UETN FY2025 Legislative Funding Request

Overview

UETN's legislative funding request aims to address the critical need for enhanced security and continued software solutions to serve its stakeholders in telehealth, K-12, and higher education. With the ever-increasing reliance on digital platforms, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of sensitive information has become paramount. By allocating funds towards bolstering security measures, a new area of formalized services, UETN strives to provide a safe and efficient environment for all its stakeholders to thrive in the rapidly evolving landscape of online educational services. This funding request is a significant increase to UETN's annual ongoing state funding for two primary factors:

- Ongoing funding for Adobe software ($4M) – this was funded on a one-time basis for K-12 in the 2023 Legislative Session at $2M.
- Funding to formalize, bolster and standardize cybersecurity services for K-12 and higher education at $6.9M.

UETN staff are the backbone to its success, and salary and benefits are the top priority. To reward performance and continue to attract top candidates, UETN requests parity with state employees in salary and benefit adjustments provided by the state legislature, as in past years. The UETN Board also requests funding for mandatory cost increases to insurance premiums, other state-provided internal service funds, as well as employee health insurance premium increases comparable to state employees.

UETN Funding Sources	FY24 Budget	FY25 Base Budget	FY25 % Increase Total	FY25 % Increase State
State Appropriation				
Utah Education Network	33,737,800	33,737,800		
Utah Telehealth Network	1,588,500	1,588,500		
ARPA (Federal)	19,295,405	-		
Grant Income	4,322,130	4,322,130		
E-Rate (Expenditure Recovery)	16,000,000	16,000,000		
Other Income (Expenditure Recovery)	714,165	714,165		
Total Funding Sources	75,658,000	56,362,595		

FY 2025 Funding Legislative Funding Request

1. Compensation (parity with increases for state employees)			
2. Education Cybersecurity			
Basic Tools	6,200,000		
Personnel	700,000		
UETN Funding Request	6,900,000	12.24%	19.53%
3. Software			
Scrible Research & Writing	950,000		
Online Library (Projected)	250,000		
Adobe (K-12 + Higher Ed)	4,000,000		
UETN Funding Request	5,200,000	9.23%	14.72%
Total UETN Funding Requests	**12,100,000**	21.47%	34.25%

UETN FY2025 Legislative Budget Priority:
Education Cybersecurity: $6.9M

Background

A recent legislative audit on cybersecurity in Utah identified several state entities that were found to be at risk to cybersecurity attacks and with a need to strengthen their security framework. Many of the entities the auditors surveyed — including state agencies, local governments and school districts — have security policies that are not up to present-day standards and lack incident response plans that could minimize the damage of a detrimental attack:

> *"Cyberattacks have cost the state of Utah millions of dollars and will continue to cost the state if cybersecurity measures are not taken. Entities should be taking proactive steps to identify weaknesses and gaps in their security and use a cybersecurity framework as a guiding policy to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Various entities throughout the state were found to be at risk to cybersecurity attacks and need to strengthen their security framework."*
> -*Cybersecurity in the State of Utah*, Legislative Auditor General, May 2023

Nationally, the US Government Accountability Office estimates cyberattacks can cost schools between $50K-$1M per attack, with recovery time ranging from 2 to 9 months.

SB 127, passed during the 2023 Legislative Session, established the Utah Cyber Center. The Center will partner with several state entities, including UETN, to improve the ability of government entities within the state to protect themselves from increasingly complex and hardened cyber threats.

The Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN)
UETN provides network connectivity to all public schools - including most charter schools, institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education, and the major private institutions (BYU, Westminster College). Its statewide reach provides a unique window into the security strengths and vulnerabilities of its partner entities. UETN is uniquely positioned to address this issue because UETN is responsible for:
- **Internet traffic** for K-12, universities, state agencies, state libraries and several local governments.
- Over 1,900 **network connections** via 17 broadband providers statewide.
- **24/7x365 network monitoring services** include failover redundancy, outage monitoring, and professional networking services to local IT staff.

Cybersecurity at UETN
- UETN maintains the security of the State's education network using accepted industry standards and policies.
- UETN staff hosts workshops, bi-weekly webinars, and training for education technology professionals.
- UETN is a keystone sponsor of SAINTCON, the largest conference for public sector cyber-security professionals in Utah.
- UETN offers ad hoc security services as its resources allow:
  - Cybersecurity consulting, design and review.
  - Stakeholder incident response consulting and assistance
  - Network traffic monitoring and threat detection on the backbone
  - Denial of service attack mitigation and malicious traffic routing
  - No-cost security framework assessments.
  - Low-cost in-depth penetration testing services
  - Security threat monitoring and alerting
  - Security incident response for detected threats
  - Semi-weekly security briefings on current threats, trends, tactics
- UETN currently provides the following additional services for healthcare connected entities participating on the network:
  - Firewall installation, monitoring, and management.
  - Vulnerability Management services.
  - VPN and remote access management

Proposed Use of New Funds

Unified Education Cybersecurity
UETN plans to build basic tools, integration, and common frameworks for K-12 and telehealth stakeholders contemporaneous to the framework adopted by higher education technology leaders in 2022. The objectives are to maximize purchasing opportunities for public and higher education, as well as encourage statewide cybersecurity practices and standards.

