

The Bottom Line of Disabilities: The Employment Odyssey

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- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) was created 94 years ago
- Mission: To help Utahns with disabilities achieve their best possible employment and independence outcomes



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- USOR has four divisions:
 - Division of Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation)
 - Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
 - Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Division of Disability Determination Services
- USOR has an \$86M operating budget which is approximately 73% federal and 27% state funded
- More than 400 employees work at USOR

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Vocational Rehabilitation

- A federal rehabilitation and employment program
- Federal funding is a rolling two year grant (on a federal fiscal year)
- A state maintenance of effort (MOE) is required (about 23%)
- Demand for program services increased more than 20% during the economic downturn (totaling more than 30,000 cases)
- In SFY2014, USOR sought a supplemental appropriation of \$1.4M to bridge a funding gap
- In SFY2015, USOR sought another supplemental appropriation for \$6.3M—*this led to drastic results*

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Actions taken by USOR include:

- Elimination of 43 FTE positions in the past 24 months and another 14 by 1 July 2016
- Appointment of a new executive director, finance director, and executive management team
- Development of a three year work plan
- Implementation of an Order of Selection (a federally-sanctioned waiting list)

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Order of Selection

- It is the only allowable method of limiting the number of Vocational Rehabilitation clients served
- Implemented 27 February 2015
- Created a waiting list with three categories of priority—Most Significantly Disabled, Significantly Disabled, and Disabled
- Today there are 2,928 people on the waiting list

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Rehabilitation and employment philosophy

- Employment is more than just a “job”--It’s about helping the person with the supports necessary to achieve their goals for long-term career success.
- People with disabilities have the right to achieve competitive, integrated employment.
- Employment should be meaningful; it should enrich the person’s quality of life.
- Successful employment is individualized and based on informed choice, e.g. 40 hours/week vs. 6 hours/week, working for a company vs. operating their own business, etc.

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What's next

- USOR transition to the Department of Workforce Services by 1 October 2016
- Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- A federal emphasis on pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities
- Continuing the necessary reforms

