

# 2016

## UTAH STATE

# Rehabilitation Council Report



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Utah State Office of Rehabilitation • A Division of the Department of Workforce Services



UTAH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL  
1595 WEST 500 SOUTH  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84104  
JANUARY 2017

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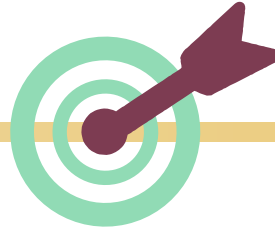


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## **MISSION**

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council, 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:

- Kent McGregor, Consumer, Chair, Business, Industry and Labor, Chair
- Melissa Freigang, Business, Industry and Labor, Vice Chair
- Sharon Brand, Business, Industry and Labor, Past Chair
- Evelyn Owen, Client Assistance Program (CAP), Secretary
- James Harvey, Business, Industry and Labor, Member-at-Large

## MEMBERS:

- Kelly Boehmer, Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH)
- Jan Quinn Carter, Community Rehabilitation Provider
- Rob Ferris, Utah State Independent Living Council (USILC) Representative
- Ken Gourdin, Consumer
- Susan Loving, Special Education
- Karim Mardanolou, Business, Industry and Labor
- Helen Post, Utah Parent Center
- Merina Pope, Consumer
- Amy Powell, Business, Industry and Labor
- Melissa Schindler, Ute Mountain Ute Section 121
- Paula Seanez, Navajo Section 121
- Amberley Snyder, Consumer
- Sandy Terry, Department of Workforce Services
- Mark Turley, Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI)
- Rylee Williams, VR Counselor Representative
- Tammy Wood, Consumer



## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR



**“EYES ON THE PRIZE:** Providing Continued Quality Rehabilitation Services Through Challenging Times” was the theme chosen by the Executive Committee to guide the Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during Fiscal Year 2016. Whether choosing how to deal with how transitioning students under the Rehabilitation Act portion of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), which was discussed during the keynote presentation at the annual meeting, or where to house the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) in state government, challenging times did, in fact, present themselves. But the quality of rehabilitation services provided to USOR’s clients remained high.

In her opening remarks in the FY 2015 Annual Report, immediate Past Chair Sharon Brand indicated that the SRC would have to devote time to challenging questions. Those questions arose. When I assumed the chair, USOR was under the governance of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). Fiscal and structural imbalances triggered an audit by the Office of the Legislative Auditor General. One of the recommendations of that audit was that USOR be moved to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), despite the fact that USOR and USBE had a longer-than-93-year relationship.

At first, legislators didn’t think a change was necessary. But as time progressed, support for the change grew. In January 2016, the SRC adopted the position that we felt USOR should either stay under the governance of USBE or become a separate agency. Often when a client comes to USOR for rehabilitation services, they are not anywhere near a position where they could be employed successfully. Education—whether in the form of intensive individual counseling, vocational or academic training—is a large and essential component of the rehabilitation process. A similar argument was raised at the federal level when the proposal was made to change the Rehabilitation Services Administration’s (RSA) location from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. RSA continued to be housed at Education.

We did not carry the day, even though our position echoed those of the disability groups with whom we coordinate and collaborate. The legislature decided to move USOR under DWS. Because the SRC’s mission is to advise on and provide analysis of policies and procedures as well as to review programs and services, including the way those are delivered, we determined that we would stand ready and make every effort on our part to aid in a smooth transition.

We could not have done this without the assistance of USOR Director Darin Brush, Assistant Director Stacey Cummings, Rehabilitation Services Program Director Aaron Thompson, SRC Staff Liaison Gordon Swensen, DWS Executive Director Jon Pierpont and many others. They provided us with updates on the transition process as well as specifics about what would happen when.

We also received timely updates and information on the implementation of WIOA, which included information about transition, pre-employment transition services, the order of selection and how it is progressing, the switch to the AWARE system of case management and updates on the ASPIRE grant. SRC members were gratified to learn that as funds gradually become available, people are taken off the waiting list and helped to create individual plans for employment as soon as possible.

It was my privilege to travel to Washington, D.C., for the spring conference of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils. There, I learned ways SRC might become more effective. But I was also made aware that Utah continues to lead the nation in terms of the example we set with our relationship between the SRC and USOR.

