



Carmen Torres



OCCUPATION:
Front Desk Receptionist

VR COUNSELOR NAME:
Consuelo Alires
Benefits Specialist: Kenna Arcury, UWIPS



VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational counseling/ guidance
- Individualized plan for employment
- Disability treatment
- Benefits counseling with UWIPS
- Job development and placement with Choose to Work
- Computer skills training
- Work Ability Internship

Carmen was referred to the UWIPS Program in October 2020 and began working with Kenna Arcury for benefits counseling. At that time Carmen was working in a production facility, which was physically challenging for her due to her disability. Kenna continually helped Carmen understand how earnings would impact her benefits, and assisted her in reporting her earnings to Social Security.

Carmen expressed concern about her ability to maintain work in this type of employment, and Kenna talked to her about different options for future employment. Kenna suggested that Carmen apply for Vocational Rehabilitation assistance. Carmen was able to work with a VR counselor, Consuelo Alires, to explore career options and obtain training to improve her computer skills.

Carmen was able to gain confidence and skills needed to take the next step towards success. Carmen worked with a Work Ability Internship at the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. This internship opportunity for people with disabilities

helped Carmen develop her office and computer skills, while providing a pathway for state employment. During her internship, Carmen connected with a Choose to Work Employment Specialist, Cheryl Thomas, who coordinated with her counselor and benefits specialist to help Carmen apply for a permanent position with the Department of Workforce Services as a receptionist. Carmen's customer service skills and positive attitude greatly helped her obtain this job. Carmen shared her final thoughts on her internship experience:

"I only brought with me to this internship my customer service skills and production experience to learn the required office skills needed to help me find a better job. I had no idea I was going to learn so much! My desire for a better future, the help from everyone provided me with the right tools to find the right job... I managed to learn more than what I expected through all the support I received. I am excited for the great new job opportunity; and to be working at the DWS Opportunities like this are not available every day. I am so grateful and blessed to be part of it."