With its network and software licensing accomplishments, UETN can provide to its education and telehealth partners a unified cybersecurity approach that would similarly enable a cost-efficient benefit to UETN stakeholders. UETN is working with the Utah Cyber Center in relation to responsibilities of the Utah Cybersecurity Commission.

Implementation is three phases. At full implementation, LEAs will maintain flexibility to either manage their individual security environment using standardized tools (with training provided by UETN) or, at their option, participate in managed security services offered by UETN.

Phase 1 FY2025: Initial implementation of tools, staff, and industry best practices

Tools and Integrations: UETN seeks funding to purchase tools to begin statewide implementation of security needs in the following areas:

- Managed Detection and Response (MDR)
- Endpoint Detection and Monitoring (EDR)
- Vulnerability Detection
- Identity and Access Management
- Asset management
- Data Loss Prevention
- Privilege and Access Management

Personnel: state-level implementation, coordinate with education entities, onboard and transition to overwatch (Phase 2) as entities integrate tools:

Security Center Manager
Security Tools Administrator
Security Analysts (2-3)

Funding Requested for Tools: $6.2M　　　　　**Funding Requested for Personnel: $700K**

Phase 2 FY2026: Expand monitoring and detection capabilities: formalize incident response, establish perimeter management for entities unable to manage independently (e.g. libraries, charter schools, HeadStart locations). Focus on research grants and collaborative partnerships with UofU, DTS, SIAC, etc. Funding estimate: $480K-600K for Sr. Security Analysts

Phase 3 FY2027: Full integration of a K-12 Managed Security Service for education entities seeking that support. UETN would manage full deployments of security monitoring, alerting, and response. Funding estimate: TBD

Additional Potential Benefits of Coordinated Cybersecurity in Education
UETN could additionally convene partners engaged in education and workforce-related initiatives and services related to cybersecurity:

Workforce Training
UETN provides redundant network connectivity to schools and higher education institutions statewide. That connectivity would enable fast-growing cybersecurity training programs offered by Utah schools and institutions to collaboratively share training, best practices and test environments ("sandboxes") for students.

Research, Grants and Partnerships
UETN, in close partnership with the University of Utah, works with other state public networks nationwide to coordinate policy, advocacy and best practices in cybersecurity. A unified funding approach to resourcing cybersecurity needs in education would further stretch potential federal

funding opportunities.

Physical School Security Collaboration
An unsecure IT physical space exposes a school to theft, damage, and data compromise. Likewise, schools are interconnected facilities where physical space is monitored and maintained via connected IT networks including security surveillance, HVAC, doors and high-cost capital assets (A/V equipment, labs, administrative systems, etc.). UETN participates in the Communication and Technology Integration Subcommittee of the Utah Legislature's School Safety Taskforce to help LEAs implement appropriate physical security in conjunction with education cybersecurity efforts.

Optional Managed Security Services as Requested
UETN could augment, consult on, and provide additional cost-effective managed security services and threat detection for entities needing greater security support. These services could include vulnerability management, endpoint monitoring, firewall management, security policy management.

Funding Detail

Funding estimate: $6.9M
- $6.2M: Consortium Security Tools Research & Purchase (Estimated savings: 28-47% annually)
- $700K: UETN Staffing (4-5 personnel: Security Center Mgr., Security Tools Admin, 2-3 analysts)

UETN FY2025 Legislative Budget Priority:
Education Software: $5.2M

Background

Software platforms are now fundamental to a student's experience to explore, create, innovate, and foster critical thinking abilities. UETN software licensing provides software access to all students regardless of socio-economic status or other barriers. Software not only enhances academic performance but prepares Utah's students for future careers in a tech-centric society, ultimately contributing to the state's workforce competitiveness on a global scale. Ubiquitous availability of basic software that used to be "nice-to-have" has become essential critical infrastructure in K-12 and higher education in recent years due to greater hybridization of educational delivery via technology, and increased access to broadband internet. UETN currently licenses 39 software products on behalf of public and higher education. 13 software products are paid for by appropriated funds (one-time and ongoing) by the Legislature specific to that software.

UETN's consortium licensing capability results in an average 37% savings to public and higher education. It streamlines training and support. It also significantly reduces administrative burdens to schools and districts to individually negotiate separate, more expensive software licenses.

Proposed Use of New Funds

UETN typically seeks state funding on behalf of education when there is high student utilization (at least 50%), direct applicability in post-education career opportunities, and reduced costs. UETN is seeking $3.2M for existing licenses that expire at the end of FY24 for editing, research and design tools (K-12) and library databases (K-12 and higher education). UETN is also seeking an additional $2M to expand access to editing and design tools for higher education.

State-funded Ongoing Software Licensing Needs	FY25	FY26	FY27
Research and E Books	$1,200,000	-	-
Learning Platform Add-ons	-	2,000,000	1,300,000
Multimedia Tools	4,000,000	500,000	-
Total Requested	**$5,200,000**	**$2,500,000**	**$1,300,000**

Funding Detail

Funding estimate: $5.2M
- $950K – Scrible* Research and Writing
- $250K – Online Library (projected)
- $4M – Adobe* Creative Suite (K-12 + Higher Education)

paid with one-time funds in FY24