

2020

UTAH STATE

REHABILITATION COUNCIL REPORT



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UTAH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
1595 WEST 500 SOUTH • SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84104
JANUARY 2021



MISSION

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment.

We accomplish this mission by reviewing programs, analyzing service delivery processes and advising on policies and procedures.



REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- Glenn Fitzpatrick, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP), Chair
- Eliza Detherage, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Vice Chair/Secretary
- Rob Ferris, Business, Industry and Labor, Past Chair
- Brian Lahti, Service Provider, Member-at-Large

MEMBERS:

- Alisha Byron, Business, Industry and Labor
- Eliza Stauffer, Consumer
- James Harvey, Business, Industry and Labor
- Lavinia Gripentrog, Special Education
- Jodi Hansen, Utah Parent Center
- Selena Harris, Utah Parent Center
- Velma Spencer, Title 121, Navajo Nation
- Jenni Thompson, Blind and Visually Impaired Representative
- Austin Oseguera, Utah Center for Assistive Technology Representative
- Katie Carroll, Client Assistance Program
- Sandy Terry, Department of Workforce Services
- Cheri Lachenmeier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Representative
- Ben Robison, Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities
- Andrea Pitts, Consumer



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR



I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY to serve as Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) this year. Considering my background in education and behavior analysis, I have a keen interest in the goals of Utah's Vocational Rehabilitation program and am honored to work closely with the many talented people who make it successful. I would like to thank the entire council for placing their trust in me. Special thanks are due to Rehabilitation Services Director Aaron Thompson, past SRC Chair Rob Ferris, SRC staff liaisons Gordon Swensen and Sylvia Gines, as well as the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Division Director Sarah Brenna. They provided the guidance and mentorship that allowed me to successfully fulfill my role as SRC Chair.

As part of my duties, I attended the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils' national conference. While there, I talked with many other SRC chairs and discovered that most SRCs did not have the same open, collaborative relationship with their state's Vocational Rehabilitation Council as we have here in Utah. I am grateful for the excellent team that has been assembled on behalf of the citizens of this great state, and for their continued efforts to provide the assistance needed to allow our more disadvantaged citizens to realize their full potential.

Respectfully,

Glenn Fitzpatrick
SRC Chair 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE USOR DIRECTOR



I AM PLEASED TO PRESENT to you the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) 2020 Annual Report. The work represented in the following pages is the result of continued services extended to the clients served by our professional and dedicated team of employees in the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), community rehabilitation providers, employers and SRC members.

What a year 2020 has been! COVID-19 has changed the way we live, work and socialize. However, during it all we have continued to provide critical services to our community. Considering the scope and impact of the pandemic on our clients, counselors, community rehabilitation providers and others, we did extraordinarily well. More than 1,850 individuals with disabilities obtained competitive, integrated employment. We processed 5,887 applications

and provided services to 16,641 individuals. We provided a high number of Utah Work Incentive Planning Services summaries this year, and served more transition age youth with disabilities than ever. Our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors made substantial improvement in both days on average to complete an eligibility determination and average days to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment. Overall, the VR program increased its impact of services to transition-aged youth and continued to provide effective management of the Order of Selection process for the program. More than 17,700 clients with disabilities received services from VR and its support programs, including the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT), the Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS) team and Independent Living.

One of this year's highlights was the development and implementation of the Work Ability Internship program. Statewide, 14 individuals with disabilities have completed internships with USOR. Several of these individuals moved on to obtain permanent employment at the Department of Workforce Services. We will continue to expand this program to other state agencies during the next year.

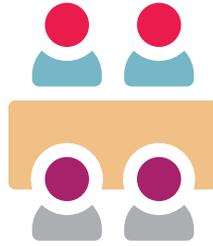
Our other divisions continued to provide services in new and innovative ways. Our Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) developed new online courses in response to the pandemic. This approach has proved extremely effective at expanding services to areas that do not have easy access to our community centers in Salt Lake County and St. George. The Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) asked staff to reach out to both current and past students to provide support and ongoing training in navigating the increasing number of online services being used to deliver services. In addition, Disability Determination Services (DDS) continued to meet federal performance standards despite a federal hiring freeze and restrictions on providers closed due to COVID-19.

