

Central Iowa Workforce Development Board

PY21 Annual Report Narrative

Executive Summary

Program Year 21 (PY21) was a year of recovery and resuming a resemblance of “normal” operations as the country emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. Entering a unique time in our history; it became difficult to anticipate how employer and employee needs would evolve.

Foot traffic in our IowaWorks American Job Center is steadily rising but has not returned to “pre-pandemic” levels. The demand for virtual services continues, but the interest in those services has shifted from a way to deliver “socially distanced” services, toward a societal change in how people expect to access services, and one of personal preference. People of all ages and backgrounds are more capable and reliant on virtual platforms than pre-pandemic.

We have also seen a shift to a state of low unemployment and rising wages. That has led to a “job seeker” driven environment in some cases leading to low applicant numbers for vacant positions. Our center has reallocated additional focus to our business services teams serving employers and helping them find solutions for workforce issues. In this job market, we have experienced individuals in our displaced workers programs being rehired or finding new jobs in a competitive job market rather quickly.

The [Central Iowa Local plan](#) was finalized in May 2022.

We have had success in creating new Career pathways through collaboration in our IowaWorks system. Examples include the AJC hosting Workforce Training Academy Career Planners one day a week for recruitment opportunities supporting short-term certificate programs. A Senior Community Service Employment Program is now being housed in the center, as well. This has resulted in increased collaboration and better job outcomes for those aged 55 and older. Title II has provided the center with the NorthStar Digital Literacy software resulting in a computer lab to help job seekers with basic digital literacy.

We also had success in statewide collaboration, including the Statewide TechWorks program delivery. Over 57 Iowans across the state successfully completed the program, and many have found their way into sustaining employment in the industry.

Local Workforce Development Area System

The Central Iowa LWDA consists of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Marion, Madison, Polk, Story, and Warren counties. The Central Iowa LWDA’s comprehensive center is in Des Moines (Army Post Road). One Satellite office, Park Fair Mall (Des Moines), is located within the local area. Satellite operations in Ames have also resumed on Mondays, transitioning to the Ames Public Library from the prior location on Lincoln Way. Titles I, III, and IV are co-located at the comprehensive center.

LWDA Strategic Objectives

Drive collaborative partnerships with businesses, job seekers, and providers to create a robust area in which:

- Every workforce member achieves a livable wage and a sustainable career.
- Work talent is connected to employer needs.
- Impactful policy changes are made.

A strategy for fulfilling Central Iowa's vision of collaborative partnerships is an important step in streamlining the workforce system. Title I (Children & Families of Iowa), Title II (Adult Basic Education provided by Des Moines Area Community College-DMACC), Title III (Iowa Workforce Development-IWD) and Title IV (Iowa Department for the Blind-IDB and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services-IVRS) are considered the core partners of the workforce system under WIOA.

The core partners met on a regular basis to collaboratively address processes, issues, and partnering opportunities. Coordinated efforts to serve employers is one example of how the core partners worked together to reduce redundancies in the system and present seamless services to employers and job seekers

COVID-19 Post Pandemic Response

COVID-Dislocated Worker Grant Success

When a worker is impacted by a layoff, the subrecipient of the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG), in conjunction with WIOA partners, offers a Worker Information Meeting in which impacted workers are provided information about opportunities through the DWG and the Dislocated Worker program.

Participants enrolled in the DWG are co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program. DWG funds may cover costs related to OST and OJT while the Dislocated Worker program funds may cover supportive services or other expenses that, if not covered, will prevent the participant from completing their DWG training program.

Relationship development with local area Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) and Reemployment Case Management (RCM) teams has been critical in progress toward achieving goals described in the DWG. Title I career planners presented to the RESEA and RCM staff along with local area American Job Center staff weekly to discuss the benefits and opportunities available through the DWG.

