



TECH TRENDS 2024 REPORT

A GLIMPSE AT THE ROAD AHEAD



TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS



The Silicon Slopes story.

Dive into the heart of Utah's humming tech scene — the Silicon Slopes. Our second annual report is your compass through the vibrant intersection of innovation and opportunity that defines our tech community here in Utah. The report gives us a quick pulse on the local tech scene's talent strategies, alignment on business priorities, economic outlook, hybrid work trends, and more key insights.

We are excited to share the findings from local tech professionals and leaders for you to use to benchmark against your own strategies and plans. The Silicon Slopes is poised for resilience, growth, and innovation as we look at the roadmap for 2024.

Let's dive into the road ahead for Utah tech.

Sean McKeehan | Market Director, Utah
ProFocus Technology



Voices of the Silicon Slopes.

We appreciate the Silicon Slopes leaders and professionals who responded to ProFocus Technology's second annual survey.

This year's survey captures insights from innovative startups to established industry leaders. With a smaller sample size than previous years, this report is a snapshot of trends happening in Utah's tech scene that we hope to continue to expand.

Thanks to our engaged tech community, we're able to share a peek at what's ahead for local employers and tech professionals in 2024. The report examines strategic decisions in resource allocation, offering a chance to benchmark against local organizations. Let's get into it.

1 **Outlook & Core Metrics**

4 **Talent Demands**

2 **Tech Trends & Innovation**

5 **Compensation Trends**

3 **Talent Challenges**

6 **Cultural Considerations**

Please note, some figures in the report do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding or question design (e.g., the ability to provide multiple answers). Some participant quotes were edited for clarity and length.



1 2024 tech outlook: guiding and growing.

Utah's economy continues to thrive, earning high marks for growth and resilience despite layoffs in 2022 and 2023. Thanks in large part to the tech sector, Utah has two cities ranked in the top five for Best-Performing Cities in the nation for 2024¹ and is distinguished as a Best State in the Nation² for its strong business environment and job creation. Utahns in the tech industry account for 8.4% of Utah's GDP, 10% of the state's economy, and over 1 trillion in assets.³

2024 marks a year of innovation and resilience in the Silicon Slopes, with leaders expressing optimism amidst challenges. The focus is on navigating economic uncertainties, leveraging technological advancements, and fostering growth. Leaders highlight a few critical barriers to achieving their priorities; one attests their "company's highest priority is growth - corporate growth is not strongly connected to tech infrastructure so that will not be an area of significant investment; however, it is connected to tech talent.

Sustaining momentum.

Over half of leaders surveyed (53%) expect their company revenue to increase, compared to 14% who expect a decrease. The data collected shows similar growth and optimism to the 2023 report, indicating the Silicon Slopes tech scene is on a steady ascent.

Also consistent with trends last year, core metrics suggest there will always be pressure to do more with less. Optimistic revenue increases don't always equal bigger department budgets. Budget predictions and hiring plans seem to be more cautious this year with nearly a fourth of leaders indicating budget and headcount increases.

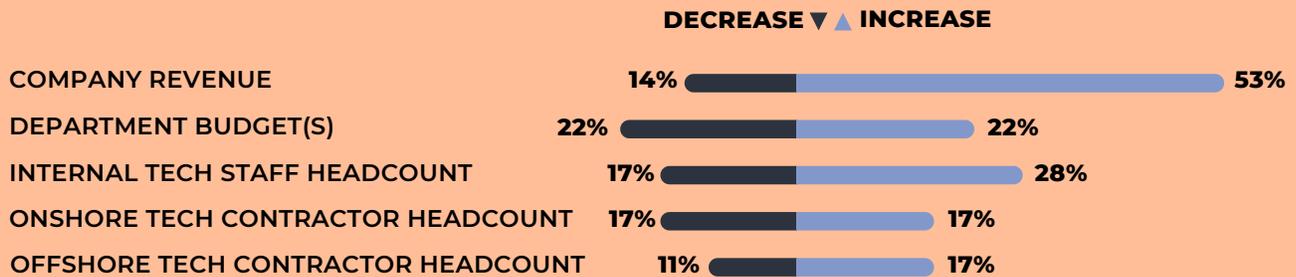
Revenue increases.

