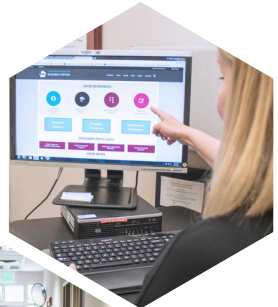


UTAH  
STATE

# REHABILITATION COUNCIL REPORT

2019



**WORKFORCE  
SERVICES  
REHABILITATION**



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UTAH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL  
1595 WEST 500 SOUTH • SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84104  
JANUARY 2020



## **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

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- Rob Ferris, Business, Industry and Labor, Chair
- Glenn Fitzpatrick, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Vice Chair
- James Harvey, Business, Industry and Labor, Past Chair
- Eliza Detherage, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Secretary
- Jay Wheeler, Service Provider, Member-at-Large

## MEMBERS:

- Kelly Boehmer, Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Eliza Stauffer, Consumer
- Lavinia Gripentrog, Special Education
- 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
- Helen Saaed, Business, Industry and Labor
- Katie Carroll, Client Assistance Program
- Brian Lahti, Consumer
- Sandy Terry, Department of Workforce Services
- Cheri Lachenmeier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Representative
- Jamie Wuthrich, Division of Services for People with Disabilities



## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR



IT IS WITH GREAT HONOR and much pride that I have completed my one-year term as the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Chair. As the CEO of a 27-year-old non-profit company serving people with disabilities and addressing barriers to employment, and as a disabled, retired Army veteran, I have a vested interest and sense of passion for the work that the SRC and the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) does for the citizens of the state of Utah.

I was appointed to the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council (USILC) in 2014; and, in 2015, I became the chair of that council, which brought me to the SRC as a required member. Since joining the SRC, I have served on the Executive Committee as the member-at-large and vice chair. I also served as the chair of both the Nomination and By-Laws Committees.

I have worked with USOR for the past 17 years as a training provider and a community rehabilitation program (CRP). In that time, I have worked with three different executive directors, and observed as USOR moved from the Utah State Board of Education to the Department of Workforce Services. I was serving on the USILC when USOR went through some troubling financial issues and had to go on an Order of Selection for services. I believe, however, that the leadership of the former executive director, Darin Brush, the current division director, Sarah Brenna, and the assistant division director and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program director, Aaron Thompson, is what makes USOR the strong and transparent organization it is today.

We have a diverse and proficient Council in Utah that has a great relationship with USOR. Being in the Independent Living Network for the past six years has allowed me to witness the relationship nationwide between VR agencies and the SRCs/SILCs. I believe what we have here in Utah is a symbiotic and mutually respected collaboration that is coveted by many other states.

Respectfully,

Robert G. Ferris  
Council Chair 2019



## MESSAGE FROM THE USOR DIRECTOR



I AM PLEASED TO PRESENT to you the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) 2019 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 resource providers, employers and SRC members.

We have seen several notable accomplishments during this past year. More than 2,000 clients with disabilities achieved gainful employment, including more than 500 Social Security Disability recipients, resulting in significant savings to this benefits program. 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.

Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires VR agencies nationwide to provide, at certain prescribed intervals, career counseling and information and referral services to individuals who are known to be employed at subminimum wage. This requirement is designed to promote opportunities for competitive integrated employment. Over the last year, career counseling and information and referral services were provided to more than 1,200 individuals.

We continue to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain employment through our Business Relations team. Employer workshops and mentoring events for students with disabilities were expanded this year. Our Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) has developed a new, state of the art, web-based application and American Sign Language (ASL) certification testing procedures. The Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) continued providing expanded low-vision services and piloted a college readiness program to improve the rate of individuals who are able to remain post-secondary education programs. Disability Determination Services (DDS) continues to meet federal performance standards despite federal hiring freeze and increasing vacancies.

As you can see, our staff within USOR continue 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 in the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

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 Council continues to be an active partner with Utah's VR program to ensure the provision of quality services to eligible consumers. Council 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 the division.

Council members participate in various functions of the VR program. These include attending USOR state-wide administrators meetings, the annual USOR agency meeting, 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 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 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.





