



# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UTAH STATE OFFICE OF REHABILITATION

94 Years of Service to Citizens With Disabilities in Utah







2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
Utah State Office of  
**REHABILITATION**  
94 Years of Service to Citizens With Disabilities in Utah

250 East 500 South  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, UT  
84114-4200

**Darin Brush**  
Executive Director  
Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

**Brad C. Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Utah State Board of Education

January 2016



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## PREFACE

<i>Utah State Board of Education</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Executive Director's Message</i>	<i>ix</i>

## UTAH STATE OFFICE OF REHABILITATION

<i>USOR SFY 2015 Funding</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Division of Rehabilitation Services</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Division of Disability Determination Services</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Additional Programs Operated by the USOR</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education     and Employment (ASPIRE) Program</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Governor's Committee on Employment of     People With Disabilities</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Success Stories:</i>	
<i>Nathan Van Dyke</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Shellie Anderson</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Alex Neumeier</i>	<i>10</i>



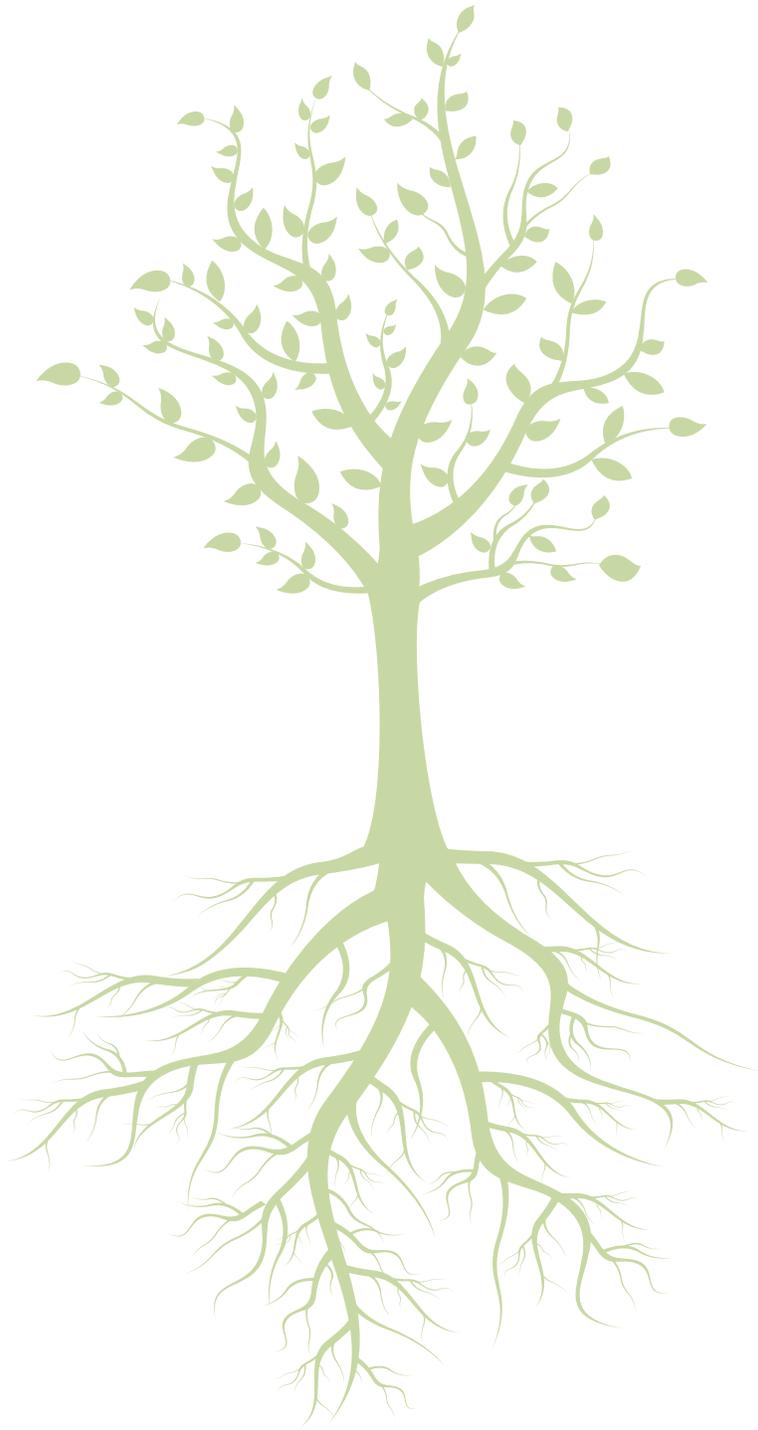
# UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