53%

OF LEADERS SAY THEY EXPECT COMPANY REVENUE TO INCREASE

Balanced forecast.

Expectations for core metrics



Steady on the slopes.

Anticipated revenue increases with steady budgets mean tech professionals in the Silicon Slopes should prepare to prioritize efficiency in all areas. As one IT Director shares, this year their firm is “focused on budget reduction,” claiming 2024 is a year to hunker down. **Despite the steady budgets, Utah tech leaders do see growth for headcount (28%) and have plans to hire to meet their goals.**

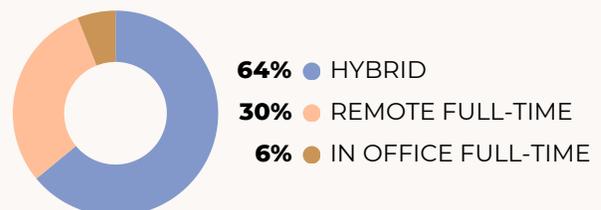
Notably the firms expecting the largest increases in headcount seem to be small and midsize firms (with a few notable large firms) while the enterprise companies anticipate fewer headcount increases. Similarly, enterprise firms seem to be the least optimistic about revenue increases in 2024, with only 30% anticipating increases compared to the 61-67% of small and mid-size firms.

Where we work.

From 2023 to 2024 respondents reported a 24% increase in hybrid work from 40% to 64%. Despite a fourth of leaders predicting a decrease in office space last year, many continue to provide hybrid options for their teams. Although the hybrid model varies, the most popular model allows employees to pick the days they are onsite. Companies requiring their teams to be in the office fulltime dropped from 11% in 2023 to just 6% headed into 2024.

Strategic Flexibility.

Working arrangements



2 The slopes roadmap: efficiency & innovation.

Utah is no stranger to innovation and efficiency. The Silicon Slopes tech scene is focused on strategic initiatives to improve the customer experience, increase operational efficiency, leverage AI, and bring new services to market. In that order. These goals seem well within reach for the thriving tech hub in Utah, especially given **the majority (50%) agree that their business leaders and tech teams are aligned on priorities.**

Setting the roadmap.

When asked about top strategic priorities for 2024, improving the customer experience heads up the list for the second year in a row. Survey results indicate this initiative is most important to small firms with 89% ranking it as their top priority.

As mention previously in the report, the need for efficiency might be driven by the anticipated steady budgets. Increasing operational efficiency ranked 2nd overall but most important to midsized, large and enterprise companies.

A not so surprising addition to the list, leveraging AI ranks third for leaders as they dive into 2024. When asked how they might leverage AI to achieve their priorities, leaders in the Silicon Slopes are in the early stages of investigation and implementation. Leveraging new technology “is an important factor to our future as we look to reduce operational expenditure through AI as well as driving innovating products,” says one Utah executive.

Innovative paths.

Over half of all respondents (54%) applaud their firm’s approach to innovation, agreeing it uses innovation to disrupt the industry. Amongst those that agree, small and midsize firms seem to inspire the most confidence from respondents on their ability to disrupt.

Overall, two-thirds of respondents feel empowered to personally innovate; with an impressive alignment between leaders (80%) and individual contributors (77%).

Charting the path.

Top 4 initiatives for 2024

- 1 Improving the customer experience
- 2 Increasing operational efficiency
- 3 Leveraging AI
- 4 Bringing new services or products to market

“ In the AI revolution, continuous upskilling isn't just a strategy; it's survival. I believe Utah's technology professionals, fueled by Silicon Slopes' legacy of innovation and entrepreneurial DNA, and years of robust education roots are uniquely positioned to lead in this digital era. At Vasion, our commitment to continuous learning ensures our team remains at the forefront of this ever-evolving landscape.

COREY ERCANBRACK | CHIEF PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY OFFICER | VASION

AI & machine learning: front-seat passengers, not drivers.