## 2018–2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

**DIVISION DIRECTOR UPDATES:** The Council received regular reports on state and national issues affecting USOR. At the October 2018 meeting, Division Director Sarah Brenna and Assistant Division Director Aaron Thompson discussed the division's recent accomplishments in terms of VR performance and outcomes. The new strategic plan for 2018–20 was presented that aligns with the Department of Workforce Services' four cornerstones of Exceptional Customer Service, Operational Excellence, Community Connection and Employee Success. Strategies were provided to improve employment outcomes, capacity and efficiencies, implementation of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Disability Case Processing System (DCPS), community engagement and access to VR services, and the provision of opportunities for staff and their professional development and recognition. In February, Brenna gave a report on the legislative session and impacts to the VR program, as well as a national research study on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation by Mathematica. In April, Brenna commented on the recent Council of State Administrators' in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) conference and her presentation to the New Directors Leadership Forum. At the May meeting, she reported on the turnover and federal hiring freeze affecting the Disability Determination Services (DDS) program and impacts on the eligibility determination process, and presented a 15-year service certificate to Assistant Division Director Aaron Thompson. Assistant Division Director Stacey Cummings asked Council members for input on the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and alternate formats for administering the survey. In August, Brenna discussed the recent Golden Key Awards and Disability:IN Utah Summit, the National Disability Awareness Summit, and the upcoming Employer Workshop (held on Sept., 10, 2019) and Workability

Job Fair (held on Oct. 8, 2019), coordinated by the Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

### **STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING AND COUNCIL TRAINING:**

At the October 2018 meeting, Rob Ferris was unanimously selected as the new chair for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), with Glenn Fitzpatrick elected as vice chair, Eliza Detherage as secretary and Jay Wheeler as member-at-large. Outgoing SRC Chair James Harvey was presented a plaque in recognition of his service to the Council. Service recognition certificates were given to outgoing Council members Helen Post, Rylee Williams, Ken Gourdin and Lindsey Boerens. James discussed a revision to the by-laws that would allow for more community representation. An email vote was later taken and the action approved by the Council. At the November meeting, Kris Fawson presented on effective advocacy for the VR program, including the legislative process and the Golden Rules of Advocacy when approaching members of the Utah Legislature during the upcoming session. Council member Rylee Williams provided a VR 101 presentation on the application and eligibility processes, VR services available, Individualized Plan Development (IPE), employment and case closure. Chairman Ferris discussed Council member roles and responsibilities, the SRC mission statement, Council composition and the following SRC goals: 1) the SRC will assist and advise USOR to preserve and improve services to clients; 2) review data and relevant information; and 3) increase the visibility and value of the SRC. At the August, 2019 meeting, Mr. Ferris provided similar training to all of the newer members of the SRC.

**VR PROGRAM UPDATES:** Assistant Division Director Aaron Thompson provided the Council monthly reports and information on a number of VR program-

related topics. Included were VR program outcomes, Order of Selection updates, personnel updates, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) meeting reports, WIOA updates, an overview of the application process, monthly reviews of the division dashboard report and outcomes, and budget and audit reports. At the November meeting, Field Service Director Gordon Swensen (representing Thompson) provided an overview of USOR, including its mission, vision and values; key historical legislation affecting the VR program; the transition from the Utah State Board of Education to Workforce Services; and a review of the Workforce Services organizational chart and four cornerstones. He also did a brief overview of each of the USOR programs (e.g., Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI)), and additional USOR programs (e.g., Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS), Choose to Work). In January, Thompson introduced the new VR program evaluation coordinator, Nicole Fraedrich, and outlined the top priorities for program evaluation, including collaboration with the SRC to update ongoing client satisfaction surveys. He announced a new UWIPS benefits specialist in St. George, the upcoming office relocations for the Salt Lake Downtown and Delta offices, and the American Job Center certifications planned for the Ogden Employment Center, among others. In February, Thompson announced the new Valley West District director, Jennifer Smart, and three recent Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) instructor hires for the Vernal, Spanish Fork, and St. George offices. He provided information on the Business Customized Trainings and partnerships with employers and community rehabilitation programs (CRP), which allow for an intensive training program for clients targeting the development of skills for that business. The two business partners identified were Sephora and WinCo Foods. He also discussed the recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment completed by Utah State University to identify the needs of clients, especially those with most significant disabilities, youth and students with disabilities, minorities and underserved groups. At the April meeting, the new USOR training coordinator, Aryn Taylor, was introduced, and

