



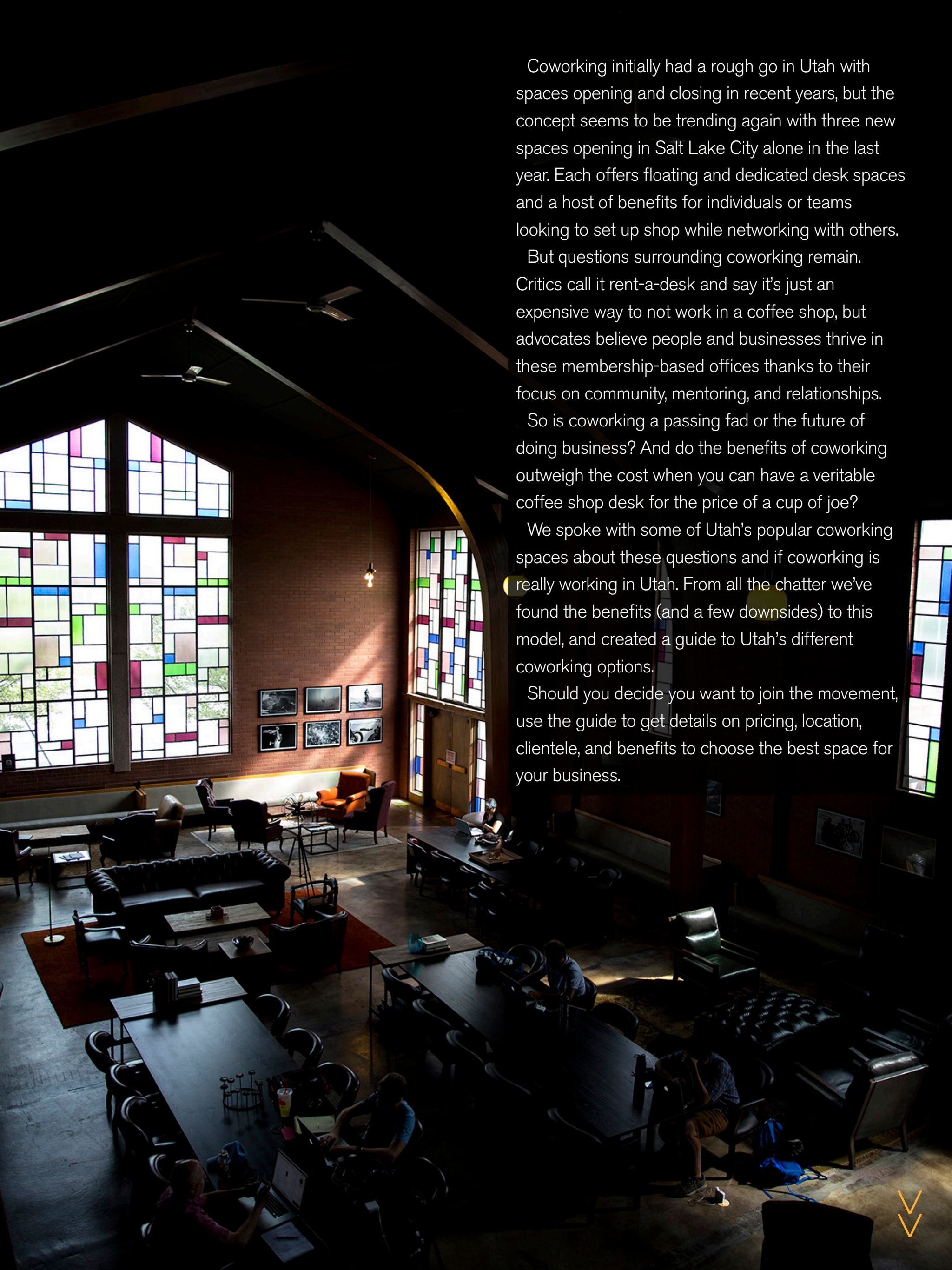
CAN WE ALL GET ALONG?