I have to recognize our hardworking employees who showed nothing but dedication, flexibility and concern for each other over the last year. We are all looking forward to starting a new year continuing to provide services consistent with our mission to help individuals with disabilities obtain meaningful employment, increase independence and enhance quality of life.

Respectfully,

Sarah Brenna
USOR Director

Introduction



THE UTAH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens appointed by the executive director of the Department of Workforce Services under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Council is composed of consumers, professionals, employers, labor representatives, family and parent advocates, and service providers who promote public awareness, support of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and advocate for individuals with disabilities. The majority of Council membership consists of individuals with disabilities, many of whom have been involved as participants in the VR process. Members of the SRC have been chosen for their interest in, specialized knowledge of and expertise with serving the disabled community. The term of office for selected SRC members is three years.

The Council provides direct communication from consumers, rehabilitation professionals, business, industry, labor, service providers and other individuals interested in improving the services provided by the VR program. Collectively, this group reviews, analyzes and advises the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) regarding the VR program.

Over the years, the SRC has established strong community relationships among people with disabilities, local businesses, private and public agencies, service providers, community organizations, and advocacy groups to promote the objectives of the organization. The SRC continues to be an active partner with the VR program to ensure the provision of quality services to eligible consumers. SRC members provide critical support to USOR and to individuals with disabilities served by the agency by communicating with legislators on both the state and national level. They promote legislation and funding requests that continue the specialized services provided by USOR.

Council members participate in various functions of the VR program. These include attending relevant USOR state-wide meetings, Golden Key employment recognition awards ceremonies, town meetings, focus groups and the Utah Rehabilitation Association annual conference.

The Council has contributed to and continues to be involved in the development and implementation of USOR's strategic plan and the WIOA Unified State Plan. It has also identified areas of strength within USOR, acknowledged the best practices of the agency and recommended improvements to the VR program. Council members and USOR staff members agree that through appropriate communication and partnerships, VR services for people with disabilities in Utah will continue to improve.

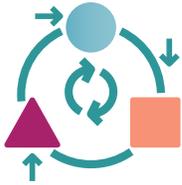


PURPOSE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, and include the following:

- Review, analyze and advise the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including Order of Selection); the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions of the state rehabilitation agency that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes.
- In partnership with USOR, develop, agree to and evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.
- Advise USOR regarding activities authorized to be carried out and assist in the preparation of the WIOA Unified State Plan, amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments and evaluations.
- Conduct a review and an analysis of the effectiveness of VR services and consumer satisfaction.
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Department of Workforce Services and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of VR in the state and make the report available to the public.
- Coordinate the work of the Council with the activities of other disability-related councils within the state.
- Establish working relationships between the VR program, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Special Education Advisory Panel established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the State Developmental Disabilities Council and the State Workforce Services Council.
- Perform additional functions that the SRC determines are appropriate and comparable to other functions performed by the Council.

The SRC, in partnership with USOR's VR program, is committed to helping the people of Utah who qualify for services to obtain better jobs with a living wage, health care benefits and better career opportunities, and to become as independent as possible. The Council believes that individuals with disabilities should be full and active partners in the VR process. Members of the SRC seek to work cooperatively with USOR to ensure that the activities of the VR program are carried out in a manner that is respectful of an individual's dignity and recognizes an individual's right to make informed choices.