Many of the factors discussed above resulted in the need for motions from the SRC. These motions and recommendations and USOR's response to them are included elsewhere in this report.

I can't say enough about the help I have received from my executive committee. During the first part of my term, I was recovering from a rather significant medical issue. My committee stepped up and made me look like a better Chair than I probably was. So, Melissa, Sharon, Evelyn and James, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Being selected as Chair for this fiscal year has been one of the great honors of my life. With the very capable leadership of USOR and DWS, and the extremely bright and competent leadership of the SRC, I can only predict that the future of rehabilitation for Utahns with disabilities is brighter than it has ever been. Again, I am humbled and honored by the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Kent McGregor, M.A.

Council Chair 2016



## MESSAGE FROM THE USOR DIRECTOR



**THIS HAS BEEN A HISTORIC YEAR** for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. On Oct. 1, 2016, USOR became part of the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS), ending USOR’s 95-year history as an independent agency. The goal of this transition is to improve services for both USOR and our clients. USOR is certain to receive better support from DWS than it received from the Utah State Board of Education, and USOR clients will benefit from the combination of DWS and USOR services.

Throughout this demanding transition process, the State Rehabilitation Council has been a steady, reliable advocate and partner, ensuring at every turn that the needs of our clients remain paramount. As if that wasn’t enough, Council members have been involved with the continued reforms we have undertaken, including implementing both the complex Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and new pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, managing the Order of Selection, and more. The Council has witnessed our lowest points and our renaissance, guiding us each step of the way.

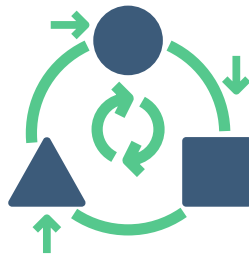
At the Oct. 3 welcome ceremony hosted by Governor Herbert, I was able to present him with an agency “whole in all its parts that has a balanced budget.” This was only possible because of the dedicated work of the Council and all our colleagues who have worked tirelessly at USOR to become a fiscally sound, forward-thinking and mission-driven division of DWS as we work to improve the independence and self-sufficiency of Utahns with disabilities.

Certainly there is more work still to be done. Yet, I am optimistic for the future and know that with the help of the Council, we will continue to improve and lead the nation in services to individuals with disabilities. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Brush', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Darin Brush  
USOR Director





## THE UTAH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens historically appointed by the Utah State Board of Education under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. In October 2016, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) became a division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS). With this transition, the appointment of SRC members is now made through the executive director at DWS.

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 vocational rehabilitation 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 state agency. Collectively, this group reviews, analyzes and advises 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 the 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 agency.

Council members participate in various functions of the VR program. These include attending USOR statewide 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 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, vocational rehabilitation 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 State Plan, amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments and evaluations.
- Conduct a review and an analysis of the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation 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 vocational rehabilitation 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 the USOR 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.



## 2015–2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

**DIVISION DIRECTOR UPDATES:** The Council was provided with regular reports on state and national issues affecting USOR. USOR Director Darin Brush appointed Stacey Cummings as deputy director for USOR and Aaron Thompson as director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). A new USOR Finance Director, Jennifer Roth, was selected, as well as an agency Compliance Officer, Shane Young. This new executive leadership team provided monthly updates to the Council on a variety of issues regarding the transition of USOR to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS); the continued implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA); the agency audits associated with the structural imbalance from 2015; the Order of Selection wait lists and category release dates; the AWARE system updates, etc. The executive team also reported on the twice-yearly Council of State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) meetings and how the other states nationwide are dealing with WIOA, Pre-Employment Services (PETS) and other changes in regulations and/or policies from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

**AGENCY FISCAL ISSUES AND STRUCTURAL IMBALANCE:** USOR was able to successfully self-correct through a number of activities intended to improve the agency's budgetary oversight issues and structural imbalance such as creating the new executive team and implementing the new agency plan, which includes the following four goals:

1. Develop and utilize a comprehensive budget and accounting management system (including the critical task of developing and testing the caseload/cost modeling system).
2. Build an integrated management information system that tracks performance across all activities.

