ANNUAL REPORT

Emma Eccles Jones College of Education, Health, & Human Sciences
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity.

2025, July 1 - 2026, June 30



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From our Director: Dr. Matt Wappett

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Fiscal Year 2026 tested the resilience of research and service organizations across the country. Significant upheavals in federal grants and contracts created real uncertainty for many of our peers and partners. I am proud to report that through it all, the Utah State University Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice (IDRPP) has continued to grow and thrive. In FY 2026, the IDRPP managed 264 grants and contracts totaling more than $32 million. In fact, in FY 26, the IDRPP brought in 21% of all extramural funding at USU!

Much of this success is a direct result of our staff's remarkable ability to think creatively about alternative partnerships, collaborations, and funding streams. Rather than relying on any single source of support, IDRPP teams have built relationships with state agencies, school districts, community organizations, and other partners. By diversifying our funding, we have been better able to weather the significant shakeups in federal research funding while continuing to deliver on our mission. The results speak for themselves: the number of individuals with disabilities and family members served directly through our programs nearly doubled, from 3,632 to 7,130; technical assistance hours grew to 6,292; and we offered 243 continuing education programs totaling more than 10,000 hours of instruction.

Two programs exemplify this momentum. The Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP) launched its new mobile AT Lab van, bringing assistive technology directly into communities across the state, including rural areas where access has historically been limited. UATP served 1,662 individuals this year, a 16% increase over FY 2025. Our recently established Northern Utah Home Visiting project has also had an extraordinary impact, growing from 424 to 3,535 individuals served (more than an eightfold increase) and providing vital, family-centered support to parents and young children during the most critical years of development.



Dr. Matt Wappett

While our roots are in Utah, our reach is national. In FY 2026, IDRPP provided technical assistance and training in 35 states, Canada, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. IDRPP staff are recognized as national experts in special education, employment, sign language interpreting, digital accessibility, assistive technology, early childhood, hearing health, and more. Through national centers such as NCADEMI, NCHAM, TAESE, and WebAIM, our team shapes policy and practice far beyond our state's borders.

I invite you to read our full annual report and its Impact Stories, which provide an insight into the people and communities behind these numbers. I also encourage you to consider supporting our programs through donations and collaborations. Please reach out to us if you see opportunities to collaborate on innovative new initiatives in the disability space. Our success has always been built on partnership, and we would welcome the chance to work with you.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,



Matthew Wappett, Ph.D.

Executive Director



IDRPP staff gathering at the retreat themed "Evolving into Excellence Through Mentorship and Coaching," held in Salt Lake City at the Natural History Museum of Utah in August of 2026.

Our Mission

We are working together to create inclusive communities and improve the lives of children and adults with disabilities and their families through sustainable innovation, collaborative research, responsive service, and interdisciplinary training and education.

IDRPP Spirit of Service & Mentoring Awards

The IDRPP would like to congratulate the awardees of the Spirit of Service Award and the Mentoring Award in 2025. These are the people who make an impact, but maybe aren't as visible as they should be.

Heather Kelley



Recognized by the Research and Training Division

Heather exemplifies the spirit of service through her commitment to collaboration and excellence in research and training. She is always eager to work with others on research projects, fostering teamwork and innovation across disciplines.



Christopher Phillips

Recognized by the Technical Assistance Division

Christopher consistently brings new ideas and strategies for project improvements to the team's attention and is always open to adapting existing protocols based on team and user feedback.

Sue Olsen



Recognized by the Services Division

The Spirit of Service Award could also be renamed the Spirit of Sue Award. Sue Olsen has dedicated her entire career to empowering children and families with and without disabilities. She is a fixture at the IDRPP and has been for over 40 years.



Martha Reyes

Recognized by the Administration Division

Martha brought a tremendous variety of skills with her to this job. She exemplifies the Spirit of Service by showing up consistently, putting in 110%, and always thinking ahead.

Frank Podobnik



Recognized for the Mentoring Award

Frank has demonstrated his commitment to fostering growth by taking the lead role as the Technical Assistance Specialist Mentor and Coach in IDRPP's Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE).

Read more about the Spirit of Service & Mentoring Award on our IDRPP blog

Community Advisory Council

Agency Representatives

Lavinia Gripentrog
Utah State Board of Education

Joey Hanna
Utah Parent Center

Tylee Harmon
Utah Statewide Independent Living Council

Chris Larson
Imber Services

Libby Oseguera
Utah Developmental Disabilities Council

Adina Zahradnikova
Disability Law Center

Family Representatives

Michelle Hoggan (Chair)
Kimberlee Adams

Self-Advocates

Autumn Cuellar
Sade Gabler
Ana Hernandez-Liquin
Mandy Kartchner
Kayci Lynam (Chair)
James Steed (Vice-Chair)
Eric Stoker

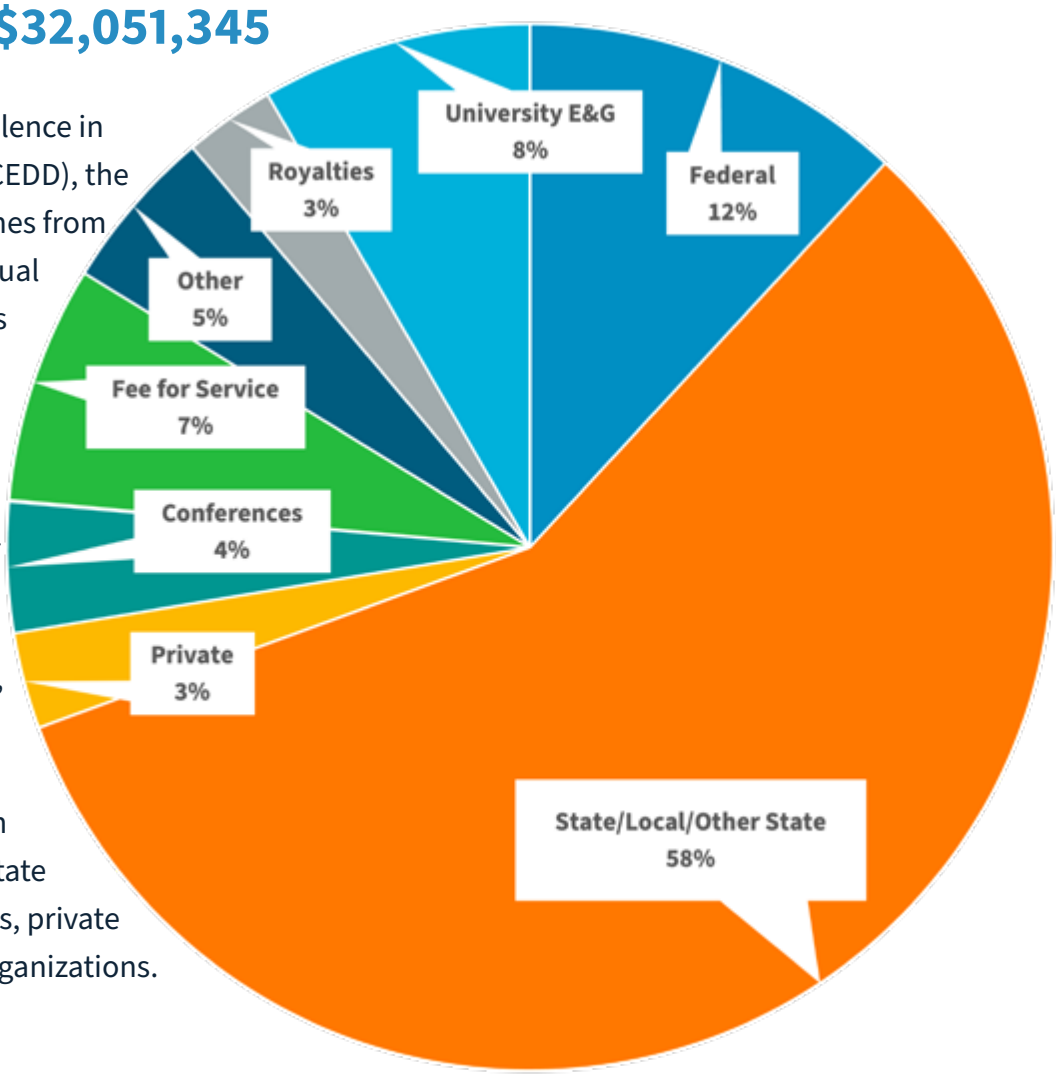
Non-Voting Member

Kelie Hess & Matthew Wappett

FY 2025 Budget - $32,051,345

As a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), the core of the IDRPP's budget comes from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). There are currently 68 UCEDDs across the U.S. and its territories.

The IDRPP leverages its federal core funding with a variety of federal, state, and local resources. With these partners, the IDRPP provides training, services, technical assistance, and information to people with disabilities, family members, state and local governments, schools, private businesses, and community organizations.



Appointments

Ty Aller

- Co-Chair for the Mental Health Special Interest Group of AUCD
- Board Member, Utah AgrAbility

Rachel Byers

- Member, Utah Health Literacy Coalition

Linda Alsop

- Utah Deafblind Advisory Committee
- Advisory Board, Ellis Center of Atlanta

Jamie Bitner

- Member, Cache Interagency Coordinating Council

Miriam Chavez

- Member, Cache Interagency Coordinating Council

John Copenhaver

- TASK-12 Advisory Board-Training and assessment for educational interpreters
- National Advisory Workgroup for State Advisory Panels and Interagency Coordinating Councils—Office of Special Education Programs.
- Small States Consortium (17 States and Territories), National Association of State Directors of Special Education.
- IRIS Center, Ambassador to the Center, Vanderbilt University, Office of Special Education Programs
- New Mexico Advisory Committee for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Cynthia Curry

- Advisor, Assistive Technology Industry Association (AITA) Annual International Conference
- Member, Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) Education Peer Action Learning Committee
- Member, Joy Smiley Zabala Fellowship for Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials Steering Committee
- Member, Rhonda Weiss Center for Accessible IDEA Data National Advisory Council
- Member, Bookshare National Advisory Committee
- Member, National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) Advisory Council
- Member, Board of Directors, Spurwink Services Incorporated, Portland, Maine

Mary Ellen Heiner

- Member, Council on Leadership in Advocacy (COLA) of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

Tressa Johnston

- Southern California University Hybrid Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program Advisory Board
- University of Utah Board Member for Maternal Child Health Graduate Program

Molly Kenning

- Member, Box Elder Early Childhood Coalition

Bora Lee

- Assistive Technology SIG Steering Committee, AUCD
- Utah Core Advisory Group for Access & Functional Needs
- Health & Well-Being Advisory Council, American Society on Aging (ASA)
- Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs Bylaws Committee (ATAP)
- Utah Public Health Preparedness Senior Advisory Committee
- Advisory Board Member, Utah AgrAbility

Marilyn Likins

- US-Canadian Intervener Community of Practice
- Paraeducator Special Interest Group, Teacher Education Division (TED), CEC

» Grow Your Own Educators (GYOE) University Neighborhood Partnerships

Amber Marsh

» Ex-Officio, Utah Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) chapter
» Board Member, Utah Job Placement and Development (JPD) chapter
» Higher Ed. Rep, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
» General Board Member, Utah Developmental Disability Council (UDDC)

Marla Nef

» Member, Utah Early Intervention Provider Consortium
» Member, Rich County Coalition
» Board Member, Cache Interagency Family Council

Eduardo Ortiz

» Board Member, Voices for Utah Children
» Member, AUCD/Multicultural Council MCC
» Member, Utah Statewide Independent Living Council
» Member, Utah Long-Term Service and Support Program (LTSS) Steering Committee Member
» Member, Logan Communities That Care Coalition

Janel Preston

» Utah Act Early Ambassador
» Member, Utah Autism Initiative
» Member, AUCD Autism Special Interest Group; Early intervention and Autism
» Member, Utah Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
» Member, Early Childhood Utah Executive Committee
» Chair, Early Childhood Utah, Health Sub Committee
» Member, Early Childhood Utah, Family Engagement Sub Committee Chair
» Member, Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (ICC) Board.
» Member, Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (ICC) Social Emotional Sub-Committee

Drake Rasmussen

» Chair, Bear River Regional Access & Mobility Council

Corban Remund

» At Large Board Member, National ACRE Board
» At Large Board Member, Utah Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Chapter

Rebecca Richards

» Member, Box Elder Early Childhood Coalition

Tim Riesen

» Guest Reviewer: Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities
» Guest Reviewer: Career Development Exceptional Individuals

Alex Schiwal

» Utah Disabilities Advisory Council
» Utah Commission on Aging
» Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Coordinating Council
» Birdability Board Member

Aubrey Snyder

» Chapter Secretary, Utah Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
» Utah Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule Workgroup (Department of Health)
» Utah National Centers on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) Workgroup (Division of Services for People with Disabilities)
» Utah Person-Centered Service Planning Workgroup (Division of Services for People with Disabilities)

Matthew Wappett

» Member, Association of University Centers on Disability Technical Assistance Advisory Committee
» Founding Board Member, Mental Health

and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities National Research Consortium, University of New Hampshire
- Advisory Board Member, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Grant on Mental Health Parity and Justice with Georgetown University and University of New Hampshire
- Trustee (Past President), Board of Trustees for the Utah Disability Law Center
- Council Member, Utah Developmental Disabilities Council
- Advisory Board Member, Utah Department of Health & Human Services Utah Disability Advisory Committee
- Advisory Board Member, Madison House Autism Foundation-Utah
- Board Member, Utah Disability Advocacy Network
- Member, Utah Interagency Coordinating Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Member, Utah Legislative Coalition for Persons with Disabilities
- Member, USU Research Council
- Member, USU EIT Accessibility Committee

Technical Assistance & Training

174,027 individuals were reached by community training, technical assistance, and continuing education provided by IDRPP staff.

Type of Participant	# of Individuals
Adults with Disabilities	980*
Children/Adolescents with Disabilities	86
Family Members/Caregivers	28,074
General Public	32,274
Legislators/Policymakers	22,446
Local/Community Partners	18,412
Professionals and Paraprofessionals	69,834
State/National Partners	37,369
Students	19,766**
Trainees	5,469
TOTAL number of participants	234,710
TOTAL hours	24,258

* This category includes individuals who are receiving training and are not reported as receiving direct services.

** Includes students trained who are not formally enrolled IDRPP trainees or in USU courses taught by IDRPP staff.

Direct Services

7,130 Utahns received IDRPP services in areas such as early intervention, special education, employment, assistive technology, family support, and recreation.

- AmeriCorps VISTA PSP----------358
- Bridgerland Literacy----------15
- Employability Clinic----------83
- IDRPP Operating Funds----------216
- MIECHV----------3,535
- Southeast Early Intervention----------122
- Stride Services----------41
- Top Sports----------360
- Up to 3----------738
- Utah Assistive Technology Project (UATP)----------1,662

Student Support

$661,296 was the total financial support to USU students during the past fiscal year. IDRPP staff members taught 13 courses in 4 university departments, generating 672 credits.

