

**State of Iowa Unified State Plan  
under the Workforce Innovation  
and Opportunity Act**

**PY2024 – PY2027**

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# **Iowa Unified State Plan, PY2024 – PY2027**

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

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## Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

### **Options for Submitting a State Plan**

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the

program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))<sup>1</sup>

## **How State Plan Requirements Are Organized**

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

<sup>1</sup> States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, *Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements*. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>2</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

## I. WIOA State Plan Type

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. **Yes**

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) **No**
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) **No**
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)) **No**
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) **No**

<sup>2</sup> Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) **No**
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants program (programs authorized under 38 U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) **No**
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) **No**
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) **No**
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. **No**
- Community Services Block Grant program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) **No**
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program<sup>3</sup> (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) **No**

## II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term "populations", these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

<sup>3</sup> The Reentry Employment Opportunities Program (REO), formerly the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO), is referred to by its original name (RExO) in this document. This name change is a recent decision that was not incorporated into WIOA.

## a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

### 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

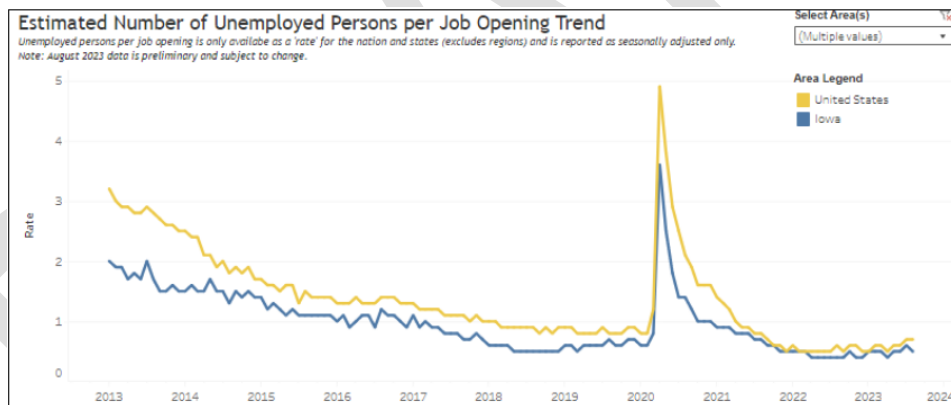
#### A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

##### i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

Iowa is facing one of the tighter labor markets in the nation with an estimated one-half (0.5) of an unemployed persons per job opening. The U.S. has 0.7 unemployed persons per job opening, which is below pre-pandemic levels for both. Iowa is tied, ranking 17th nationally, with the highest unemployed per job opening.



This labor market tightness is the result of a spike in job openings following the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2021 as businesses started to return to normal business operations. The rapid increase in job openings peaked in December 2021 and 2022 with a job openings rate of 7.8 (the ratio of job openings to total employment in the state). Overall job openings have receded some through 2022 and 2023 but continue to be at much higher levels than typically seen over the last 20 years.

Not surprising, when looking at the job openings within Iowa, most job openings are found in Iowa's Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), employment centers: Des Moines (Polk County - 13,849), Cedar Rapids (Linn County - 4,689), Iowa City (Johnson County - 4,579), Davenport (Scott County - 3,945), Dubuque (Dubuque County - 3,374), Waterloo (Black Hawk County - 3,152), and followed by Sioux City (Woodbury - 2,475).

Employment centers with high job openings can be found around the state: Mason City (Cerro Gordo County – 2,107, North Central), Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie County – 1,944, Western Iowa), Ames (Story County – 1,670, Central Iowa), West Des Moines (Dallas County – 1,230, Central Iowa), Burlington (Des Moines County – 1,218, Southeast Iowa), Ottumwa (Wapello County – 1,150, Southeast Iowa), Pella Knoxville (Marion County – 898, Central Iowa), Muscatine (Muscatine County – 887, Southeast Iowa) and Fort Dodge (Webster County – 768, North Central Iowa).

Iowa's metro areas have some of the lowest rates for unemployed individuals per job opening: Dubuque County (0.3), Johnson County (0.3), Polk County (0.3), Woodbury County (0.4), and Pottawattamie (0.4). Rural counties with low rates can be found in Cerro Gordo County (0.2%), Marion County (0.3), Page County (0.3), Wapello County (0.3) and multiple counties in the northwest counties of the state.

The counties with the most estimated slack in their labor markets are Madison County (1.5), Jackson County (1.3), Benton County (1.2), Grundy County (1.2), Monroe County (1.2), Allamakee County (1.1), Pocahontas County (1.1), and Winnebago County (1.1). For Madison and Jackson; this is not a large concern as these counties are contingent to large metro areas with high job opening levels, which also stiffens local labor markets.