3. Create a centralized compliance and quality assurance structure to ensure regulatory compliance, organizational consistency and continuous improvement.
4. Configure the agency internally to support its key business functions.

The guiding principles for future USOR budgeting included avoiding an increase in our state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) without ongoing appropriations, gradually eliminating our dependence on one-time federal reallocations and avoiding a future MOE penalty. By the end of the state fiscal year, and with the transition to DWS, the executive team was able to announce that the budget had been balanced and that the Order of Selection wait-list reductions were indications that the goals and principles discussed earlier were effective.

**TRANSITION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES:** The 2016 Legislative Session brought significant change to the 95-year history of USOR. The Utah State Legislature voted to move USOR under the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) as a division as House Bill 325, sponsored by Representative Norm Thurston. The bill effectively made Darin Brush the director of the division (USOR), and the four current divisions of USOR became programs (including the Vocational Rehabilitation program). House Bill 325 led to the creation of a transition team of executive and program staff from both USOR and DWS to ensure a successful transition by the effective date of Oct. 1, 2016. The transition team focused on six general areas: communication, programs, employees, budget and finance, facilities and technical support. The Council was provided with monthly updates on the transition's progress and was able to have input on various aspects of the process. Several executive team members

moved their offices to the DWS Administration North building in Salt Lake City while other staff (including the VR program administration) occupied offices at the Judy Ann Buffmire Rehabilitation Service Center. DWS Executive Director Jon Pierpont and his deputy directors accompanied USOR Director Darin Brush to all statewide VR offices to meet staff and discuss the transition process. The meetings were informative and provided transparency of information for staff members, including the benefits of making the move to DWS. At the August 2016 meeting, SRC Staff Liaison Gordon Swensen provided the Council with a District Activities Report highlighting the types of transitional activities being held statewide to bring USOR and DWS staff together. The transition was determined a success by all parties involved, and VR client services and staff were not impacted significantly by the transition itself.

## **ORDER OF SELECTION CATEGORY**

**OPENINGS:** The previous structural imbalance had led USOR to implement an Order of Selection in 2015 to address insufficient staff and/or financial resources available to serve all eligible clients with disabilities. The Council was provided information on the priority categories approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in late February 2015. The order of priority categories was Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities, Individuals with Significant Disabilities, and Individuals with Disabilities. In November 2015, the Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities category was opened to all those on the waiting list. Starting in January 2016, the Individuals with Significant Disabilities category was opened with weekly client releases based on date of application for services.

**UNIFIED STATE PLAN:** In November 2015, DRS Division Director Aaron Thompson presented to the Council regarding the Unified State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), currently being developed by the core programs (Workforce Services, Adult Education and VR) to provide strategies to increase the educational, training and employment opportunities for individuals

with employment barriers. Thompson discussed specific program requirements, including an analysis of performance standards and common measures under the core partner programs to incorporate into strategic goals required by WIOA. He also provided a comprehensive review of the four-year goals under the USOR State Plan (to be incorporated into the Unified State Plan), including the goals and activities to increase employment opportunities and independence for persons with disabilities. The Council approved the proposed USOR State Plan goals as presented. The Unified State Plan will be completed in early 2016. Five town hall meetings for public comment on the Unified State Plan were also held in Price, Salt Lake City, St. George, Ogden and Orem.

**ASPIRE UPDATE:** In September 2015, ASPIRE Program Director Carol Ruddell presented to the Council regarding the state-by-state progress of grantees (Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Montana and Arizona) and the types of services funded through the ASPIRE grant to identified youth and families participating in the project. This included increased education and household income for the families and reduced dependency on public benefits. In 2016, Ruddell was able to report that all of the program enrollment goals for the six-state consortium had been reached and that ASPIRE program outcomes would be collected and shared with the Council at a later date.

## **FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS PRESENTATION:**

In October 2015, USOR training staff members Jennifer Smart and Janet Autrey provided the Council with an overview of the classification process following eligibility and the Order of Selection determination. They provided a PowerPoint to the Council on types of functional limitations caused by a client's physical or mental impairment(s) and how these functional limitations impact the categorization of clients as Most Significantly Disabled, Significantly Disabled and/or Disabled. The discussion included how to make those classifications as a VR counselor, including the review of medical records. The seven functional limitation categories included work skills, work tolerance, interpersonal skills, self-direction,

self-care, communication and mobility. Council members asked several questions about classification, including clients that disagree with determinations and their appeal rights.