- As of June 30, 2022, 83 individuals have been enrolled into individualized services.
- 9 individuals have been enrolled in OJT and in in-demand industry sectors including transportation, human resources, office administration, human services, manufacturing and construction.
- 16 participants have been enrolled in Occupational Skills Training (OST). OST is post-secondary education training and participants have enrolled into programs in high-demand career fields including medical coding, certified medical assistant, nursing, web development, web design, information technology, business administration, supply chain management, transportation, automotive mechanics technology, secondary education certification, accounting and digital marketing.
- Total services provided – 238; including objective assessments, individual employment plans, career planning, job search and placement, work experience, referrals and follow up services.

Virtual Services

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and society's evolving view of accessibility we have adjusted our service delivery to embrace demand for virtual services. Most of the career services group workshops are offered collectively through a statewide platform and delivery system. This allows for efficient use of staff resources and has resulted in increased participation rates with job seekers. Our in-person workshops are now focused on topics that require staff assistance, such as resume labs, as well as workshops that target specific populations, such as our "Emerge" program.

Individual Virtual Career Planning appointments are being offered daily through the Des Moines IowaWorks center. Job seekers can schedule these through the IowaWORKS website, email or phone. Virtual Mock Interviews are also offered through the center. This responds to a shift in employers utilizing the virtual option for interviewing, by preparing the job seeker with experience on how to conduct the interview in a virtual environment.

Sector Strategies

On-Site hiring events were held targeting the 5 in-demand sectors identified in our local plan:

Health Care and Social Assistance: Optima LifeServices(2), Sevita, Link Associates, Balance Autism, ProMedica, Progress Industries.

Finance and Insurance: Co-op Financial, Principal Financial, Employer Panel.

Food Services and Drinking Places: Quiznos, Racoon Partners.

Construction: Stromax Construction, Briggs, Excel Contractor, Labor Ready Mix, Tradesman International, Luina.

Manufacturing and Warehouse: DeeZee, John Deere, UPS, Vermeer, Michael Foods, Tyson Foods, Marzetti Frozen Pasta, Loffredo, Titan Tire.

Business Services & Employer Engagement

Core Partner Business team meetings focus on sharing information, connections and integrated business visits with employers. Monthly strategic planning meetings were also started in PY21, these meetings are focused on event planning for both employers and job seekers. Management and key staff are invited to these meetings to discuss the events/activities to increase participation and connection in the local area.

Title III engaged in several intensive Workforce Needs Assessments throughout the area. These assessments were employer driven and focused on the needs and resources currently being utilized in order to develop strategic ways to enhance recruitment efforts. An outcome was several community and core partner business connections and innovative solutions to the area's labor shortage.

The Title I Youth and Young Adult Team and their Business Service and Workforce Career Planner continues to build employer relationships through collaboration with Title III and their Business Service Team. These employer connections have been instrumental in providing paid work experience for the

participants enrolled into The Title I Youth and Young Adult Programming. Some of these employer connections include Urban Experience Magazine, Design Consign, and Rasmussen Group.

Program Highlights & Innovation

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth

Title 1 observed an increase of Dislocated Workers who are interested in transportation as a career pathway, but do not possess a CDL license and need to work rather than attend a training program. To respond, we contacted three local area employers which provide in-house CDL training and invited them to the AJC to connect with job seekers referred to the DWG. During an informal session, employers presented information to job seekers such as the type of training and employment available within their business including in-town transportation services as well as long range over-the-road positions. The session resulted in same-day job applications from job seekers, who utilized services at the AJC to apply. Employers stated this recruitment strategy was more effective than attending traditional job fairs.

The Title I Youth and Young Adult team continues to offer skill building workshops, as well as one on one career planning. Workshops target all eight counties and have been expanded to include three intensive four-week training courses. The team has also added 1-week workshops for youth that are not quite cognitively ready for a 4-week intense training. Additionally, 2-day workshops were offered in our rural counties. Workshop skills gained include, but are not limited to, building a resume', mock interviewing, professionalism in the workplace, workplace communication, and financial literacy. The youth also receive instruction from certified trainers in Gallup Strengths Finder, CPR/First Aid, and Bring Your "A" Game to Work.