USU Courses Taught by IDRPP Staff

- Departments----------4
- Courses----------13
- Credits----------672
- USU Students----------196
- Masters/Doctoral/Tenure Committees----------15
- Graduate Assistantships----------5
- Student Employees----------78

Project Support	# of Trainees
IDACEL	23
URLEND	44
Up to 3	9
TOTAL TRAINEES	76

Editorial Boards

DAVE CLARK

» Assistant Editor, Developmental Disabilities Network Journal Editorial Board 2020-present

MARY ELLEN HEINER

» Assistant Editor/Copy Editor, Developmental Disabilities Network Journal Editorial Board 2020-present

KELIE HESS

» Assistant Editor, Developmental Disabilities Network Journal Editorial Board 2025-present

TIMOTHY RIESEN

» Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation

ALEX SCHIWAL

» Managing Editor, Developmental Disabilities Network Journal

MATTHEW WAPPETT

» Editorial Board Member, Review of Disability Studies, 2008-present
» Editor in Chief, Developmental Disabilities Network Journal, 2019-present
» Ad Hoc Peer Referee, Journal of Inclusive Education, 2009-present
» Ad Hoc Peer Referee, Social Work in Mental Health, 2023-present

DDNJ Readership Distribution



The IDRPP's Development Disabilities Network Journal (DDNJ) has reached 192 countries total since launching in 2019, and has been downloaded 67,620 times (as of July 10, 2026)

Professional Presentations

1. Ames, N., Podobnik, F., Smith, B., & Smith, S. (2026, March 12). *Self-assessing for program improvement* [Conference presentation]. CEC Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.
2. Batura, J., Green, G., Kelley, H., Hancock, A., & Fauth, E. (2025, November). *Balancing closeness and attachment in family dementia caregiving: A mixed methods systematic review* [Paper presentation]. Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.
3. Bhattashali, A., & Kim, G. (2025, October). *Use of practice-based coaching: A systematic review* [Poster presentation]. Division for Early Childhood's 41st Annual International Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families, Portland, OR, United States.
4. Bhattashali, A., Kim, G., & Ai, J. (2026, February). *Centering identity and culture in practice-based coaching: A systematic literature review* [Poster presentation]. Conference on Research Innovations in Early Intervention (CRIEI), San Diego, CA, United States.
5. Byers, R., & Juhasz, A. C. (2025, December 4–6). *Chronic health conditions among individuals with cognitive disabilities* [Poster presentation]. TASH 2025 Conference, Denver, CO, United States.
6. Byers, R., & Juhasz, A. C. (2025, December 4–6). *Results of an adapted SNAP-Ed curriculum for adults with disabilities* [Breakout session]. TASH 2025 Conference, Denver, CO, United States.
7. Byers, R., & Kelley, H. (2025, December 4–6). *Results of a mental health literacy training for direct support professionals* [Breakout session]. TASH 2025 Conference, Denver, CO, United States.
8. Carr, R. (2025, July 14–18). *Digital accessibility: Ask us anything* [Conference presentation]. AHEAD Conference, Denver, CO, United States.
9. Carr, R. (2025, July 14–18). *The top 12 barriers in digital accessibility: An introduction to remediating common problems* [Conference presentation]. AHEAD Conference, Denver, CO, United States.
10. Carr, R. (2025, October 22–23). *Accessible names* [Conference presentation]. Thunder Plains Developer Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, United States.
11. Carr, R. (2025, November 18–21). *Accessibility in technology procurement* [Conference presentation]. Accessing Higher Ground, Denver, CO, United States.
12. Carr, R. (2025, November 18–21). *Evaluating accessibility when time is scarce* [Conference presentation]. Accessing Higher Ground, Denver, CO, United States.
13. Carr, R. (2025, November 18–21). *Shift left, and up* [Conference presentation]. Accessing Higher Ground, Denver, CO, United States.
14. Carr, R. (2026, March 9–13). *Building accessibility training programs that work* [Conference presentation]. CSUN AT Conference, Anaheim, CA, United States.
15. Carr, R. (2026, May 11–14). *Accessibility in procurement deep(-er) dive* [Conference presentation]. AccessU Conference, Austin, TX, United States.
16. Carr, R., Curry, C., Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, January 28). *Digital doesn't equal accessible: Moving from misconception to meaningful access* [Conference presentation].

17. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Actually shifting left: Technical accessibility for designers* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

18. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *AI and alt text* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

19. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *A tangled web of ARIA* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

20. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Creating accessible documents and slides: Microsoft, Google, and Canva* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

21. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Never delegate understanding: Foundations of digital accessibility* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

22. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Practicing accessibility research with confidence* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

23. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Understanding burnout in accessibility work* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

24. Carr, R., Whiting, J., & Smith, J. (2025, September 16–17). *Win with metrics: How to track and show the value of your program* [Conference presentation]. Web Accessibility in Mind Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

25. Curry, C. (2025, August 4). *Introduction to OSEP funded centers* [Conference presentation]. National Center on Deafblindness and State DeafBlind Projects Networking Session.

26. Curry, C. (2025, August 5). *Data standards for accessible educational materials* [Conference presentation]. Cultivating Effective Systems to Support Children and Families with Data Standards.

27. Curry, C. (2025, August 6). *Adaptive leadership* [Conference presentation].

28. Curry, C. (2025, August 6). *Strategies and tools for full digital access to educational materials and IDEA data for individuals with disabilities* [Conference presentation].

29. Curry, C. (2025, October 7). *Title II of the ADA in education: Government, institutional, and advocacy insights* [Conference presentation].

30. Curry, C. (2025, October 15). *Presentation at the annual Printing House for the Blind annual meeting - VIPPer: Meeting of the minds* [Conference presentation]. Annual Printing House for the Blind Annual Meeting.

31. Curry, C. (2025, December 3). *Prioritizing students with disabilities in AI policy roundtable* [Conference presentation].

32. Curry, C. (2026, January 30). *AT needs backup: Why digital accessibility can't be optional* [Conference presentation].

33. Curry, C. (2026, January 30). *Impacts on access: AT in the era of shifting policy and funding* [Conference presentation].

34. Curry, C., & Smith, B. (2026, March 11). *Accessible digital content that works for learners with disabilities* [Conference presentation].

35. Fahlbush, J. (2025, October 16). *Hands developmental disabilities & autism ECHO: Education series* [Conference presentation].

36. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, January 29). *From gaps to gains: Access to digital materials for all students* [Conference presentation].

37. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, January 30). *Accessibility in action: Practices that empower assistive technology* [Conference presentation].

38. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, March 10). *Advancing inclusive procurement with the EdTech Accessibility Directory* [Conference presentation].

39. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, March 10). *Closing gaps & improving access to digital materials for students* [Conference presentation].

40. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, June 1). *The challenge of PDF accessibility (and solutions)* [Conference presentation].

41. Fahlbush, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, June 2). *A roadmap accessible digital learning systems* [Conference presentation].

42. Fauth, E., Kelley, H. H., & Aller, T. B. (2025, November 13). *A systematic review of 3rd wave behavioral interventions for individuals with dementia* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.

43. Franco, J. (2025, September 5). *Regenerative learning for human flourishing* [Conference presentation]. 5th Annual Education for Flourishing Conference, Saint Louis, MO, United States.

44. Franco, J. (2026, February 8–11). *Regenerative learning for human flourishing in education* [Conference presentation]. Meaningful Living and Learning in a Digital World 2026 Conference, Savannah, GA, United States.

45. Gongora, C., & Juhasz, A. (2026, May 11–13). *Stronger together: Continuous program improvement to strengthen community outreach* [Workshop session]. Utah Conference on Community Engagement, Price, UT, United States.

46. Green, G., Batura, J., Kelley, H. H., & Fauth, E. (2025, November 15). *Managing ambiguous loss in dementia caregiving: Conceptualizing the Adaptive Support Model* [Paper presentation]. Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.

47. Green, G., Kelley, H. H., Davis, C., Aller, T. B., Levin, M., & Fauth, E. (2025, November 13). *An online Acceptance and Commitment Therapy session to help people manage stress from their dementia diagnosis* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.

48. Horning, E., Peterson, S., Kelley, H. H., & Flint, C. (2025, December 4). *A mixed-methods analysis of Utahns' perceptions of water quality and supply* [Paper presentation]. Utah State University Fall Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

49. Horning, E., Peterson, S., Kelley, H. H., & Flint, C. (2026, April 8). *Associations between community resources, social connections, and wellbeing among Utah residents* [Poster presentation]. Spring Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

50. Johnston, T., & Lee, B. (2025, December 4–6). *Open doors to play: Assistive technology in recreation* [Conference presentation]. TASH Conference, Denver, CO, United States.

51. Juhasz, A. (2026, May 19–21). *Building better surveys* [Breakout session]. USU SEA Staff Elevated Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

52. Juhasz, A. C., Byers, R., & Hess, K. (2025, November 12–14). *It just takes more time: Designing accessible evaluations* [Conference presentation]. American Evaluation Association Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO, United States.

53. Juhasz, A. C., Byers, R., & Hess, K. (2026, May 11–13). *Accessible evaluation for all* [Breakout session]. Utah Conference on Community Engagement, Price, UT, United States.

54. Juhasz, A. C., Hess, K., & Byers, R. (2025, November 12–14). *Accessible evaluation for all: Designing with disability in mind* [Panel presentation]. American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO, United States.

55. Juhasz, A. C., & Jones, A. (2025, November 18). *The critical role of data in supporting early childhood mental health and social-emotional services* [Workshop]. Ready! Resilient! Utah Early Childhood Mental Health Conference, Sandy, UT, United States.

56. Juhasz, A., McFarland, J., Salazar, J., Turner, M., & Boyce, L. (2026, May 11–13). *Supporting children & families in rural Utah: Lessons from a pilot program in San Juan County* [Breakout session]. Utah Conference on Community Engagement, Price, UT, United States.

57. Langevin, A. (2026, February 22). *ADHD & executive function: Beyond the misconceptions* [Breakout session]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

58. Langevin, A., & Perez-Rickels, K. (2025, July 7–8). *Interpreting behavior with equity: Understanding the manifestation process for students with disabilities* [Breakout session]. Birmingham City Schools Summer Conference, Birmingham, AL, United States.

59. Lee, B., & Ro, J. (2026, April 20–23). *Walkers to wearables: Assistive technology to promote health and connection* [Conference presentation]. OnAging Conference, Atlanta, GA, United States.

60. Lema, L. (2025, October 17). *Paraeducator barriers to professional development: A mixed methods exploration* [Poster presentation]. CLD 47th International Conference on Learning Disabilities, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

61. Lema, L. (2026, March 12). *Paraeducator barriers to professional development: A mixed methods exploration* [Poster presentation]. Council for Exceptional Children 2026 Annual Convention & Expo, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

62. Likins, M., & Lema, L. (2026, February 19). *Paraeducator national and state leadership community of practice* [Conference presentation]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

63. Likins, M., & Lema, L. (2026, February 20). *Welcome - Empowered to support, inspired to lead-paraeducators: Make it happen* [Conference presentation]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

64. Likins, M., & Lema, L. (2026, February 21). *Planning and providing professional development for paraeducators* [Breakout session]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

65. Likins, M., & Lema, L. (2026, February 22). *Conference wrap up* [Conference presentation]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

66. Likins, M., & Lema, L. (2026, March 11). *Planning and providing professional development for paraeducators* [Breakout session]. Council for Exceptional Children 2026 Annual Convention & Expo, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

67. Ortiz, E., Dokos, M., & Enniss-Poe, H. (2026, May 28). *Multicultural Disability Network & Training (MULDINET) creative digital evolving experience* [Conference presentation]. 41st Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability,

Honolulu, HI, United States.

68. Ortiz, E., Enniss-Poe, H., & Dokos, M. (2026, May 6). *Combined purpose, greater impact: Unifying rural disability and mental health systems* [Conference presentation]. Office of Health Promotion and Prevention Conference, Sandy, UT, United States.

69. Peterson, S., Horning, E., Kelley, H. H., & Flint, C. (2025, December 4). *Recreation among older adults in Utah* [Poster presentation]. Utah State University Fall Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

70. Peterson, S., Horning, E., Kelley, H. H., & Flint, C. (2026, April 8). *The role of recreation in supporting health and wellbeing among Utah older adults: Qualitative findings from the Utah Wellbeing Project* [Paper presentation]. Spring Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

71. Preston, J. (2026, March). *Increase family engagement using "Learn the Signs. Act Early."* [Poster presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/ae8lq1vxo9788gsuour6vz7u8xmyfuf2

72. Preston, J. (2026, April). *Early intervention and autism* [Presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/4r37jzsos43ml9ip1jg5xko1qawf84kg

73. Preston, J. (2026, April). *Early intervention for social work students* [Presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/url1yj2r8e481zmzyh5a1x4gb3h8grlp

74. Preston, J. (2026, May 5). *Enhancing professional development using the ECHO model* [Presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/zqhst8n8060cg1owv4jebty578r25utm

75. Preston, J. (2026, June 6). *CDC's LTSAE materials and more* [Presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/dwlh3dsonr6vpwi2t6kejp3ih6734f91

76. Preston, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, January 26). *Enhancing professional development of autism using the ECHO model* [Poster presentation]. Utah State University, Logan, UT, United States. https://usu.box.com/s/gsxd93vpzyue0u80dlasqr7t4iv3pxy9

77. Prince, L. (2026, May 11–14). *"Perfect" is the enemy of accessible* [Conference presentation]. AccessU Conference, Austin, TX, United States.

78. Riesen, T. (2005). *Building the capacity of employment support providers to improve employment outcomes for PWDs* [Conference presentation]. Center for Employment and Inclusion Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

79. Riesen, T. (2025, October). *Building the capacity of employment support providers to improve employment outcomes of PWDs* [Conference presentation]. International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), 5th Asia-Pacific Congress, Singapore.

80. Riesen, T., & Snyder, A. (2026, June). *Supported employment and customized employment: A comparative analysis* [Conference presentation]. 2026 International Association for Special Education (IASE) Conference, Thimphu, Bhutan.

81. Ryner, D., & Wappett, M. (2026, June 24). *AI, ID8, and a values anchored federated data model: Expanding access to trusted IDD knowledge* [Conference presentation]. 150th Annual American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Conference, Chicago, IL, United States.

82. Schiwal, A. (2026, June 9). *Underreported and unprepared: Disability and sexual abuse* [Conference presentation]. Northern Utah Conference to End Violence: A Call for Collaborative Leadership, Logan, UT, United States.

83. Smith, B. (2026, February 22). *Ask us anything panel* [Keynote panel session]. 38th National Resource Center for

Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

84. Smith, J. (2025, August 13). *Built for everyone: Accessibility-first thinking across the SDLC* [Conference presentation]. BrowserStack QA Leadership Summit, Mumbai, India.

85. Smith, J. (2026, April 28). *Using the WebAIM Million to inform accessibility efforts* [Conference presentation]. a11yBay Accessibility Meetup, San Francisco, CA, United States.

86. Smith, J., Whiting, J., & Asuncion, J. (2026, March 9–13). *Second global digital accessibility salary survey* [Conference presentation]. CSUN AT Conference, Anaheim, CA, United States.

87. Smith, S. (2025, September). *IDEA - Money matters: Tools to support effective and compliant use of federal funds* [Conference presentation]. Association of Educational Federal Finance Administrators (AEFFA) Conference, Traverse City, MI, United States.