**THE AWARE SYSTEM:** The agency's IRIS data management system was replaced with a state-of-the-art AWARE system, currently used in more than 30 state/federal rehabilitation agencies nationwide. The Council was provided with regular updates on the development and rollout for the AWARE system. The system has been in place now for several months. Adaptations to the AWARE system based on the new WIOA regulations have been added throughout the year by AWARE Project Manager Mike Brooks, who provided a demonstration of the AWARE system and its features to Council members in January 2016.

### **NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS (NCSRC)**

**CONFERENCE:** SRC Chairman Kent McGregor and Vice Chair Melissa Freigang were able to attend the NCSRC conferences in the spring and late fall to discuss the role of SRCs nationally. At the conference, they heard presentations from RSA Commissioner Janet LaBreck, CSAVR Executive Director Steve Wooderson and others regarding changes implemented through WIOA and how to effectively utilize SRCs to meet their mission as an advisory body to the state VR programs. McGregor attended the spring meeting as part of the CSAVR conference and visited members of Utah's congressional delegation with USOR Director Darin Brush and Division Director Aaron Thompson. Freigang attended similar meetings in November 2016 in San Diego, Calif., with executive team members. McGregor and Freigang reported to the Council on their experiences and answered questions.

**CANAR CONFERENCE PRESENTATION:** SRC Staff Liaison Gordon Swensen attended the annual Native American VR conference in Salt Lake City and presented on youth gangs and returning to Indian reservations following incarceration. USOR employee

Michael Shoemaker also presented on the national Summit group regarding tribal program evaluations. The Council learned about the 560 federally recognized Native American tribes and the 85 tribes with current VR programs, including the Navajo Nation and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (with representatives on the SRC in Utah).

### **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

**PRESENTATION:** In February 2016, the Council learned about the Individual Placement and Support Model (IPS) from Sharon Cook, program manager for supported employment with the Utah Department of Health and Human Services. Sharon presented information on the division of substance abuse and mental health programs, the principles of supported employment and the IPS model, the Supported Employment Coordinating Committee (including USOR representation) and the goals, objectives and outcomes of this collaborative effort to improve consumer choice, competitive employment and rapid job search.

### **AGRABILITY, CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP), AND DISABILITY**

**MENTORING PRESENTATIONS:** In March 2016, VR Policy Director Emily Stirling provided the Council an overview of the AgrAbility program run through Utah State University that benefits clients with farming/ranching as their primary employment goal. Stirling discussed the assistive technology, accommodations and assessment processes required to assist farmers/ranchers to achieve a higher level of independence and self-sufficiency. Client Assistance Program (CAP) Representative Lindsey Boerens presented on CAP services in Utah and the mission of the Disability Law Center (DLC) to enforce and strengthen laws for people with disabilities. Boerens described the CAP program and its services to VR clients with complaints about their VR program, as well as breaking down employment and other barriers for VR clients. Leah Lobato, director of the Governor's Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities, spoke about the agency's business relations program, employer site visits, disability job fairs

and employer workshops, and Disability Mentoring Day activities. Lobato discussed the successful outcomes of Disability Mentoring activities with Goldman Sachs, Henry Schein and Union Pacific, among others, as well as the year-end Golden Key Awards to recognize employers and their efforts to hire individuals with disabilities.

**WORKFORCE SERVICES PROGRAMS AND DIVISIONS PRESENTATION:** At the April 2016 Council meeting, program specialists Kimber Burkes, Amber Johnston and Lindsay Crosby of DWS presented on the majority of programs and services offered through the department. Unemployment Insurance (UI), WIOA Dislocated Worker Program, Family Employment Program (FEP), Food Stamp program, Medicaid, WIOA for youth programs, bonding for ex-offenders, Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), TANF grants, veteran's services and Choose to Work were programs discussed, including contact information through the department for those wanting more information.

**POLICY ADVICE:** The Council reviewed a number of draft policies and provided advice on implementation as covered in Attachment 4.2 (C).