2019–2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

DIVISION DIRECTOR UPDATES: The Council received regular reports on state and national issues affecting USOR. At the January 2020 meeting, Sarah Brenna, division director, made the announcement that Arlene Garcia-Gunderson had been selected as the new director of the Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH). Brenna also discussed Advocacy Day with the Coordinating Council for People with Disabilities (CCPD), and the current legislative session and funding requests related to the VR program. In February 2020, Brenna provided a wrap-up of the successful legislative session and the recruitment needs for the DSDHH advisory council. In May 2020, Brenna discussed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on both staff and the clients they serve. Those impacts included: 1) Disability Determination Services (DDS) staff teleworking since March 2020 and slower processing times for Social Security applications; 2) halting of Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) field work, including apartment housing for students in training; 3) the use of virtual meetings for DSDHH staff and clients, which has increased program participation; and 4) some VR staff being assigned temporarily to assist with the high volume of Unemployment Insurance (UI) program applications. At the August 2020 meeting, Stacey Cummings, assistant director, reported changes in the Department of Workforce Services leadership, including Executive Director Jon Pierpont's move as chief of staff to Lieutenant Governor Spencer Cox, and the appointments of Greg Paras and Casey Cameron as interim co-executive directors over the department. In September 2020, Brenna discussed Workforce Services' involvement with the COVID-19 Unified Command, and our emphasis on getting people back to work, reducing unemployment claims and providing essential resources. She also discussed the DDS hiring freeze,

office closure and new hires; open and online services at the DSDHH Sanderson Center; and the resumption of classes for transition services at DSBVI.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING AND COUNCIL TRAINING:

At the October 2019 meeting, Glen Fitzpatrick was unanimously selected as the new chair for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), with Jay Wheeler elected as vice chair, Eliza Detherage as secretary, and Brian Lahti as member-at-large. Outgoing SRC Chair Rob Ferris was presented a plaque in recognition of his service to the Council. It was decided that SRC member training would occur throughout the year because of turnover. The pandemic limited that training due to the cancellation of several SRC meetings. In September, past chair Rob Ferris provided a presentation to SRC members on the purpose for the SRC and specific training information related to SRC membership.

VR PROGRAM UPDATES: Aaron Thompson, assistant director, provided the SRC monthly reports and information on a number of VR program-related topics. At the October 2019 meeting, Thompson provided a VR performance update on the division's recent accomplishments in terms of performance and outcomes. New applicants to the VR program, successful case closures, median weekly wage at closure, and both public assistance and SSI/SSDI beneficiaries successfully employed all saw notable increases from the previous year. In November 2019, Thompson discussed time to eligibility and days to plan development goals, and shared a client success story from the Ogden VR district. In February 2020, Thompson reviewed quarterly comparison data, disability classification of eligible clients, and the Workability Internship program. These are paid internship opportunities with state agencies for

people with disabilities under the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB), with a goal of at least 25 internships throughout the year. Thompson also discussed the Combined State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including a review of goals and priorities from the 2016-2020 plan. He also provided the SRC with information from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted by Utah State University of DRS program goals and outcomes. In February 2020, Thompson announced two new VR district directors (Ogden and Davis Districts), provided a VR program statistical report, and discussed the upcoming Employer Workshop and Job Fair in April at the Sanderson Center. In May 2020, Thompson provided an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on VR services, including teleworking, policy changes regarding client verbal versus written consent and guidance on informed choice for in-person/virtual client/VR counselor meetings. Office cleaning protocols, mask wearing, and social distancing protocols and policies were reviewed with the Council. At the August 2020 meeting, Stacey Cummings, assistant director, discussed leadership changes at the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) and the incorporation of the Independent Living/Assistive Technology program. Cummings discussed the Workability Internship program positions currently in USOR, the collaboration with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to reach clients regarding participation in the Census and an update on office openings combined with virtual services to VR participants. In September 2020, Thompson discussed re-engagement with clients and referral sources due to the pandemic. He reported on the new transition services contract providers and updates to the website regarding the contracts.