Thompson discussed Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) information and how WIOA partners and VR counselors are tracking this information. The Spring Employer Workshop and the State Alternative Application Program (ASAP) were discussed. In April, he shared information from the recent CSAVR meeting and the draft monitoring report from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) site visit to Utah (including the division's response to observations and findings). In May, Thompson reported that the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) would be updating their lab and shop (July 2019) to improve technology services, and gave a Choose to Work Pilot update on rapid engagement and increased contact with clients as part of USOR Business Relations. In August, Thompson introduced the new employment supports program specialist, Jason Bennington, and discussed the State As A Model Employer (SAME), to promote both the ASAP program and training for state hiring managers on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. He also discussed a disability employment awareness campaign, coordinated through a partnership with the Utah Developmental Disability Council, Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD), and Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH).

**POLICY UPDATES:** Division of Rehabilitation Services Policy Director Emily Stirling presented at several SRC meetings on new regulations, policies and practices, and was a resource to Council members with VR program questions. In January, Emily presented on Client Service Manual (CSM) Training Services, including the old and new policies for review of training facilities and services. Included in the discussion was comprehensive assessment training, definitions for success, and the selection process for training facilities. Specific information was shared regarding approvals for graduate training, and the use of comparable benefits. In May, Assistant Division Director Aaron Thompson discussed the rollout of Training Services, including graduate school reported in the January meeting. In-person training on career exploration, vocational goal selection, and assessment of rehabilitation needs was

presented, including an upcoming VR Supervisor's Academy in July entitled "Leadership in the World of WIOA." In August, Emily provided an update on the Business Customized Training pilots with Sephora and WinCo and the referral, assessment, training and employment processes of this specialized training. She discussed Comparable Benefits (Chapter 9) changes, the America Job Center certifications (to date), and the Unified State Plan aligning the workforce system with education, VR and other WIOA programs.

### **TRANSITION, PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT AND 511 PROGRAM**

**UPDATES:** In January, Transition and Supported Employment Specialist Aimee Langone provided the Council an overview of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including WIOA requirements and core Pre-ETS services, including job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, counseling on post-secondary education, self-advocacy instruction and work-based learning experiences. Eligibility services provided by VR (including new Pre-ETS instructors), fee-for-service approvals and current state contracts were described, as well as how community partners can assist with employment of qualified students (e.g., paid temporary work experience, informational interviews). In May, 511 Program Coordinator Jeff Pitts provided the Council an update on the WIOA regulations regarding subminimum wage and current annual career counseling efforts. Tracking indicates that some sheltered workshops are changing their employment models to include at least minimum wage. Jeff reported on meetings with support coordinators and the sheltered workshops to increase understanding of the law and to provide greater options for VR clients with disabilities.

**2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE:** Brooke Wilson, director of the Utah State Independent Living Council (USILC), provided an update on various bills passed by the Utah Legislature in the recent session. She gave information to Council members for becoming involved with the Legislative Coalition for Persons with Disabilities (LCPD). She discussed a joint resolution

settlement to move people into home and community-based services passed. Senate Bill 143, a public education bill, would move the responsibility for school vision screenings by USOR's Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) program to the Department of Health. Medicaid expansion and a toolkit on the health department's website was discussed, as well as appropriations for Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind, Ogden's Roads to Independence program, and one-time Workforce Services internal funding being utilized for the six independent living centers to build youth initiatives programs.

### **CLIENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES UPDATE:**

At the October 2018 meeting, Lindsay Boerens from the Client Assistance Services (CAP) discussed their FY 2018 Review of Case Work and Projects, including referrals, short term assistance, individual cases, Field Service Director (FSD) reviews, and other outcomes in their advocacy efforts for VR clients. Boerens provided information on the involvement of CAP on various councils, including the SRC, USOR/CAP quarterly meetings, the Association for People Supporting Employment First, and employment partnership meetings. CAP's systemic efforts included advocacy for the VR program to exclude ABLE accounts and special needs trusts from the resources included in client financial needs assessments. CAP also provided outreach and training at the Work Ability job fairs and transition fairs, to job coaches on ADA rights and reasonable accommodations, to veterans, independent living centers, and ADA training to Deseret Industries staff.