250 East 500 South P. O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

<http://schoolboard.utah.gov>

District 1	<b>Terryl Warner</b>	Hyrum, UT 84319
District 2	<b>Spencer F. Stokes</b>	Ogden, UT 84403
District 3	<b>Linda B. Hansen</b>	West Valley City, UT 84120
District 4	<b>David L. Thomas</b>	South Weber, UT 84405
District 5	<b>Laura Belnap</b>	Bountiful, UT 84010
District 6	<b>Brittney Cummins</b>	West Valley City, UT 84120
District 7	<b>Leslie B. Castle</b>	Salt Lake City, UT 84108
District 8	<b>Jennifer A. Johnson</b>	Murray, UT 84107
District 9	<b>Joel Wright</b>	Cedar Hills, UT 84062
District 10	<b>David L. Crandall</b>	Draper, UT 84020
District 11	<b>Jefferson Moss</b>	Saratoga Springs, UT 84045
District 12	<b>Dixie L. Allen</b>	Vernal, UT 84078
District 13	<b>Stan Lockhart</b>	Provo, UT 84604
District 14	<b>Mark Huntsman</b>	Fillmore, UT 84631
District 15	<b>Barbara W. Corry</b>	Cedar City, UT 84720
	<b>Brad C. Smith</b>	Chief Executive Officer
	<b>Lorraine Austin</b>	Secretary to the Board

8/2015



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

# Understanding the Past— Envisioning the Future

---



Darin Brush  
Executive Director

On behalf of the dedicated professionals with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), I am pleased to present our 2015 annual report. In many ways, it has been a difficult year at USOR. But we are emerging as a stronger, better agency that serves Utahns with disabilities—a mission we proudly carry out each day.

In January, USOR sought a supplemental appropriation of \$6.3 million during the 2015 General Session of the Utah State Legislature for its largest program, Vocational Rehabilitation, because it had enrolled more eligible clients with disabilities for services than the budget could sustain. In February, USOR implemented (and remains under) an Order of Selection, a federally-sanctioned waiting list by which individuals with the most significant disabilities are served first. An audit report

from the Office of the Legislative Auditor General was released in September describing the budget and oversight shortcomings that had led to these and other agency problems.

Within the first 30 days after my arrival in July, we had developed a plan for stabilizing the agency and systematically prioritizing and fixing the issues we faced. That plan has four immediate objectives:

1. Develop a comprehensive budget and accounting management system to replace the failed one.
2. Build an integrated management information system that tracks performance across all activities.
3. Create a centralized compliance and quality assurance structure.
4. Configure the agency to support these efforts and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Since then, we have:

- ▶ Appointed a new executive management team.
- ▶ Built a finance team that is developing accounting management systems and financial reporting.