POLICY UPDATES: The SRC was provided policy updates throughout the year, including new regulations, practices and processes. Policy Director Emily Stirling left her employment and was replaced by Christine Anderson, who will be providing future agency updates, as needed. At the November 2020 meeting, Aimee Langone, Transition and Supported Employment

coordinator, provided a policy update on Plan for Client Success and its impact on the services of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Langone discussed the goals for decreasing time to placement, ensuring quality employment outcomes, and increased efficiencies for clients, VR counselors and CRPs working together. Other policy changes included high quality indicators aligned with WIOA performance goals, hourly payment rate changes and approval levels, and job coach-specific training and certification. Langone discussed what would not change in current policy, including clients being transferred to extended services (e.g., Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities) when they reach less than 20% job coach intervention or 24 months on the job.

ASPIRE UPDATE: At the January 2020 meeting, Carroll Ruddell, ASPIRE program director, gave an overview to the SRC on the accomplishments of the six-year grant serving six states. She reviewed the recommendations from the project. This successful grant (ASPIRE), and the five other national PROMISE projects, demonstrated that when proven, evidence-based practices are implemented simultaneously with eligible youth and their families, education can be increased, employment outcomes improved and greater self-sufficiency achieved. The recommendations included: 1) early intervention, 2) presumption of participation in existing services, 3) approaches correlated to youth employment, 4) community-based services, 5) incorporated self-determination training, 6) development of SMART goals, 7) strong provider relationships, 8) understanding public benefits, 9) costs of participation in services, 10) privacy protections, 11) time and opportunity to collaborate, and 12) service coordination

VR PROGRAM OVERVIEW: At the February 2020 meeting, District Director Gwen Solum provided an overview of the VR program, including goals for 1) stabilization, 2) skills development, 3) obtaining employment, and 4) increased independence. Solum discussed the application and orientation process, and reviewed several program core services, including 1)

restoration, 2) diagnostic and evaluation services, 3) interpreter and reader services, 4) self-advocacy skills building, and 5) employer relations, including reasonable accommodations requests and training options (i.e., academic, supported employment, on-the-job). Solum described the initial interview and the development of a counselor/client relationship, the eligibility process, impediments to employment and disability classification, and verification of Social Security benefits.

VR PROGRAM VIRTUAL SERVICES UPDATE:

At the August 2020 meeting, Ogden District Counseling Supervisor Amanda Salmon presented on the current state of staff-telework and virtual services to clients of the VR program. The COVID-19 pandemic required adjustments in how counselors would provide services to clients. Salmon described the use of Google Meet and Zoom as virtual platforms to meet with clients who have appreciated not having to come to the office out of health and safety concerns. The SRC recognized the effective use of technology and how client informed choice allows for services to continue to meet the mission of the VR program. Salmon also discussed how staff members have benefitted from approved telework schedules and how case management systems and processes are being utilized virtually to meet client needs.

TRANSITION/CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT PRESENTATION:

At the February 2020 meeting, Transition and Supported Employment Coordinator Aimee Langone presented on the Customized Employment (CE) process, including strategies designed to personalize an employment relationship between a job seeker and employer that matches the strengths and interests of the client with the business needs of the employer. Current WIOA law or regulations do not describe the CE process or how it is provided in the states. However, as a recognized component of supported employment, CE now provides opportunities for job development and placement. Most states have been receiving technical assistance and training. The essential elements of CE include: 1) negotiation of job duties, 2) individuation-one job for one person, 3) negotiated

pay (at least at minimum wage), 4) CE provided in the community business, 5) CE is beneficial for the individual and the employer, 6) job developers are used if necessary to assist the individual, 7) a “no fail” process that presumes individuals can work, 8) customized self-employment or wage employment, and 9) CE best used for individuals not likely to be successful with traditional employment. Langone described how Utah was an early adopter of the CE model and the current fee structure in place. She discussed the School to Work and Pathways to Career programs, the barriers related to CE (e.g., costs, rural outreach), and next steps (including evaluation of the program by Utah State University).