A Look at Salt Lake City's Growing Coworking Scene

Free coffee and snacks, speedy Internet, desks and conference rooms galore, and an open floor plan filled with a bevy of fellow workers to glean inspiration and insight from. This is the scene at coworking hubs around the world that cater to all types of workers, from freelancers looking for desk space to startups setting up a dedicated office.

By Jenny Willden Photos by Kevin Kiernan





Coworking initially had a rough go in Utah with spaces opening and closing in recent years, but the concept seems to be trending again with three new spaces opening in Salt Lake City alone in the last year. Each offers floating and dedicated desk spaces and a host of benefits for individuals or teams looking to set up shop while networking with others.

But questions surrounding coworking remain. Critics call it rent-a-desk and say it's just an expensive way to not work in a coffee shop, but advocates believe people and businesses thrive in these membership-based offices thanks to their focus on community, mentoring, and relationships.

So is coworking a passing fad or the future of doing business? And do the benefits of coworking outweigh the cost when you can have a veritable coffee shop desk for the price of a cup of joe?

We spoke with some of Utah's popular coworking spaces about these questions and if coworking is really working in Utah. From all the chatter we've found the benefits (and a few downsides) to this model, and created a guide to Utah's different coworking options.

Should you decide you want to join the movement, use the guide to get details on pricing, location, clientele, and benefits to choose the best space for your business.



Coworking in Utah

Freelancers and independent contractors are becoming a huge part of the workforce, with The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimating that 65 million Americans (40% of the workforce) will work this way by 2020. And while working from home in your pajamas has its benefits, people today are looking for workspaces that are inspiring and collaborative.

The growth of coworking in Utah is due partially to this increase in non-traditional workers, but has also been catapulted by our entrepreneurial culture focused on startups. Salt Lake had virtually no true coworking options (with the exception of [Work Hive](#)) until last year when [Holodeck](#), [Impact Hub](#), and [Church & State](#) opened their doors within a few months of each other. Despite all the competition these Salt Lake City hubs are thriving.

Work Hive founder Mark Morris says the spaces collaborate often, “We all work together pretty well, and we all have a different demographic that we focus on. We started a coworking coalition with some of the new spaces coming online because we decided, ‘Let’s not all fight over the same piece of pie; let’s make a bigger pie.’” The coalition seeks to promote and grow coworking as a whole in Utah.

Dan Might, founder of Salt Lake City coworking space Holodeck, agrees that shared office spaces are growing, despite increasing competition, “We’re definitely seeing coworking work in Salt Lake City, because we continue to grow and have demand.”

Holodeck’s look is modern and reminiscent of Google’s offices with bright colors and plenty of open space. The owners—brothers Dan and John Might—were new Utah transplants looking to connect with people when they realized there weren’t many coworking options in Salt Lake City. So they found a downtown space and remodeled it themselves to save money and open quickly. Right off the bat they started filling up with members, and they now have everyone from individuals to eight-person teams working there.



Other similar spaces cater to distinct groups and have their own personal communities too. The best way to find a perfect fit for you or your business is to test-drive them all. Most spaces offer a free day, or you can pay the drop-in rate for a day before committing. Also, memberships are contract-free so if you decide coworking isn’t for you, you can opt out fast. Some coworking spaces, like Work Hive, offer packages of 10 days that can be used anytime that are perfect for those needing an occasional office for times they work in Salt Lake City.





Pros of Coworking

Bouncing ideas off others and making connections are key reasons people love coworking, and though private offices are offered, spaces like Holodeck find people benefit most from working in the open office area, “We encourage teams of individuals or team of up to three people to work in those open offices. It doesn’t get too noisy and you get a chance to talk to people and make connections,” says Might.

As for on-site member benefits, “We have 24/7 access, free coffee, free snacks, all provided with your membership, and tons and tons of conference rooms,” Might says, “One thing we have that’s different from other coworking offices is an on-site prototyping shop...for startups working in the physical product space.”

