

## Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



# Katie Stoddard



OCCUPATION:  
Specialist at Roads to Independence

### VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Education Assistance
- Interview Clothes
- Job Development and Placement
- Work Incentive Counseling (Utah Work Incentive Planning Services)

**K**atie sought help for work incentives counseling in August 2011 as she was concerned about how working would affect her Social Security and medical benefits. She had very expensive medications and wanted to ensure working wouldn't affect her access to healthcare.

Katie's Community Work Incentives Counselor Farrah Edwards helped her understand how work would affect her various benefits including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Housing, Food Stamps and HEAT. They also discussed how interim work would help her while she was at school and discussed the benefits and pitfalls of working at different levels of income.

With USOR's help explaining how she could pursue education and work, Katie explored her career options with her VR counselor Ted Deelstra and decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in social work. Through her hard work and persistence, Katie graduated Cum Laude in 2017.

Choose To Work Specialist Shelly Sorenson helped Katie find work at Roads To Independence where she is now a specialist

for clients on the Physical Disabilities Waiver. In her work, she has already received a promotion and a raise. She has the satisfaction of helping other people with disabilities and uses her personal experiences to better serve her clients.

Katie is also pursuing a master's degree in social work while working full time. While Katie is accomplishing much, her disability has not disappeared. She has not lost her disabling condition because of work. She works in spite of her disability. Every day she continues to manage her medication and to accommodate the needs of her specific disability.

Ultimately, Katie's dedication to her education along with understanding her benefits has helped her have confidence to look for and find a job. She is now financially independent and working her way off receiving benefits.

USOR's investment in Katie helped her build a successful launch pad for the next phase of her life—as an educated, successful working woman.