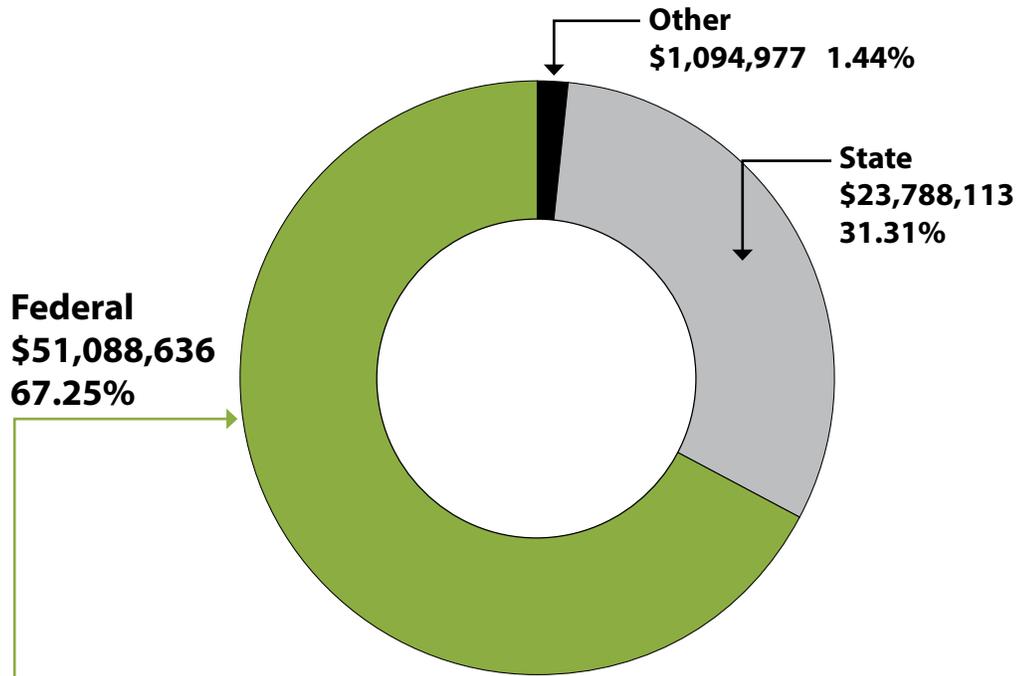
- ▶ Implemented a new, more advanced Vocational Rehabilitation case management system.
- ▶ Developed and tested a case service expenditure rate model that guided us to opening one of the three client categories of the Order of Selection and begin serving the 1,500 people on the waiting list.

Of course, the work is not yet finished. We predict that our goal of becoming one of the best-managed and most customer-focused state agencies is at least a three-year project. Yet that does not mean that we are not doing great things already. As you look through this report, you will note some of the positive outcomes of our four divisions, all serving Utahns with disabilities—the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Division of Disability Determination Services. We have also included information on some of our successful initiatives. We will build on all these strengths as we fix our problems and keep our commitment to the people we serve.