### **CTA COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

**PRESENTATION:** At the October meeting, Council Member Glenn Fitzpatrick presented on CTA Community Supports, a community rehabilitation program (CRP). Fitzpatrick shared the organization's history, and the 27 small group homes (3-5 occupants) throughout the state that "provides adults and children with autism spectrum disorder and other related disabilities the support they need to learn and have a fulfilling life." CTA provides employment services, with a focus on discovery and customized employment.

## **INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM**

**PRESENTATION:** In February, USOR Independent Living Coordinator Noreen Roeca presented on the Independent Living Network in Utah. Historically, Ed Roberts of Berkeley, CA, conceptualized the IL movement in 1960, and felt that people with disabilities are fully human and have both the right and responsibility to control their daily lives. The civil rights, women's, self-help, disability rights, and consumerism movements impacted the independent living philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access and individual and system advocacy. Roeca contrasted the differences between independent living and a medical/social paradigm, as well as independent living core services, including independent living skills training, information and referral, institutional transition and diversion, peer counseling and peer support, systems and individual advocacy, and youth transition. Utah is served by six independent living centers statewide that operate as individual non-profit organizations with a board of directors, primarily representing individuals with disabilities. Roeca reported that the passage of WIOA in 2014 moved independent living from the RSA to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Roeca also discussed the role of the USILC, its goals and highlighted performance outcomes for FY 2018, and the Utah Assistive Technology Fund.

## **WORK SUCCESS PROGRAM**

**PRESENTATION:** In February, Workforce Services State Program Specialist Tracy Harris-Belnap presented on the Work Success Program, an intensive two-to-four week program focused on helping clients find and retain competitive employment. The program has a more than 70% employment rate. Harris-Belnap reviewed the requirements for program participation, including age, employment-focused, with transportation, childcare, work clothing, on-time behaviors, and able to commit to 20-40 hours per week. The program services include master application development, resume consultation, personal branding, social networking strategies, interview

coaching, career portfolio development, budgeting and financial management, life skills seminars, and career planning. All these services are at no charge to participants. Harris-Belnap answered Council member questions and provided additional online assistance information.

## **UTAH CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY REPORT:**

At the November meeting, Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Director Mike Wollenzien provided an annual program update. Wollenzien discussed UCAT's full integration into the USOR's AWARE system that tracks assistive technology equipment and inventory. Referrals to the program reached 550. Wollenzien provided brief historical information on the original UCAT grant (started in 1993) and that services are available to all. UCAT is trying to assist the aging population and considering some related prioritization of assessment services. UCAT works closely with the independent living program as well as DSPD, with VR counselors as the main referral source for services. The Utah Assistive Technology Teams (UATT) program combines with UCAT to "support school LEAs and IEP teams to evaluate, acquire, and manage assistive technology for students with disabilities. We support and coordinate with multidisciplinary educational and rehabilitation teams to train students, caregivers, educators, and service providers in the use of assistive technology in education and in the major life functions of students with disabilities."

## **BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PROGRAM PRESENTATION:**

In March, Council Member Jenni Thompson presented on the division's Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) program, including the impact of BVI services on her own life as a wife and mother. She described the home management classes that provide cleaning, cooking, ironing and other skill development for clients with blindness and visual impairments. Other classes include woodworking, braille, and mobility and orientation. Thompson discussed additional BVI services, including the low vision clinic, the DeafBlind program, and the iCanConnect program

that assists blind and visually impaired individuals with free technology (e.g., iPhones, wireless amplifiers). She reported on the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind that assists children ages 2 to 22 with education and parental training in the formative years of development and education. The Helen Keller National Center has a regional specialist in Utah, Laura Bench, and the Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has a tactile sign language class for those who are DeafBlind.

