



**WORKFORCE  
SERVICES  
REHABILITATION**

# BUSINESS RELATIONS Resource Guide



Employing and retaining  
individuals with disabilities

*Serving Utahns with disabilities since 1921*

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr)

# The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

We help individuals with disabilities:

- Obtain meaningful employment
- Integrate into the community
- Improve accessibility and independence in their activities of daily living
- Determine eligibility for federal disability benefits



**EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES** have equal or higher job performance rates, higher retention rates and lower absenteeism.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Vocational rehabilitation helps people with disabilities address their unique barriers and achieve their employment goals. Its licensed and certified counseling staff addresses each client's unique needs and vocational goals to connect them with business partners looking for qualified job applicants.

Services include diagnostic and evaluation, counseling and guidance, restoration, assistive technology, training, job placement and transition.

### Additional VR programs:

Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS) helps people on Social Security disability understand how employment impacts their Social Security and other benefits (Medicaid, Medicare, housing and food stamps.)

Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) provides free evaluations and help on acquiring assistive technology devices. Equipment provides greater functioning and independence in home, education or work environments.

Transition services support students and youth with disabilities to guide their transition from high school to adulthood and employment.

### Disability Determination Services

Disability Determination Services makes accurate and timely decisions on whether applicants meet requirements for Social Security benefits.

A disability is a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more of life's major activities, such as walking, self-care, writing and more.

#### Non-obvious disabilities:

- AIDS/HIV
- Anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder
- Arthritis, fibromyalgia
- ADD, ADHD
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Brain injury
- Cancer
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Heart conditions
- Learning disabilities
- Lupus, Lyme disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Respiratory disorders
- Sleep disorders

## Division of Services for the Blind and Low Vision

This division helps increase independence, community integration and productivity for the blind and visually impaired.

**Training and adjustment services** help students achieve greater independence through a mastery of skills. Monday through Friday classes include:

- Cane travel
- Job readiness
- Braille literacy
- Computers and adaptive technology
- Home management
- Wood shop
- Needle arts

The **Low Vision Services Program** provides devices, resources and services to help individuals learn to use their remaining vision effectively.

The **Business Enterprise Program** offers an opportunity to train and license individuals to operate their own businesses, including food service and vending routes in government facilities.

The **DeafBlind program** provides services for individuals who have a hearing loss as well.



**One in  
four (27%)**

American adults  
have some type of  
disability

**or  
61 million**

people as of 2021

*We serve everyone  
who has a disability  
and those who  
support individuals  
with disabilities.*

## Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

A community for the deaf or hard of hearing, DeafBlind and their families: promoting connections, awareness and equity while inspiring greatness.

**Case management** provides information about resources and services such as Social Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, VR, and Department of Workforce Services. Mental health counseling is also available.

**Assistive technology demo lab** has the latest technologies for clients to try out before purchasing. Devices include caption and amplified phones, listening and alerting devices.

**Hard of hearing program** helps clients learn how to live with hearing loss through regular workshops and classes, as well as direct client consultations.

**Utah Interpreter Program** offers mentoring and testing as the state certification program for American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpreting.

**Community centers** in Taylorsville and St. George provide lifelong learning classes such as cooking, computer skills, budgeting, gardening, health and fitness and ASL. Other activities include guest speakers, family activities, cultural richness events, craft socials and senior citizen events.



There are several local and national organizations to support business partners in their efforts to hire people with disabilities and improve workplace accommodations.

## Utah Resources

### ■ **USOR Business Relations**

#### **People with Disabilities Network (PWDNET)**

A free Utah network linking businesses to jobseekers with disabilities.

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/contact.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/contact.html)

#### **Support offered to businesses:**

- One-on-one support provided on disability employment training and education for Human Resources, supervisors, and other hiring managers
- Assistance to improve or add workplace accommodations
- Provided direct access to USOR counselors and clients for job postings by emailing [pwdnetjobs@utah.gov](mailto:pwdnetjobs@utah.gov)
- Connect and network with other businesses taking action to hire people with disabilities

#### **Work Ability job fair**

Bi-annual job fair that helps job seekers meet with employers, explore career options and attend workshop sessions.