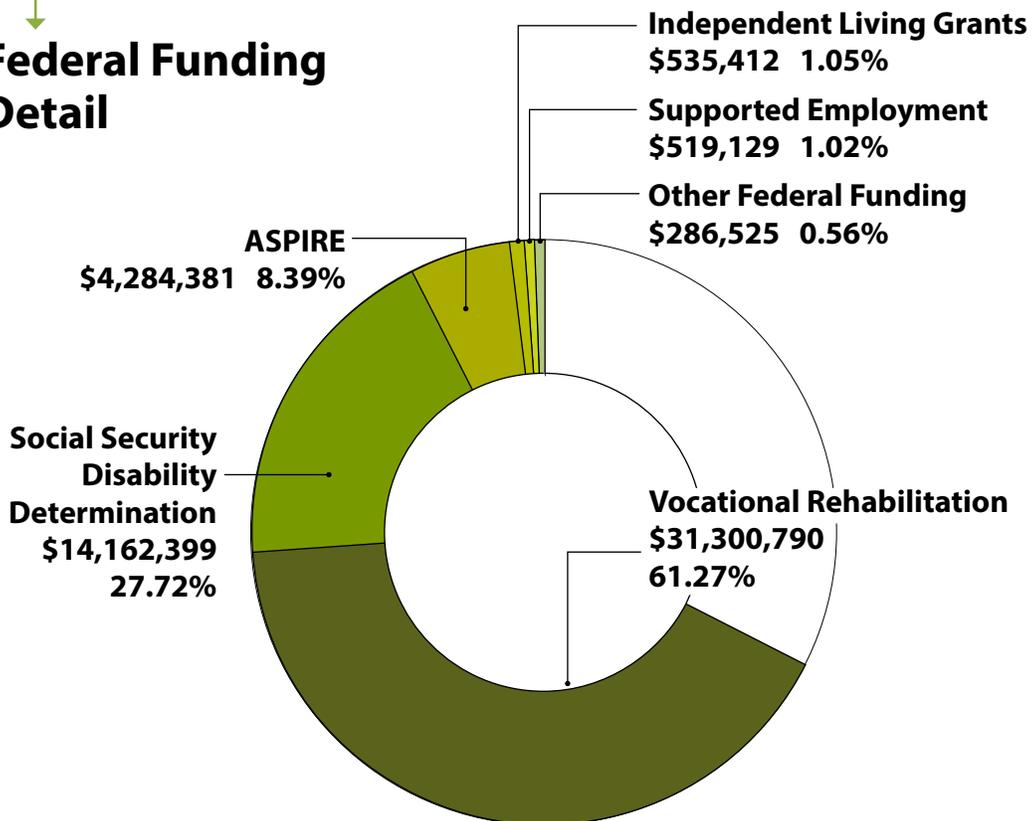
All the best,

Darín Brush  
Executive Director

# USOR SFY2015 FUNDING



## Federal Funding Detail



## DIVISION OF

# REHABILITATION SERVICES

---

**The mission** of the Division of Rehabilitation Services is to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving meaningful employment and increasing their independence. In support of this mission, the Division is committed to providing high quality, individualized services to all eligible individuals. Services are available according to needs, abilities and choices. These services may include disability restoration and treatment, counseling and guidance, assistive technology, training, job placement, and follow-up supports.

Staff members of the Division of Rehabilitation Services—including vocational rehabilitation counselors, employment specialists, benefits planners, and assistive technology specialists—collaborate to provide a comprehensive system of support to assist eligible individuals in overcoming barriers and realizing their employment goals. The Division also works closely in partnership with employers, local school districts, higher education, and other public and private service agencies to support and meet the needs of clients.

During federal fiscal year 2015, the Division of Rehabilitation Services **assisted 25,746 Utahns** with disabilities. The following information demonstrates the individual and program successes of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program during the last year:

- **3,502** individuals with disabilities were successfully employed.
- **83%** of those employed were significant disabled.
- **687** public assistance recipients successfully gained employment.
- **769** Social Security Disability recipients successfully gained employment.
- **61** individuals successfully gained employment through Supported Employment Services.
- **456%** was the increase in weekly earnings of the 3,502 individuals successfully employed.
- **26%** of individuals served were transition-age youth with disabilities.
- **84** trainings to 2,154 individuals were provided by the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT).
- **777** new clients were served and 710 benefit summaries presented by the Work Incentive and Planning Services unit (UWIPS).

## DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR

# THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

---

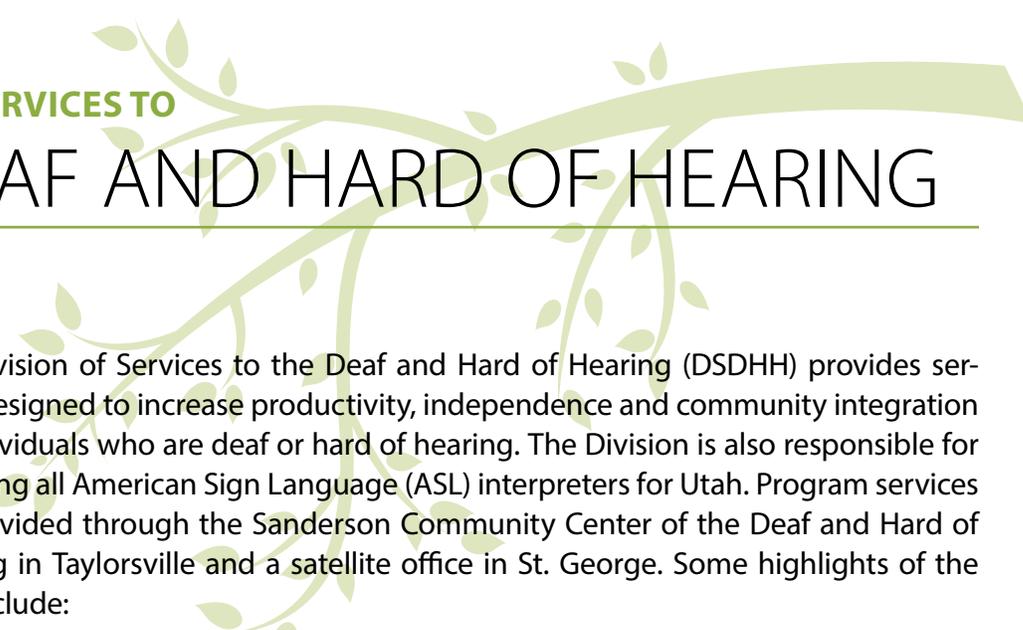
The Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) provides services designed to increase independence, community integration and productivity for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. These services are provided to eligible individuals under the State Office of Rehabilitation through programs located at DSBVI.