**SRC BY-LAWS CHANGES:** The change of departmental oversight from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to the DWS required the SRC to make corrections and/or changes to the current by-laws of the Council. This included the nomination and approval process for members by the executive director of DWS instead of USBE. A subcommittee was created to address these changes, and the Council later gave its approval.

**SRC NOMINATIONS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:** At the August 2016 meeting, SRC Vice Chair Melissa Freigang discussed the nominations and interviews of several potential representatives on the Council. Helen Saeed (Questar) and Clarissa Alldredge (Utah Transit Authority) would fill Business, Labor and Industry positions on the Council, and Glen Fitzpatrick (CTA Community Supports) and Eliza Detheridge (TURN Services) would

serve in Service Provider positions. The executive council selected for the 2015–2016 year included: Melissa Freigang (SRC Chair); Evelyn Owen (Vice Chair); James Harvey (Board Member at Large); and Rob Ferris (Board Member at Large).

**UTAH STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (USILC):** In May 2016, the Utah State Independent Living Council (USILC) joined SRC for a combined training. Rob Ferris, USILC representative and SRC member, made a presentation about services provided statewide and the move of independent living from the RSA to the Department of Health and Human Services. The makeup of the USILC and its goals and activities such as the State Plan for Independent Living were discussed with the SRC voicing support for this important collaboration.

**UTAH CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (UCAT):** UCAT Director Mike Wollenzien made a presentation to the Council on the history of the UCAT program and the multi-agency collaboration and services provided by the facility. He introduced the various UCAT staff members and discussed the CReATE program, which involves wheelchair restoration and distribution in partnership with Utah State University.

**SRC ANNUAL MEETING:** The theme for the September 2016 annual SRC meeting was “Rigor throughout the Realignment.” The meeting focused on the orientation of new members and the renewed commitment of the Council. SRC and USOR staff members provided training to assist Council members with their roles, duties and active commitment to meeting the mission of the SRC. Kris Fawson of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities provided a presentation on “How to Be a 10-minute Advocate” for Council members meeting with legislators; USILC representative and SRC member Rob Ferris discussed the SRC By-laws in detail; and USOR Director Darin Brush discussed the final transition pieces for the Oct. 1 merger with DWS, including a special welcome address by Governor Gary Herbert scheduled for the first week of October at the Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI).

# 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 covered in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) portion of the Unified State Plan, and as required by section 101 (a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1983, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014.

Note: The past two years have been historically noteworthy for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) with the structural imbalance and agency fiscal issues (including multiple audits), WIOA regulations, changes to the USOR executive leadership team, the passing of House Bill 325 (making USOR a division under DWS) in the 2016 Legislative Session, the implementation of an Order of Selection and the transition of oversight from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS). The SRC has been given extensive opportunities to be educated on, and provide feedback to, each of these important activities/processes. Council member questions and concerns were answered in real time during SRC meetings by USOR and DWS executive staff members, legislative and internal fiscal auditors, and others throughout this past year. Approvals by the SRC were given on each aspect of what was presented for input through a quorum vote of Council members.

Many of the recommendations from the 2014–2015 SRC Annual Report were given greater emphasis during the past year as USOR went through this historical period of change and opportunity.

The following, however, is a summary of additional SRC's recommendations made from November 2015 to October 2016 and USOR's response and actions taken with regard to these recommendations:

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 1:**

In October 2015, USOR Director Darin Brush discussed with the Council a second phase of an ongoing legislative audit concerning case expenditures in the VR program. That report would be released before the 2016 Legislative Session. The Council requested access to that audit report and other recent audit reports and findings.

## **USOR RESPONSE 1:**

Council members were provided copies of this and other audits as requested. The audits were also provided in accessible formats, including Braille, for their review. The input of the SRC was an important advisory responsibility of the Council, and members were invested in providing direction and/or guidance throughout the Legislative Session.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Division of Rehabilitation Services Director Aaron Thompson presented to the Council on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Plan and the addition of fourth-year statewide goals and objectives. The Council requested that the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Plan and fourth-year goals be provided electronically to members for review as soon as possible to discuss in the November 2015 meeting.