Aside from the prototype shop, Utah’s other coworking spaces offer the same or similar benefits with some extras like Church & State’s basement gym.

Beyond membership perks, here are other reasons to consider sharing space for your business:





GUIDE TO SALT LAKE CITY'S COWORKING SPACES

Whether you're a startup, a graphic designer, a writer, or an architect, there's a coworking office for you. Read the features and benefits of local spaces below to match yourself with a hub you'll love.

Holodeck

Location: 175 West 200 South, Suite #100 (Garden Level), Salt Lake City.

Price: \$20 for a day pass during regular weekday business hours, \$300 per month for any open desk, \$400 per month for reserved desk. Military and students get 15% off memberships.

Member Benefits: Free unlimited coffee and snacks, unlimited room reservations, locker for storing belongings, 24/7 building access, on-site prototype shop, Fiber Internet access, on-site notary services, printing/scanning/copying services, and a gaming area for breaks. Holodeck recently merged with DeskHub so members can also use those spaces for free when they travel.

Parking: On-site parking on deck for \$50 per month.

Vibe: Open and social, but people are focused on working and collaborating. Not the spot for chitchatters. An advantage here is that the space is separated in two distinct parts, meaning that when events occur in the evening, coworkers can move to the other side for quiet time.

Clientele: Various fields are represented: lawyers, accountants, startups, and freelancers, but this space skews more toward the open desk plan with most people working communally as opposed to in team offices. Individuals and small teams of three to four are the norm.

Contact: info@HolodeckSLC.com, 801-872-9263

Networking and Collaboration

As previously mentioned, working alongside other professionals encourages collaboration, "We're purposely facilitating connections. We employ a community curator and her job is to make connections and make sure people have what they need," Might says of Holodeck's community focus.

Jason Kloug, founder of [Klugonyx](#) who runs his business from Holodeck, recognized this as a vital asset, "Becoming a member was one of the best decisions for my company. The space is great, but biggest value is guys leading it, the support I get from them and the community aspect that they lead and grow."

[Desk Mag](#)—the online magazine about coworking—quantified these and other benefits in a recent survey that found 86% of coworkers reported an increase in social circles, 71% feel more creative, 80% have an expanded business network, and 68% say they share knowledge and advice often.





Holodeck member and founder of local startup Swoob, Kyle Muir, has experienced these benefits while coworking, “There’s always some meeting of the minds and value exchange that we couldn’t get any other place. If we were in a coffee shop there wouldn’t be the same synergy. Plus, Holodeck is a cool space aesthetically, and there’s a huge value in bringing clients here and the meeting environment it provides.”

You’re also part of a vibrant community where you can socialize or work solo when you wish. This leads you to developing new ideas, and can give you better drive and focus than you’d have at a home office. Plus, relationships you form can even lead to a new career!

Garrett Clark, director of Church and State says, “There have been a fair amount of coworkers hired by our office tenants. They’ve gotten to know each other playing Ping-Pong, going to lunch, and hanging out. That’s been mostly organic.”

Impact Hub

Location: 150 S. State Street, Salt Lake City.

Price: \$35 for a day pass, \$80 for five days (40 hours) per month from 8 a.m.–6 p.m., \$200 for 12 days (100 hours) per month 8 a.m.–6 p.m., \$300 for unlimited 24/7 access at any open desk, \$380 for unlimited 24/7 access at a dedicated desk.

Member Benefits: Free 60 Mbps WiFi, unlimited meeting room use, free coffee and snacks, bike storage, free events, and community business discounts.

Vibe: The open floor plan is beautiful, but it means this hub is a bit louder than some others. This is great for facilitating relationships and connections, but can make it hard to focus for some. Many member and community events are held here in the evenings so this may not be the best coworking space for you if you work a lot of nights.