While AI technologies are a hot topic, their **application is still in the early stages**. Usage varies widely, from individual-level application to strict 'no AI' policies pending further vetting. Popular tools like ChatGPT, GitHub Copilot, DALL-E 3, and CoLab are mentioned by respondents, highlighting their emerging roles in the tech landscape. Nationally, 56% say they are either experimenting with today's AI solutions in some way or they have begun researching and evaluating the tools for potential future adoption.⁴

Amongst respondents, AI tools seem to be most popular for project and program planning, content creation for webinars and trainings, and add-ons to existing development tools. However, some firms in the Silicon Slopes are ahead of the curve with AI already being used and deployed in products. One executive states their firm is “employing over 10 different AI models in this new release.” Overall, leaders expect to make more of an investment in AI tools and learning in 2024 and beyond.

Skills strategies.

The biggest obstacle to achieving the priorities set by tech leaders in Utah? “Budget and lack of qualified talent,” claims one supervisor. Respondents once again indicate tech talent shortage keeps their team from meeting key goals. With a significant 64% of individual contributors feeling their organization struggles to find the right tech talent and 25% claiming a skills shortage keeps their team from meeting its goals.

Managers feel strongly, with over 40% agreeing, that the tech skills shortage keeps their teams from meeting their goals. Leaders surveyed suggested that **upskilling their tech teams is their 2nd toughest challenge** next to finding the right talent.

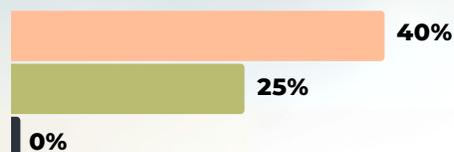
Eyes on the road.

Executives might see the skills shortage differently. Respondents at the executive level unanimously do not view it as an impediment, with 0% agreeing that it hinders goals. A stark contrast to their teams and middle management.

Why executives are less concerned about the skills shortage might have to do with their plans to upskill the workforce with over 57% of respondents confirming their company has plans to upskill their current teams. Others believe qualified talent is out there and say “we have a saturated market for developers. There have been a ton of layoffs,” says Bo Denkers VP, Software Development at AvantGuard Monitoring Centers.

Skills shortage.

Agree a tech skills shortage derails goals



- CONTRIBUTORS
- MANAGERS
- EXECUTIVES

“Attempting to match existing skills with the constant change in technology is a challenge and can drive up training cost for the department. Leveraging contract talent allows us more immediately support for deployments, helps train our existing teams faster, and there is a potential team fit if converted.

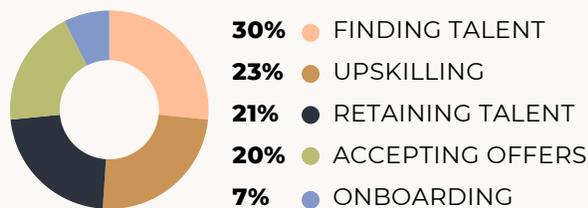
JOHN COOK | DIRECTOR OF SERVICES & INNOVATION | SPORTSMAN'S WAREHOUSE

3 Navigating tech terrain: talent roadblocks

With the overall Utah unemployment sitting at a low 2.8%—and tech unemployment even lower—**the struggle to find tech talent is alive and well.**⁵ While over 64% of individual contributors and team leads see finding people as their biggest tech talent headache, only 30% of the executive level rank it as the number one challenge. The responses suggest executives might be looking at the bigger picture; with onboarding, upskilling, getting talent to accept offers, and retaining talent also weighing more heavily on tech executives than last year. Utah firms are well aware of the talent roadblocks ahead, and the solution is not one size fits all.

Talent roadblocks.

Top talent challenges for managers & leaders



Navigating new challenges.

Looking more closely at the year over year data, last year 50% of leaders said finding talent was their biggest challenge compared to 30% this year. Leaders are now navigating talent challenges in multiple parts of the hiring process.

One surprising sentiment from respondents was the impact of government regulations on talent acquisition with 78% of executives in agreement that regulations complicate hiring quality talent. Over half of managers and directors agree.

Retention on the radar.

In Utah, skills development is a major concern for leaders, ranking as their second biggest challenge, with 57% planning to upskill teams in 2024. However, opinions on training effectiveness vary between leaders and contributors.

Retention is the third largest issue, particularly in larger firms where over half face turnover challenges, compared to 31% in smaller firms acknowledging it as a problem.