## **USOR RESPONSE 2:**

USOR provided the requested information electronically and in accessible formats for Council members to review. The Council's discussion and comments were recorded in the minutes and approval was given by a majority vote to approve the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Plan and objectives as presented.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 3:**

In February 2016, the Council discussed a request to review the consumer satisfaction survey results. The summer response rates were lower than previous quarters, and there have been concerns over the costs associated with mailing, especially with the addition of a pen for survey respondents. There were concerns over whether this practice was cost prohibitive and should be discontinued. Council members asked for a breakout of the results and future discussion of their concerns.

## **USOR RESPONSE 3:**

Ongoing discussions between USOR and the Council addressed this issue and possible resolution for upcoming quarterly surveys.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 4:**

Following the release of a second legislative audit in May 2016, Council members discussed audit findings and case-service expenditures, including duration of and cost of services. The audit showed that documentation could be stronger in justifying case expenditures and that the Pell Grant and other comparable services and benefits were not documented appropriately. The AWARE system was discussed as a means to assist with these audit issues. The SRC asked for the final audit results report as well as the legislative auditors report at the June 2016 meeting.

## **USOR RESPONSE 4:**

The legislative auditors who completed the report presented (as requested) to the Council at the June 2016 meeting. Council members were provided with the audit findings report and had their questions answered by the auditors and USOR administration.

## **SRC RECOMMENDATION 5:**

At the May 2016 meeting the Council discussed recruitment of members and the available Council positions that needed to be filled. Council member Helen Post provided a historical document on how the nomination committee operates and recommended an addition to the by-laws of this process. USOR Staff Liaison Gordon Swensen was asked to send recruitment letters to VR offices and independent living centers for possible member recommendations to the Council.

## **USOR RESPONSE 5:**

The recruitment letters were sent electronically to the VR offices and independent living centers as requested. The submitted nominations were compiled for the Nomination Committee to continue with the interviews, selection and SRC approval process.





# COMMITTEES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SRC committees included the Nominating and Interviewing Committee and the UCAT Standing 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. There were few vacancies that needed to be filled with required members as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act. These committees were formed to solicit nominations, review the qualifications of nominees, conduct interviews and present the names of the individuals for consideration. Names were submitted to the Utah State Board of Education in accordance with specified timelines. Highly qualified and committed individuals were appointed to the Council. They bring commitment and unique expertise to the SRC.

## UCAT COMMITTEE

The UCAT advisory committee was established consisting of Ken Gourdin of the SRC. Additional members included Kevin John (and later Kent Remund) of the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT); Crystal Thomas, Jan Bigelow and Jessica Bowman of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE); Alma Burgess of the Utah Assistive Technology Program; and Helen Post, Executive Director of the Utah Parent Center. Marv Fifield served as an ex-officio member. The committee members met quarterly. Recommendations were made and implemented regarding UCAT services, budget, reports and outreach.