Regionally, the eastern and southern areas of Iowa see more individuals that are available for job openings relative to openings in the area. These are areas of the state that historically have the highest unemployment rates.

Healthcare & Social Assistance industry has more the 10,000 job openings posted on Iowa Workforce Development's job board, [www.iowaworks.gov](http://www.iowaworks.gov), followed by Educational Services with 7,016 job openings. These two industries make up over 25% of all openings on the IowaWORKS website. The next three industries are Retail Trade (6,070), Manufacturing (4,079), and Accommodation & Food Services (3,135). The Retail and Accommodation Food Service industries tend to be higher turnover industries that utilize part-time employment.

The industries are reflected in the top advertised occupational groups and specific occupations. Healthcare Practitioner (10,420), Management (3,923), Transportation (3,126), Sales (2,941), Educational Instruction & Library (2,920), Food Preparation & Serving (2,514), Office & Administration (2,344), Production (2,146), Installation & Maintenance (2,101), and Architecture & Engineering (2,090).

Drilling down into the specific occupations with the highest openings, Registered Nurses are by far the most advertised job on [Iowaworks.gov](http://Iowaworks.gov) with nearly 4,000 job openings. In the distance is Retail Salesperson (874), Nursing Assistants (814), Stock & Order Fillers (741), Licensed Practical Nurse (672), Customer Service Representatives (653), Physicians (643), Coaches (602), Physical Therapists (564) and Food Preparation Supervisors (552). Five of the top 10 occupations with the most job openings are either Healthcare Practitioners or Healthcare Support workers. These occupations are also reflected in long-term industry and occupational projections along with opportunities in Education and Manufacturing.



Iowa’s biggest sector for employment remains manufacturing in 2023 with 222,834 jobs, employing 14.8 percent of all covered employment. Additionally, the average weekly income, \$1,411, is 20.2 percent higher than the statewide average weekly wage of \$1,174. Health care and social assistance follows closely behind with 219,773 jobs or 14.6 percent of all covered employment. This sector has shown some recent weakness in the wake of Coronavirus social distancing efforts as staff has shown a propensity to switch industries. In prior recessions, health care and social assistance generally didn’t lay off workers. Raising wages and benefits may help combat this problem in the long term. As the chart below shows, the top in-demand industry sectors in Iowa are: Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Educational Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Finance and Insurance, and Construction. Finance and Insurance is concentrated in the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids metro areas, while the other top industries are statewide. These industries have long been the in-demand industries in Iowa, remaining consistent with historical data.

Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	109,936	1,505,798	1,508,539	1,511,528	1,508,639	\$1,174
Manufacturing	4,237	222,803	222,739	222,960	222,834	\$1,411
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,754	219,632	219,682	220,011	219,773	\$1,079
Retail Trade	11,168	173,250	171,775	170,978	171,998	\$667
Educational Services	2,982	150,524	153,196	152,800	152,175	\$969
Accommodation and Food Services	7,267	114,398	115,662	116,879	115,648	\$410
Finance and Insurance	7,418	93,869	93,675	93,525	93,689	\$2,400
Construction	9,778	73,617	73,173	75,723	74,170	\$1,256
Transportation and Warehousing	5,014	71,364	70,232	69,599	70,401	\$1,107
Wholesale Trade	7,766	66,242	66,158	66,499	66,303	\$1,707
Public Administration	3,054	64,822	64,850	65,316	64,995	\$1,139
Admin Support & Waste Management	5,988	62,354	62,547	62,364	62,421	\$948
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	12,122	57,277	57,932	57,669	57,625	\$1,675
Other Services (except Public Administr..	7,616	39,606	39,853	39,922	39,798	\$887
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	1,517	21,960	21,988	22,001	21,983	\$2,267
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	2,737	18,769	18,906	19,189	18,961	\$1,020
Information	2,600	18,884	18,778	18,678	18,786	\$1,595
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,479	15,888	16,759	16,784	16,479	\$469
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,866	13,950	13,998	13,995	13,982	\$1,118
Utilities	523	6,222	6,280	6,269	6,256	\$2,104
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	50	367	356	367	362	\$1,346