### **UTAH STATEWIDE POST HIGH SCHOOL OUTCOMES SURVEY PRESENTATION:**

In April, Lavinia Gripentrog, Council member and transition specialist with the Utah State Board of Education presented on the Utah Statewide Post High School Outcomes Surveys for 2018. These phone surveys are completed one year after high school or post high for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Participants are asked 23 questions covering topics related to post-secondary education and training, competitive or other employment hours, adult living, agency involvement, and positive experiences from high school. Gripentrog reported a significant 37% response rate. Of particular interest were the responses from unemployed youth, including: full-time student/going to work, did not plan to work after high school, unable to find work, does not have the necessary skills or qualifications, no transportation to work, currently on an agency wait list for services, laid off/fired, family obligations, and health/disability-related issues.

### **EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PRESENTATION:**

In May, Melissa Freigang, Council member and vice president of Social Innovation and Workforce Initiatives for LSI, a business development company in Layton, Utah, discussed the Education to Employment (E2E) program, a USOR-funded grant administered by LSI. The focus is effective statewide delivery to transition students with disabilities. As part of LSI's Social Innovation and Workforce Initiative approach, LSI aligns industry, post-secondary education and economic development to deliver employment

skills to youth and young adults. LSI's methodology is user-centered, including summer employment, career education, barrier removal and self-advocacy to prepare students with disabilities to successfully transition from school to work. Freigang discussed the five core services that reflect the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) requirements under WIOA: 1) career advocates and one-on-one mentoring; 2) students self-select, explore, progress and achieve; 3) target the underserved; 4) customized, data-driven, and outcomes based; and 5) alignment of resources, programs and community partners. The referral and application process was provided, including the various forms of service delivery to participants (e.g., traditional face-to-face, YouTube, Google Hangouts).

### **DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PRESENTATION:**

In August, Bryn Petersen and Ben Robison from the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) presented to the Council on the long-term supports and services provided by the program for people with disabilities in Utah, including the promotion of public awareness, acceptance, self-determination and full societal participation. Specific services available through DSPD were highlighted (e.g., respite, family support, supported employment, supervised community living) to support and supplement competitive, integrated employment. The presenters reviewed the eligibility process for developmental disabilities (prior to age 18) or related conditions (prior to age 22), brain injury (over age 18), and physical disabilities (over age 18). The intake process, eligibility worker assignment, required documentation for eligibility and other forms can be completed online. A Needs Assessment occurs and the person is placed on the DSPD wait list according to need. The role of the wait list coordinator, surveys, Community Service Brokers, and other services were described. Petersen and Robison provided a description of the requirements for collaboration with VR, including the Employment First Initiative, the Home and Community-Based Settings (HCBS) Rule, funding of employment supports, and work strategy assessments. Council members

were introduced to House Bill 45, the Support Work Independence (SWI) bill, and the emphasis on assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain competitive, integrated employment by extending services to those on the DSPD wait list. Through collaboration, DSPD and VR identify prospective VR clients who can benefit from the services of both programs. The steps include an individual becoming a VR client and being added to the DSPD wait list, as well as all VR services being utilized until eligibility for long-term funding by

is reached at the 20% intervention level or 24 months of job coaching per VR case. The presenters spent time on the HCBS requirement, the Employment First priority (House Bill 240), and its emphasis on creating rewarding integrated employment, with minimum or competitive wages, as the preferred outcome for youth and adults with disabilities, and for whom traditional job placement has never occurred.

# 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 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 2018 meeting, Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Director Mike Wollenzien provided an update, including his concern over whether the UCAT Advisory Committee should still be a standing committee on the SRC. Discussion by the Council was tabled until the January 2019 meeting and the Council requested that the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) research the federal regulations regarding SRCs and any language that would be critical to this discussion. SRC staff liaison Gordon Swensen was tasked with this assignment.

## **USOR RESPONSE 1:**

At the January 2019 meeting, Gordon Swensen presented his research findings regarding the issue regarding the UCAT Advisory Committee. He reported that this committee is not in statute or located in any of the regulations concerning SRC requirements. Based on that research, the Council unanimously voted to discontinue the UCAT Advisory Committee as a standing committee of the Council. This action took place following further review in February 2019. The decision was also made to include a representative from UCAT on the Council as a required member.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Following discussion by the Council, a request was made for Division of Rehabilitation Services Policy Director Emily Stirling to present to the Council on the new Training Services chapter of the Client Services Manual (CSM).

