



Synthetic Control Model

Utah Coal Country Strike Team

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team serves Carbon and Emery counties by helping to raise incomes by 10% and diversify the economy. The Strike Team, with the support of the Utah Legislature, Schmidt Futures, and the University of Utah, assists with public policies and investment in workforce training, tourism infrastructure, housing revitalization, and economic development.

The Gardner Institute created a one-of-a-kind synthetic control model, using data from more than 150 other areas with coal economies to benchmark the success of the four Strike Team initiatives. This model also allows the Institute to share specific data with other community transition efforts across the country.

The model tracks total incomes in Utah’s Coal Country. Income serves as a proxy for household income. The model shows two estimates of incomes. The first estimate evaluates incomes in Carbon and Emery counties without the investment and efforts of the Utah Coal Country Strike Team. We call this “trend income” and it serves as the counterfactual for measuring the

impact of our success. This trend income is based on the performance of 150 other similar coal communities in the country. Measures of similarity include the level of coal dependence, past income growth, geographic location, levels of opioid challenges, and other measures. The second estimate includes actual income performance in Utah’s Coal Country.

The Gardner Institute tracked incomes in Utah’s Coal Country for seven quarters and are pleased to report that Utah’s Coal Country outperforms over 150 benchmark coal communities and by the 2nd quarter 2020 reached the 10% goal.

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Coal Country Wages (Actual, Counterfactual, and Goal)