88. Smith, S., & Makukna, A. (2025, September). *IDEA - State panel: Strong connection between fiscal and program* [Conference presentation]. Association of Educational Federal Finance Administrators (AEFFA) Conference, Traverse City, MI, United States.

89. Snyder, A., & Riesen, T. (2026, June). *Outcomes and lessons from interagency teams supporting students with disabilities* [Conference presentation]. 2026 International Association for Special Education (IASE) Conference, Thimphu, Bhutan.

90. Stant, L., Bauman, S., & Aller, T. B. (2025, November 12–13). *Supporting the mental health of rural Utahns* [Poster presentation]. Rural Health Association of Utah Conference, St. George, UT, United States.

91. Stant, L., Bauman, S., Aller, T. B., & Flint, C. (2025, November 12–13). *It's not all bad: Accessing mental health resources via digital formats* [Poster presentation]. Rural Health Association of Utah Conference, St. George, UT, United States.

92. Ticha, R., Abery, B., & Riesen, T. (2026, June). *One size does not fit all: Transitioning to adulthood with a disability* [Conference presentation]. 2026 International Association for Special Education (IASE) Conference, Thimphu, Bhutan.

93. Tuttle, G., Brown, B., & Kelley, H. H. (2026, April 8). *Perceived outcomes from a digital mental health intervention for dementia care dyads* [Paper presentation]. Spring Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

94. Tuttle, G., Green, G., & Kelley, H. H. (2025, December 4). *Acceptability and feasibility of a digital ACT intervention for dementia care dyads* [Paper presentation]. Utah State University Fall Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT, United States.

95. Wappett, M. (2025, July 20). *The dark side of stress & the light side of laughter: A new perspective on mental health and living with fewer limitations* [Keynote address]. Oklahoma State Department of Education Annual Special Education Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, United States.

96. Wappett, M. (2025, September 25). *Stress, mental health, and belonging: The correlation between mental health & community* [Keynote address]. Utah Statewide Independent Living Programs Conference, Price, UT, United States.

97. Wappett, M. (2025, October 23). *Managing mental health through evidence-based practices* [Conference presentation]. Utah Conference on Substance Use, St. George, UT, United States.

98. Wappett, M. (2026, February 21). *Science of belonging* [Keynote panel session]. 38th National Resource Center for Paraeducators Virtual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

99. Wappett, M. (2026, February 21). *The science of belonging: Lessons for paraprofessionals* [Keynote address]. 2026 National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals Annual Conference, Logan, UT, United States.

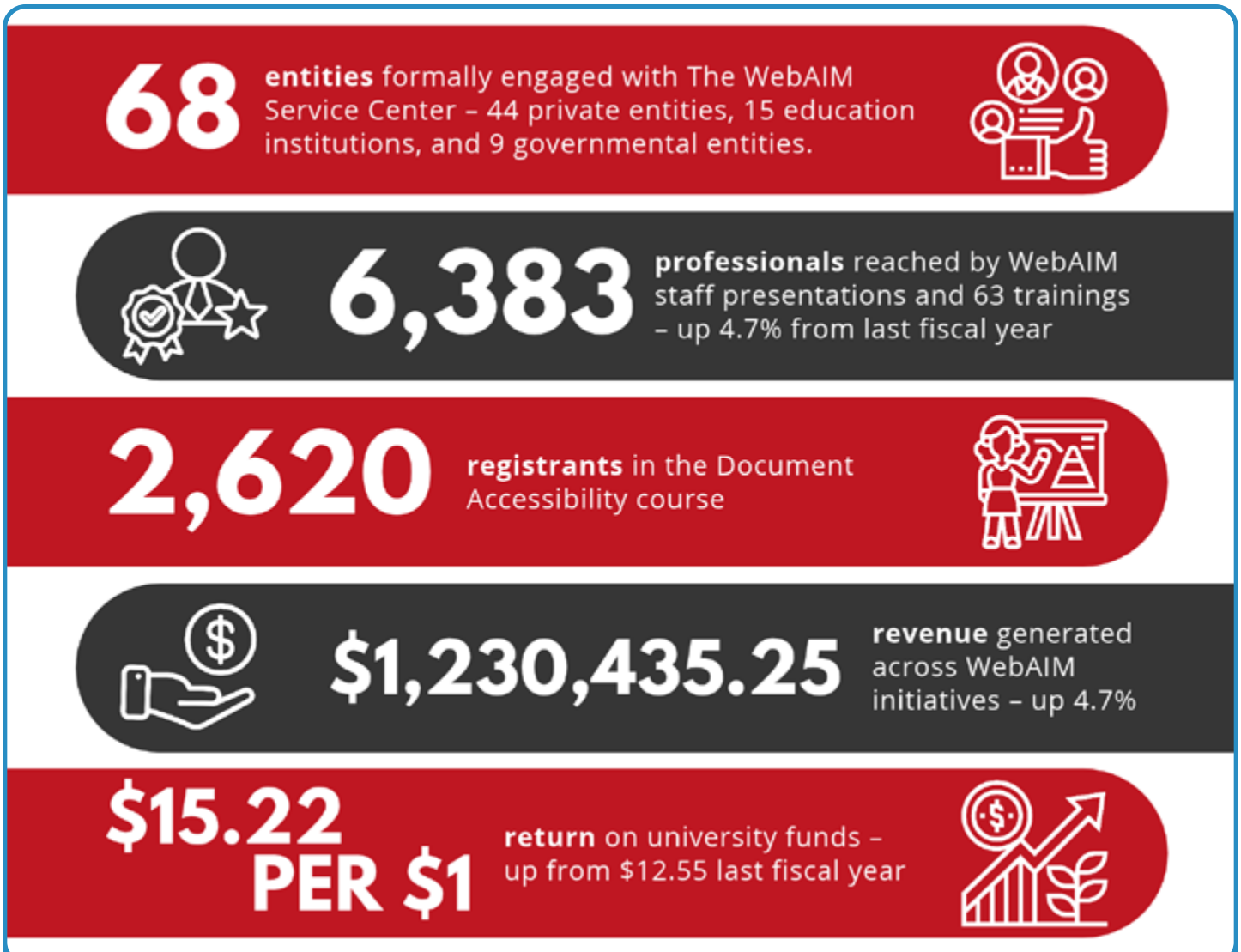
100. Whiting, J. (2025, October 23). *Preparing for ADA and Section 508 updates - Utah Health PIO meeting* [Conference presentation]. Utah Health PIO Meeting, Ogden, UT, United States.

101. Whiting, J., & Northup, J. (2026, May 11–14). *Decoding WCAG color and contrast requirements* [Conference presentation]. AccessU Conference, Austin, TX, United States.

102. Whiting, J., & Phillips, C. (2026, March 9–13). *Demystifying digital accessibility: Starting with the basics* [Conference presentation]. CSUN AT Conference, Anaheim, CA, United States.

WebAIM - FY Summary

The summary of WebAIM activities and revenue for the 2025-2026 fiscal year created optimistic perspectives for the future and for continuing the mission of improving digital experiences for individuals with disabilities.



Infographic showing WebAIM's Data & Accomplishments

Research & Training Summary - FY Summary

The Research and Training (R&T) team had a productive FY 2026 outperforming FY 2025 in grant funding, publications, trainings, and technical assistance.



Infographic showing the Research & Training Division Data & Accomplishments

Publications | Refereed Publications (Published & In Press)

1. Aller, T. B., Kelley, H. H., Juhasz, A., & Covington, B. (2025). COVID-19 health distress among autistic adults: Does psychological flexibility explain effects of health distress on mental health concerns? *Autism: International Journal of Research and Practice, 29*(5), 1359-1363. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13623613241313403

2. Bhattashali, A., Cheatham, G., Lickvar-Armstrong, C., Oh, J. R., & Kim, G. (2025). Overcoming bias in ECSE by incorporating funds of knowledge in teacher preparation. *Early Childhood Education Journal, February*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-025-01886-y

3. Bowers, E. M., Woolley, M. G., Muñoz, K., Petersen, J. M., & Twohig, M. P. (2024). Acceptance and commitment therapy versus progressive relaxation training for misophonia: Randomized controlled trial protocol, interventions, and audiological assessments. *Contemporary Clinical Trials, 145*, 107671. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2024.107671

4. Capel, L. K., Bowers, E. M., Woolley, M. G., Petersen, J. M., Muñoz, K., & Twohig, M. P. (2025). Utility of and preliminary psychometric reliability and validity of a measure of psychological inflexibility for misophonia. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 36*, 100896. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2025.100896

5. Eiserman, W. D., & Shisler, L. (2025). Identifying children with hearing loss: The key role of school nurses in evidence-based screenings. *NASN School Nurse, 40*(1), 24–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/1942602X241268715

6. Juhasz, A. C., & Byers, R. (in press). Prevalence of chronic health conditions among people with disabilities in the United States. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

7. Juhasz, A. C., & Byers, R. (2025). Prevalence of chronic health conditions among people with disabilities in the United States. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 106*(5), 805–810. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2025.02.002

8. Juhasz, A. C., & Riesen, T. (2025). Propensity score analysis of RSA 911 supported and customized employment outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 62*(3), 268-278. https://doi.org/10.1177/10522263251326493

9. Kelley, H. H., Julian, A., Strand, L. & Aller, T. B. (2024). "It's a circus": Family caregivers' perceptions on accessing mental health care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 18*(3), 323-337. https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2024.2424759

10. Levin, M. E., Aller, T. B., Klimczak, K. S., Donahue, M. L. & Knudsen, F. (2025). Digital acceptance and commitment therapy for adults with chronic health conditions: Results from a waitlist-controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 188*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2025.104729

11. Levin, M. E., Mukasa, M. N., Bowers, E. M., Klimczak, K. S., & Aller, T. B. (2025). Pilot evaluation of a single session digital acceptance and commitment therapy intervention. *Behavioral Sciences, 15*(1), 75. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15010075

12. Muñoz, K., Chan, D., Goldberg, D., Ortiz, D., James Abbott, V., & White, K. (2024). A systematic review of the prevalence of late identified hearing loss in childhood. *International Journal of Audiology, 64*(2), 103–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/14992027.2024.2385550

13. Muñoz, K., Sorensen, B., Kamerer, A., & Twohig, M. P. (2025). Audiological characteristics and associations with psychological inflexibility. *American Journal of Audiology, 34*(2), 321-329. https://doi.org/10.1044/2025_AJA-24-00246

14. Muñoz, K., Velasquez, D., Humes, M., Ortiz, D., & Twohig, M. P. (2025). Assessment of auditory conditions in misophonia treatment research: a scoping review. *International Journal of Audiology, 64*(7), 653–659. https://doi.org/10.1080/14992027.2025.2467768

15. Muñoz, K., Woolley, M. G., Velasquez, D., Ortiz, D., San Miguel, G. G., Petersen, J. M., & Twohig, M. P. (2024). *American Journal of Audiology, 33*(4), 1202-1211. https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_AJA-24-00111

16. Raia, M. H., Lynch, M. M., Ward, A. C., Brown, J. A., Bonhomme, N. F., & Hunting, V. L. (2024). One size does not fit all: A multifaceted approach to educate families about newborn screening. *International Journal of Neonatal Screening, 10*(3), 44. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijns10030044

17. Ravi, R. & White, K. R. (2024). A review of social media platforms of state early hearing detection and intervention programs in the United States. *Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention, 9*(1), 2-6. https://doi.org/10.26077/c346-2a19

18. Riesen, T. Kelley, H, Rooney-Kron, M, Byers, R., & Remund, C. (in press). Knowledge and skill competencies for job coaches who provide on-the-job supports to individuals with disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*.

19. San Miguel, G. G., & Muñoz, K. (2025). Spanish version of the hearing loss acceptance and action questionnaires. *International Journal of Audiology, 64*(3), 283–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/14992027.2024.2353270

20. Snyder, A., Emmett, K., & Riesen, T. (in press). Outcomes from community conversations on supporting students with disabilities during transition. *Journal of Rehabilitation*.

21. Vilaseca, R., Rivero, M., Leiva, D., Roggman, L. A., & Innocenti, M. S. (2025). The use of video feedback to promote developmentally supportive parent–child interactions with young children with ASD or at risk: Study protocol for a randomized controlled trial (VIFEPOPA-RCT). *BMC Psychology, 13*(1), 196. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02494-6

22. Wappett, M. (2025). Digital accessibility: A critical imperative for inclusive information access. *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal, 5*(1), 1-3. DOI: 10.59620/2694-1104.1137. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/ddnj/vol5/iss1/1

23. Woolley, M. G., Capel, L. K., Bowers, E. M., Petersen, J. M., Muñoz, K., & Twohig, M. P. (2024). Clinical characteristics of a treatment seeking sample of adults with misophonia: Onset, course, triggers, context, and comorbidity. *Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders, 43*, 100915. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2024.100915

24. Woolley, M., Ramos, A., Bowers, E., Muñoz, K., Petersen, J., & Twohig, M. P. (2025). Recognizing individual variability in misophonia: Identifying symptom-based subgroups with gaussian mixture modeling. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 184*, 232-240. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2025.02.054

25. Yates, P. A., Chopra, R. V., & Likins, M. (2024). Teacher-paraeducator teams: Strategies and systems to improve student outcomes through the art of collaboration. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 35*(2), 242–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2024.2393851

Publications | Books & Book Chapters (Published & In Press)

1. Lebaron-Black, A., Kelley, H. H., & Sorgente, A. (Eds.). (2025). *Flourishing and floundering financially in emerging adulthood: A handbook*. Oxford University Press.

2. Saxey, M. T., Lebaron-Black, A. B., & Kelley, H. H. (2025). Financial socialization and emerging adults' financial outcomes. In A. LeBaron-Black, H. H. Kelley, & A. Sorgente (Eds.), *Flourishing and floundering financially in emerging adulthood: A handbook* (pp. 281-291). Oxford University Press.