Rapid Response

In PY21, Rapid Response services were provided for multiple employers, including Arcosa, TPI, Allied Global, and Wells Fargo either in-person or virtually. When personal services were not provided, employees were e-mailed information related to Unemployment Insurance, basic and individualized career services and supportive services available as a result of their layoff.

Registered Apprenticeship

We facilitated registered apprenticeship workshops at the Roland Story School District and two at the Ankeny Community School District.

Offender Re-Entry

Partners have taken a collaborative approach to providing offender re-entry services in Central Iowa. Our Title III staff provided American Job Center Orientation weekly to the newly arrived individuals at Fort Des Moines. They are then invited to the AJC for one-on-one career planning. Additionally, a Wagner Peyser staff is housed at the "Fresh Start" facility providing career counseling twice a week. A reentry staff is also housed at both Iowa Correctional Facility for Women in Mitchellville, as well as the Newton prison. This outreach helps the job seekers transition when leaving the facility to achieve self-sufficiency quicker.

Serving job seekers with disabilities

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) staff are co-located or have a presence in the IowaWORKS Center in the Local Area. They have worked hard toward having a completely accessible facility. Assessments of the American Job Center were performed in the fall of 2021 by the Disability Access Committee.

A special event for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) was held in October 2021. It was a virtual “lunch and learn” due to COVID but focused on introducing the community to IowaWORKS resources; including the website, job center, Vocational Rehab, Ticket to Work, and Registered Apprenticeship.

Our Title I program has a staff person dedicated to providing “Ticket to Work” and benefits planning onsite at the AJC.

Veteran Services

In order to best serve the Veteran community, we partner with local businesses, our community partners, and Veteran Service Organizations throughout the year. One example was the “Homeless Veteran Stand Down” event in Des Moines, September 17-19, 2021. During the event, 218 Veterans were served by IowaWORKS staff.

In May 2022, “LVER” staff developed and facilitated training for Home Base Iowa employers. 144 participants registered for the training covering topics such as creating job orders, creating a Veteran resume alert, and how to create accounts in the IowaWORKS system.

Implementation of priority of service

Veterans and their spouses are given priority to all services offered in the IowaWORKS Center, which means they are served before other individuals who are seeking services at that time. When individuals enter the IowaWORKS center they are asked if they have served in the military or if they are the spouse of a service member. Staff are honored to always express gratitude to military members and their families for their service. Special packets of information containing center and Veterans’ services are also provided.

Annual Performance Analysis

Title 1

- Youth / Young Adult
 - 6,754 Served
 - 133 Enrolled
- Adult
 - 90 Enrolled
- Dislocated Worker/NDWG
 - 82 Co-Enrolled
- Total Services provided for Adult, Dislocated Worker and NDWG
 - 1,164

Title 2

- 2,131 were enrolled (completed 12 hours or more) in HiSet or ESL classes.
- 300 participants achieved High School Equivalency.
- 43.2% of participants had a Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)

Title 3

- Iowa Works Voss Greeter Services. 20,239
- Wagner Peyser Enrollments 4,899
- Workshop Attendance 8,538
- 116 Virtual Career Service Appointments

Title 4

- 2,903 Individuals served by IVRS
- 137 Individuals served by IDB

Central Iowa		
Wagner-Peyser		
		Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr		60.8%
Employment 4th Qtr		65.5%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr		\$8,339

Adult		
		Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr		61.1%
Employment 4th Qtr		52.8%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr		\$5,600
Credential Attainment		72.7%
Measurable Skills Gain		56.5%

Dislocated Worker		
		Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr		84.2%
Employment 4th Qtr		78.9%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr		\$9,164
Credential Attainment		58.8%
Measurable Skills Gain		46.7%

Youth		
		Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr		62.5%
Employment 4th Qtr		56.5%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr		\$4,141
Credential Attainment		50.0%
Measurable Skills Gain		35.7%

Success Story - Braylen

Upon enrollment into the DWG and co-enrollment into the Dislocated Worker program, Braylen and her Career Planner identified eight barriers to employment that Braylen was currently experiencing including disability, health concerns, basic skills deficiency, low-income, long-term unemployed, no transportation, victim of domestic violence and personal factors.

Braylen felt defeated in work and life, however found hope through Iowa WORKS and through her relationship with her career planner who believed in her. Braylen and her career planner completed an Objective Assessment which included an assessment of Braylen's skills, strengths, and aptitudes. After completion of the OBA, Braylen discovered that she wanted to pursue a career as an administrative support professional.

Braylen's career planner was thrilled that she was interested in an in-demand position and got to work connecting with employers. The planner connected with a local manufacturing business, and after an interview with Braylen, the business hired Braylen and signed an OJT contract. The OJT provided Braylen with employment as an administrative professional with reasonable accommodations for Braylen's disability.

Braylen is co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program and has utilized transportation assistance to get to and from work, financial assistance to pay for her first month's rent in her new apartment and miscellaneous supportive services to repair her car. These services allowed Braylen to remove financial barriers and successfully complete her training at her new job. Braylen has successfully completed her OJT and is earning a self-sufficient wage for herself and her children.

Success Story - Larry

Larry was referred to The Title I Youth Program by a community partner located in Warren County. He successfully completed the 4-week Summer EARN Workshop held in our youth center. Larry's peers and the Career Planner staff saw positive changes in his attitude and participation during the workshop activities.

During the workshop many community partners presented their programs to the participants. One of those partners was DMACC's Youth Build Program. Larry expressed interest in learning more about the construction trades and more specifically how to build houses. Larry's career planner with the Title I Youth Program assisted him with co-enrolling into Youth Build. Larry is now working with both programs to reach his vocational goals.

Success Story - Shayla

Shayla found our virtual career planner appointments online at IowaWORKS.gov and scheduled a meeting on April 14, 2022. The career planner discussed her career goals and found out what services she needed. Shayla had been working in data entry and customer support positions but was recently laid off from her previous employment and had filed for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Shayla had been taking classes in Web Development through the local community college but exhausted her funding before completing the program. Because of Shayla's interest in an IT career path, she was referred to both "Grow with Google" and the "IT Tech Works" programs through Title I. Shayla has qualified for the IT Techworks program and started taking classes last week and on track to complete the program in fall 2022.

Success Story - Xiping

Xiping's relationship with IowaWORKS was instrumental in his re-employment as a scientist. He began working with IowaWORKS in February of 2022 when he had his first meeting with RESEA. He then attended the virtual workshop "Essential Tools for Job Seekers", followed in March by a Virtual 1-on-1 Meeting with a Career Coach. As his search for a scientific position continued, Xiping attended the Careers in Customer Service Employer Panel and another Virtual 1-on-1 Meeting with a Career Planner. The meeting with the career planner led to a mock interview and referral to the recruitment and placement team.

In April, Xiping began consulting with a career planner on the recruitment and placement team who listened to his concerns about being a non-native English speaker and being an older worker. Mock interviews, revision of his resume, and discussion of career options helped him maintain his confidence as he continued to search for the right position. Xiping continued to attend virtual workshops and a virtual job fair into May.

Although his initial application to a specific scientific company had not resulted in an interview, the career planner who Xiping was working with felt that an opportunity was there. During a tour of the scientific company, the career planner was able to have a conversation with the hiring manager, bringing Xiping's application to her attention. The hiring manager recommended that Xiping apply to a specific position, which he did. Xiping was invited to an interview and subsequently hired, beginning his new position in mid-June.

Xiping, who missed working as a scientist, stated that touring the labs during his interview made him feel at home again and that he was very thankful to be re-employed in his field. A note from Xiping stated, "I would like to thank my career planner for recommending me to this opportunity and all IowaWORKS staff for training, support, and assistance. It has been challenging for me to get reemployed. My re-employment wouldn't be possible without assistance from IowaWORKS, especially from my career planner. My sincere thanks to you all from the bottom of my heart!"