



UTAH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL
2014 POLICY PRIORITIES

The Utah Developmental Disabilities Council (UDDC) will educate the 2014 Utah Legislature about the following four priorities.

Priority #1—Strengthen the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD)

DSPD is the state agency providing supports and services for families and their family member with a disability. We support the Governor's 2014 budget request for disability services. We will ask for a multi-year, incremental capacity increase within DSPD to serve families waiting for services; an increase in DSPD's capacity to serve Utah's growing population; and a competitive wage for service providers. These vital needs will keep families together, reduce costs, and ensure effective supports for Utah's families.

Priority #2—Support the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR)

VR works to employ hundreds of people with disabilities each year. This public investment leads to independence and tax paying capacity. We support VR's request to fund the vocational rehabilitation statewide delivery system because it is an effective program.

Priority #3—Access to vocational training beyond high school leading to employment

People who have the advantage of post-secondary education and vocational training increase their income, enjoy overall improved health, and they add to Utah's economic strength by paying taxes. This is especially true for people with intellectual disabilities. However, people with intellectual disabilities face more barriers to accessing educational opportunities.

We intend to increase understanding among legislators and state agency leaders that people with intellectual disabilities will benefit from access to additional educational opportunities. We intend to explore options such as scholarship incentives, program modifications, and support expertise development for people with intellectual disabilities to gain greater employability.

For example, the Utah Colleges of Applied Technology (UCAT) provide an opportunity to partner with programs that increase access to career and technical education programs. The open curriculum, affordability, and flexibility of the UCAT statewide system is a model that is ready to increase access for people with intellectual disabilities.

Priority #4—Workers' Compensation insurance coverage for home care providers

Workers' compensation insurance protects employees from incurring serious medical debt or a total loss of wages due to an on-the-job injury. Most Utah employers are required to provide this coverage. We support such insurance and we advocate for it to include in-home service providers, when funded by state agencies, who assist people with disabilities to be employable and independent. Without workers' compensation insurance, many in-home providers will not be willing to work in the field of in-home care and families will be forced to choose restrictive and expensive institutional placement. DSPD contracts for publically funded in-home care providers should provide workers' compensation coverage to ensure retention of services

If you have any questions about this statement,
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provided for people with disabilities in their homes. Utah Code Section 34A-2-104(5)(d) exempts in-home care providers from workers' compensation coverage. We recommend that the Legislature change the law to provide coverage for Utah's families using in-home workers.

Statewide system of advocacy and awareness to improve quality of life for Utahns with developmental and intellectual disabilities

We will accomplish these four priorities through the UDDC's statewide system of advocacy and public awareness called the Grassroots Advocacy Partnership (GAP). GAP coordinators are established throughout the state. These coordinators work locally with families of people with disabilities and individuals with disabilities to educate local and state policy makers about UDDC's priorities. GAP coordinators understand the practical implications of change, the impact of programs, and the importance of promoting self-determination by people with intellectual disabilities.

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