IDRPP Projects

- ACRE Training Certification.....Tim Riesen
- Act Early Ambassador: Learn the Signs.....Janel Preston
- ACT Program to Improve Life Quality.....Ty Aller
- Adaptive Adventures: Assistive Technology.....Bora Lee
- AEM Corporation-WebAIM Training.....Jared Smith
- Alabama Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
- Alabama DR Workgroups.....John Copenhaver
- Alabama Jobs Alike Workgroup.....John Copenhaver
- Alabama TASK12.....Jennifer Harvey
- Alaska Personnel Development.....Norman Ames
- Alaska TASK12.....Jennifer Harvey
- AmeriCorps VISTA Public & School Partnership.....Roseline Hill
- Arizona Braille.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona DR.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona Exceptional Student Services Recruitment Websites.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona IMET.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona Language Labs.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona Paraeducators.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona Requested Technical Assistance.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona SEAP.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona TASK12.....John Copenhaver
- Arizona TIPS.....John Copenhaver
- ASSIST: State Grant for Assistive Technology (UATP).....Bora Lee
- Assistive Tech Services in Southern Utah.....Bora Lee
- Autism ECHO.....Janel Preston
- BIE Advisory Board Cooperative Agreement.....Brenda Smith
- Birmingham SPED Training Conference.....Brenda Smith
- Bridgerland Literacy.....Curt Phillips
- Cache Valley Home Visiting Program (MIECHV).....Curt Phillips
- Caltech Web Accessibility Services.....Jared Smith
- Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting.....Norman Ames
- Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education.....Norman Ames
- CERP(Customized Employment Research Project).....Tim Riesen
- Child Nutrition Program (Center).....Michael Diehl

» Child Nutrition Program (Homes).....Michael Diehl
» Colorado Directors Conference.....Norman Ames
» Colorado Dispute Resolution.....Frank Podobnik
» Colorado Law Conference.....Norman Ames
» Colorado Parents Encouraging Parents Conference.....Norman Ames
» Colorado Pep Spring 2026.....Norman Ames
» Colorado Preschool Conference FY26.....Norman Ames
» Congenital Cytomegolavirus(cCMV) Public Health and Policy Conference.....Karl White
» Connecticut Indicators 8 & 14.....John Copenhaver
» Connecticut RR Web.....John Copenhaver
» COVER to COVER: Rural Veterans Health Access Program.....Jen Morgan
» DD Network Abuse and Neglect Training.....Alex Schiwal
» Developmental Outcome for Deaf.....Alyson Ward
» DHHS Accessible Document Training.....Alex Schiwal
» DIAAID World Language Department (Spanish Translation).....Matthew Wappett
» Early ECHO.....Susan Olsen
» ECHO: Disability Awareness & Intervention.....Janel Preston
» ECHO: Time to Act-Mental Health and Substance Abuse Across the Lifespan.....Janel Preston
» Effective and Efficient Onboarding (EEO) Family-Centered Coaching.....Amie Andelin
» EHDI Parent Navigator Consortium.....Alyson Ward
» EmployAbility Clinic.....Curt Phillips
» Evaluation for USU Collaboratory for Innovation in Teaching and Leadership.....Alyson Ward
» Family Leadership in Language and Learning.....Alyson Ward
» Georgia DR Workgroups.....John Copenhaver
» Georgia SEAP.....John Copenhaver
» GHA Self Employment Research.....Tim Riesen
» Griffin-Hammis Associates Customized Employment Training and Technical Assistance.....Tricia Jones-Parkin
» Hawaii TASK12.....Jennifer Harvey
» HRSA EHDI.....Karl White
» Human Services Research Institute (DHHS) Subcontract.....Aubrey Snyder
» Idaho IMET.....Jennifer Harvey
» Idaho SPED Advisory Panel.....John Copenhaver
» Idaho TASK12.....Jennifer Harvey
» IDEA Fiscal Reporting.....Norman Ames
» IDRPP Core Grant: University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.....Matthew Wappett
» IDRPP Operating Funds.....Matthew Wappett
» Interdisciplinary Disability Awareness and Community-Engaged Learning (IDACEL).....Mary Ellen Heiner
» IOTI - Supported and Customized Employment.....Tim Riesen
» IOTI HHAU Home-based Care and Transitional Support.....Alyson Ward
» IOTI: Improving Access to Mental Health Care and Individuals Well-Being.....Ty Aller
» IOTI-Creating the Utah Community-Based Dementia Resource Ambassador Program.....Ty Aller
» IOTI-Improving Access to Mental Health Care Services for Autistic People in Utah.....Tim Riesen
» IOTI-Multicultural Disability Network & Training: Strengthening Community Integration & Practices..... Eduardo Ortiz
» Iowa Law Conference.....Frank Podobnik
» Iowa TASK 12.....Jennifer Harvey
» Kansas CapDev.....Norman Ames
» Kansas CVI Conference.....Norman Ames

» Kansas Data.....Norman Ames
» Kansas DRSE.....Norman Ames
» Kansas Early Childhood Conference.....Norman Ames
» Kansas General Supervision Supports.....Norman Ames
» Kansas LRP Special Ed Connection.....John Copenhaver
» Kansas Stake.....Norman Ames
» Kansas TASK12.....Norman Ames
» Kansas Technical Assistance Team State Education Agency Monitoring.....Norman Ames
» Kansas Tristate Conference.....Norman Ames
» Kayenta Boarding School Training.....John Copenhaver
» Kentucky Dispute Resolution State Education Agency Staff Training and Mentoring.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Event Conference Support.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Fiscal Liaison Consultant.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky General Supervision Training for State Education Staff.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Specific Technical Assistance for State Education Agency Policy and Guidance.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation Support.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children Training.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky Technical Assistance Workshops for Local Educational Agency Directors.....Norman Ames
» Kentucky's Department of Education's State Personnel Development Grant.....Norman Ames
» Kha'p'o Community School Training .....John Copenhaver
» KY/DR FY26 .....Norman Ames
» Massachusetts SEAP.....John Copenhaver
» McKinney-Vento Advisory Committee.....John Copenhaver
» McKinney-Vento Nutrition Program.....John Copenhaver
» MHIDD Utah Training Initiative.....Matthew Wappett
» Mindfulness Trainings for Human Flourishing.....Joana Franco
» Minnesota Collaborations for Employment.....Tim Riesen
» Mississippi SEAP.....John Copenhaver
» Missouri SEAP.....Brenda Smith
» Montana DPHO.....Norman Ames
» Montana DR.....Norman Ames
» Montana GDR.....Norman Ames
» Montana IMET.....Norman Ames
» Montana INDAPR.....Norman Ames
» Montana RTA.....Norman Ames
» Montana SEAP.....Norman Ames
» Montana TASK.....Norman Ames
» National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials and Instruction (NCADEMI).....Brenda Smith
» National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference(NCHAM).....Karl White
» National Initiative to address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk.....Ty Aller
» NCHAM Hearing Screener Training.....Karl White
» NCHAM HiTrack for EHDI Programs.....Karl White
» NCHAM Illinois Hi-Track Projects.....Karl White
» NCHAM National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management Resource Center.....Karl White
» Nebraska ASL Immersion Retreat 2025.....Jennifer Harvey
» Nebraska Complaint Investigator Training, Mentoring and Consultation.....Norman Ames
» Nebraska Dispute Resolution Personnel Training and Mentoring.....Norman Ames
» Nebraska Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames

» Nebraska DR.....Norman Ames
» Nebraska Facilitated Individual Education Program(IEP) Assistance and Mediator Training....Norman Ames
» Nebraska IMET.....Norman Ames
» Nebraska Specialized and Customized Professional Development and Technical Assistance..... Norman Ames
» Nebraska TASK 12.....Norman Ames
» Nebraska Tri-State Special Education Law Conference.....Norman Ames
» Nevada Adv Committee Training.....John Copenhaver
» New Mexico ACB.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Albuquerque Public Schools Mentoring and Review.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico CIS.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico DPHO.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Eclipse.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico GDR.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico GS.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Improvement Project.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico IndAPR-14.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico JAW.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico LEAatR.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico LRP.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico MedFac.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico RRWeb.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico RTA.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico SEAP.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico TASK 12.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Teacher Honorariums/Support.....Norman Ames
» New Mexico Technical Assistance.....Norman Ames
» Newborn Hearing Screening Training Curriculum.....Karl White
» NIDCD Conference Grant Support.....Karl White
» North Carolina SEAP.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota Braille.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota CIT.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota FM.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota GDR.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota IEPMed.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota IMET.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota IndAPR.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota RTA.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota SEAP.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota SSIP.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota TASK.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota Web-Based Recruitment.....Norman Ames
» North Dakota Web-Based Recruitment.....Norman Ames
» Northa Dakota TIPS.....Norman Ames
» NRCP Parent Engagement.....Brenda Smith
» NSF INCLUDES Alliance: The Alliance.....Matthew Wappett
» Ohio EHDI Efficiency.....Karl White

» Oklahoma Central Public School MTSS.....Brenda Smith
» Oklahoma CR.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma DirCon.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma GS.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma IMET DEC.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma IMET.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma IndAPR.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma LAW.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma PARA.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma Pathways to Partnership.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma SEAP.....Norman Ames
» Oklahoma TASK.....Norman Ames
» Oregon Dispute Resolution.....Brenda Smith
» Oregon ICC.....John Copenhaver
» Oregon TASK 12.....Jennifer Harvey
» Oregon Technical Assistance.....Brenda Smith
» Partnerships for Progress Colorado.....Tim Riesen
» Pay for Success Longitudinal Study.....Mark Innocenti
» Pennsylvania Braille Coaching/TA.....Brenda Smith
» Pennsylvania Dispute Resolution Workgroups.....Frank Podobnik
» Pennsylvania IMET.....Jennifer Harvey
» Pennsylvania TASK12.....Jennifer Harvey
» Preschool Development Grant B-5 (Pyramid Model).....Amie Andelin
» Puyallup Washington Web-Based Recruitment.....Norman Ames
» Refugee Tutoring and Mentoring Program.....Roseline Hill
» Shonto Preparatory School Professional Development.....John Copenhaver
» SKI-HI Institute-Deafblind Training.....Linda Alsop
» SKI-HI Special Activities.....Elizabeth Dennison
» SKI-HI Viisa & INSITE.....Elizabeth Dennison
» South Dakota CIT.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota DDD.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota DocR&T.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota DPHO.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota Dispute Resolution WebTrn.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota FAC.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota GDR.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota IEPMed.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota IndAPR.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota MTSS.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota SEAP.....Norman Ames
» South Dakota Web-Based Employment.....Norman Ames
» Southeast Utah Early Intervention (Up to 3).....Tressa Johnston
» Stride Services.....Drake Rasmussen
» Subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment (SWTCIE).....Tim Riesen
» Teaming Agreement with WestED.....Norman Ames
» UAES Seed Grant: Efficacy and Feasibility of the Adapted CREATE Better Health Adult Nutrition Program for Individuals with Disabilities.....Audrey Juhasz

» University of Missouri St Louis Training.....Tim Riesen
» Up To 3 Early Intervention FY 25.....Curt Phillips
» URLEND: Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Program.....Gretchen Peacock
» Utah Assistive Technology Foundation Support.....Bora Lee
» Utah BRL.....Norman Ames
» Utah Children's Project (ECHO).....Eduardo Ortiz
» Utah Customized Employment Training.....Tricia Jones-Parkin
» Utah DCA.....Norman Ames
» Utah Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» Utah Employment Training.....Tim Riesen
» Utah IMET FY25.....Norman Ames
» Utah IndAPR.....Norman Ames
» Utah IndPost.....Norman Ames
» Utah JAW.....Norman Ames
» Utah LEA-DRG.....Norman Ames
» Utah Professional Dev.....Norman Ames
» Utah SEAP.....Norman Ames
» Utah State University Early Hearing (CHARM).....Karl White
» Utah TASK12.....Norman Ames
» Utah TIPS.....Norman Ames
» Utah Work Based Learning.....Corban Remund
» Utah/ICC.....John Copenhaver
» Vermont Indicator 14 Survey Project.....Brenda Smith
» Virgin Islands Advisory Panel.....John Copenhaver
» Washington Special Ed Parent Survey.....Brenda Smith
» WebAIM Conference Fees.....Jared Smith
» WebAIM COVID 19 Website Accessibility.....Jared Smith
» WebAIM Royalties.....Jared Smith
» WebAIM Services.....Jared Smith
» Western Regional Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network.....Ty Aller
» Wisconsin Indicator 8.....John Copenhaver
» Workplace Supports Training.....Tim Riesen
» Wyoming Dispute Resolution.....Norman Ames
» Wyoming IMET.....Norman Ames
» Wyoming Requested Technical Assistance.....Norman Ames
» Wyoming TASK12.....Norman Ames
» Wyoming Technical Assistance and SEAP.....Norman Ames

2026 Impact Stories

During FY 2026, the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice (IDRPP) continued its dedication to improving systems, increasing access, and improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them. The impact stories compiled in this report highlight how our interdisciplinary teams leverage technical assistance, community outreach, evidence-based services, and empirical research to address systemic barriers across Utah and nationwide. Through collaborative partnerships with state education agencies, healthcare networks, school districts, and community advocacy organizations, IDRPP initiatives continue to translate federal core support into sustainable, scalable outcomes that expand opportunities at every stage of life.

At the systems level, national technical assistance centers like the National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction (NCADEMI) and the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR) are advancing systemic change—NCADEMI by standardizing IEP data structures across state and district pilot sites to ensure timely access to accessible digital materials, and CIFR by preparing state departments for federal general supervision monitoring. Concurrently, our policy and advocacy team mobilized over 200 advocates at the Utah State Capitol during the 2026 legislative session, providing the training and momentum necessary to protect vital home- and community-based disability funding and secure state waiver slots. In professional workforce development, initiatives like the Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) Interpreter Mentorship, Education, & Training (IMET) Program are addressing critical educational interpreter shortages, elevating standard Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) performance scores through online mentoring and Deaf language coaching to ensure deaf and hard-of-hearing students receive meaningful classroom access.

Our direct service and research initiatives demonstrate equal impact across local communities and family systems. Utah Assistive Technology Project's (UATP) Lab on Wheels and the Utah Frame Running Project (UFRP) are breaking geographical and physical barriers, delivering mobile assistive technology, equipment repairs, and adaptive running frames directly to rural families and public schools. Similarly, the EmployAbility Clinic's restructured team approach and campus internship model tripled client capacity while achieving durable competitive employment outcomes for transition-age youth. Complementing these community efforts, the Cache County MIECHV program empowers early parental self-advocacy to ensure early identification and intervention for infants with developmental delays, while the Center for Mental Health Promotion (CMHP) expands accessible mental healthcare through rigorously evaluated, public-facing digital health interventions tailored to parents, autistic adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

Matthew Wappett Ph.D.
IDRPP Executive Director

National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction (NCADEMI)

Brenda Smith, Cynthia Curry, Alex Langevin, Ankita Bhattashali, Christopher Phillips, Janel Preston, Jena Fahlbush, Kristen Perez-Rickels, Lyssa Prince, Jonathan Whiting, Rob Carr, Alex Schiwal, Alyson Ward, Katie Emmett, Jared Smith, Natalie Cardenas, Joana Magalhaes Franco, George Joeckel, JoLynne Lyon, Mindy Johnson, Casey Allen, Cam Lund, Logan Black, Zaham Mahmood.

Core Goal Addressed: Training & Technical Assistance

NCADEMI partnered with Applied Enterprise Management Corporation (AEM Corp), the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska's Assistive Technology Partnership, and Lincoln Public Schools (Nebraska) to improve how students with disabilities receive accessible formats of educational materials through data collection and use. The project, which is ongoing, serves a dual purpose of (1) highlighting the need for more consistent processes for providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities and (2) providing districts and states with usable and actionable data for continuous improvement in the provision and use of accessible formats.

This project included training and technical assistance on best practices for providing accessible formats as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development process, as well as data collection procedures that standardize that process. This activity was part of a broader project that added accessible format data to the Common Education Data Standards, which is a national, voluntary initiative to create a common system for education data across states.