#### **Employer workshop**

Bi-annual workshops teach employers how to hire and retain individuals with disabilities, network with specialists and receive resources.

### ■ **Utah's Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities**

Promotes public and private efforts to achieve equal employment opportunities for all qualified Utahns with disabilities. [jobs.utah.gov/usor/business](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/business)

#### **Disability:IN Utah**

A local nonprofit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace. [DisabilityInUtah.org](https://DisabilityInUtah.org)



#### **Golden Key Awards**

Annual awards that honor employers and individuals who promote efforts for equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Contact the Utah Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities for information on how to make a nomination.

#### **Youth mentoring day**

Event for business partners to help students with disabilities engage in their community and develop confidence about their employability in the workforce

## Tips for getting started

- Have the USOR Business Relations team provide basic disability training for your business
- Look at how you talk about disability in your workplace
- Commit to include people with disabilities as employees and customers
- Provide accessible facilities and services
- Accommodate applicants and workers with disabilities
- Partner with agencies and other businesses
- Be creative and open (your best employee may be someone with a disability)



Utah ranks  
**3rd**

in the nation for  
employing people  
with disabilities,  
according to  
RespectAbility



## National Resources

### **National Employment Team (THE NET)**

A one-company approach to serving a variety of businesses through the national network of the vocational rehabilitation program. Support includes pre-employment services, recruitment and referral, staff training, and retention programs, consulting and technical support, and financial support.

[csavr.org/the-net](http://csavr.org/the-net)

### **Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP)**

An online system that includes a national talent pool of vocational rehabilitation jobseekers and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities.

[tapability.org](http://tapability.org)





## Did You Know?

Hiring an employee with a disability will not increase your insurance rates or worker's compensation rates.



### Department of Workforce Services – [jobs.utah.gov](https://jobs.utah.gov)

#### On-the-Job Training

On-the-Job-Training (OJT) programs in Utah VR and Utah Workforce Development have distinct focuses and target different populations::

1. Utah VR: VR provides services to individuals with disabilities, aiming to help them gain employment and achieve independence. The OJT programs cater to individuals with disabilities, offering support, accommodations and specialized training to help them develop skills and succeed.
2. Utah Workforce Development: Workforce development programs focus on enhancing the overall workforce in Utah, serving a broader range of job seekers, including individuals without disabilities. Their OJT programs are designed to provide training opportunities for individuals seeking employment or career advancement. These programs typically align with industries or sectors experiencing skill shortages or high-demand occupations.

Both programs offer benefits to employers by:

1. Having the opportunity for employers to custom train their employees
2. Reduced training cost with negotiated training compensation
3. Screened applicants entering or re-entering the workforce

#### Choose-To-Work

Choose-To-Work specialists provide job readiness and placement services to job seekers with disabilities. These services could include VR job development and placement, and suggesting modifications of assistive equipment to increase independence. Specialists then connect qualified jobseekers with businesses looking to hire.



#### Online job search

Employers can target their job postings to jobseekers with disabilities through our online job search. By adding in the keyword "PWDNET" to the job description, this will show the job in search results for jobseekers with disabilities who know to look for that term. Email [pwdnetjobs@utah.gov](mailto:pwdnetjobs@utah.gov) to include your job listings.



## Tax credits & bonding – adata.org

### ADA tax incentives

Federal tax incentives are available to encourage compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### *Architectural / transportation tax deduction*

all businesses could be eligible for up to \$15,000 to remove physical, structural and transportation barriers. Examples include widening doors, building ramps and modifying vehicles.

#### *Small business tax credit*

Small businesses could be eligible for up to \$5,000 for expenses to comply with ADA such as barrier removal, auxiliary aids and accommodating employees with ASL interpreters, Braille documents and building ramps.

### WOTC tax credit

The federal government offers significant tax credits to employers hiring people with disabilities. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) ranges from \$1,200 to \$9,600 depending on the employee hired.