Services include the following:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** provides services to assist individuals to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.
- **Training and Adjustment Services (TAS)** includes a complete center-based orientation and training program.
- **Low Vision Services (LVS)** assists individuals by providing devices, resources and services to help them learn to use their remaining vision effectively.
- **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** provides an opportunity to train and license blind and visually impaired individuals to operate their own businesses, including food service and vending routes in government facilities.
- **Deaf-Blind (DB) Services** are offered for blind and visually impaired individuals who also have a hearing loss.
- The Division's **Vision Screening Program** is an important service provided to children in Utah to detect, prior to a child entering school, either poor vision or other risk factors that could interfere with normal visual development.

Outcomes include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation served **551** clients, with **52** successful case closures.
- Training and adjustment classes were attended by **37** full-time students and **37** part-time students.
- Low vision services served **708** clients, including **525** new clients.
- The BEP currently operations **12** routes consisting of **111** locations.
- A total of **70** individuals who are deaf-blind were served in the Support Service Provider (SSP) program.
- Over **175,000** children in preschool through third grade were screened for amblyopia and other vision problems.



## DIVISION OF SERVICES TO

# THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

---

The Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) provides services designed to increase productivity, independence and community integration for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Division is also responsible for certifying all American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for Utah. Program services are provided through the Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Taylorsville and a satellite office in St. George. Some highlights of the year include:

- DSDHH hosted the **Annual Fall Bazaar**, with **900–1,000** attendees.
- The **Utah Interpreter program** certified **208** interpreters through testing for the novice and professional levels.
- **Community activities** involved **621** children in family support activities.
- DSDHH staff members provided **187** presentations for consumer agencies and businesses.
- The **DSDHH website** received an average of **6,200** hits per month. Facebook and other social media followings have continued to grow.
- The **Hard of Hearing Program** has contacted over **15,000** people during fairs and booths, providing demonstrations of assistive devices and information on the services provided by the Taylorsville location; **2,900** people have been contacted for the St. George location.
- The **Individualized Service team** provided **3,100** hours of case management services, counseling and mental health services.
- The **Employment Specialist** helped **54** individuals become employed, provided **730** workshops/meetings for employers, and assisted with two job fairs attended by **600** participants, with **35–45** companies present at both job fairs.
- **Socialization and adjustment services** benefitted over **7,615** individuals at the Taylorsville location and **603** individuals at the St. George location.

## DIVISION OF

# DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

---

The mission of the Division of Disability Determination Services (DDS) is to make accurate and timely decisions on whether applicants meet the requirements for Social Security disability benefits.