Students with disabilities fall behind and are less likely to experience educational benefit when educational materials aren't accessible to them. One solution available to school systems is to provide accessible formats of print materials (e.g., braille, large print, digital text, or audio). However, this process is underutilized, has multiple steps, frequently requires collaboration with external sources, and special education teams are often confused by legal issues. This impact story presents the results of a pilot project to help a state and a school district standardize the process through systematic data collection and reporting. Outcomes included the identification of procedural gaps and system improvements, as well as opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration that increases access for all students with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the nation's primary special education law, requires state education agencies and school districts to provide eligible students with disabilities who cannot use standard print materials or certain digital text materials with accessible alternatives, such as Braille, digital text, audio, or large print, in a timely manner (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(23)(A); 34 C.F.R. § 300.172(a)(1)).

While the IDEA does not require IEP teams to consider a student's need for accessible formats, the IEP is the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring that students with disabilities who need accessible formats receive them in a timely manner and use them to make progress in the general education curriculum. However, studies from the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) have

identified persistent barriers to timely provision of accessible formats, even when a student's needs are documented in the IEP. A recent national review of IEP policies and guidelines conducted by NCADEMI indicated inconsistent attention to the inclusion of accessible formats in the IEP development process.

To address the procedural barriers that get in the way of providing accessible formats in a timely manner, NCADEMI partnered with AEM Corp, a technology and professional services firm that provides data management services. Under a previous project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, AEM Corp developed a process to standardize accessible format consideration in the IEP. Using the Common Education Data Standards, AEM Corp partnered with other stakeholders to develop data structures directly aligned with the questions IEP teams follow to effectively consider a student's need for an accessible format, the type of format needed, where it can be acquired, and whether it was ultimately provided in time for instruction and learning.

NCADEMI and AEM Corp recruited special education leaders from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Nebraska's Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP), and administrators and staff from Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) to pilot the data collection and reporting process. NDE was drawn to the opportunity because providing accessible formats for eligible students with disabilities is a focus of the state's Targeted Improvement Plans related to reading outcomes. Nebraska school districts are engaging in a problem-solving cycle that requires the use of data to support evidence-based implementation plans. The standardized process for IEP teams to collect data about the inclusion and delivery of accessible formats in the IEP is directly aligned with NDE's Targeted Improvement Plans for districts. When NDE put out a call for districts interested in partnering to pilot the data collection process, LPS responded.

The NCADEMI and AEM Corp teams, in partnership with ATP, provided a blend of virtual and in-person training and technical assistance to LPS administrators and staff during the 2025-2026 school year. Additionally, we held debrief meetings with LPS special education administrators. Throughout all activities, the NCADEMI team maintained internal documentation. Additionally, our external evaluator administered surveys after in-person trainings in both September of 2025 and March of 2026.

The project demonstrated that:

Training in the best practices for considering a student's need for accessible formats in the IEP led to an increased understanding of:

- The definition of accessible formats.
- The distinction between accessible formats and assistive technology
- The distinction between accessible formats as an accommodation and digital materials created to be accessible from the beginning.
- The importance of accessible materials for delivering content and information to students who use assistive technology.
- The different types of accessible formats available to meet various needs of students with disabilities.
- The range of sources and limitations of specific accessible formats by material type.

Documenting the accessible format that a specific student needs led to increased likelihood of:

- Discussion among the IEP team about the accessible format types most preferred by the student.
- Confirmation of whether the accessible material was ultimately delivered to the

student
» Identification of materials that have a pattern of low-quality accessibility features.

The overall process of data collection led to:

» Recognition of the need to clarify staff roles and distribute responsibilities for providing accessible formats.
» Improved collaboration across staff that support students who require accessible formats.
» Identification of procedural gaps and the need to tighten accessible format protocols.
» Improved confidence among pilot participants to provide accessible formats and to support others to do the same.

In addition to collaborating with ATP to provide training and technical assistance to the school district, the project team collaborated directly with NDE staff, including the state special education data team. This collaboration has yielded statewide pathways for the high-level collection and analysis of data on the provision and use of accessible formats throughout the state. While LPS is the only district currently participating, NDE now has a usable structure and system for collecting and analyzing this specific data set within their overall data reporting processes.

Standardizing the process of providing accessible formats for students with disabilities led LPS to a significant realization. To ensure the unique needs of students with disabilities are effectively met, the district organizes special education and related staff into separate teams by disability category, including three related to students who are most likely to need accessible formats:

» Blind/Visual Impairment,
» Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and
» Learning Disabilities/Other Health Impairment.

This structure matches staff with specialized training and expertise to students' disability characteristics, needs, and accommodations.

The pilot project, however, revealed that an organizational structure designed for a specific purpose can unintentionally hinder the flow of information across disability categories. For example, the Blind/Visual Impairment team has intentional protocols for providing accessible formats that the other two teams were unaware of but could benefit from. Trainings provided by NCADEMI and our partners resulted in opportunities for district staff to collaborate across teams on areas of shared importance to all the students they serve. As a Teacher of the Visually Impaired stated, "Anything we can do procedurally has positive outcomes long term."

Special education leaders are now considering how to maintain the benefits of a decentralized structure while identifying shared services that would benefit from centralization. The project also raised the possibility of coordinating a multidisciplinary team to support both assistive technology and accessible materials. A special education leader from ATP reflected, "We have gone so long without any data in these spaces; so now that we are focusing on pieces of it, I think people are seeing the value and it is raising related issues."

NDE, ATP, and LPS found these initial outcomes of the project worthy to disseminate to other districts across Nebraska. In the fall of 2026, they plan to present at the Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Summit, an event hosted by NDE's Office of Special Education to help educators make an impact by using multi-tiered systems of support to improve literacy outcomes. NCADEMI and AEM

Corp have also submitted proposals jointly with NDE, ATP, and LPS to present the project's outcomes to national audiences, including the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference.

Implementation of the data collection process by LPS continues into the 2026-2027 school year and beyond. The next focus is on scaling and sustaining the data collection and reporting process within LPS and expanding it to other districts in Nebraska.

NCADEMI and AEM Corp are also identifying a second partner state to pilot the process and we look forward to new findings. The importance of the work was conveyed by an LPS staff member who stated in a follow-up survey, "This is not only exciting, but hopeful for the future generations."

To learn more about this data pilot project or other products and services offered by NCADEMI, please contact the team at ncademi@usu.edu or (435) 554-8213 or visit ncademi.org.



Pictured at an onsite training: Jackie Hughes, AEM Corp; Cynthia Curry, NCADEMI; Emily Rang, AEM Corp; Kristen Perez-Rickels, NCADEMI; Gena Peth, AEM Corp

Multicultural Disability Network and Training (MULDINET) Project

Eduardo Ortiz, Mindy Dokos, Hollie Enniss-Poe

Core Goal Addressed: Training & Technical Assistance, Community Outreach, Continuing Education, Information Dissemination

Utah's Multicultural Disability Network & Training (MULDINET) is dedicated to connecting and training organizations, professionals, and disability-related stakeholders while providing educational and collaborative opportunities to enhance awareness, knowledge, and access to inclusive and more integrated services for individuals with disabilities and their families throughout Utah. The project recognizes the importance of considering the multiple factors that shape individuals' experiences, needs, and access to services. Particularly, MULDINET emphasizes the complex intersection of disability with sociocultural and geographic contexts, including rurality, race and ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and other community and environmental influences. By addressing these overlapping factors, MULDINET seeks to strengthen inclusive practices, expand access to services, and improve the effectiveness of support for individuals with disabilities and their families across Utah's many communities.

The purpose of MULDINET is to improve community integration, inclusion, and preparation of people with disabilities from all backgrounds. The MULDINET project achieves this by providing training to build capacity of Disability Service Providers (DSPs) and disability stakeholders who serve people with disabilities and their families from all sociocultural/geographic backgrounds. We intend to continue engaging participants in constructive discussions, disseminate information, and increase knowledge and skills regarding needed and available services and products in different community settings.

The intersection of disability, sociocultural, and geographic contexts creates complex challenges for DSPs to meet people's needs, implement quality services, and make appropriate referrals. Many sociocultural or geographic contexts represent challenges and opportunities to improve and maximize available services and products utilized by professionals who serve and interact with people with disabilities.

For the past three years, hundreds of DSPs have been eager to learn and expand their knowledge and skills related to this work. MULDINET represents the solid foundation for this follow-up effort, which has developed ongoing Community of Practice meetings, dozens of archived online trainings presented by field experts, numerous Digital Storytelling episodes showcasing lived experiences, infographics on the intersectionality of disabilities, a comprehensive digital ecosystem framework reaching thousands of people, and an introductory Canvas course, among other developed project products. In addition, a successful in-person conference called Honoring Our Intersectionalities was organized in March 2025.

The MULDINET project advances several of the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice's core goals. In creating and maintaining our continuously growing network of DSPs, stakeholders, self-advocates, and caregivers, we participate in digital and in-person community outreach activities. By producing trainings and

webinars led by experts, we provide technical assistance and continuing education by building capacity of the members of our network. Finally, we disseminate information to our network and beyond through our monthly newsletter, social media posts, and participation in conferences.

Disability affects one in four Utah adults, yet significant disparities remain, particularly among those who also live in rural areas, come from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, are older, or are not wealthy. The intersection of disability with factors such as culture, language, race and ethnicity, geography, age, and socioeconomic status can create barriers to accessing quality services, education, employment, and healthcare. Utah's rural and frontier regions further compound these challenges through limited service availability, transportation barriers, workforce shortages, and fewer opportunities for training and support.

MULDINET was developed to address these challenges by increasing disability awareness, strengthening partnerships, and fostering collaboration among professionals, organizations, self-advocates, family members, and communities across Utah. Through a diverse Advisory Board, strong community partnerships, and our comprehensive digital ecosystem, the project has built a statewide network that promotes inclusive practices, resource sharing, and meaningful connections. These efforts help bridge geographic, organizational, and cultural barriers, which improve access to inclusive services, and strengthen outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families throughout Utah, nationally, and internationally.

The MULDINET project has established a strong foundation for disability collaboration across Utah. Over the past three years, MULDINET has developed a statewide network of approximately 500+ members representing more than 20 partner organizations. Through its comprehensive digital ecosystem, the project has also engaged several thousand individuals connected to the disability community. Key factors contributing to its success include meaningful opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and learning among stakeholders who share their commitment, expertise, ideas, and strategic vision. These connections have been fostered through an intentional program framework designed to strengthen partnerships and advance collective impact across the disability sector.

MULDINET hosted a one day in-person conference last spring on disability and diversity. The conference theme was Honoring Our Intersectionalities and was held at the USU Salt Lake Center on March 21, 2025. The conference offered an invaluable opportunity for community stakeholders working with individuals with disabilities from diverse multicultural backgrounds to deepen their knowledge. We examined how the intersectionality of disability interacts with factors such as geography (including rural and remote areas), race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status (including health literacy and family structures) and other cultural elements. These multifaceted intersections create complex realities that require expanded conversations and learning. The event was successful, having in attendance a full venue capacity (~100 participants from many places of Utah and beyond). Additional contributors on 12 conference tables presented information from different agencies, organizations, and projects, such as the Utah Parent Center, Holy Cross Ministries, Utah Independent Living Center, Utah Disability Council, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Relay Utah, Utah Assistive Technology Program, the Public & School Partnership - VISTA program, NCADEMI,

among others. We had a keynote session followed by three breakout sessions, each exploring different aspects of intersectionality. Each breakout session offered two simultaneous presentations, and we concluded with a panel discussion featuring self-advocates and service providers.

Our goal was to equip participants with a deeper understanding of the unique challenges faced by disability context situations, fostering awareness, and enhancing practical skills. It served as a catalyst for relationship building among participants who might not otherwise have opportunities to connect. Attendees reported gaining new perspectives on disability and diversity, identifying resources they were previously unaware of, and establishing connections with organizations and professionals from other sectors. The conference reinforced the value of cross-sector collaboration, building trust, and the importance of including lived experience voices in disability-related education and systems change efforts.

At the conclusion of the conference, we edited and archived all recorded sessions to our website and YouTube channel for further study. The evaluation feedback from attendees reflected a positive experience overall. By advancing the understanding of disability and diversity through training, education, and networking, we aim to build a more inclusive world for all.

Individual level story

One of our values in the MULDINET project is to have a bottom-up approach, meaning we learn from people with lived experience to inform our training efforts. All of our Advisory Board members and other project participants who have shared



Eloy Salazar speaks as a panelist at the "Honoring Our Intersectionalities" MULDINET Conference in March 2025. Cynthia Garbett and Ana Liquin are also in the picture as panelists.

experiences with us have been key in better understanding pertinent issues, but one participant in particular has stood out as a success story with our project. Eloy Salazar joined our Advisory Board as a self-advocate at the age of 14. While juggling his schoolwork and other daily life commitments for a Latino teenager with autism, he agreed to join quarterly advisory board meetings, provide thoughtful feedback and ideas, and participate in discussions with other stakeholders on the board. Not long after joining our team, he volunteered to share his personal story with us as part of our Digital Storytelling series. During his interview, he shared his experiences, good and bad, with making friends, participating in disability services, and unique impacts of his culture on his family's life. As time passed, Eloy joined the conversation more and more. We approached him to participate in a panel discussion during our in-person conference in 2025, and while he showed some apprehension initially, he ultimately decided to accept. He came prepared with notecards and prompts for himself, but as the conversation flowed, he relied less on his supports and spoke from his experiences and his heart about topics of great importance. After the conference presentation, he was clearly energized and empowered by the opportunity to speak, and his mother was elated that he was able to set a challenging goal for himself and find success. The following is one of his quotes from participating in that panel:

"Providers need to understand that we are human. We're not a disease, we're not failures, we're human. People like to think that conditions like autism can be cured, but that is just a cold and apathetic view. It's like saying that we will save the planet by destroying it, which is just a ridiculous perspective. They may see us as crazy, strange and stupid, but we know that is actually them who are unveiling their insecurities about themselves. We will not be sidelined as outcasts for we will continue to share our voices to the world. We will not be silent."

That statement truly reflects his participation as a whole with MULDINET – he joined with some tentative goals set, and has grown as a self-advocate, moving from boy to man, and gaining confidence to share his ideas and experiences to help make change. Today, Eloy is a recent high school graduate with upcoming opportunities awaiting him in higher education. He has been a book contributor in both English and Spanish. He also continues to participate as an active advisory board member with MULDINET.

Efforts made by MULDINET aim to enhance community integration and inclusion for people with disabilities, considering complex sociocultural and geographic contexts. Encouraging active listening, learning, and creating trusting relationships among network members has proven to be worthwhile, and providing opportunities for individuals with lived experience to be at the forefront of our efforts has impacted the work we are doing together for the better. An Advisory Board member who is a community leader said as part of past evaluation feedback:

"MULDINET is a fantastic resource for Utah. Regardless of the current political climate that can make this work difficult, this is the right time for our committee to continue working and making a difference in Utah."

As the network continues to grow, its foundation of partnership and shared learning will help create more inclusive communities and improved opportunities for people with disabilities and their families throughout Utah.