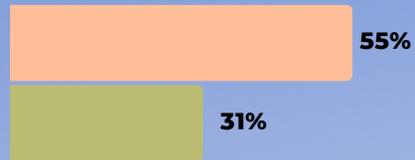
Skills solutions.

57%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS SAY THEY PLAN TO UPSKILL THEIR TEAMS IN 2024

Unfilled tech roles.

Agree turnover is an issue for tech roles

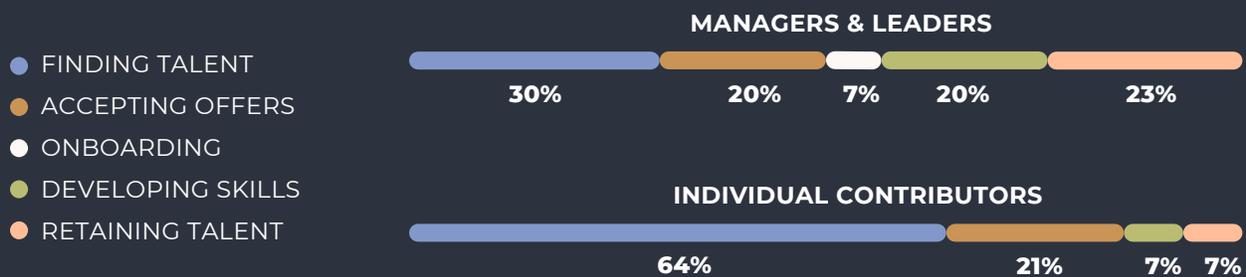


- LARGE & ENTERPRISE
- SMALL & MID-SIZE



The race to find talent.

Top talent challenges



4 Talent at the wheel: Utah workforce insights.

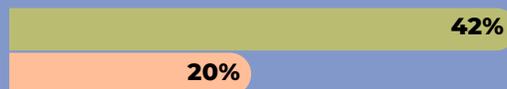
Tech professionals in the Silicon Slopes show a near-even split among those actively looking, possibly open, or having no plans to change jobs in 2024. This indicates a dynamic workforce open to opportunities yet appreciative of their current positions. Compared to last year, less people are actively looking to change roles suggesting recent layoffs, overall job satisfaction, and other factors might be impacting the Utah talent market.

Stay or go?

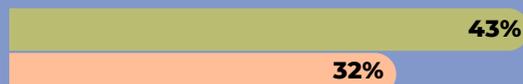
Actively seeking a job change

- 2023
- 2024

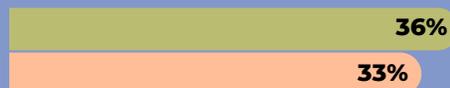
INDIVIDUAL
CONTRIBUTORS



MANAGERS



EXECUTIVES



Shifting directions.

In Utah's tech sector, salary emerges as the top factor in attracting and retaining talent, followed by meaningful work and flexible hours. Interestingly, the tech stack seems to hold no sway in decision-making, likely a nod to the ever evolving industry that requires continuous learning of new tools and technologies. Tech pros at small and mid-sized firms ranked meaningful work higher than those at large and enterprise firms.

Overall, this data reflects a workforce prioritizing financial reward, purpose in their work, and work-life balance, with evolving expectations towards workplace flexibility and personal growth opportunities.

Notably, DEI & Belonging, Career Development, and Benefits overall did not make the top four factors in retaining and attracting talent. The results YOY are very similar for what talent wants.

Talent insights.

Top 4 talent attraction and retention factors

- 1 Salary/
compensation
- 2 Meaningful/
interesting work
- 3 Remote work &
career development
- 4 Flexible hours



“ For the tech scene in Utah, the real key to making things work is simple: respect and understanding between those hiring and the folks looking for jobs. No matter what the economy or the industry is doing, it's all about being fair and **building real connections**. It's super important for both sides to get this right to grow together and keep our Silicon Slopes community thriving.