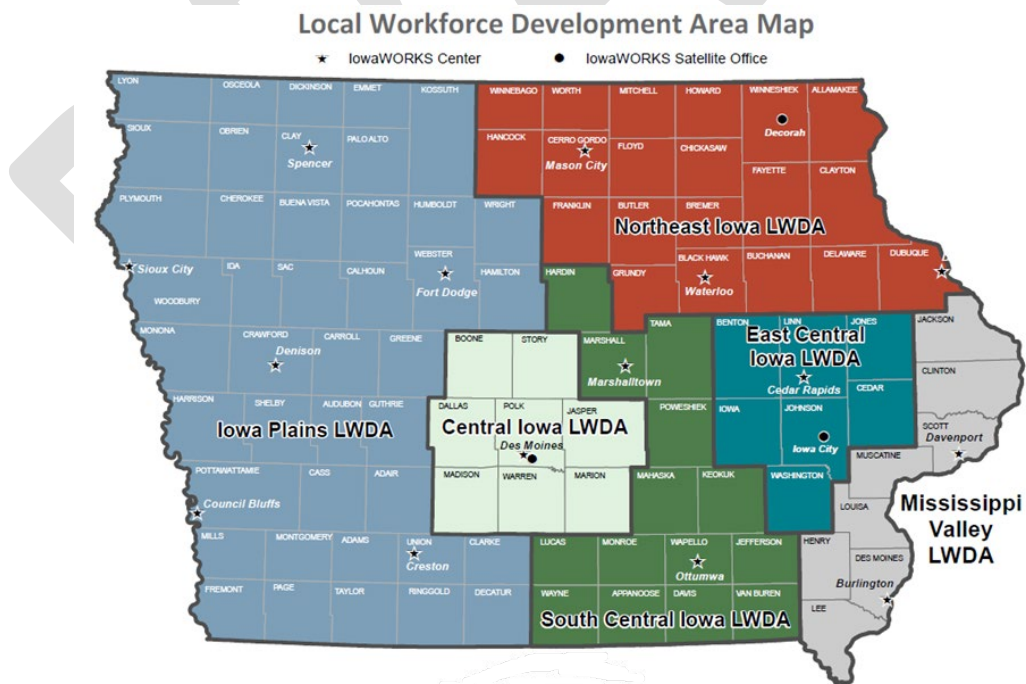
The chart below summarizes the existing in-demand occupations across the state. The majority of in-demand occupations are reflective of Iowa’s top employing industries, while other high demand and high growth occupations provide support across numerous sectors. For example, truck driving remains a top demand occupation across all industries in Iowa.

Rank	Occupation Group	Job Openings <i>as of 11/16/23</i>
1	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	10,420
2	Management Occupations	3,923
3	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	3,126

4	Sales and Related Occupations	2,941
5	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	2,920
6	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	2,514
7	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	2,344
8	Production Occupations	2,146
9	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	2,101
10	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,090
11	Healthcare Support Occupations	1,912
12	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,460
13	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	1,199
14	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,020

### Local Workforce Development Area Industry Projections

Effective July 1, 2023, Iowa has six Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), each with unique demographics and workforce challenges.





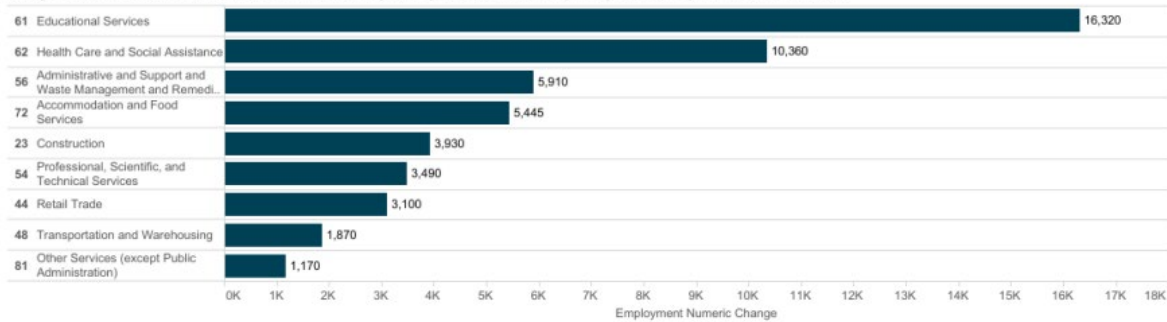
## Central Iowa LWDA

Central Iowa contains almost one third of all Iowa jobs and, in many ways, is a smaller snapshot of the state’s economy. Health care and social assistance is the largest employer in the area and suffers from the same hiring and retention afflictions as the rest of the state. Much of Iowa’s insurance and credit intermediation jobs are headquartered in the Des Moines Metropolitan area and are trending down after a recent peak in 2018. Fortunately, some of these losses have been absorbed by other LWDAs. Unlike other areas of the state, manufacturing in Central Iowa has shown signs of growth, especially withing machinery manufacturing, which continues to expand through 2023. The Central Iowa LWDA is expected to add 70,365 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030, increasing to 532,230 from the current 461,865, a 15.2 percent increase. This growth is projected to grow faster than the state level, which is projected to show 12 percent growth during the same period. Additionally, the 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The educational services sector is expected to add 16,320 and is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. Healthcare and Social assistance sector is projected to add 10,360 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the number of aging populations. The charts below summarize the in-demand industry sectors and projections for Central Iowa.