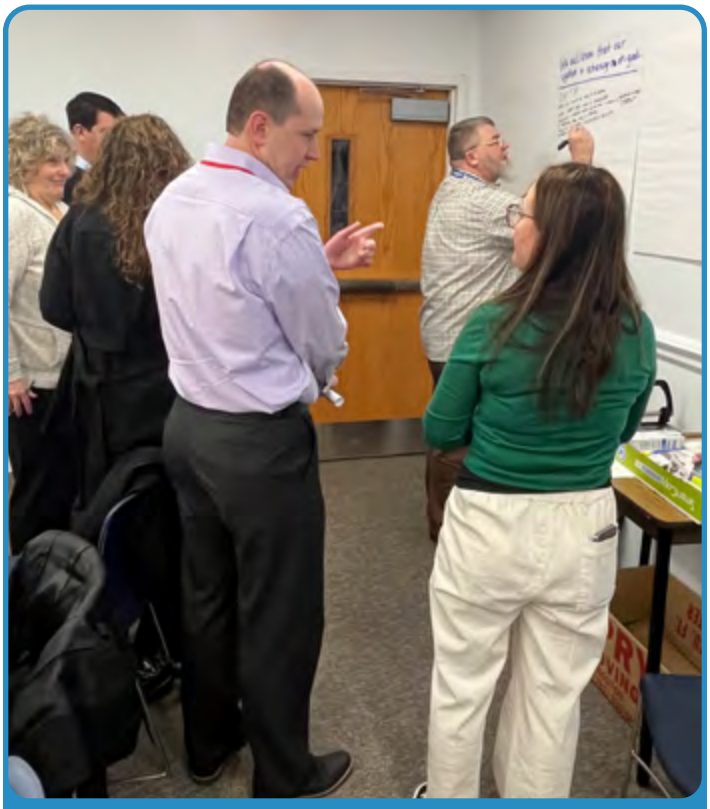
Contact the MULDINET Project on their website.

Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR)

Steve Smith

Core Goals Addressed: Training & Technical Assistance

Beginning in early 2023, staff from the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR) coordinated with staff from other Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-funded technical assistance (TA) centers. Together, they provided sustained support to the special education director and staff at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to prepare for OSEP's spring 2026 Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS) on-site visit. The focus of the OSEP DMS visit was to determine the strength and reasonableness of DESE's special education general supervision system under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



Special education staff gather for a CIFR activity in Massachusetts

CIFR's role in this process was to support DESE fiscal and program staff to review existing IDEA fiscal policies, procedures, and practices, identify gaps, and provide feedback and training. CIFR also engaged with DESE staff in activities designed to prepare them to present an overview of their system to OSEP, provide documentation of their policies, procedures, and practices, and respond to questions from OSEP during the on-site DMS visit. The project is currently paused as DESE awaits the results of the DMS visit in the form of a letter of findings. Once OSEP issues its letter to DESE, CIFR will provide assistance to DESE staff to address any fiscal findings and support them until they are resolved.

This ongoing activity was prompted by OSEP's notification to DESE that they would be engaged in DMS in 2025-26 as part of cohort 3. The state director of special education at DESE reached out to CIFR and other OSEP-funded TA centers to support her and her staff with planning and improving systems cohesion and integration in advance of the visit. CIFR was specifically tasked with support of DESE fiscal staff in CIFR's core areas of local educational agency (LEA) maintenance of effort (MOE), comprehensive, coordinated early intervening services (C/CEIS), and allocation of IDEA Part B funds to LEAs. The key partnerships to successfully prepare DESE staff for the DMS visit were between the two CIFR staff assigned to the state, between CIFR staff and other OSEP-funded TA centers, and between the TA providers and the DESE staff assigned to work on the IDEA fiscal policies, procedures, and practices.

This is an ongoing activity but DESE has refined and developed written IDEA fiscal procedures that will demonstrate improved compliance with the IDEA fiscal requirements. Due to the length of this activity,



A planning activity helps special education staff prepare for an upcoming Office of Special Education Programs visit.

DESE staff have turned over, and CIFR provided IDEA fiscal training to new staff, which has led to a better understanding of IDEA fiscal requirements.

While this process is still ongoing, the state director of special education did share positive feedback regarding CIFR's support through the culmination of the OSEP DMS visit.

> ***"On behalf of the Massachusetts team, I want to thank you for your support and guidance throughout the DMS preparation process. Through CIFR, you have been helping us to examine our system for the many years that led up to this week's DMS visit. You have been instrumental in helping to improve the IDEA fiscal systems in Massachusetts. I believe we were well prepared to our visit because of the many hours you have spent with us not only improving our policies but refining the implementation. We value your professionalism and expertise, and we look forward to continuing to work with you as we navigating this next phase that will likely include some corrective action."***

Although DESE is still awaiting the results of the OSEP DMS visit, it is clear that the agency was better prepared and had improved systems in place. These improvements were reflected in DESE's new and revised IDEA fiscal policies, procedures, and practices and were due, in part, to CIFR's ongoing training and technical assistance. CIFR remains prepared to coordinate additional support with other TA centers as needed.

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Utah Assistive Technology (UATP) Project – Lab on Wheels

Bora Lee, Dan O'Crowley, Robert Remund, Wes Smith

Core Goals Addressed: Community Services; Training & Technical Assistance; Community Outreach; Information Dissemination

The UATP South Lab on Wheels is a mobile assistive technology service model designed to bring assistive technology resources, equipment, repairs, demonstrations, and training directly to individuals and communities throughout central and southern Utah. Rather than requiring people to travel long distances to one of UATP's office locations, staff travel to communities across the state to provide services where people live, work, and receive support.

Through the Lab on Wheels, UATP provides assistive technology demonstrations, short-term device loans, mobility device repairs, community outreach, training for individuals and professionals, and connections to additional disability-related resources. The program also partners with independent living centers, healthcare providers, schools, therapists, and community organizations to identify local needs and coordinate services.

What makes the Lab on Wheels unique is its ability to combine multiple assistive technology services into a single mobile platform. This flexible approach allows UATP to reach rural and underserved communities that may otherwise have limited access to assistive technology professionals and equipment. By bringing services directly into communities, the Lab on Wheels reduces transportation barriers, increases awareness of available resources, and helps individuals access the technology and support they need to live more independently.

UATP South Lab on Wheels has transformed how assistive technology services are delivered across rural and frontier Utah. By bringing assistive technology directly into rural communities, the program has eliminated barriers caused by distance, transportation, and limited local resources. Through mobile demonstrations, device loans, mobility equipment repairs, and community partnerships, individuals with disabilities have been able to regain independence, remain safely in their homes, and participate more fully in their communities.

Utah is a large, geographically diverse state, and many individuals with disabilities live in rural and frontier communities where access to assistive technology services can be limited. While the UATP has provided services statewide since 1989, individuals living in central and southern Utah often faced significant barriers to accessing specialized support. For some, receiving a device demonstration, equipment repair, or assistive technology consultation required several hours of travel. These challenges were even greater for individuals with mobility limitations, limited transportation options, or caregiver balancing work and family responsibilities.

UATP explored several options to improve access, including the possibility of opening an additional office. However, it became clear that a traditional office-based approach would not fully address the problem. No matter where an office was located, many rural communities would still remain several hours away from services. At the same time,

UATP staff were hearing directly from consumers, healthcare providers, therapists, educators, and community organizations about the need for greater access to assistive technology resources in their communities. Rural partners needed a way to connect individuals with equipment, expertise, and support without requiring them to travel long distances.

An opportunity emerged when UATP secured grant funding to purchase and equip a mobile van specifically designed to deliver assistive technology services in the community. The van was customized to transport assistive technology devices, repair equipment, and outreach materials, creating a mobile office that could travel throughout the state. This approach allowed UATP to bring services directly to individuals and communities rather than requiring individuals to travel to a fixed office location.

The success of the program has been made possible through strong partnerships with independent living centers, healthcare providers, therapists, schools, aging service organizations, and other community partners. These collaborations help identify local needs, connect individuals to services, host community events, and expand access to assistive technology throughout rural Utah.

The impact of the UATP South Lab on Wheels has been significant for individuals, families, and communities across Utah. To date, the program has delivered low-cost assistive technology to 45 individuals, resulting in approximately $18,225 in direct consumer savings. In many cases, these services prevented individuals from going without critical mobility or daily living equipment due to financial hardship or geographic isolation. During the same reporting period, 21 assistive technology devices from the public lending library were loaned or trialed to support increased independence, safety, and informed decision-making before purchase. An additional 90 individuals were connected with disability-related resources and services, while more than 200 individuals gained increased exposure to assistive technology through demonstration, training, outreach activities, and repair events.

The Lab on Wheels has also strengthened community partnerships throughout southern and rural Utah. Collaboration with independent living centers, healthcare providers, therapists, schools, and local organizations has increased access to mobility device repairs, assistive technology expertise, and ongoing support in communities where these services were previously difficult or impossible to obtain.

Beyond the numbers, the program has restored confidence, mobility, and independence for individuals who otherwise may have gone without support. The ability to provide services directly within rural communities has reduced travel burdens, prevented delays in care, and created stronger local networks of disability-related support.



UATP staff Wes Smith helping a client in Blanding.

The impact of the UATP South Lab on Wheels can be seen in the many ways it helps individuals and families overcome barriers to independence.

One individual in central Utah was struggling with mobility and had become increasingly limited in their ability to walk safely for exercise and everyday activities. At the recommendation of a physical therapist, UATP provided a Zeen mobility walker through its Assistive Technology Lending Library so the individual could try the device before pursuing a purchase. During the loan period, the individual was able to walk outdoors again, improve leg strength, and regain confidence in their mobility. Encouraged by the success of the trial, they applied for insurance funding to obtain their own Zeen. The request was initially denied because the insurance provider questioned whether the individual could safely operate the device. UATP provided documentation from the loan period demonstrating the individual's successful use of the equipment, which helped support the appeal and ultimately secure approval.

In southern Utah, partnerships have become just as important as the equipment itself. Through ongoing collaboration with the Red Rock Center for Independence, UATP regularly brings repair and maintenance services directly to community members who might otherwise have to travel hours for assistance. During one outreach event, individuals arrived with a variety of mobility equipment concerns, including worn wheelchair tires, failing power wheelchair batteries, and malfunctioning motors. Repairs that may have otherwise left someone stranded at home or without reliable transportation were completed onsite, allowing consumers to continue working, attending appointments, and participating in their communities. The success of these events has strengthened community partnerships and highlighted the need for ongoing rural repair services.

The impact also extends to families and caregivers. During a Wheelchair Wash and Safety Inspection event in Carbon County, a mother brought in her son's wheelchair for cleaning and inspection. Her son, who is non-verbal and uses a feeding tube, relies on the wheelchair throughout the day. During the inspection, staff discovered that the seatbelt had become twisted and pinched within the chair's hinge, creating a safety concern. The team thoroughly sanitized the chair, repaired the seatbelt, and ensured everything was functioning properly. For the family, the service provided more than a clean wheelchair; it provided reassurance that their son's equipment was safe, comfortable, and ready for daily use.

While each story is unique, they share a common theme. Access to assistive technology is about much more than equipment. It is about helping people maintain their independence, support their families, and continue participating in the activities that give their lives meaning. Whether through a device loan, a repair event, or a safety inspection, the UATP South Lab on Wheels helps ensure that geography is not a barrier to opportunity.

Every year, individuals with disabilities in rural Utah face challenges that go far beyond their disability. Limited local services, long travel distances, and a lack of specialized resources can make it difficult to access even basic assistive technology support. The UATP South Lab on Wheels helps bridge that gap by bringing equipment, expertise, and services directly into communities, making it easier for people to stay independent, safe, and connected to the activities and people that matter most.

Over the past year, the program has helped individuals regain mobility, receive critical equipment repairs, explore assistive technology

solutions, and connect with resources that may not otherwise have been available to them. Whether it is repairing a power wheelchair, helping someone obtain equipment through small grants, or supporting a caregiver who is trying to keep a loved one safe, these services often have a lasting impact on a person's daily life.

The Lab on Wheels has also strengthened partnerships with independent living centers, healthcare providers, aging services, schools, therapists, and community organizations across the state. These relationships help ensure that individuals living in rural communities have access to knowledgeable professionals and support systems close to home.

The stories shared in this report highlight the importance of meeting people where they are. For some, that means being able to continue working, attending school, or participating in community activities. For others, it means greater peace of mind, improved safety, or the confidence that comes from knowing help is available when it is needed. While every story is different, they all demonstrate the same outcome: access to assistive technology can open doors to greater independence and opportunity.

For more information about UATP South Lab on Wheels or opportunities to partner with the program, please contact:

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- Wes Smith: wes.smith@usu.edu, 435-767-1719.



Utah Assistive Technology Program mobile AT lab van.

EmployAbility Clinic

Erica Lundahl

Core Goal Addressed: Community Services

The EmployAbility Clinic received new leadership and underwent restructuring in 2024, implementing a stronger team-based approach to serving clients. This shift created a more collaborative environment where staff worked together to support all clients rather than maintaining separate caseloads. As a result, the clinic significantly increased successful job placements and expanded services for individuals with disabilities.

In addition, the clinic launched a paid student internship program with spring, summer, and fall sessions in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation/Utah Department of Workforce Services and Cache County School District. The program provides transition-age students with disabilities valuable early work experiences on the Utah State University campus.

The EmployAbility Clinic experienced significant growth after implementing new leadership and restructuring efforts. Over the past two years, the clinic tripled the number of clients served and doubled successful job placements while expanding services to include paid internships, work readiness training, and life skills support for transition-age youth and adults with disabilities. The continued success of the program has led to plans to expand the paid internship program into Brigham City in Fall 2026.

Employment is critical to the independence and long-term success of individuals with disabilities. Early work experiences, including internships and first jobs, provide opportunities for individuals to build resumes, gain confidence, develop workplace skills, and discover their strengths and interests.

Many individuals with disabilities face barriers to employment, including lack of work experience, transportation challenges, employer misconceptions, limited workplace accommodations, and difficulty navigating the job search process independently. Transition-age youth especially benefit from structured opportunities to gain work experience before leaving school settings.

The EmployAbility Clinic recognized the need for a more collaborative and individualized approach to supporting clients. Through new leadership and restructuring, the clinic adopted a team-based service model focused on advocacy, employer partnerships, job development, and individualized support. Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation/Utah Department of Workforce Services, Cache County School District, and employers throughout the community helped create more opportunities for clients and students to gain



An EmployAbility client on the job at USU.

meaningful work experience.

Following the leadership change and restructuring efforts, the EmployAbility Clinic experienced substantial growth and improved outcomes. The number of job placements doubled compared to 2022–2023, and the number of clients served increased to 65. The clinic's overall income also tripled as a result of expanded services and successful employment outcomes.

In June 2024, the clinic launched a year-round paid internship program for students ages 17–22 in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation/ Utah Department of Workforce Services and Cache County School District. Students participating in the program work in paid internships on the Utah State University campus while receiving support from job coaches and clinic staff. The program has been highly successful and now typically maintains a waiting list for participation. The program has served 64 interns since its launch in 2024.