Clientele: Authors, photographers, entrepreneurs, startup teams, company founders, and community leaders call Impact Hub their work home. Also houses private offices like those of Boom Startup.





Increased Productivity

Desk Mag's survey reported that 74% of coworkers believe they are more productive in a coworking space, and Morris of Work Hive agrees, "When I worked from home I felt isolated and distracted. Here there is the expectation that I'm at work and should be productive. Conversely, now when I'm home I'm more relaxed. There's a separation of work and home."

Church & State

Location: 300 E. 370 South, Salt Lake City.

Price: Free coworking from 9 a.m.–6 p.m. \$99 for 24/7 access at shared desk and \$300 for a dedicated desk with 24/7 access. Offices are \$500–\$3000 dependent on how big and location.

Member Benefits: High-speed WiFi, printing/scanning/fax services, conference rooms, member discounts at community businesses, ability to book private events, mentoring and networking opportunities, mail and packaging, free events, and on-site gym. Non-members who come during the day still receive free networking and services with nothing asked for in return.

Parking: Limited on-site parking for \$50 a month. Many others park at the Library or take TRAX.

Vibe: Different from other coworking spaces, Church & State is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing entrepreneurs. The building is paid for so they can instead focus on stimulating growth and innovation amongst members and visitors. Housed in a former church with big stained glass windows, an arched ceiling, dark wood, big barn doors, and plenty of couches, it offers more of a cozy living room feel in the communal space. The upstairs offices have more of a startup vibe while the downstairs offices are scrappier.

Clientele: Diverse mix of people. Private offices house startups that are growing and scaling. These businesses receive discounted rent and they give back by mentoring in the coworking space. Dedicated desks have not sold out yet, but those tend to be programmers who write code and want to get out and be involved with people. The daily coworkers run the gamut from lifestyle businesses to startups to creative designers.

Contact: info@cs1893.com





Saving Money

Believe it or not, you can save money by coworking. Despite the membership fee, you're saving the amount you'd spend on coffee or food at a coffee shop every day. If you averaged \$10 a day and went to a coffee shop five days a week, you'd spend \$200, which completely covers the cost of most coworking memberships.

Plus, you receive additional benefits like printing and mail, and get much speedier WiFi than your local coffee shop. Plus, with the increased productivity and discipline that most coworkers report, you'll churn out work more quickly and have time for additional projects, increasing your bottom line.



WorkHive

Location: 307 W. 200 South #3004, Salt Lake City.

Price: \$20 day pass for 9 a.m.–6 p.m. M–F access, \$60 a month for weekly access, \$120 for ten days to use at your own rate, \$99 for three-day a week access at any open desk, and \$220 a month for 24/7 access and your own dedicated workspace.

Member Benefits: Private conference rooms, lounge space/library, free coffee, personal or shared storage, lockers, printing/scanning services, WiFi Business Class Internet, 60-minute guest parking for clients, and secure bike storage.

Parking: On-site parking for \$40 a month. Nearby two-hour free parking also available.

Vibe: Boutique sized. Members say it's quiet enough to focus and work, but is lively and friendly enough to facilitate connections. No private offices here. This coworking space offers shared and dedicated desk spaces and conference rooms and is open 9 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday–Friday, except for full-time members who receive 24/7 access.

Clientele: Freelancers, architects, electrical contractors, graphic designers, startups, and small business owners are just a few of the diverse group of members here.

Contact: info@workhiveSLC.com, 801-484-2164





Shared Resources

Work Hive, Salt Lake City's oldest continuously operating coworking space, launched in 2012 with just six desks and has built up to 40 workstation on two floors at their office in the Crane building downtown. They tout sharing resources as a coworking benefit on their website, "Coworking is sharing. Shared space. Shared resources. Small businesses and startups need to keep overhead costs down, so coworking is often a great way to take your business to the next level."

Instead of purchasing a printer, high-speed Internet, a desk, and other essentials for a home office, simply bring your laptop to a coworking space and get busy. Use their address for your business, so you have a professional, safe place to send and receive mail. Conference room space is also included, generally at no additional charge, so you can host professional meetings easily.

