utah has a business intelligence team that is well trained in using the Salesforce Customer 360 for government, a compliance team that reviews and validates applications, and a finance team that understands the importance of deploying the funds quickly.



What advice do you have for other agencies??

Here are our 4 best practices:

1. Recognize customers as customers.

Government agencies often don't think they have customers, but we do. Go Utah's customers are the business owners who rely on our services.

2. Plan for a remote work environment.

A cloud platform enabled us to transition to remote work. We could not have done our jobs from home if our grants management process still ran on a paper-based system.

3. Put your data to work.

Go Utah is tracking, reporting and unlocking all kinds of data-driven insights that can help our team and the state improve future services.

4. Embrace a can-do attitude.

Go Utah's strategy allows new programs to go live faster because the team can reuse existing tools instead of building each new workflow from scratch.

Our team became even more passionate about our work because we see how much it helps businesses, individuals and the community when we quickly deploy the services they need. ■

Learn more about how Go Utah delivers support for local businesses at sfdc.co/customer-success-GoUtah.