## CSAVR Meetings

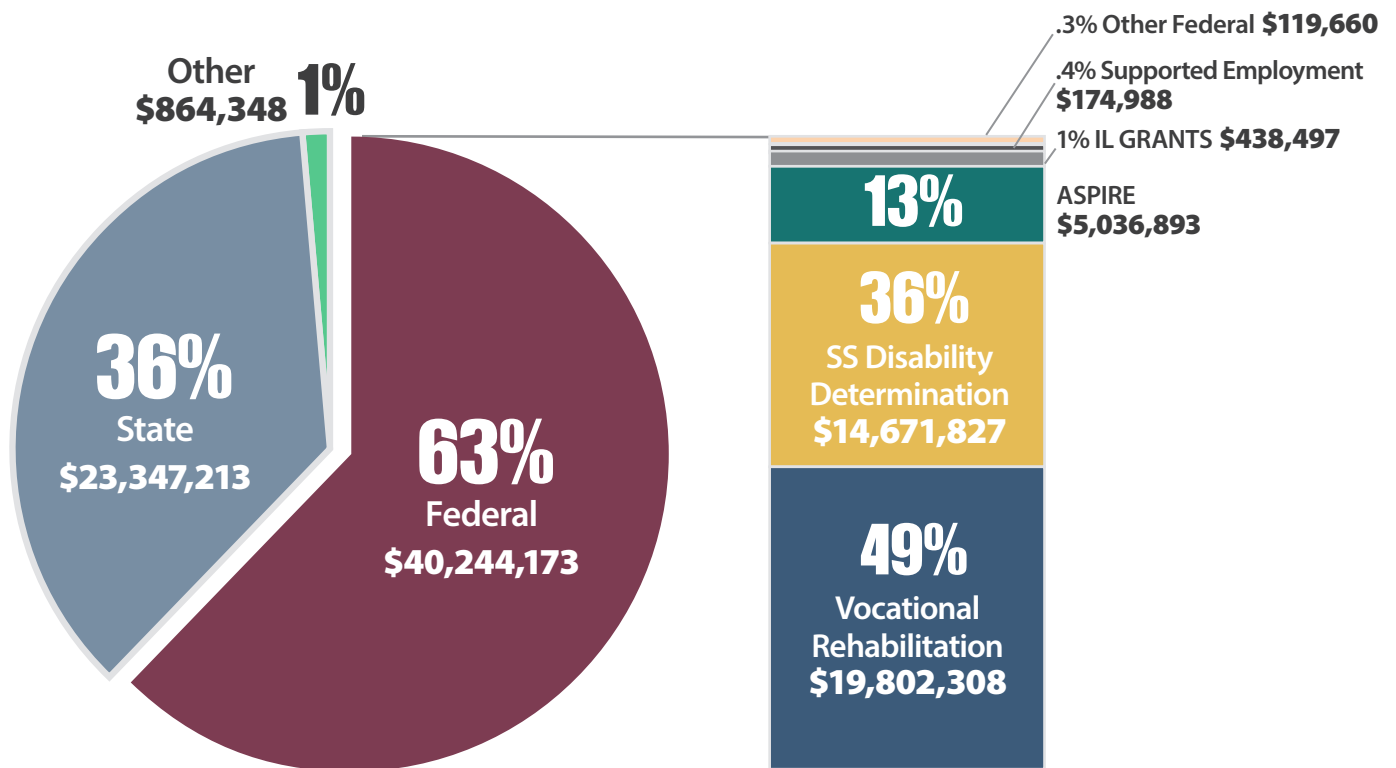
SRC Chair Kent McGregor attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) meetings with DRS Director Aaron Thompson and USOR Director Darin Brush. They reported on updates on national VR and disability issues. These included vocational rehabilitation services for transition students, the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) updates and WIOA Reauthorization. McGregor joined Thompson and Brush in visits with congressional delegation. Vice Chair Melissa Freigang attended the November 2016 NCSRC training meetings in San Diego, Calif.

## SRC STRATEGIC PLANNING

The executive committee considered needs and strategies to be implemented during the coming year. This process was determined necessary to help the SRC identify priorities and focus its efforts on accomplishing its mission and fulfilling responsibilities outlined in the federal regulations and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. The outcomes covered in this report are a direct result of SRC strategic planning and an effective executive committee.



# USOR SFY 2016 FUNDING



# USOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 2016 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



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

- 1,968 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed.
- 94% of those employed were significantly disabled or most significantly disabled.
- 481 public assistance recipients successfully gained employment.
- 407 Social Security Disability recipients successfully gained employment.
- 99 individuals successfully gained employment through Supported Employment Services.
- 709% was the increase in weekly earnings of the 1,968 individuals successfully employed.
- 27% of individuals served were transition-age youth with disabilities.
- 621 assistive technology evaluations were provided by the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT).
- 680 new clients were served, and 632 benefits summaries presented, by the Work Incentive and Planning Services (UWIPS) unit.

# SUCCESS STORIES



## Mindy Zampedri

Mindy Zampedri was found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in April 2014 with disabilities including major depressive disorder and physical injuries related to an auto accident. Mindy was restricted in terms of physical strength and her motivation. She had been a manager at a retail store previously, but her disabilities made it difficult to continue her employment. She had a strong interest, however, in retail theft prevention and possibly working in security.



A VR counselor worked with Mindy on her résumé, and they discussed several possible companies that were hiring. Mindy successfully obtained employment first as a full-time youth worker with Waterfall Canyon, a group home for autistic boys. Her case was closed successfully, but Mindy kept

in contact with her counselor. With her VR counselor's encouragement, Mindy prepared to interview for a second position as a security manager. Her preparation paid off, as she was hired for the position. She currently works both jobs, which have led to newfound independence and an improvement in self-confidence.