SEAN MCKEEHAN | MARKET DIRECTOR, UTAH | PROFOCUS TECHNOLOGY

5 Compensation trends: tech in the fast lane.

Salt Lake City has the most competition for a ‘highly paid’ job in the country right now, beating out major players like New York and San Francisco. For every job posting with a salary over \$94,515 there are roughly 35 applicants per day. The fierce competition is due to many factors including but not limited to more remote applicants and population growth (SLC increased by 7.8% between 2012 and 2022, exceeding the national growth rate).⁶

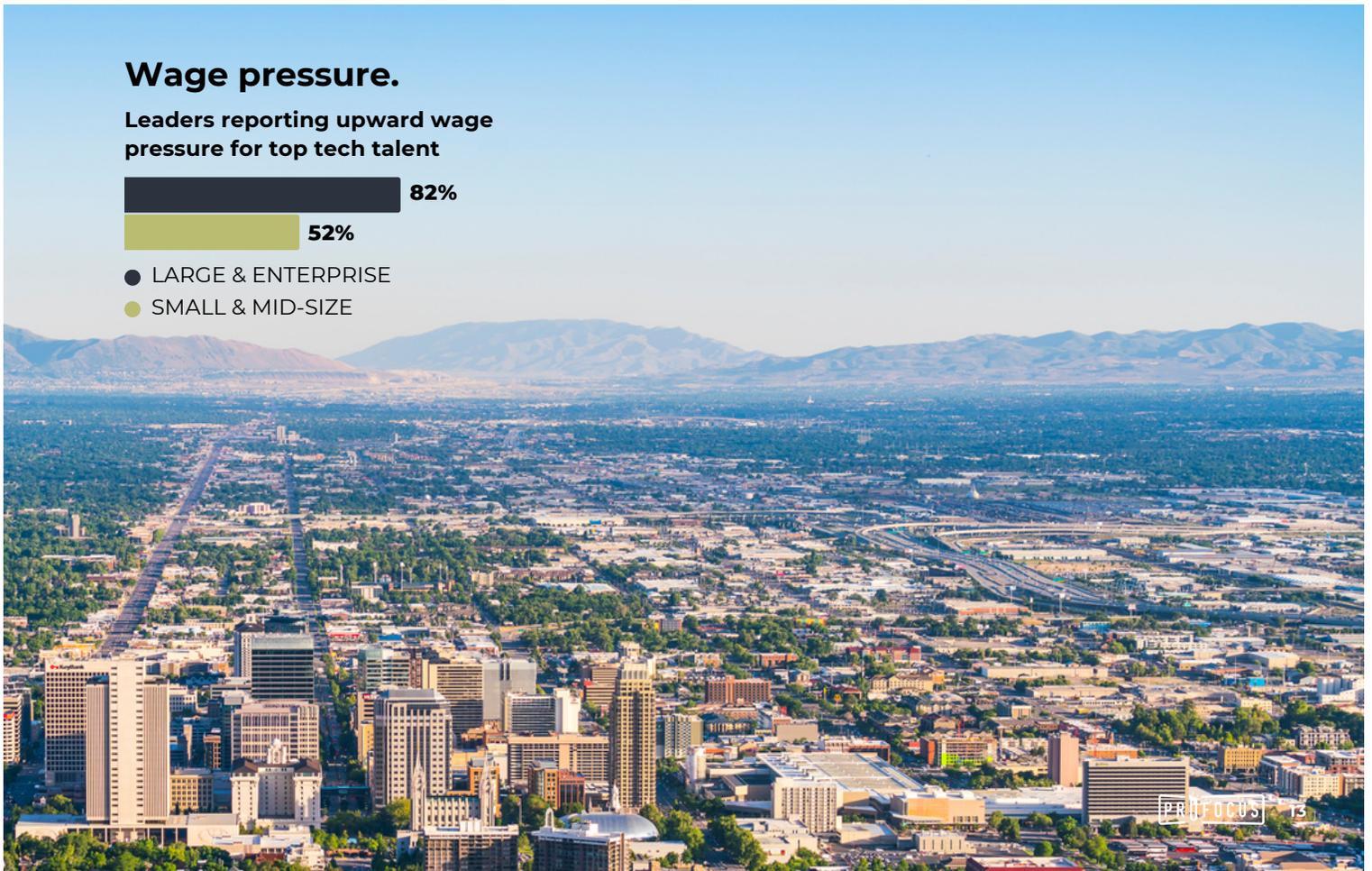
So how is this impacting compensation for technology professionals? Leaders surveyed seem calm about compensation trends with 58% expecting team compensation to remain steady and 33% expecting some increase in 2024. As we dig into the data it is clear that large & enterprise firms are reporting higher wage pressure (82%) compared to small & mid-size firms (52%).