## **USOR RESPONSE 2:**

At the January 2019 meeting, Ms. Stirling presented to the Council on the new Training Services chapter (including updated sections, with an emphasis on Graduate Degree Training). Council members received clarification to their questions from Ms. Stirling and a vote was taken to approve the new Training Chapter for use by VR counseling staff.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 3:**

At the March 2019 meeting, researchers from Utah State University presented the findings of a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted for USOR, including key summary points regarding the strengths and areas for improvement concerning VR client services. The Council had questions for the researchers and requested the entire report for review.

### USOR RESPONSE 3:

As requested, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment report was sent to Council members for review and to answer any questions the Council might have. The Council was appreciative of the efforts of VR staff in terms of service provision for clients with disabilities and the Council unanimously approved the report and its recommendations.

### SRC RECOMMENDATION 4:

At the May 2019 meeting, Assistant Division Director Stacey Cummings updated the Council on the new USOR Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Also discussed were other types of surveys to be used for targeted services. The Consumer Satisfaction Survey would be available in alternate formats (e.g., online) to increase response rates and client participation. The Council requested a copy of the survey from USOR for review, discussion and approval.

### USOR RESPONSE 4:

USOR sent Council members the requested document for review. The Council later voted unanimously to approve the USOR Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

### SRC RECOMMENDATION 5:

At the November 2019 meeting, Transition and Supported Employment Coordinator Aimee Langone presented to the Council on policy changes affecting employment services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's). The USOR Plan for SUCCESS, proposed rate changes for both the Supported Job Based Training and Supported Employment programs, High Quality Indicator incentives, new job coach specific training, and Temporary Work Experiences (TWE) funding increases. Following discussion the SRC voted unanimously for the USOR to implement the recommended CRP Services policy and funding changes.

### USOR RESPONSE 5:

Following the recommendation of the SRC, the USOR will implement the proposed changes to the CRP Services policy January 1, 2020.





# COMMITTEES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SRC committees included the Nominating and Interviewing Committee and the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Advisory Committee. A summary report for each committee follows:

## 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.

## UTAH CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

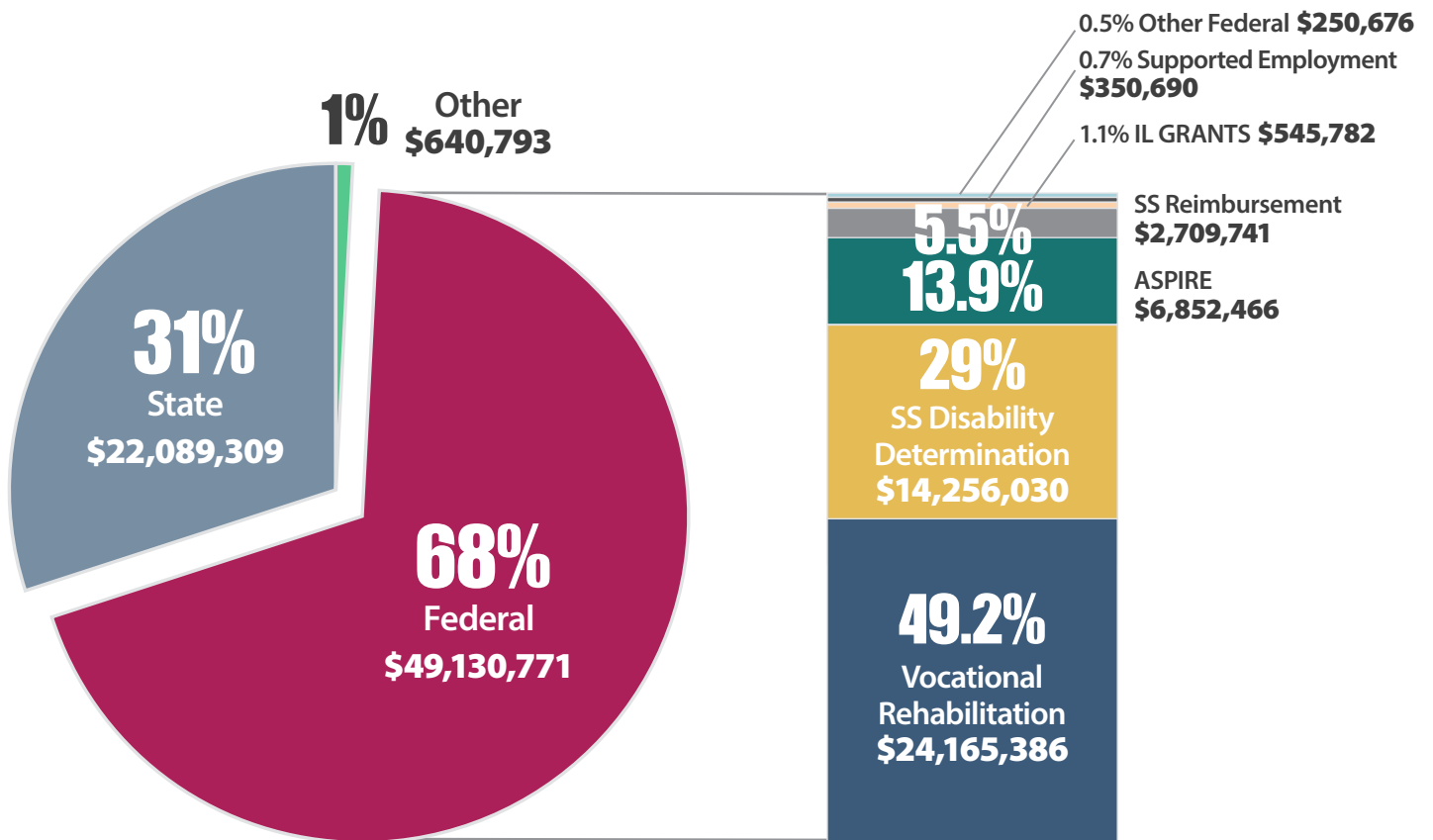
The Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) Advisory Committee was discontinued following a review of federal regulations governing the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provisions of the law. UCAT was originally created to meet an identified need by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and was a standing committee of the Council. Committee members met quarterly with meetings conducted by the UCAT director. However, during the February 2019 meeting the Council unanimously voted to discontinue the UCAT Advisory Committee.

## COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETINGS

SRC Chair Rob Ferris attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) meetings with USOR Division Director Sarah Brenna, and Assistant Division Director 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 SFY 2019 FUNDING



# USOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 2019 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



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

- 2,051 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed
- 17,724 individuals with disabilities receive services
- 646 public assistance recipients successfully gained employment
- 526 Social Security disability recipients successfully gained employment
- 352 individuals successfully gained employment through Supported Employment Services
- 40% of individuals served were transition-age youth with disabilities
- 51% of clients in educational training programs obtained a measurable skill gain
- 27 days on average to complete an eligibility determination for services
- 74 days on average to develop an individualized plan for employment
- 650 Benefits Summaries and Analysis were presented to social security recipients by the Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS) team
- 675 new individuals were referred to the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT)
- 216 employers accessed training, resources and hiring support from Business Relations

## SUCCESS STORIES



# Nathan Bond



OCCUPATION:

Cart Associate

UWIPS BENEFITS SPECIALIST:

Farrah Edwards

Nathan was first referred to UWIPS in October 2017. He was working part-time in the fast food industry and earning less than \$300 per month. Nathan was dependent on Social Security, Medicare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps) benefits and the Utah Community Supports Waiver to meet his basic living expenses. Nathan believed he could work more; but, he was worried that earning more money would jeopardize his eligibility for Community Supports Waiver services, which he relied on to live and work independently in the community.

Nathan met with UWIPS Benefits Specialist Farrah Edwards, who gave him information and guidance on how working would affect his benefits. Farrah provided Nathan with an individualized benefits summary and analysis, and coordinated with Ashley Braegger, his payee and contracted support provider at the Life Skills and Individual Needs Center.

After meeting with UWIPS, Nathan and Ashley felt confident about Nathan moving towards greater employment. Ashley assisted Nathan in obtaining an offer of full-time employment as a cart associate at Walmart. To provide wrap-around support, Farrah met with Nathan and Ashley to answer questions and discuss concerns about this new job. Nathan was surprised to learn that his potential new job provided enough money to replace his need for Social Security cash benefits and SNAP benefits, while still maintaining access to waiver services. This information helped empower Nathan to accept the job offer.