DISTANCE LEARNING PRESENTATION:

Council member and Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Transition Specialist, Lavinia Gripenrog, presented at the August 2020 meeting on distance learning and remote instruction. She reported that all Local Educational Agency (LEA) in Utah had to submit a plan regarding learning options for students with disabilities in a virtual environment. Canvas and Google Classroom are being utilized statewide by students and teachers, and Chromebooks, iPads and Wi-Fi are reaching families in need. Because the law does not include a period of pandemic, the school districts are being creative in their communication with parents, teachers and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Some other creative ideas have included in-home visits by teachers, one-on-one learning assistance and virtual transition services. Virtual job shadowing, flex lessons, life skills videos and a transition planning app are available on the USBE website.

UCAT AND UWIPS PROGRAM UPDATES:

At the October 2019 meeting, Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Director Mike Wollenzien provided the SRC with information on numbers of referrals, services provided, primary referral sources and other highlights from the past fiscal year. Two staff members, Kevin Christensen and Ed Whiting, received the Workforce Services’ Cornerstone Award for Exceptional Customer Service. Another UCAT employee, Michael

Offutt, received a USOR Director's Award for his work with the computer loan program. Wollenzien reported that UCAT had received Workforce Services one-time funding for shop and lab equipment, and also discussed federal fiscal year 2020 goals for the program. Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS) Director Jolene Wyler provided program information on the number of new clients, benefits summaries developed with clients, success stories from the UWIPS program and the current five-member Benefit Specialists team.

VR UPDATE/PLAN DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW: At the September 2020 meeting, Provo District Counseling Supervisor Janet Autrey presented a VR update on Plan Development for clients. Council members learned about the four requirements for an eligibility determination: 1) the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), 2) the building of a working counselor/client relationship, 3) the exploration of vocational goals and interests, and 4) the removal of barriers to employment. Autrey also covered career exploration resources, the development of a vocational goal and related activities, and counselor and client roles in the process. The counselor's duty to educate the client, regular meetings, and serve as both an advocate and a "reality check" were discussed. Additionally, the client's commitment to employment, completion of assignments, and other expectations for gaining and maintaining competitive, gainful employment in the community were discussed. A PowerPoint presentation was sent to all SRC members following the meeting.

CORRECTION to 2019 Annual Report/UCAT Committee Clarification:

In the 2019 SRC Annual Report, there was information regarding the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Advisory Committee being discontinued after a Council vote at the February 2019 meeting. To clarify, the language from the 2019 report states that "UCAT was originally created to meet an identified need by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR)..." In reality, UCAT was created by the Center for People with Disabilities (CPD) in 1994 at the Utah State University (USU) with Federal Tech Act Funding. It was a community-based

model for assistive technology. In 1996, USOR agreed to continue funding for the program when the Tech Act was going to sunset. UCAT remained community-based and included funds appropriated by the Legislature and an original rule that required a UCAT Advisory Committee. Updated legislative rules from the 2017 session did not include the requirement for a "standing committee" for UCAT. In February 2019, the SRC unanimously voted to discontinue the UCAT Advisory Committee and to include a representative from UCAT as a required member of the SRC. This would allow the mission and vision of the original UCAT, including its community-based focus model of service to be maintained.

ATTACHMENT 4.2 (C)

Attachment 4.2 (C): Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), Response of the Designated State Unit and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations.

In addition to the review, analysis and recommendations covered above, the SRC made recommendations to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) portion of the WIOA Unified State Plan, and as required by section 101 (a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014.

The following is a summary of SRC recommendations made from October 2018 to September 2019, and USOR's responses and actions taken regarding these recommendations:

SRC RECOMMENDATION 1:

At the November 2019 meeting, Assistant Director Aaron Thompson presented to the SRC on performance data, including targets for the coming year. He discussed the Order of Selection monthly releases, national and Utah performance measures, median earnings of clients, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring Report recommendations. Thompson also talked about the 2020 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan goals (in development) that would be ready to present to the SRC for review at the January 2020 meeting. The Council requested a copy of those goals for review at the January 2020 meeting.

USOR RESPONSE 1:

At the January 2020 meeting, Thompson presented on both the past and current goals and activities under the Unified State Plan in support of WIOA. The Council unanimously supported the goals as presented.