Wage pressure.

Leaders reporting upward wage pressure for top tech talent



- LARGE & ENTERPRISE
- SMALL & MID-SIZE



Compensation in the spotlight.

Utah pay trends

33%
INCREASE
IN TEAM
COMPENSATION
EXPECTED

75%
EXPECT
UPWARD
WAGE
PRESSURE

56%
AGREE THEIR
FIRM HAS
COMPETITIVE
PAY

2%
EXPECT A
DECREASE IN
HOURS
WORKED

Feeling the pressure.

While overall 75% of respondents are facing wage pressure, managers and directors experience it more acutely, with a striking 81% affirming wage pressures compared to 55% of executives. Recent reports from Dice confirm that Utah's tech salaries are one of the fastest growing, seeing an 11% increase YOY.⁷

"As pay goes up in Utah and finding tech talent remains a challenge, many leaders are choosing to bring in skilled contractors," says Jennifer Waldrip, VP of Client & Talent Services at ProFocus Technology.

This approach helps firms teach new skills to their current teams while keeping an eye on budget and not adding too many permanent jobs. Jennifer explains, the cost of hiring contractors short-term is **"a smart way for companies to manage this challenge, allowing them to grow and adapt without overspending."**

Local compensation trends.

In Utah, 56% feel their pay is competitive, with 75% expecting wages to rise in 2024. While 33% foresee higher compensation for tech teams, only 2% expect shorter work hours, and 65% anticipate no change in work hours, suggesting pay increases may be linked to work demands rather than reduced hours.

Utah tech wages.

\$120K

AVERAGE SALARY

11%

INCREASE YOY

6 Spotlight on culture: a balancing act.

In the Silicon Slopes, tech culture earns high praise, with a stunning 95% praising work-life balance, 90% satisfied with burnout management, and 88% proud of their strong organizational culture. Yet, when it comes to being the prime spot for tech professionals, opinions vary.

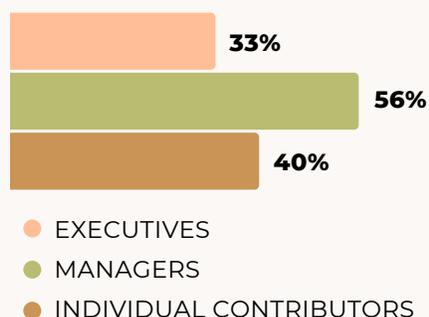
Navigating burnout.

Despite how well companies are managing burnout, it still exists. Results suggest Utahns experience a higher rate of burnout (63%) compared to the national average (48%).⁸ Key contributors to burnout include heavy workloads, management support deficiency, and insufficient resources.

IT leaders should note concerns around team overwork, with significant portions of managers (56%) and contributors (40%) worried. This is critical as 65% foresee no change in work hours, and 31% anticipate increases, potentially exacerbating burnout issues.

Overdrive.

Agree tech teams are overworked



63%

OF UTAH TECH PROFESSIONALS FEEL BURNED OUT

65%

ANTICIPATE NO CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED

Reaching new heights.

In Utah, **69% of tech pros say their firm is a good or outstanding place to be a tech pro**, with large and enterprise companies earning the highest marks from respondents.

With nearly 22% rating their firm as below average or poor for tech pros, Silicon Slopes firms have room for improvement.

Overall, firms in the Silicon Slopes seem to be in touch with the struggles of their workforce and are making intentional decisions to support their tech teams.

**Building
loyalty.**
Company
performance



Diverse Routes.

For 2024, while over half of respondents see DEI efforts continuing on their current track, opinions vary, reflecting a landscape with diverse routes but a shared destination of inclusivity and equity.

When asked what DEI initiatives are most valuable, tech professionals shared “those that make everyone feel included and supported.”