Some of the Division's accomplishments this year include:

- For the Federal Fiscal Year, Utah DDS processed **22,786** claims.
- Claim accuracy, based upon SSA rankings, was in the top ten in the nation, at over **97 percent**.
- The average processing time for the DDS receiving a claim and adjudicating the decision was **109 days**. The Utah DDS met or exceeded all Social Security Administration (SSA) goals for production, accuracy, and processing time. In addition, over **36 percent** of Utah applicants were allowed benefits on their initial application.
- The Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) Program, is a joint effort among federal and state agencies to effectively pool resources for the purpose of preventing and investigating potential fraud in SSAs, Title II, and Title XVI disability programs and related federal and state programs. SSA records show that during the year the CDI program in Utah saved SSA **\$9,425,518** in SSA monies and **\$10,162,602** in non-SSA savings.

The nine-member DDS Advisory Council continues to provide valuable input and feedback on how DDS is serving the public. Additionally, each of the nine members and alternates provides a flow of accurate and timely information regarding the SSA disability program to different segments of the public or agencies he/she represents. The Advisory Council was established by state statute in 1994.

As of June 2015, there were **60,411 Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries** in Utah, receiving **\$60.05 million** per month in disability benefits. Additionally, there were 30,672 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries in Utah receiving a total of **\$14.76 million** a month. As the data indicates, the disability program is having a large impact on Utah's citizens and economy.

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

# Operated by the USOR

---

**The Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment (ASPIRE) program:** Awarded by the U.S. Department of Education on October 1, 2013, ASPIRE is a project of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation on behalf of six western states: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah (PROMISE initiative—Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income, #H418P130009). This five-year, \$32.5 million award **targets youth with disabilities, ages 14 to 16, who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families.** No state or matching funds were necessary. Expected outcomes include increased education and household income for the families and reduced dependency on public benefits. Two thousand (2,000) youth will be recruited in the six states, 250 in Utah. **The goal of this research study is to compare youth and families who access current services with youth who receive enhanced services.**

The youth will be randomly assigned to either the ASPIRE Services group or the Usual Services group. The youth and families randomly assigned to the ASPIRE Services group will receive additional services to promote increased education, employment and independent living. These services begin after enrollment and continue through September 30, 2018. As of January 1, 2016, a total of 1,420 youth and families were enrolled, and the Utah ASPIRE team has completed all 250 enrollments for the state.

To learn more, contact:

Carol Ruddell, ASPIRE Project Director

(801) 619-3010

[cruddell@utah.gov](mailto:cruddell@utah.gov)



**The Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities** was established in the late 1960s to promote public and private efforts to achieve equal employment opportunities for all qualified Utahns with disabilities. The committee includes 24 individuals representing business partners, community partners, state agencies, individuals with disabilities, education, veterans and members of the public. The committee informs and advises the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and other partners on state and national issues that affect the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Current objectives for the committee include:

1. Increasing the reach, education, and awareness of the Alternative State Application Program (ASAP) with job seekers and state agencies.
2. Providing assistance to federal contractors in their compliance with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. This legislation increases requirements for recruiting, hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities within federal contractors.
3. Improvement of existing marketing campaigns and creation of new campaigns as necessary. Committee members are working with local business partners, including the businesses they represent on the committee, to establish a Utah affiliate of the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN). This chapter will be called the Utah Business Leadership Network (UBLN), and will continue the efforts of the Utah Business Employers Team (UBET) that has been the Utah business-to-business mentoring model. The committee is also coordinating Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) events with business across the Wasatch Front. The DMD event is an opportunity for transition-age youth with disabilities to visit and learn more about the hosting business partner’s employment opportunities. In addition, the committee advises the business relations team with the USOR.

This year, Business Relations hosted over 100 human resources professionals at the biannual Employer Workshop on Hiring and Retaining Individuals With Disabilities. The workshop happens every March and September. Business Relations also hosted the biannual Work Ability Career Preparation and Job Fair in April and October. Each job fair had over 40 business partners attend. Workshops were hosted for job seekers, and participating business partners conducted mock interviews with clients. Each job fair hosted at least 180 job seekers with disabilities. Outreach continues throughout the year to develop and maintain partnerships with business partners and provide supports to individuals with disabilities through the People with Disabilities Network (PWDNET). PWDNET business partners attend events, host Disability Mentoring Days, post and list job openings and receive consultation services from the Business Relations team on issues surrounding disability and employment. PWDNET has approximately 146 business partners who participate regularly in events and training opportunities, or who post and list positions.

