

# TAKING ON UTAH'S AUTISM CHALLENGE



## STATEMENT OF NEED:

Utah has the 3rd highest rate of autism in the country that costs an estimated \$186,832,920 annually (direct and indirect costs). Young adults ages 16–26 face an 80% unemployment rate and a future of social isolation during a time of unprecedented financial prosperity and growth in Utah. How do we tap into the unrealized potential of these young adults so they too can participate in Utah's future?

## SCOPE OF PROBLEM:

2016 data indicates 13,643 young adults age 16–26 have autism. It is estimated that 55% of these individuals are able to be employed full-time (30+ hours/week). There are currently few opportunities for them to parallel their neurotypical peers in regards to employment and attending college. We hope to change that.

### Be a part of the solution:

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**YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM AGES 18–26**  
 (able to work 30–40 hours/week)  
**WITHOUT SUPPORTS:**



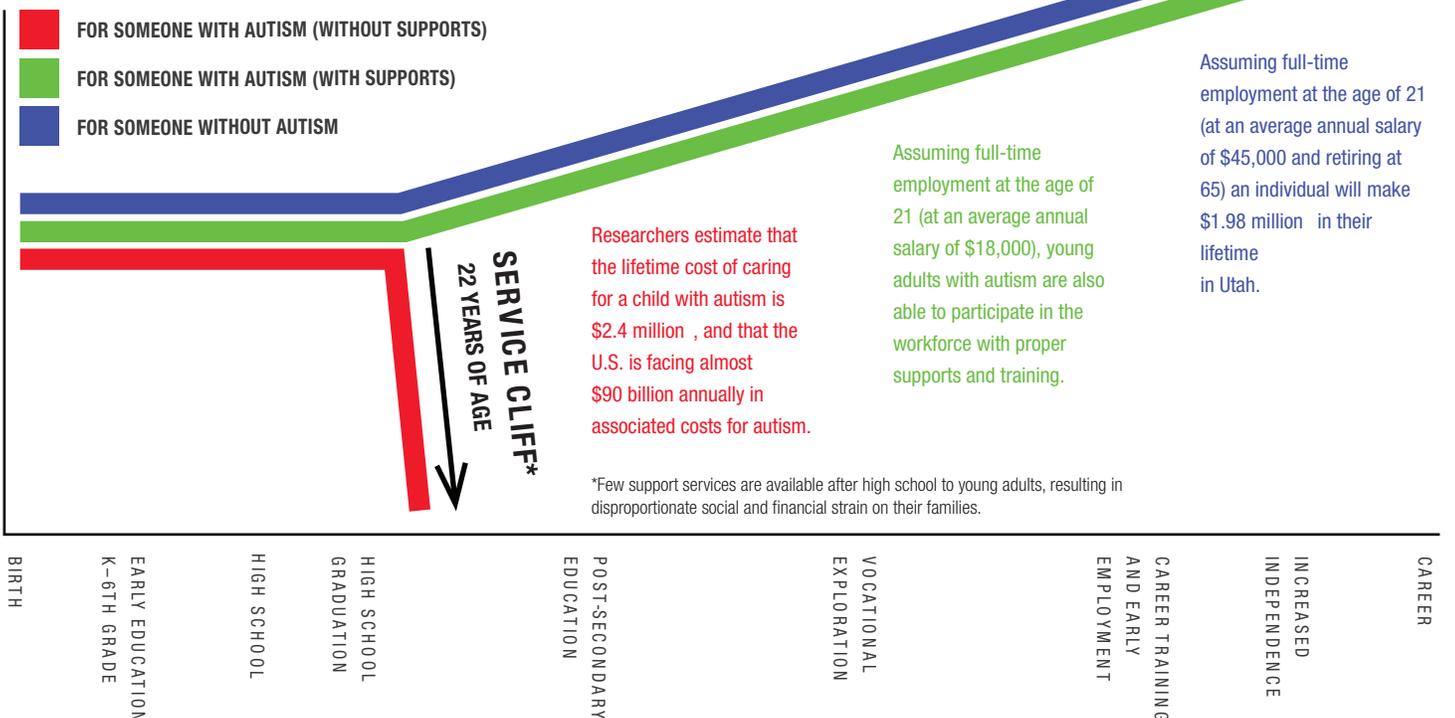
**YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM AGES 18–26**  
 (able to work 30–40 hours/week)  
**WITH SUPPORTS:**



**YOUNG ADULTS WITHOUT AUTISM AGES 18–26**  
 (able to work 30–40 hours/week).



## LIFE TRAJECTORY



\*range estimated due to lack of reliable data

1.

**Develop the unique attributes/skill sets of individuals with autism** to optimize their chances of success in the workforce, as well as living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

2.

**Focus on placing individuals in STEM and IT jobs**, as many have attributes and talents that align very well with this type of industry.

3.

**Educate and work with employers** so they are better prepared to hire and retain this previously untapped workforce.

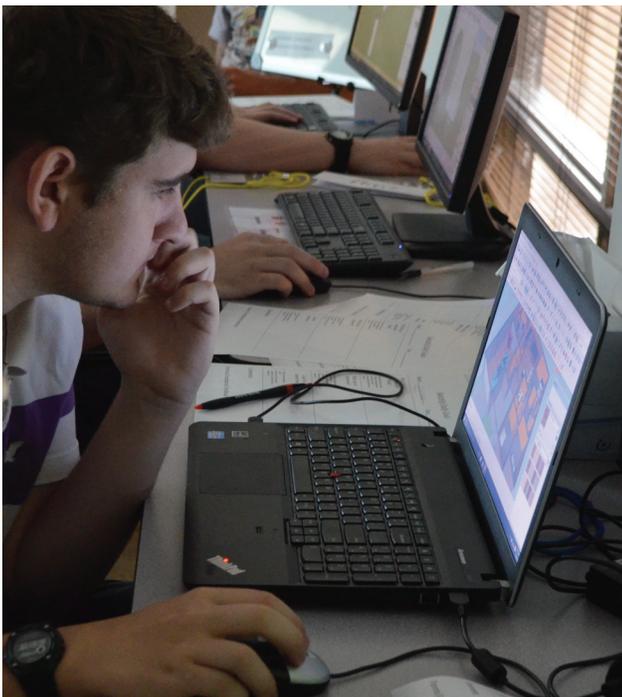
4.

**Provide programming and transition services to assist young adults** on the autism spectrum, and their families, with among other things; assessments, skills training, employment services, and job site visits.

## MASON: A LIFE CHANGED

In high school, Mason began participating in specialized training that would prove to draw out his social, technical, and academic skills in spite of his autism. Over time this training set him on the track to serve as a peer tutor to other young adults with autism.

Through the Columbus NextWork program we are now providing him with employment services that are allowing him to explore career options. He has confidence in his abilities that you would expect from a young man at this age. His mother Denise sees hope for her son's future and feels the pride of a mother getting ready to launch her son into the world.



## + BENEFITS

**\$4,150** → **\$19,162**

PER PERSON PER YEAR  
PROGRAM COSTS  
LEADING TO EMPLOYMENT

PER PERSON PER YEAR  
ANNUAL NET BENEFIT  
TO UTAH

### THE STATE SAVES ON:



- + Incremental wages
- + Incremental taxes
- + Reduction in state spending

### FAMILIES SAVE ON:



- + Incremental wages
- + Incremental taxes

### THE INDIVIDUAL WITH AUTISM:



- + Has employment over a lifetime, is a consumer and taxpayer
- + Feels a sense of worth, purpose, and that they are a contributing member of society
- + Learns to self-advocate
- + Is not isolated and left alone at home
- + Learns about attending college/university and may even enroll in some classes