



Employment & Independence

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF REHABILITATION

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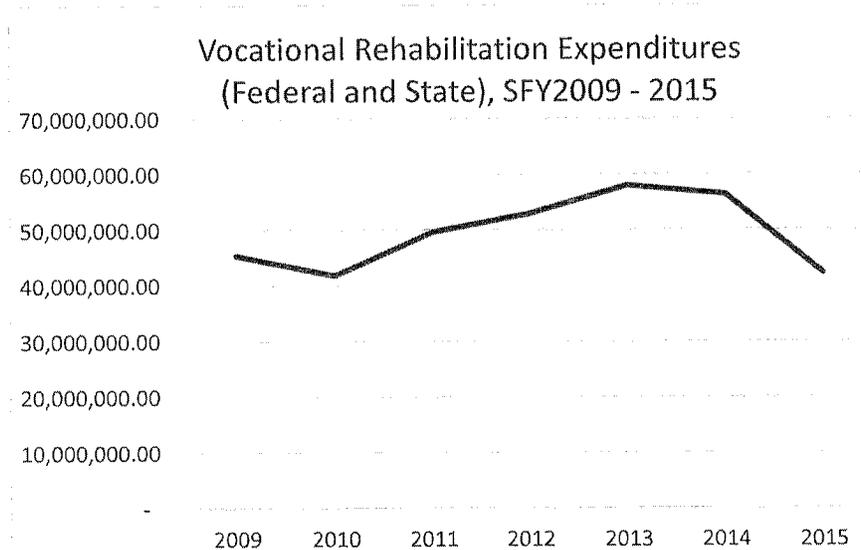
Senator Allen M. Christiansen, Senate Chair
Representative Paul Ray, House Chair
Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee of the Utah State Legislature
350 North State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Chairmen:

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee last month. As I reported, I am confident that the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) now understands the root causes of the budget problems it has experienced the past two years, and that it has a plan to implement the necessary corrections. Naturally, the work has already begun.

I emphasized a key point of failure in my remarks to the Subcommittee, specifically the absence of client caseload and cost modeling to accurately predict spending and compare projected obligations and expenditures to the budget for the Vocational Rehabilitation program. I noted that USOR management has reached out for information from federal program experts and other states, which it had used to begin building and testing its projection model.

As you are aware, USOR has also dramatically reduced its spending in the Vocational Rehabilitation program. First, it has eliminated 43 full-time equivalent positions in the past 22 months. More than that, in February USOR implemented an Order of Selection, a federally-sanctioned waiting list by which individuals with the most significant disabilities are served first (there are three client categories under an Order of Selection, which, by priority are: Most Significantly Disabled, Significantly Disabled, and Disabled). The figure below illustrates the impact of these measures.



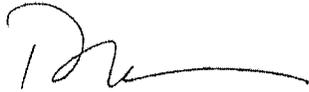
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I am pleased to report that since my arrival in July, ***USOR has successfully developed its initial Client Services Expenditure Rate (CSER) model to be used for comparing anticipated expenditures against available budget for Vocational Rehabilitation program client service expenses.*** Based on the results of the model, and given the cost savings illustrated above, ***USOR believes it has sufficient resources, and therefore is currently finalizing a plan to bring all clients in the Most Significantly Disabled category off the waiting list so that they can be served. This process will begin next month and will occur gradually over approximately 12 weeks.*** Clients will be removed from the waiting list in the order that they applied for services (i.e. oldest date of application first). Once everyone has been cleared off of the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list, USOR believes that it will be able to continue to serve clients who are found eligible and categorized as Most Significantly Disabled, and an ongoing waiting list will not be necessary for Most Significantly Disabled clients. Of course, significant changes to funding can affect this.

USOR plans to monitor expenditures and outcomes closely after opening the Most Significantly Disabled category in order to test and improve the model. USOR will use the test results to make decisions about modifications that need to be made to the model and to determine if the available budget can support bringing clients off the waiting list from the other two categories (and if so, how many). USOR will also continue studying options for expanding the model and incorporating additional data to improve the model.

I would be delighted to discuss the CSER model with you in detail, or answer any other questions. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Respectfully,



Darin Brush
Executive Director

cc: Brad C. Smith, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Utah State Office of Education
Stephen C. Jardine, Fiscal Analyst, Utah State Legislature
Russell T. Frandsen, Fiscal Analyst, Utah State Legislature