Central Iowa LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1						
Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	31,210	456,465	457,249	457,345	457,020	\$1,405
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,090	59,263	59,280	59,492	59,345	\$1,159
Finance and Insurance	2,379	49,564	49,444	49,408	49,472	\$2,975
Retail Trade	2,737	49,692	49,256	48,899	49,282	\$722
Educational Services	855	39,978	40,380	40,359	40,239	\$1,000
Manufacturing	904	38,304	38,346	38,459	38,369	\$1,521
Accommodation and Food Services	1,990	34,892	35,329	35,608	35,276	\$461
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	4,856	26,050	26,282	26,009	26,113	\$1,903
Construction	2,488	25,074	25,082	25,667	25,275	\$1,379
Admin Support & Waste Management	1,972	23,240	23,410	23,308	23,320	\$1,046
Public Administration	568	21,819	21,859	21,922	21,866	\$1,326
Wholesale Trade	2,376	21,391	21,335	21,390	21,372	\$2,115
Transportation and Warehousing	874	21,440	20,958	20,669	21,022	\$1,159
Other Services (except Public Administr..	2,323	12,798	12,915	12,865	12,860	\$1,028
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	639	10,335	10,334	10,298	10,323	\$2,428
Information	868	6,943	6,901	6,831	6,892	\$1,921
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,434	6,533	6,547	6,568	6,549	\$1,341
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	433	6,130	6,545	6,437	6,372	\$513
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	258	1,773	1,808	1,901	1,827	\$1,123
Utilities	147	1,081	1,087	1,099	1,089	\$2,193
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	19	165	151	156	157	\$1,854

## Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 Central Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	36,690	53,010	16,320	44.5%
561 Administrative and Support Services	20,500	26,265	5,765	28.1%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,365	23,290	4,925	26.8%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	24,140	27,630	3,490	14.5%
551 Management of Companies and Enterpris...	9,760	13,045	3,285	33.7%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	25,965	29,165	3,180	12.2%
624 Social Assistance	11,310	14,300	2,990	26.4%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	17,035	20,000	2,965	17.4%
721 Accommodation	3,800	6,065	2,265	59.6%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	10,455	12,600	2,145	20.5%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	4,475	6,570	2,095	46.8%
524 Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	26,675	28,455	1,780	6.7%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	33,435	35,165	1,730	5.2%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,950	3,540	1,590	81.5%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	23,575	25,080	1,505	6.4%
484 Truck Transportation	6,020	7,465	1,445	24.0%
492 Couriers and Messengers	2,445	3,840	1,395	57.1%
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	965	1,750	785	81.3%
452 General Merchandise Stores	8,440	9,170	730	8.6%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	2,390	3,060	670	28.0%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	461,865	532,230	70,365	15.2%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	340	705	365	107.4%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,950	3,540	1,590	81.5%
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	965	1,750	785	81.3%
721 Accommodation	3,800	6,065	2,265	59.6%
492 Couriers and Messengers	2,445	3,840	1,395	57.1%
325 Chemical Manufacturing	1,160	1,765	605	52.2%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	4,475	6,570	2,095	46.8%
611 Educational Services	36,690	53,010	16,320	44.5%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,615	2,225	610	37.8%
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	565	770	205	36.3%
551 Management of Companies and Enterpris...	9,760	13,045	3,285	33.7%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	450	600	150	33.3%
561 Administrative and Support Services	20,500	26,265	5,765	28.1%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	2,390	3,060	670	28.0%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,365	23,290	4,925	26.8%
624 Social Assistance	11,310	14,300	2,990	26.4%
442 Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	1,100	1,385	285	25.9%
443 Electronics and Appliance Stores	1,305	1,625	320	24.5%
484 Truck Transportation	6,020	7,465	1,445	24.0%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	10,455	12,600	2,145	20.5%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	461,865	532,230	70,365	15.2%

## East Central Iowa LWDA

The East Central Iowa LWDA contains the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids MSAs and is trending in the same direction as the State as a whole. Health Care and Social Assistance remains the top employer, although Education services follows second due to the location of the University of Iowa in Iowa City. In East Central Iowa, the Education services sector have recovered from Coronavirus measures and is currently maintaining levels rivaling pre-COVID data. Manufacturing is still vital in the area, with 12.5 percent of all employment in the LWDA. This sector has been steadily trending up since a low in 2021. The East Central LWDA is expected to add 47,100 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030, increasing industry employment from 258,500 to 305,600, an 18.2 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, reflecting recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The educational services sector is expected to add 12,385 jobs. This sector is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. The healthcare and social assistance sector is projected to add 6,655 jobs in the next ten years, driven by an increase in the number of aging populations. The charts below summarize the in-demand industry sectors and projections for East Central Iowa.