The clinic also expanded services to include work readiness and life skills training for clients needing additional support to achieve workplace success. Staff members assist clients with resume development, mock interviews, workplace communication, self-advocacy, and on-the-job coaching that gradually fades as clients gain independence.

A major factor in the clinic's success has been persistence and relationship building with employers. Staff regularly network with community businesses, advocate for clients, and help employers identify solutions and accommodations that create successful employment opportunities. The clinic often arranges trial work experiences that allow clients to demonstrate their skills while helping employers recognize the value individuals with disabilities bring to the workplace.



An EmployAbility intern working at the Aggie Chocolate Factory at Utah State University.

Vocational Rehabilitation has continued to increase referrals to the EmployAbility Clinic as a result of the clinic's strong employment outcomes and growing reputation within the community.

RVD came to our clinic for services after working with us in 2024. He was successfully placed in a job where he was responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of a transportation center for public buses. However, after his work hours changed and he was no longer able to use public transportation to get to and from work, he unfortunately had to leave the position.

Clinic staff then worked with RVD on interview skills, job applications, and identifying positions that matched his interests and strengths. In April 2025, the clinic reached out to a local restaurant and helped arrange an interview opportunity. RVD was hired to maintain the restaurant lobby and dining area. Because RVD is unable to read, clinic staff created individualized picture-based task lists that visually showed his daily job duties and responsibilities. This accommodation proved to be highly successful and allowed him to complete his

responsibilities independently and confidently.

After receiving onsite support from a job coach for approximately eight months, RVD was able to perform all job duties independently. His employment became stable and successful enough for his case to be successfully closed.

RVD's success demonstrates the importance of advocacy, employer partnerships, individualized accommodations, and ongoing support in helping individuals with disabilities achieve meaningful and lasting employment.

The EmployAbility Clinic continues to help individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment and develop greater independence through work experience. Through collaborative leadership, innovative programming, strong employer partnerships, and individualized support, the clinic has significantly increased employment outcomes for clients and expanded opportunities for transition-age youth.

The clinic's continued growth demonstrates the importance of inclusive employment opportunities and the impact that individualized support and advocacy can have on the lives of individuals with disabilities. As the paid internship program expands into Brigham City in Fall 2026, even more students and community members will have access to valuable work experiences that support long-term employment success.

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EmployAbility program director Erica Lundahl with an intern from the PEER Program at the 2026 Disability Advocacy Day at the Utah State Capitol.

The IDRPP Policy Team – Disability Advocacy Day

Aubrey Snyder, Matthew Wappett

Core Goal Addressed: Training & Technical Assistance, Community Outreach, and Information Dissemination

The IDRPP's policy team engages in projects and activities that support a variety of issues that impact disability systems as well as the individuals and families that these systems serve. The IDRPP is a co-collaborator of Utah's Disability Advocacy Day, an annual event that is meant to raise awareness of disability issues, provide training to individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals on Utah's state legislative processes, and bring community members together for a day of advocacy and storytelling.

This Disability Advocacy Day, we hosted over 200 participants at the Utah State Capitol for a day of education and advocacy. This includes over 100 individuals trained in legislative functions and advocacy and over 200 individuals participating in a disability advocacy rally and follow-up reception, where participants took what they learned and put it into practice talking with Utah State legislators and agencies.

Every year, Utah State legislators gather for 45 days starting in January to discuss, introduce, and change Utah laws and funding. Each year, legislative topics that impact the disability community have various focuses such as guardianship and supported decision-making, employment, special education, and so on. In addition to these topics, one item that remains consistent each year in Utah is funding for our waitlist for DD services, which as of April 2026, currently sits at just over 6,500 individuals. To make matters worse, due to Federal funding changes, this legislative session started with proposed 10% cuts to disability services and elimination of an entire waiver. Without informed community members and professionals advocating for or against the legislative items and funding that impact them, the legislature is often left uneducated or unaware of the need for funding for these vital services and disability issues.

In addition to the need of informed community members, advocating at the state-level can be intimidating, and often-times, confusing. To increase awareness around disability issues and support education and training around advocacy, we at the IDRPP, along with our community partners at the Utah Parent Center, Disability Law Center, Utah Developmental Disabilities Council, Utah Statewide Independent Living Council, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, and ACLU Utah, hosted a day-long Disability Advocacy Day that brought advocates from around the state up to the Utah State Capitol for a day of learning and advocating.

2026's Disability Advocacy Day was able to provide over 100 trainees, including individuals with disabilities, family members, disability professionals, and other community members, with education and increased knowledge on Utah's 2026 legislative session, the Utah State Legislature including processes and members, and advocacy tips and tricks. Additionally, after the training, over 200 attendees participated in a march and rally where 13 speakers (including individuals with disabilities, disability organization representatives, and legislators) provided inspiring speeches disability rights and issues, along with a reception where legislators also attended to hear more about the impacts of potential cuts and other disability-related



Advocates at 2026 Disability Advocacy Day Rally at the Utah State Capitol.

legislation.

One week after the 2026 Disability Advocacy Day, the Utah Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee met to discuss budget items, including the proposed 10% cuts to disability services. The advocacy efforts during Disability Advocacy Day and the momentum it built from the disability community resulted in the Committee kicking off the meeting acknowledging the packed room of disability advocates, a turnout so large that individuals had to be directed to an overflow room. The Committee Chair commented that the Committee was "grateful for the goodness and engagement" they'd received from disability advocates. "We have received a lot of emails and in those emails are stories that are tender and heartwarming and I thank you for the courage you are showing in the circumstances that you've been given." The Legislator then went on to invite those in the room advocating against cuts to disability services to please stand up so they could take a picture to show their fellow legislators; almost everyone in the room stood. Across the 45-day session, meetings continued where discussions on which Utah services would receive cuts or funding occurred. In the end, thanks to the large turnout of disability advocates and Disability Advocacy Day efforts, absolutely no cuts were made to Utah's disability services and an additional 100 individuals were funded to get off of the waitlist. While this is not a large number of individuals, given the massive number of those on the waitlist, this was a huge feat in a year where cuts seemed to be inevitable.

This year's Disability Advocacy Day and the advocacy done by individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals that followed, was a testament to the outcomes that can happen when individuals are educated and empowered to create change and make their voices heard. Without the unified voices of these advocates, Utah could very well be facing a decrease in disability services and supports over the coming years. If you would like more information on Disability Advocacy Day or have questions about this event, please contact Aubrey Snyder at Aubrey.Snyder@usu.edu



IDRPP Executive Director Matthew Wappett speaks to community members, influencers and advocates at an event in Salt Lake City.

Cache County Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)

Tressa Johnston PT, DPT, Cari Gongora M.S.

Core Goal Addressed: Community Services; Community Outreach.

The Cache County Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (Cache Co. MIECHV) Program is a no-cost, evidence-based service that empowers families from pregnancy through age six using the Parents as Teachers curriculum. Home visiting educators build strong, trusting relationships with families to support holistic family wellness, responsive positive parenting, child development monitoring, and school readiness.

Through these relationships, home visiting educators improve parental and child health and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. Visits are tailored to each families' needs and can occur in the home or any comfortable setting. Families receive guidance on family wellness, parenting, child development, breastfeeding, nutrition, toilet training, safety, and more. In addition to twice monthly visits, families are invited to participate in Family Connection Group activities, a monthly gathering where the whole family is welcome to participate. These sessions include fun family and child activities, presentations on specialized learning topics, and opportunities to meet and connect with other families.

The goal of this activity is to empower parents and strengthen their capacity to promote positive family and child outcomes. This includes using screeners to identify maternal depression, intimate partner violence, parent-child interactions, and developmental delays. The results are then discussed with families to assess overall family well-being and identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Through the relationship between the family and home visiting educator, trust is established allowing reflective discussion aimed at supporting the family to create their goals for home visiting. This continued relationship, filled with support from home visitors, provides more opportunity to guide and reflect with the family on barriers and perceived limitations that are impacting the family system.

An example of the MIECHV program's success involves a family that needed support to understand their baby's early developmental differences and how to advocate effectively within the medical system. Drawing on her strong educational background—including a master's degree in human development and specialized training in the FAN model, motivational interviewing, and trauma informed practice—the home visiting educator worked with the family over five months to answer their questions and guide them through their concerns about their baby's development.

The home visitor encouraged thoughtful reflection, strengthened the mother's confidence, and helped both parents become effective advocates for their baby within the medical system. Through Cache County MIECHV's close partnership with Early Intervention, the family was connected with specialized therapeutic services to provide the individualized support their baby needed.

The home visiting educator gathered data through two developmental screenings, ongoing observations, and reflective conversations with the family. The developmental screenings showed



A Family Connection Group activity focused on food.

a consistent pattern of developmental delays, prompting early referrals and demonstrating the effectiveness of our program's early identification process. As a result of this support, the parents gained increased knowledge of their baby's development, improved confidence in navigating the medical system, and faster access to specialized services. These outcomes show how the program increases access, strengthens parental advocacy, and improves long-term developmental pathways for children.

Last year, a mother in our program gave birth to her fifth child. With four older children, she expected a smooth transition and felt confident in her experience. However, at her first postpartum visit, her home visiting educator noticed subtle signs that something might be developmentally different when compared to other infants her age. The baby seemed tense, had trouble nursing, and struggled to get comfortable no matter what they tried. These early observations led the home visitor to begin conversations with the mother about what she was seeing.

To better understand the baby's development, the home visiting educator had the mother complete a developmental screening at two months, and again two months later. The results of the screening suggested a possible delay. The home visiting educator encouraged the mother to bring these concerns to her pediatrician at their next well-child visit.

At the baby's four month well-child visit, the mother shared her concerns. However, the doctor recommended a "wait and see" approach, saying that the baby was still young and children reach milestones at different times. The mother left the appointment feeling dismissed and unsure. She called her home visiting educator and expressed her frustration because she could clearly see differences between how her older children were as infants and her new baby.

During their next scheduled home visit, the home visiting educator came prepared to reflectively discuss the importance of trusting themselves as parents. The home visiting educator helped the mother build confidence to seek a second

opinion and supported her in preparing for that appointment. When they met again, the mother shared that the new pediatrician listened carefully.

After hearing her concerns and reviewing the developmental screening scores, the doctor agreed that further evaluation was needed and recommended a referral to a neurologist. The mother then confidently requested a referral to Early Intervention as well, so her baby could begin receiving services while they waited for medical answers.

With close collaboration between Cache Co. MIECHV and the local Early Intervention team, the baby began therapeutic services and soon met with a neurologist. The neurologist ordered an MRI, and within two weeks, the family received the results: their baby had significant differences in neurological development, including a major loss of gray matter in the brain.

During a reflective conversation afterward, the home visiting educator paused to ask the mother how she was feeling. The mother said she felt both proud and relieved. She was proud that she trusted her instincts, built her confidence, and learned to partner with medical professionals. She was relieved that, although much was still unknown, her baby was making progress with the Early Intervention therapeutic services, and the family was finally getting the answers they needed to properly support their child.

By collecting data through two developmental screenings and providing reflective guidance, the home visiting educator empowered the parents to advocate within the medical system, seek a second opinion, and secure timely referrals to a neurologist and Early Intervention program. As a result, the baby began therapeutic services promptly and is undergoing further evaluation to receive a diagnosis that will guide long-term care.

This story illustrates the program's broader impact: increasing parental knowledge of child development, strengthening responsive parenting, improving access to community resources, and promoting whole family wellness. The MIECHV program's home visiting educators play a critical role in supporting early identification of potential delays, family empowerment, and coordinated developmental support.

For more information on this program, contact Ashlee Holguin ashlee.holguin@usu.edu or (435) 797-2356. And visit the MIECHV website.



Cache County MIECHV staff.

Utah Frame Running Project (UFRP)

Tressa Johnston

Core Goal Addressed: Community Services, Trainings and Technical Assistance, Community Outreach, Information Dissemination and Research and Evaluation

The Utah Frame Running Project (UFRP), housed within the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP), expanded access to adaptive assistive mobility equipment by acquiring 13 frame runners and creating both school-based and individual family lending programs. Since its inception in 2024, UFRP has loaned frame runners to 20 schools across 13 school districts throughout Utah and provided frame runners to 25 families with children with physical disabilities. UFRP recently coordinated 3 frame runner loans for the school iHOPE in Manhattan NY.

Schools use frame runners during their academic school year, using frame runners in physical therapy, occupational therapy, adapted physical education (APE), physical education (PE), recess, and recreational school activities to increase mobility and engagement for students with physical disabilities.

During the summer months, individual families can borrow frame runners for extended periods of time allowing them to try the equipment before purchasing. Families receive individualized instruction, frame runner fitting, and ongoing support to ensure safe and effective use. UFRP also assists families and schools in identifying funding sources to purchase their own frame runners.

Frame Running, also known as RaceRunning, is an adaptive sport that enables individuals with moderate-to-severe mobility impairments to achieve upright, self-directed movement using a three-wheeled frame equipped with large wheels, a saddle, and postural chest support. This design allows participants with limited or no independent ambulation to engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity that is often unattainable through traditional therapeutic or recreational interventions. Evidence shows that individuals with moderate to severe physical disabilities, particularly those with cerebral palsy (CP), experience significant disparities in physical activity participation. These disparities result from a combination of functional



The Utah Frame Running Project brought an assortment of frame runners to a Utah adaptive recreation event in Park City.

limitations, environmental barriers, limited provider awareness, and a lack of accessible equipment trial opportunities within schools and communities. Research shows physical inactivity contributes to decreased functional strength as children age, increased risk of cardiometabolic disease, reduced cardiorespiratory fitness, poorer mental health, social isolation, and decreased overall quality of life. Studies have shown that Frame Running can improve cardiorespiratory endurance, promote skeletal muscle hypertrophy, increase physical activity participation, and improved functional mobility. Participants reported increased confidence, enjoyment, independence, self-esteem, and greater socialization contributing to a stronger sense of belonging within their schools and communities

UFRP is the only known program in the United States coordinating multi-site frame runner lending programs that serves both school districts and individual families. In addition, UFRP designed and developed three mini frame runners for children ages 2-3 years who receive Part C Early Intervention. These smaller frame runners introduce mobility and outdoor play opportunities at an early age, helping families recognize and experience the benefits of early physical activity and outdoor play.

UFRP is in the early stages of conducting research examining the use of frame runners in the school settings to support mobility, self-initiated engagement and participation in physical activities. Findings from this work will help inform future physical therapy services, APE, and PE practices.

The UFRP has increased access to adaptive mobility equipment for children with significant physical disabilities by creating a statewide lending and technical assistance program. Through partnerships with schools and families, the project has expanded opportunities for movement, recreation, social engagement, and community participation while helping students experience greater independence, confidence, and active participation.

Children with moderate-to-severe physical disabilities often have limited access to adaptive recreation equipment that supports independent movement, exploration, and active play. While their peers may choose from a variety of recreational options such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and roller blades, children with significant mobility impairments are frequently limited to mobility devices including walkers, gait trainers, or wheelchairs. Although these devices are essential for daily mobility, they are not designed to support running, freedom of movement across multiple surfaces, promote endurance, or recreational experiences associated with active play and sport.