Sustainable Startups

Location: 340 East 400 South, Salt Lake City.

Price: \$50 a month for shared desk during regular business hours M–F, \$75 a month for shared desk with 24/7 access, \$125 a month for dedicated desk, and \$500 a month for a private office. Scholarships available for qualified candidates.

Member Benefits: Reserved parking, conference and breakout rooms, free events, mail service, High-speed WiFi, printing services, priority incubator consideration, monthly membership sessions, and free beverages.

Vibe: A business incubator and not simply a rent-a-desk space, this non-profit space focuses on providing community, support, and education for early-stage entrepreneurs. You'll see people generating ideas and developing them here through collaboration and mentoring.

Clientele: Startups, entrepreneurs, and non-profits gather here with a focus on social good, non-profit businesses, and entrepreneurs lacking opportunities to make their ideas come to life. Training programs offered to help entrepreneurs launch successful, sustainable startups.



Startups and Entrepreneur-focused Coworking Benets

In Utah, a popular use of coworking is for entrepreneurs to launch and grow startups in community with others, benefiting from their expertise and experience.

Some Utah spaces focus specifically on this goal of empowering entrepreneurs and have built a community for them to thrive in, such as Sustainable Startups and Church & State. These hubs are run not-for-profit and are seen more as business incubators than solely coworking spots.

Sustainable Startups offers cheap coworking rates (\$50 a month) and focus on providing community, support, and education for early-stage entrepreneurs. Their goal is to help get sustainably focused and social good businesses running and succeeding through training programs and mentoring from seasoned entrepreneurs.

Plus, your desk rental membership provides a focused place to work with needed services like printing and WiFi. At Sustainable Startups, new businesses without any funds can even receive scholarships to cover their membership and some training.

Church & State is improving Utah's business climate and growing a community too by offering free coworking from 9 a.m.–6 p.m. for drop-ins. If you want 24/7 access and a few other perks it's just \$99 a month.

Their director, Garrett Clark, says, "For us coworking isn't our main focus, but it's nice to have. Church & State is really a platform where we tie in public and private resources to offer programs to help entrepreneurs."

They paid cash for their building, which is housed in a former church in downtown Salt Lake City, so they can focus less on cash flow. They use rent and fees from coworkers to cover costs and overhead then funnel the extra back into the community to pay for programming and amenities like a new gym.





Clark says they've had "decent success at coworking. Sometimes there are a lot of people. Sometimes there aren't. It's still a semi-new concept in Utah. The more people that know about the more people that will be interested in being part of the space."

A perk here is free mentoring from experienced business owners and employees who rent office space in the building, but Clark says their biggest benefit are the friendships and relationships being formed at Church & State.

Cons of Coworking

For most the benefits outweigh the cons, but not every personality is built for coworking. Here are a few downsides to consider before signing up for a membership.

Little Privacy

If you make lots of private calls, working in a large open space may not be for you. Some offer private areas, but check before joining.

Disturbed By Others Often

Chitchat happens at coworking spaces, and that's part of the magic of them. If you're easily distracted by noise or interruptions, you may be better off in a home office.

Fixed Operating Times

Unless you pay the most expensive rates at a coworking space, you'll only have access during regular business hours. If you're a night owl or a young startup working long hours to launch a brand, these spaces may not be your best bet.

Coworking isn't for everyone, but if you're currently working from home or a coffee shop, drop in to Salt Lake's coworking spaces and see for yourself what these communities have to offer.

Jenny is the Senior Editor of Business Connect, a native Utahn, and an outdoor recreation enthusiast. When she's not behind a laptop screen obsessing over proper comma usage, you'll likely find her bagging peaks, running trails, or snowboarding in Utah's Wasatch Mountains. Follow her adventures on Twitter @jennywillden and Instagram @jlwillden.