## SUCCESS STORIES

# NATHAN VAN DYKE

---



Nathan applied for services with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in July of 2011. He was a recovering alcoholic with six months of sobriety. He had lost much in his life—relationships, jobs, and his sense of self-worth—through alcoholic-dependent behaviors. His first desire was finding a job so he could lead a normal life. He continued to work on maintaining sobriety and became active in his 12-step group meetings. He worked closely with his VR counselor, and followed through with the expectations of the VR program. Once he believed he could maintain sobriety over an extended period of time, he wanted to help others. He understood the disability caused by alcohol dependence and knew there was a way out. He believed that his experience could help others with the downward spiral of alcohol abuse and/or dependency in their lives.

Nathan had little college education before becoming a VR client, and wanted to complete the University of Utah's Substance Use Disorder Certification Program. He was excited to have his application accepted, and his diligence and hard work paid off. VR provided the financial support he needed to complete the program, which is not eligible for Pell Grant funding. While attending school, Nathan made contacts through his 12-step program and community involvement. Through this networking, he successfully secured a job in his chosen field. Nathan continues to be active in promoting a sober lifestyle for others, and is using his education to make a living doing something he loves.

## SUCCESS STORIES

# SHELLIE ANDERSON



Shellie Anderson was found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder. She also had a history of poly-substance addiction disorder, and had been in several treatment centers while dealing with anxiety and depression for most of her life. She came to VR hoping to receive help with stabilizing her disabilities, and she wanted assistance with education and training to obtain a successful job helping others overcome their personal challenges.

Shellie actively participated in counseling, was able to stabilize her disabilities, and became actively engaged in education/training. She participated in assessments at Uintah Basin Applied Technology College, completed the Licensed Substance Abuse Counseling (LSAC) program at Utah Valley University, and obtained a bachelor's degree in family, consumer and human development at Utah State University. She is now successfully working as an LSAC at Red Pine Treatment Center and is continuing her education on her own, seeking a master's degree in marriage and family therapy.

VR assisted Shellie with counseling and guidance; mental health therapy; tuition, books and fees at UVU and USU; and licensing and testing fees for her professional license. She is working in the field, overcoming past personal struggles and using what she learned to help others to overcome their addictions and find success in life. She is thankful for all the support she received from VR, and reported that VR was her biggest "cheerleader." She felt she could always stop by and talk with the executive secretary or her counselor for support and positive reinforcement. She loves what she does, and is looking forward to working as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) after she completes her master's program.

## SUCCESS STORIES

# ALEX NEUMEIER

---

Alex began services with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in October 2013 while living on the Wasatch Front. He was found to be eligible for services due to depression and anxiety. Shortly after, he moved to Southern Utah to help take care of his mother and siblings due to his father unexpectedly passing away. Alex met with his counselor, and they began working on an Individualized Plan for Employment. Alex was very motivated, and had a sense of urgency and a desire to begin work as soon as possible. His family was quickly falling behind on bills, as they had little to no income after his father passed. Alex did not know what he was going to do, and was under a lot of stress. His counselor assured him that Vocational Rehabilitation could provide the necessary supports which would lead to successful employment.



The services VR provided to Alex included vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance to help him establish a viable job goal. Emotional support was also provided to help Alex deal with the death of his father and with taking on the responsibility of caring for his mother and siblings. VR identified the need for mental health therapy, which provided Alex with support for his ongoing depression and anxiety. VR partnered with a Choose-To-Work Specialist, who met with Alex right away to help him prepare and look for a job.

Through several direct and coordinated services, VR was able to help Alex become stable, allowing him to find successful employment at Walmart. Alex continues to gain self-confidence in his job, and is doing very well. He is now able to support his family, and is grateful for the assistance and support given to him by the VR program.





UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Brad C. Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer



250 East 500 South/P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

**Darin Brush**, Executive Director  
Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

[www.usor.utah.gov](http://www.usor.utah.gov)