As a result, many children with physical disabilities have fewer opportunities to engage in physical activity, participate alongside peers, and experience the social, emotional, and health benefits of recreation. Recognizing this need, the Utah Frame Running Project (UFRP) leveraged the Utah Assistive Technology Program's (UATP) established equipment lending model to increase access to adaptive mobility and recreation opportunities. By combining equipment loans, technical assistance, training, individualized fitting, and funding support, UFRP removes barriers that prevent children, families, schools, and communities from exploring and experiencing the benefits of Frame Running. Through this approach, UFRP helps ensure that children with physical disabilities have greater opportunities to move, play, participate, and belong.

Since launching the project, UFRP has:

- Loaned 13 frame runners to 20 schools across 13 school districts.
- Provided loans to 25 individual families

- Developed three custom mini frame runners for children ages 2–3 years participating in Part C Early Intervention services.
- Delivered training and technical assistance to educators, therapists, and families throughout the state of Utah, Massachusetts and New York.

Educators and therapists report increased student engagement, improved endurance, greater willingness to participate in physical activities, and enhanced self-initiation during school-based activities. Families report expanded mobility opportunities, improved strength and endurance, increased participation in family recreation activities, and greater inclusion with siblings and peers.

Several families of children with progressive or degenerative conditions have reported that frame runners helped preserve mobility and allowed their children to continue participating in activities they otherwise would not have been able to access. Students have participated in community fun runs, school events, recess activities, and family outings, creating opportunities for active play that were previously unavailable.

Addison began using UFRP's first custom-designed mini frame runner at three years of age. Now six years old, she continues to use Frame Running as part of her daily life and recently received grant funding to purchase her own frame runner. According to her family:

> ***"She loves using the frame runner because it makes her feel like she is running. No other piece of equipment gives her that feeling. We brought it to school so she could use it during recess, and she runs alongside her classmates. It has been a great alternative to a tricycle because she feels like she can keep up with her peers."***

Recently, Addison participated in her first family fun run, an experience she especially enjoyed because she earned a medal and participated alongside her siblings, parents, and other community members. Her parents report that the frame runner has increased her confidence, encouraged physical activity, and created opportunities to participate with friends, classmates, and family members. Whether using it at school, the park, or community events, Addison now has a way to actively engage in activities that were previously out of reach.

The Utah Frame Running Project demonstrates how access to adaptive mobility equipment can transform opportunities for children with physical disabilities. By removing financial and logistical barriers, UFRP allows schools and families to explore adaptive equipment before making a purchase decision. To date, 20 schools and 25 families have benefited from frame runner loans, expanding opportunities for movement, recreation, fitness, and social connection.

To learn more, contact Tressa Johnston tressa at johnston@usu.edu or Bora Lee at bora.lee@usu.edu and visit the UATP website to find out more.



A young frame runner user.

TAESE Interpreter Mentoring, Education and Training (IMET) Program

Jennifer Harvey, Amy Drewek, David Davenport, Anna Witter-Merithew (mentor), David-Lee Raymond (language coach)

Core Goal Addressed: Training & Technical Assistance

The Interpreter Mentorship, Education, and Training (IMET) Program developed an eight-month Educational Interpreter Mentoring Program to enhance the quality of interpreting services provided to deaf and hard of hearing students in K–12 educational settings. The program strengthens educational interpreters' American Sign Language (ASL) skills and interpreting proficiency while preparing participants for the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). The EIPA is the standardized assessment used by many states to evaluate educational interpreters' competencies and determine eligibility for credentialing requirements.

Research shows that insufficient ASL fluency is a primary factor contributing to inadequate interpreting proficiency. To address this need, participants complete intentional skill-building assignments and engage in alternating weekly meetings with an interpreter mentor and a language coach. These individualized sessions provide targeted feedback on each participant's strengths and areas for growth, supporting continuous improvement in both language and interpreting skills.

The 8-month mentor program is offered entirely online, providing participants with access to experienced interpreter mentors and Deaf language coaches from across the nation. This innovative model expands access to high-quality professional development while connecting participants with experienced practitioners in the field. The ultimate objective of the program is to elevate the field of educational interpreting and improve access to equitable educational opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students.

The IMET Educational Interpreter Program supported a cohort of 28 educational interpreters through an intensive eight-month professional development mentoring experience. Participants completed 32 weeks of structured skill-building activities and engaged in 30 individualized coaching sessions, including 15 meetings with an interpreter mentor and 15 meetings with a Deaf language coach. Upon successful completion of the program, participants earned more than 200 hours of professional development credit.

A key component of the program was the development of a highly interactive community of practice that fostered collaboration, peer learning, and professional networking. This community continues beyond the training period, providing participants with ongoing support and opportunities to further their professional growth.

The program incorporates a strong evaluation component to measure effectiveness and inform continuous improvement. Participants complete the EIPA following the program, and pre- and post-program EIPA scores are used to evaluate growth in interpreting competency. In addition, participants complete comprehensive program evaluations that provide valuable feedback on program strengths and

identify areas for enhancement. These data are used to refine curriculum, strengthen training outcomes, and ensure the program continues to meet the needs of educational interpreters serving deaf and hard of hearing students.

The IMET Educational Interpreter Mentoring Program improved the skills and confidence of 28 educational interpreters through intensive online training, individualized mentoring, and language coaching. Participants completed more than 200 hours of professional development and demonstrated growth in language and interpreting competency, as well as in EIPA assessment outcomes. They also built a lasting community of practice dedicated to improving educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students.

The IMET Educational Interpreter Program was created to help improve the quality of interpreting services for deaf and hard of hearing students in K–12 schools. Research shows that limited ASL fluency is one of the primary reasons interpreters struggle to achieve higher levels of interpreting proficiency. Schools across the country face a significant shortage of qualified educational interpreters, making it difficult to provide students with the communication access they need to fully participate in their education.

This need was further highlighted by partnering states of IMET requesting assistance with providing meaningful mentoring opportunities that would help interpreters strengthen their ASL skills and improve interpreting performance. To address these challenges, IMET developed a fully online, eight-month training program that combines skill-building activities, one-on-one mentoring, and language coaching. A unique feature of the program is regular access to Deaf language coaches. Many interpreters do not have frequent opportunities to interact with Deaf ASL users, making this direct language exposure and personalized feedback especially valuable for improving ASL skills, confidence, and overall interpreting effectiveness.

Program data demonstrate strong and consistent outcomes. The USU IMET program served 209 participants from 2019 to 2025. Of these, 84% met their state's EIPA-based credentialing requirements. Additionally, 89% of participants improved their EIPA score, with an average increase of 0.5 points from their entry-level score to their post-training score. While a half-point increase may appear modest if unaware of the assessment, it actually represents a significant advancement in interpreting proficiency. To achieve this level of growth, interpreters must demonstrate meaningful improvement across multiple skill areas, including ASL expressive and receptive fluency, message accuracy, and overall interpreting effectiveness. These gains reflect substantial professional growth within a relatively short period of time.

Beyond measurable skill gains and credentialing success, the program has fostered a strong community of practice among educational interpreters. Participants continue to collaborate, share resources, and support one another after the training ends, helping to strengthen the educational interpreting workforce and improve educational opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students.

One participant's experience highlights the transformative impact of the IMET Educational Interpreter Mentor Program. As a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Montana, she frequently stepped into the role of interpreter due to the ongoing shortage of qualified educational interpreters in her district. Recognizing the importance of providing quality communication access for her students, she enrolled in the IMET

program with the goal of strengthening her interpreting skills.

Through eight months of individualized mentoring, language coaching, and intensive skill development, she experienced remarkable growth. Upon receiving her EIPA results, she sent the following unprompted message of appreciation to the IMET team and the state agency who sponsored her participation:

> ***"I am writing to express my thanks for your support for my participation in the IMET program. I am a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Montana and due to interpreter shortages, I am often stepping into the interpreter role, to provide access to my students in their mainstream classes. It was important to me that I provide high quality of service, and that is why I participated in the IMET program. I can't overstate how amazing the experience was!***
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> ***I was able to be mentored by highly skilled interpreters, and had exposure to Deaf, fluent ASL models who really helped me take my skills to the next level! These kinds of opportunities simply are not available in our state, and they are essential to develop the needed skills that provide Deaf and Hard of Hearing students access to their education. Because of my participation in IMET, I was able to take my EIPA score from a 3.6 to a 4.2! This growth would not have been possible for me without this amazing program."***

Her journey was made even more meaningful by the personal challenges she faced during the program. Despite significant health concerns throughout the training period, she remained committed to the work and with the IMET team's support she successfully completed the program.



The online Interpreter Mentorship, Education, and Training (IMET) Program strengthens participants' skills and proficiency.

Her increase from a 3.6 to a 4.2 is especially significant because many states use a score of 4.0 or higher as a benchmark for educational interpreter qualification and credentialing. Reaching and surpassing that threshold is a goal many educational interpreters aspire to achieve. A 0.6-point increase on the EIPA represents substantial improvement across multiple areas of interpreting proficiency and exceeds the average gain typically seen among participants. Reflecting on her experience, she credited the program's individualized support for helping her achieve breakthroughs in her professional practice. She also emphasized the unique value of the program's access to expert interpreter mentors and Deaf language coaches, opportunities that are often unavailable in rural states:

This participant's story illustrates the broader impact of the IMET Educational Interpreter Mentoring Program. By providing access to expert mentoring, Deaf language models, and individualized feedback, the program helps interpreters achieve meaningful professional growth while improving educational access and opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing students they serve.

The IMET Educational Interpreter Mentoring Program addresses a critical need in education by helping increase both the quality and availability of qualified interpreters serving deaf and hard of hearing students. Through intensive online training, individualized mentoring, and regular access to Deaf language coaches, the program equips interpreters with the skills, confidence, and support needed to provide effective communication access in K–12 settings.

A total of 209 participants have completed the program since its launch in 2019. Of these, 84% met their state credentialing requirements, and 89% improved their EIPA scores by an average of 0.5 points, representing a significant gain in interpreting proficiency. Beyond measurable outcomes, the program creates lasting professional networks and helps ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students have greater access to learning, participation, and academic success. Participant experiences consistently demonstrate that IMET is not only improving interpreter skills but also making a meaningful difference in the lives of the students they serve. Together, we continue strengthening the educational interpreting workforce and enhancing the educational opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students.

For more information about the TAESE IMET Educational Interpreter Program, please contact Interpreter Mentorship, Education, and Training (IMET) Program, Jennifer Harvey - TASK12 and IMET Program Director - jenn.harvey@usu.edu, 801-558-8719.

Center for Mental Health Promotion (CMHP) Digital Mental Health Interventions to Improve Quality of life Among Disability Community Groups

Dr. Ty Aller (PI), Dr. Mike Levin, Dr. Heather Kelley; and Dr. Benjamin Covington

Core Goal Addressed: Research & Evaluation; Community Services

The Center for Mental Health Promotion, in collaboration with the USU Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Research group and specifically Dr. Michael E. Levin, has tailored five digital mental health interventions (DMHIs) for specific populations. These interventions serve autistic adults, parents of children with disabilities, individuals with chronic health conditions, individuals with dementia, and individuals living in rural communities. These DMHIs seek to improve quality of life and mental health concerns while helping increase access to strengths-based resources for the disability community.

Over the past several years, we have created and tested these programs. During FY26, the CMHP focused on launching the programs for public use while continuing to refine and evaluate them through future randomized controlled trials.

The CMHP collaboration with the USU ACT Research lab has resulted in the creation of six public facing DMHIs with a strong research evidence base. In fact, research products resulting from these programs include 5+ peer reviewed articles, 10+ poster presentations, with over 8 student research assistants (including clinical psychology doctoral students) being trained in disability-related science. Further, the DMHIs have helped serve over 500 people in the disability community to address their mental health through the course of researching and improving the DMHIs. Evidence of the programs efficacy and utility for members of the disability community can be seen through many peer-reviewed articles.

In completing the scope of work for the Mental Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (MHIDD) Utah Training project, we learned via our community-engaged needs assessments, that many individuals in the disability community were not receiving adequate mental health treatment due to provider knowledge and lack of accessible treatment options (Kelley et al., 2024). Based on these findings, our team started to strengthen collaborations with Dr. Mike Levin, who has worked with many teams to adapt DMHIs to better serve tailored needs of communities. Through collaborating with Dr. Levin, self-advocate Dr. Covington, and countless community members in and outside of clinical work, we developed several DMHIs for the disability community (e.g., parents of children with disabilities, autistic adults, individuals with chronic health conditions; see Aller et al., 2025). We then received funding to test these DMHIs in both open and randomized controlled trials from the Mental Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities National Research Consortium (MHIDD-NRC) and other internal sources to test these programs. Programs have been feasible to test, acceptable to user groups and efficacious for shifting quality of life, mental health, and improving psychological skills. These trials have resulted in numerous peer-reviewed publications, national presentations, and are often translated into clinical trainings for mental

health providers.

We strive to collect high-quality data on our DMHI studies that meaningfully contributes to the research field while also providing accessible, scalable, sustainable programs for the disability community. One strong example of this is our ACT Guide for Chronic Health Conditions DMHI. The randomized controlled trial of this program resulted in several high-quality publications that explained the program improved quality of life and helped us learn about user characteristics that impact program effects. These studies were published in reputable clinical psychology journals, including the Journal of Behavioral Medicine and Behaviour Research and Therapy. These journals reach a multidisciplinary audience. The project also provided training opportunities for two doctoral students, who gained experience in participatory action research, community-engaged recruitment, and the public dissemination of effective programs following their implementation. Following the trial, these efforts helped an additional 38 community members complete our six-session program. Over the next years, we plan to continue the dissemination of these programs as we continue to learn more about what works and does not work.

The CMHP recently tested ACT Guide for Parents of Children with Disabilities, a transdiagnostic program for all parents of children with disabilities to improve their wellbeing. Traditionally, programs for parents of children with disabilities silo parents by their children disability types, making it harder to access support for parents with children with more rare disabilities and for folks living in rural communities. ACT Guide was created in a way that it could potentially help all parents at the same time. A recent randomized controlled trial included 89 parents of children with various disabilities who were experiencing current distress. Results indicated that the program was feasible to deliver, acceptable to parents, and effective in improving parents' psychological flexibility. For instance, one parent stated,

> ***"I liked how the program discussed various techniques to help you with anxiety and depression. I also liked that it was very easy to understand and they explained in a simple way instead of a very complex way."***

Further, another parent reported that the program was helpful in a challenging time, stating,

> ***"My son was hospitalized in the last 6 weeks and almost died. I liked having this [program] help me find my center and purpose."***

Collectively, the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that these parents are making a meaningful difference in the lives of their children with disabilities. Their efforts also help drive positive change within the communities that support these individuals.

Continuing to collaborate with communities to increase the accessibility, acceptability, and efficacy of DMHIs for individuals with disabilities will be a crucial step in increasing mental health care for all people. The CMHP at the IDRPP strives to continue this work by actively partnering with national collaborators to continue testing and improving existing DMHIs. If you're interested in engaging more with our work or using our DMHIs, please reach out to Dr. Aller at ty.aller@usu.edu or visiting the CMHP website.

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