SRC RECOMMENDATION 2:

For the November 2019 meeting, the SRC Executive Council asked for a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) services update regarding changes to new policy changes, including high quality indicators for performance and counselor approval levels.

USOR RESPONSE 2:

At the November 2019 meeting, Transition and Supported Employment Specialist Aimee Langone presented on the changes affecting CRP services, as requested. Langone also discussed Job Coach training and Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification, as well as fee schedule changes and communication/collaboration between CRP providers, VR counselors and clients. A PowerPoint presentation was distributed to SRC members. The SRC unanimously supported the recommended changes to policy.



COMMITTEES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NOMINATING AND INTERVIEWING COMMITTEES

Resignations and the expiration of terms for a few members created openings on the Council. A few members chose to be nominated to serve a second term. Several vacancies were filled with required members as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act. The 121 Native American program for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe SRC member position remained vacant. The representative for the Navajo Nation continued to attend the Council meetings by phone. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regulations require membership of at least one Tribal VR program in Utah.

The Nominating and Interviewing Committee was formed to solicit nominations, review the qualifications of nominees, conduct interviews and present the names of the individuals to the Council for consideration. Names were submitted to the executive director of Workforce Services for approval in accordance with internal policies. Highly qualified and committed individuals were appointed to the Council. They bring commitment and unique expertise to the SRC.

COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETINGS

SRC Chair Rob Ferris attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) meetings with Sarah Brenna and Aaron Thompson. They reported on updates on national VR and disability issues. Brenna reported on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) meetings and the differences between states in terms of SRC support.

USOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

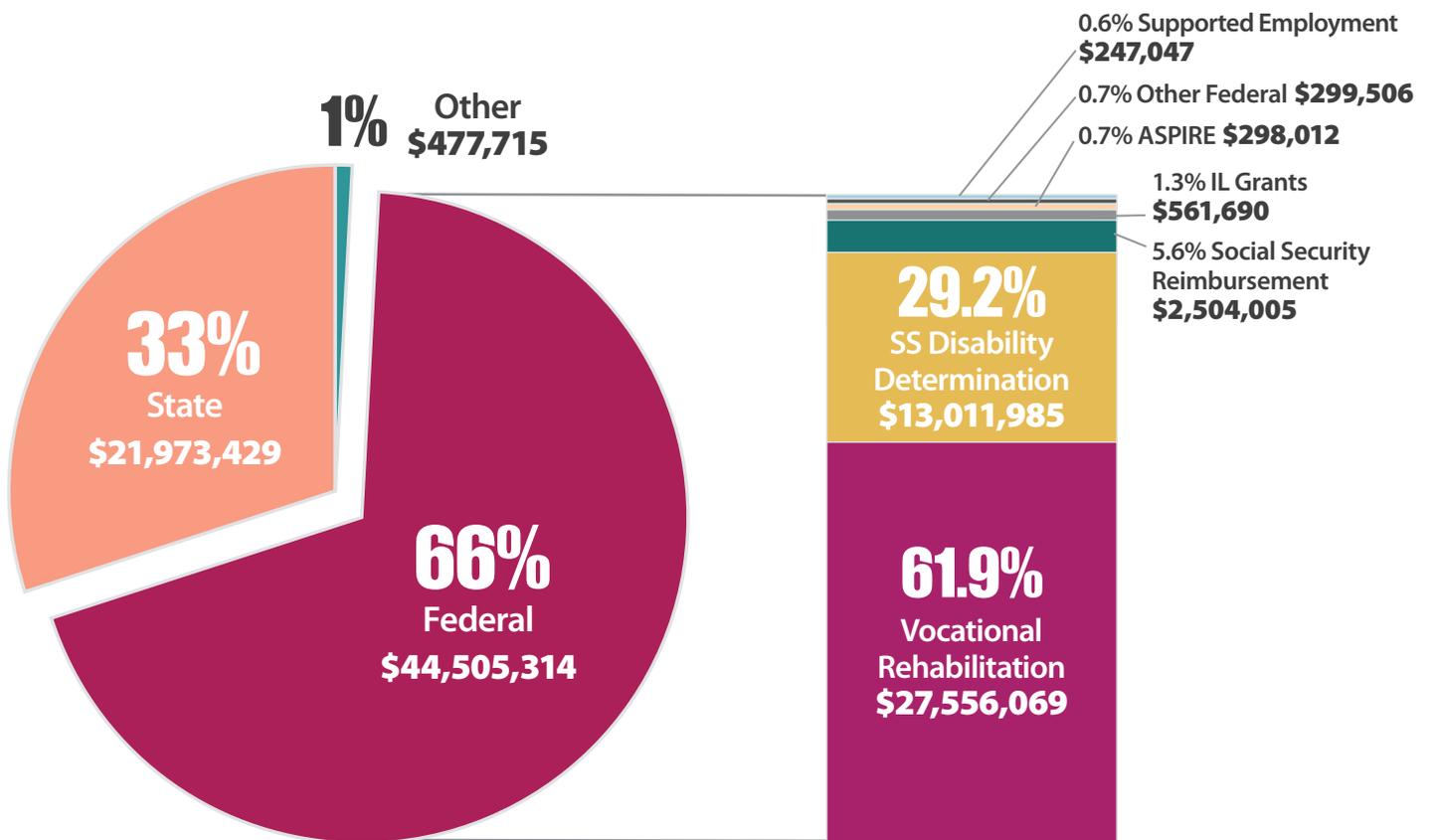


The following information reflects the individual and program successes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program during the past year.

- 1,839 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed
- 16,641 individuals with disabilities received services
- 514 public assistance recipients successfully gained employment
- 420 Social Security Disability recipients successfully gained employment
- 151 individuals successfully gained employment through Supported Employment Services
- 41% of individuals served were transition-age youth with disabilities
- 51% of clients in educational training programs obtained a measurable skill gain
- 26 days, on average, to complete an eligibility determination for services
- 70 days, on average, to develop an individualized plan for employment
- 613 Benefits Summaries and Analysis were presented to Social Security recipients by the Utah Work Incentives Planning Services team
- 538 new individuals were referred to the Utah Center for Assistive Technology
- 174 individuals placed into employment by the Choose to Work program
- 173 employers accessed training, resources and hiring support from Business Relations



USOR SFY 2020 FUNDING



SUCCESS STORIES



Jeremy Daddow



OCCUPATION:
Lot Attendant

VR COUNSELOR:
George Loesch (Provo District)

VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Guidance and Counseling
- Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- UWIPS Benefits Counseling
- Job Development and Placement
- Supported Employment Job Coaching
- Hearing Aids

When Jeremy first met with his VR Counselor, George Loesch, he shared his great passion for cars. He talked about his excitement to identify the different makes and models of cars and trucks when he is traveling. He also discussed the different cars his family has owned and his dream car. George kept this in mind as he worked with Jeremy to identify the right vocational goal and employment opportunities.

After ensuring Jeremy had all the support and services to address his disability-related barriers, George connected Jeremy with North Eastern Services (NES) for job development, placement and coaching support. Together they

brainstormed jobs having to do with cars and trucks, which were the right fit for Jeremy's skills, interests and abilities.

The detailed job exploration led Jeremy to finding the perfect employment opportunity with Ken Garff Chevrolet. As a member of the Lot Attendant Team, Jeremy gets to work directly with cars and trucks, while helping out around the showroom. Jeremy has worked at Ken Garff for almost a year and is still excited to go work each day. Jeremy adds, "I love my job and being around cars!" The partnership between Jeremy, his VR counselor and the NES job coach, Loa Taylor, led to both a successful employment placement and a satisfied client.



Randall Martin



OCCUPATION:
Residential Building Inspector

VR COUNSELORS:
DJ Bartschi and Jake Marino
(Southern District)



VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Benefits Counseling
- Assistance with Building Inspector certificates (e.g., study guides, exam costs, seminars, travel assistance)
- Certification
- Clothing and Eyeglasses
- VR Counseling and Guidance
- Choose to Work

For Randall Martin, working in construction was his life. However, things changed when he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy, heart valve disease, depression and chronic pain syndrome. His condition became so severe that he was unable to maintain any form of employment. He started to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and stayed home for a time to raise his daughter. By the time he applied for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, Randall had been out of the workforce for several years.

In 2015, Randall was found eligible for VR services, and worked closely with counselors Jake Marino and DJ Bartschi. He chose a vocational goal of Building Inspector, which would allow him employment in a construction-related field. Randall had to obtain four separate certifications, involving both intense study and a grueling examination for each. Testing at multiple locations involved travel arrangements being made by VR support staff. Initially, Randall had difficulty passing his certification tests;

but, with much effort and the encouragement of VR, he was ultimately successful.

To obtain gainful employment, Randall received support from many VR staff. His VR counselors helped him address his employment gap, and how to self-identify as a person with a disability. Choose to Work Specialist Brad Jones taught him resume skills, job-searching techniques, and how to connect with other department resources. Later, as a UWIPS benefits counselor, DJ provided information on the Trial Work Period and how work would affect Randall's SSDI benefits.

Randall is currently working as a residential building inspector for the city of Safford, Arizona. He works full time with benefits earning nearly \$25 per hour. "Construction is who I am," Randall said. "I couldn't have done it without you guys [in VR]!" Using the transferable skills he already had in a work setting that accommodates his physical limitations made all the difference. And that success is good for the heart!



Travis Telford



OCCUPATION:
Commercial Truck Driver

VR COUNSELOR:
Kate Hinchee, Northern Utah District

VR PROVIDED SERVICES:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Mental Health Counseling
- Vocational Training
- Transportation Assistance
- Coordination with Adult Probation & Parole
- Coordination of Bonding Services

After being incarcerated for 23 years, Travis Telford applied for VR services in 2018. During those previous 23 years, society experienced significant technological changes. Travis did not believe he had any applicable job skills — he had never used a cell phone or the Internet. However, he had learned impulse control, coping skills and could “crochet up a storm.” His life experience in a harsh prison environment and the recent loss of his mother prepared him for something better upon release.

With the assistance of the Utah State Prison Re-Entry Team and the Prison In-Reach program, and as a condition of his parole, Travis was referred to VR services in Brigham City, Utah. Travis applied for Medicaid and his VR counselor, Kate Hinchee, coordinated mental health and substance abuse restoration services with Adult Probation and Parole and Bear River Mental Health.

With assistance from his VR counselor, Travis chose a career as a commercial truck driver and was able to secure daily transportation from Brigham City to Sandy to complete his commercial driver’s license training through Sage Trucking Driving School. In addition, Travis received assistance from Employment Specialist Eden Johnson to ensure his prospective employer could participate in the Federal Bonding Program.

Through these collaborative efforts, Travis found full-time employment with Resource Manufacturing as a truck driver in January 2019 and continues to excel in his chosen career. In recounting his journey, Travis simply stated, “Thank you for giving me a brighter future.”

FY 2020–2021 MEETING SCHEDULE



LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

October 28, 2020

November 25, 2020

December (No Meeting)

January 27, 2021

February 24, 2021

March 31, 2021

April 28, 2021

May 26, 2021

June 30, 2021

July (No Meeting)

August 25, 2021

September 29, 2021

Individual committees may meet following the full Council meeting.

Note: All times subject to change due to meeting in-person or on Zoom.

Meeting location:

Judy Ann Buffmire Rehabilitation Service Center Conference Room
1595 West 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104

For more information:

801-887-9505 or 866-435-7414 (toll-free)

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Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
A Division of the Department of Workforce Services
1595 West 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids (accommodations) and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.