How to apply:

1. Complete page 1 of IRS Form 8850 by the day the job offer is made.
2. Complete page 2 of IRS Form 8850 after the individual is hired.
3. Complete ETA Form 9061 or ETA Form 9062 if the employee has been conditionally certified as belonging to a WOTC target group by the Department of Workforce Services, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation or another participating agency.
4. Submit the completed and signed IRS and ETA forms to the Department of Workforce Services. Forms must be submitted within 28 calendar days of the employee's start date. [jobs.utah.gov/employer/business/wotc.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/employer/business/wotc.html)

### Federal bonding program

[jobs.utah.gov/services/bond.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/services/bond.html)

Bonding is a free service provided to employers who are willing to hire applicants who are not commercially bondable without risking the loss of money or property. These included individuals who have an arrest record, poor credit history, past alcohol or drug use issues, disadvantaged youth and dishonorable military discharge.

- Effective the day a new employee begins work
- No deductible
- Reimburses for any loss due to employee theft, forgery, larceny or embezzlement during a specified six-month period
- Can be issued regardless of whether the employer has or has not commercially purchased a Fidelity bond



# Tips for communicating with individuals with disabilities



## ■ Individuals who are blind or low vision

- State clearly who you are in a normal tone of voice.
- When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person you're addressing.
- Do not attempt to lead the individual without first asking. Allow the person to hold your arm and control his/her own movements.
- Be descriptive when giving directions. For example, if you're approaching steps, mention how many steps.
- If offering a seat, gently place the individual's hand on the back or arm of the chair so the person can locate the seat.

## ■ Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing

- Ask the individual their preferred method of communication.
- If the individual is using an interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
- Gain the person's attention by tapping them gently on the shoulder or arm.
- Use short, simple sentences and keep hands away from your face.
- At the workplace, use email or communicate by writing notes back and forth. Gestures and body language also help.
- To call, dial their number directly and it will automatically route through Video Relay Services. The person who is Deaf will be on a screen signing to a interpreter who will then voice the message to you over the phone.

When you respond, the interpreter will sign it to the person who is Deaf.

- If needed, visit [jobs.utah.gov/usor/uiip/directory.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/uiip/directory.html) to find an interpreter agency that can provide interpreting services.

## ■ Speech and language impairments

- Ask the individual their preferred method of communication.
- If you're not understanding, ask the individual to repeat what he/she said and then repeat it back.
- Try to ask questions that require only short answers or a head nod.
- Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish his/her sentences.
- Use written communication options if the individual prefers it.

## ■ Individuals with cognitive disabilities

- If in an area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or private location.
- Be prepared to repeat what you're saying.
- Wait for the individual to accept an offer of assistance. Do not "over-assist" or be patronizing.

## ■ Individuals with mobility impairments

- Don't lean on the wheelchair or any other assistive device.
- Respect personal boundaries. A mobility device is part of a person's physical space.
- Ask first if an individual would like assistance.



# People first language

Remove stereotypes and general statements by focusing on the person rather than the disability. It promotes respect, understanding, dignity and a positive outlook for people with disabilities. Be sensitive and respectful when choosing the words you use to address a person with a disability.

In addition, group designations such as “the blind,” or “the disabled” are inappropriate because they do not reflect the individuality of people with disabilities. When referring to people with disabilities use affirmative phrases instead of negative phrases.