VR assisted Mindy with counseling and guidance, physical restoration services (including medications), an eye exam and classes; mental restoration, including therapy and medication management; gas vouchers

for job interviews, job-seeking assistance through the Choose to Work program; and vocational training at the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology Center. The supportive counseling provided by the VR counselor and the Choose to Work specialist helped Mindy to achieve her employment goals and increase her self-sufficiency and independence.

## Chris Schilling

As a Social Security benefits recipient, Chris Schilling was presumed eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services in October 2013. Chris had Traumatic Brain Injury and associated injuries from a motorcycle accident sustained in 2012. VR conducted a career assessment to assist Chris with a suitable vocational goal. Chris chose to become a welder and through use of his Pell Grant and supplemental funding by VR, he attended and successfully completed a welding program through the Davis Applied Technology Center.

Chris's VR counselor then assisted him in finding permanent employment by partnering with Choice Supported Employment, a community rehabilitation program that offers specialized services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Choice Supported Employment located a full-time position for



Chris at Universal Trailer Cargo Group, Inc., as a welder. Because of his employment, Chris was able to purchase a truck for transportation to and from the job site and is working toward full independence from Social Security benefits.

Other VR services to Chris included the purchase of school supplies, transportation assistance, a

work strategy assessment, and vocational guidance and counseling. Chris has offered his gratitude on multiple occasions to the staff at the Layton office for the support received during his VR experience and plans to keep in touch with the Davis District on his future success.

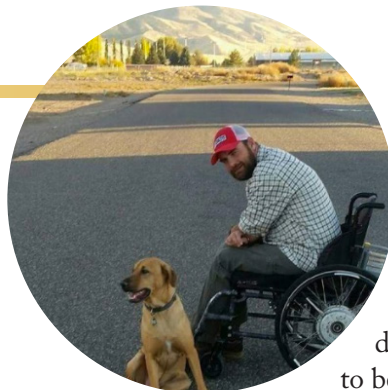
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## Richard Werry

Richard “Rick” Werry came to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in 2009 after suffering a worksite accident that left him quadriplegic. Rick needed assistive technology to become mobile enough to attend training and restoration activities. He had a vehicle but was unable to drive it because he had no way to access it with his wheelchair.

Rick worked with his VR counselor and the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) to purchase hand controls and a wheelchair lift for his truck. This specialized lift raises his camper shell, lifts his wheelchair out and lowers it to where he can transfer from truck to chair. UCAT would continue to be a source of knowledge and support throughout his time with VR.

In addition to assistive technology, Rick also needed vocational direction that better suited his new normal. Before his accident, he was a plumber’s apprentice, but he could no longer do this work. With the help of Career Exploration Services and VR counseling, he was able to utilize his previous experience and transferable skills to set a vocational goal of becoming



a draftsman. Rick attended Snow College and did well in his classes until the drafting program was discontinued, forcing him to begin a different career track.

Rick began part-time work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was eventually offered full-time work if he completed his education in a related field of study. With the possible job opportunity, Rick switched his degree to biology and was offered a full-time job as a soil conservation technician with the U.S. Conservation Services (NRCS-USDA). Through his new employer, Rick is able to continue working toward completing his degree.

When he received his full-time job, the Utah Work Incentive Program (UWIPS) provided benefits planning so Rick was able to understand how his new full-time work would affect his Social Security benefits. With the collaboration of VR services and programs, and through his persistence and diligence, Rick was able to be successful in achieving his employment goal.

# FY 2016–2017 MEETING SCHEDULE



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FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS  
9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.  
(LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH)

October 26, 2016

November 30, 2016

December (No meeting)

January 25, 2017

February 22, 2017

March 29, 2017

April 26, 2017

May 31, 2017

June 28, 2017

July (No meeting)

August 30, 2017

September 27–28, 2017

Annual and final 2017 meeting

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:**

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

**Website: <http://www.usor.utah.gov/councils/src>**





**usor.utah.gov**

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation  
A Division of the Department of Workforce Services

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