Today, Nathan is working full-time at Walmart. He has stopped his cash and SNAP benefits completely and is still eligible for his Community Supports Waiver. Through accurate and timely work incentives counseling and support, Nathan had the confidence to pursue higher-paying employment that offers more financial security and independence.



# Abraham Lopez



OCCUPATION:

**Automotive Service Technician**

VR COUNSELOR: Kate Hinchee  
(Northern Utah District)

VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- UWIPS Benefits Planning
- High School Transition Services
- On the Job Training
- Job Placement

Abraham applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services in March 2015, when he was a high school student. Abraham attended post-secondary school at the Lincoln Center until he graduated in May 2017. During the school day, he participated in two different work sites. His instructors noted he was a hard worker and cared about the people he worked with. Like so many teenagers, he needed to improve his soft skills, such as focusing on his work and staying off his cell phone. Abraham's peers and teachers spoke of him as a pleasant person with an easygoing nature and great manners.

Abraham enjoyed his work site placement at Hansen Motor Company, where he helped clean the customer vehicles. Due to his interest in mechanics, he learned to service his own vehicle, as well as the vehicles of his family. Abraham's goal was to become a mechanic.

After graduation, he began working at Hansen Motor Company, primarily assigned to maintaining the shop,

cleaning vehicles and sometimes working on routine maintenance of customer vehicles.

Through the development of his Individual Plan for Employment with his counselor, Kate Hinchee, he began working with Dan Kroc, the Choose to Work specialist. Dan set up an On-the-Job Training agreement with Hansen Motors for Abraham to train in basic mechanics. Abraham was referred to Utah Work Incentive Planning Services and met with Farrah Edwards to understand his earning capacity and how Social Security benefits are affected by earned income.

After six months, Abraham successfully completed his training and was offered a permanent position with Hansen Motors — along with a raise! Abraham is grateful for the support and assistance he received through USOR. Through hard work and determination, Abraham is off to a great start in his career pathway.



# Jerry Fewell



## OCCUPATION:

**Assistant Receiver (Stock Clerk)**

CHOOSE TO WORK SPECIALIST: Shelly Sorenson, Ogden District

## VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Disability Treatment Services
- Education Assistance
- Benefits Planning Services
- Work Readiness Training
- Choose to Work Employment Services

Jerry Fewell is a young man who moved to Utah with his family from Oregon. In 2009, Jerry applied for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) assistance, and worked on developing skills in working with computers and soldering. Despite his training, Jerry still struggled to find the right job. His VR counselor connected him with Choose to Work Employment Specialist Shelly Sorenson to help him fine-tune his efforts in securing a successful career. Shelly and Jerry worked together on his resume and interviewing skills to reach his goals. In addition, Jerry met with Farrah Edwards from Utah Work Incentives Planning Services (UWIPS) and received benefits counseling that helped him understand how he could work and be independent of his cash benefits while maintaining Medicaid.

Jerry struggled with his interview skills and to connect with employers. Shelly worked one-on-one with Jerry to develop his resume and improve his interviewing skills. Shelly was contacted by a local employer, Smith

and Edwards, about finding a candidate for their open warehouse position. Shelly let them know that she had the right individual for the position. Her relationship with Smith and Edwards helped remove barriers for Jerry during the recruiting process.

Shelly continued to meet with Jerry after his VR case was closed. “Shelly really helped me a lot in getting a job,” Jerry said. “She worked really hard with my store management to make sure that I got the training I needed and [was] being treated well. I am enjoying it.”

Jerry loves his job, his supervisor Scott and his co-workers. He especially likes that it is close to home. Jerry started with entry level tasks, but over time he developed new skills. He is now responsible for counting shipment pallets being unloaded on the dock and taking products out to the sales floor. Jerry hopes to become a full-time employee and is working hard to develop his skills to meet that goal. His health has also started improving, which he attributes to his job at Smith and Edwards.

# FY 2019–2020 MEETING SCHEDULE



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## LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

October 23, 2019

November 20, 2019

December (No Meeting)

January 29, 2020

February 26, 2020

March 25, 2020

April 29, 2020

May 27, 2020

June 24, 2020

July (No Meeting)

August 26, 2019

September 25, 2020

Individual committees may meet following the full Council meeting.

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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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**WORKFORCE  
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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 and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.