Others admitted uncertainty, with one leader stating, “I didn't find value in the company efforts. More in my own reading/discussions.” Responses indicate the ongoing nature of DEI work, with respondents appreciating employee resource groups, creating a culture of trust, formal trainings and hiring from non-traditional talent pools including veterans and military reserve programs.

Falling off the radar.

DEI programs & initiatives

19%

SAY DEI EFFORTS ARE STILL NOT CLEAR

Bigger than tech.

When asked about **favorite local charities and non-profits**, the Silicon Slopes was quick to show up and show love for the organizations they support.

- Bridle Up Hope
- Community Animal Welfare Society
- Girls Who Code
- International Rescue Committee
- Kids' Chance of Utah
- Kids On The Move
- Project Rainbow
- Red Cross
- Tech-Moms
- The Other Side Academy
- Utah Food Bank

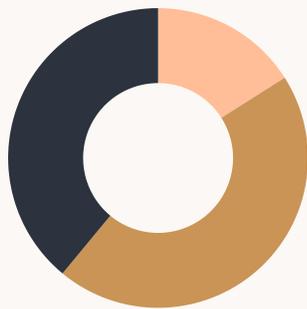
“Utah has a rich history of volunteerism. Within our diverse community, how and where we dedicate our time and resources is vast. Together, we prioritize a healthy work-life balance, enabling us to contribute to and enhance our community's well-being.

JENNY HATCH | TALENT PLANNING LEAD
PROFOCUS TECHNOLOGY



Survey demographics.

The *Silicon Slopes 2024 Trends Report* is based on 64 responses to an online survey of Silicon Slopes technology professionals conducted between October 9 and November 12, 2023.



Job level.

- 16% EXECUTIVE
- 45% MANAGER OR DIRECTOR
- 39% CONTRIBUTOR OR TEAM LEAD

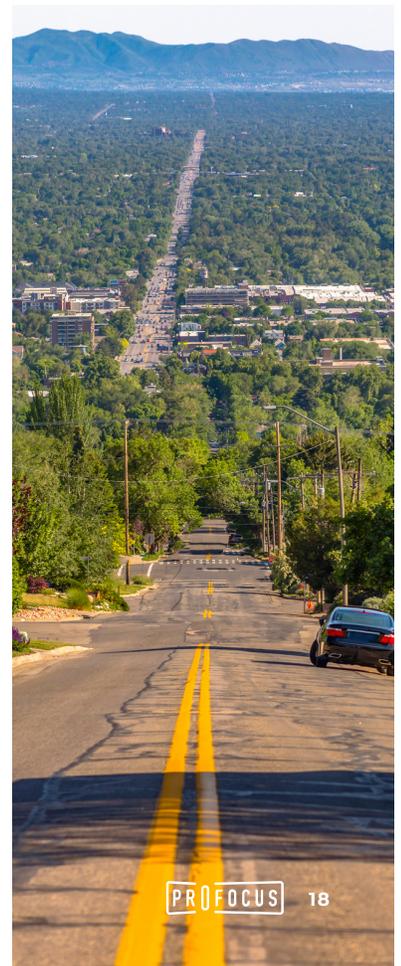


Business size.

- 27% SMALL (1-100 EMPLOYEES)
- 22% MIDSIZED (101-500)
- 30% LARGE (501-5,000)
- 21% ENTERPRISE (5,000+)

Endnotes.

- <https://milkeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/BestPerformingCities2024.pdf>
- <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/economy>
- <https://attheu.utah.edu/facultystaff/utahs-booming-fintech-industry-in-spotlight-at-national-conference/>
- <https://www.comptia.org/content/research/it-industry-trends-analysis>
- <https://jobs.utah.gov/blog/post/2024/03/06/utah-s-employment-summary-january-2024#>
- <https://www.cNBC.com/2024/03/08/this-city-has-the-most-competition-for-a-highly-paid-job.html>
- <https://www.dice.com/technologists/ebooks/tech-salary-report/salary-trends.html>
- <https://www.roberthalf.com/us/en/insights/salary-guide/technology>





Let's connect.

Have questions about the report or want to know more? We'd love to hear your perspective on Utah tech trends.

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