

IDRPP Project Helps Bridge the Transition Gap

JoLynne Lyon

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Bee Bear Bistro



Corban Remund pauses to talk at a training session in Brigham City.

The IDRPP's Corban Remund has received a nearly \$500,000 grant from the Utah State Board of Education to train personnel from five Utah school districts: Alpine, Box Elder, Davis, Spectrum Academy, and Tooele. The training and ongoing support will help schools prepare students in special education to enter the workforce after they graduate.

The Work-Based Learning Project is operating through IDRPP's Center for Employment and Inclusion.

[Statistics released this year](#) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show 23 percent of those with disabilities are employed, compared to 66 percent of those without disabilities. Those are numbers Corban Remund, who leads the project, is working to change. Research shows that when students have paid employment during their school years, they're much more likely to be employed after high school. [One study](#) concluded students who were paid to work during high school were more than twice as likely to have paid employment after graduation.

"We talk to schools and they do all their best in terms of internal skill development," said Remund. "And then they know that .. other agencies will hopefully help with the employment piece. But looking the other direction, employment programs are receiving students that have exited the school system, and they haven't had any meaningful employment experiences.

"The goal with this program is to help the teachers realize that there's opportunity and responsibility on their end to help students get into paid employment. And then on the

other side, we're helping those programs to improve their practices so that they can continue the momentum."

A big hurdle for special education students, their families and their service providers is simply belief, Remund said. "When we believe in something wholeheartedly, like paid employment, it's going to change the way we treat other people and the expectations we put around them. Just increasing that self-awareness: 'Am I projecting my own anxieties and fears onto other people and limiting them, or am I giving them the opportunity to run forward?'"

Remund and IDRPP Training and Development Specialist Jeremy Musgrove focused on bolstering those beliefs during a training in Brigham City. They offered specific ways service providers can discover employable skills in their students and promote the student with those skills to community employers. And if it doesn't work out on the first try, they urged service providers to try again. "It wasn't a failure because it didn't work out, right?" Remund said. "We're learning."

"It's a deflating feeling," Musgrove said, "but there's value in that. Maybe it's good we learned this now and didn't send [them] on a path to ... spend four or five years getting an education around it, only then to get a job and figure out that it was a horrible fit."

Their training will not just impact young adults with disabilities, Remund said.

"It's not only going to transform the student's life, but because more people with disabilities are in the community and demonstrating their skills and benefiting employers, it's going to change our communities. They will recognize that these individuals have so much to offer, and they are very valuable members of our society."

The project continues through July 2027. School districts finding out more about how USU can provide specialized training and collaboration on work based learning experiences can contact [Corban Remund](#).