AFFIRMATIVE PHRASES	NEGATIVE PHRASES
People with disabilities, individuals with disabilities	Disabled people, the disabled, the retarded
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, development disability	Retarded, mentally defective
Person who is blind, person who has low vision	The blind
Person with a disability	The disabled, handicapped
Person who is Deaf	The Deaf, Deaf and dumb, hearing impaired
Person who is hard of hearing	Suffers a hearing loss
Person with epilepsy, person with seizure disorder	Epileptic
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair
Person with a physical disability, physically disabled	Crippled, lame, deformed
Person with psychiatric disability	Crazy, nuts
Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability, is courageous (when it implies the person has courage because of having a disability)

## Example of Video Relay Services, VRS



*Photo used courtesy Sorenson Communications*

# Myths of Hiring People with Disabilities

- **MYTH:** The ADA forces employers to hire unqualified individuals with disabilities.
  - **FACT:** Applicants who are unqualified for a job cannot claim discrimination under the ADA. Under the ADA, to be protected from discrimination in hiring, an individual with a disability must be qualified, which means he or she must meet all requirements for a job and be able to perform its essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations.
- **MYTH:** Under the ADA, employers must give people with disabilities special privileges, known as accommodations.
  - **FACT:** Reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities have rights in employment equal – not superior – to those of individuals without disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a job, work environment or the way work is performed that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, and enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace.
- **MYTH:** Providing accommodations for people with disabilities is expensive.
  - **FACT:** The majority of workers with disabilities do not need accommodations to perform their jobs, and for those who do, the cost is usually minimal. According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a service from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, 58% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make, while the rest typically cost only \$500. Moreover, tax incentives are available to help employers cover the costs of accommodations, as well as modifications required to make their businesses accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **MYTH:** The ADA protects employees who have difficult or rude personalities or are troublemakers.
  - **FACT:** Improper behavior in and of itself does not constitute a disability, and having a disability does not excuse employees from performing essential job tasks and following the same conduct standards required of all employees. The courts have consistently ruled that “common sense” conduct standards, such as getting along with co-workers and listening to supervisors, are legitimate job requirements that employers can enforce equally among all employees.
- **MYTH:** Under the ADA, an employer cannot fire an employee who has a disability.
  - **FACT:** Employers can fire workers with disabilities under three conditions:
    1. The termination is unrelated to the disability or
    2. The employee does not meet legitimate requirements for the job, such as performance or production standards, with or without a reasonable accommodation or
    3. Because of the employee's disability, he or she poses a direct threat to health or safety in the workplace.



In Deaf culture, waving your hands (as shown) is the sign for applause instead of clapping.

## ■ Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

All federal contractors with 50 or more employees and \$50,000 or more in federal contracts fall under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Section 503 encourages federal contractors to recruit, hire and improve job opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities.

Section 503 requires contractors to provide updates to OFCCP on the number of individuals with disabilities who have applied for positions, been hired, retained and promoted. It also requires contractors to invite applicants and existing employees to self-identify as individuals with disabilities.

## ■ Why does this matter?

These regulations provide a great opportunity for businesses to increase their diversity, access a relatively untapped talent pool, and improve their bottom line.



## Resources

1-866-454-8397 • [jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr)

PWDNET Business Relations  
801-887-9522

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/contact.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/contact.html)

Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities  
801-887-9522

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/govcommittee.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/govcommittee.html)

Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
1-800-284-1823

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/dsbvi](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/dsbvi)

Utah Center for Assistive Technology  
801-887-9380

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/ucat.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/ucat.html)

Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
801-263-4860

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/dhh](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/dhh)

Choose to Work  
801-887-9522

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/choose.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/employer/choose.html)

Ticket to Work

Noreen Roeca • 801-887-0283

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/ticket.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/ticket.html)

Utah Dept. of Workforce Services  
801-526-WORK (9675)

[jobs.utah.gov](https://jobs.utah.gov)

Utah Work Incentive Planning Services  
1-866-454-8397

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/uwips.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/services/uwips.html)

Division of Substance Use and Mental Health  
801-538-3939

[sumh.utah.gov](https://sumh.utah.gov)

Division of Services for People with Disabilities  
1-844-275-3773

[dspd.utah.gov](https://dspd.utah.gov)



Find more information on these programs and other disability-related business topics at [jobs.utah.gov/usor/business](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/business)

**Connect with us • [jobs.utah.gov/usor](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor)**

UtahVocRehab @UtahVocRehab

Utah's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

UtahPWDNET

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Auxiliary aids (accommodations) and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.

[jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr](https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr)