

Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



Fernando Cabana



OCCUPATION:
Massage Therapist

COUNSELORS:

VR Counselor: Bill Miller, Provo
Claudia Knight, CTW Employment Specialist

VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Clothing and Transportation for Employment
- Assistive Technology
- Training Assistance
- Job Search and Placement

When Fernando Cabana first applied for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, he needed some direction. Fernando was born blind and already had independent living skills with this disability. Frustrated, Fernando was unaware of his work potential and the direction he needed to meet his life goals. He needed an assessment of his strengths and abilities, and accommodations to find employment. The VR program put him on track to achieve his dream of becoming a massage therapist. Bill Miller, Fernando's VR counselor, provided excellent counseling and guidance in this process. VR paid for Fernando's training through the Healing Mountain Massage School, and transportation, clothing and assistive technology resources led to successful certification in massage therapy.

Bill's understanding of Fernando's disability-related issues opened doors that led to his current employment with Massage Envy in Sandy, Utah. Working together as counselor and client, Bill and Fernando actively

collaborated with the employer to provide the needed jobsite accommodations. Claudia Knight, Choose to Work employment specialist, was also instrumental in helping Fernando develop self-advocacy and empowerment skills to assist with job placement and accommodations, and confidence to make his dream a reality. Now, Fernando is making \$25 an hour and has a growing clientele of satisfied customers.

Fernando says, "Vocational Rehabilitation has been a very good program for me because they didn't look at me as just a person with a disability, but as someone that wants to be a part of society. They show you how to be out in the world without being afraid. I am a licensed massage therapist, and I enjoy what I do." Fernando Cabana is a good example of overcoming the odds, working hard and proving that a disability can be a stepping-stone to a successful future.