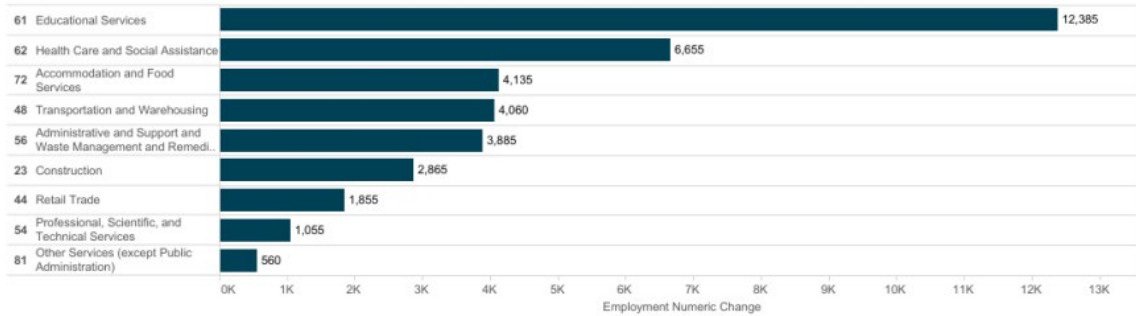
### East Central Iowa LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1

Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	16,240	239,204	240,271	240,885	240,126	\$1,212
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,032	40,266	40,330	40,409	40,335	\$1,133
Educational Services	509	32,377	33,155	33,096	32,877	\$1,307
Manufacturing	531	30,081	30,111	30,202	30,131	\$1,745
Retail Trade	1,559	25,775	25,640	25,488	25,634	\$668
Accommodation and Food Services	1,119	19,067	19,434	19,310	19,270	\$409
Transportation and Warehousing	590	12,869	12,608	12,713	12,731	\$1,097
Construction	1,462	11,906	11,733	12,117	11,919	\$1,247
Finance and Insurance	967	10,694	10,601	10,581	10,626	\$1,988
Admin Support & Waste Management	964	10,113	10,307	10,320	10,247	\$889
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	2,132	9,431	9,514	9,564	9,504	\$1,725
Wholesale Trade	1,166	8,692	8,710	8,761	8,721	\$1,679
Public Administration	251	8,449	8,447	8,532	8,476	\$1,194
Other Services (except Public Administr..	1,145	6,059	6,089	6,088	6,078	\$905
Information	477	3,768	3,730	3,722	3,740	\$1,709
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	250	2,688	2,676	2,682	2,682	\$1,905
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	239	2,317	2,459	2,540	2,440	\$401
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	563	2,101	2,138	2,099	2,114	\$979
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	229	1,433	1,424	1,493	1,450	\$1,096
Utilities	44	1,014	1,056	1,055	1,042	\$2,785
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	11	104	109	113	109	\$1,035

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## East Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 East Central Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	33,315	45,700	12,385	37.2%
561 Administrative and Support Services	9,365	13,185	3,820	40.8%
484 Truck Transportation	8,275	12,025	3,750	45.3%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	14,335	17,390	3,055	21.3%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,265	10,840	2,575	31.2%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	7,975	9,880	1,905	23.9%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	21,115	22,775	1,660	7.9%
624 Social Assistance	5,760	7,295	1,535	26.6%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,940	8,250	1,310	18.9%
622 Hospitals	15,665	16,900	1,235	7.9%
721 Accommodation	2,160	3,240	1,080	50.0%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	8,820	9,875	1,055	12.0%
524 Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	6,930	7,895	965	13.9%
493 Warehousing and Storage	2,940	3,775	835	28.4%
236 Construction of Buildings	2,465	3,160	695	28.2%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,345	2,025	680	50.6%
452 General Merchandise Stores	4,750	5,245	495	10.4%
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	360	840	480	133.3%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	1,645	2,120	475	28.9%
811 Other Services (except Public Administration)	560	1,120	560	100.0%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	258,500	305,600	47,100	18.2%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	360	840	480	133.3%
213 Support Activities for Mining	5	10	5	100.0%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	125	245	120	96.0%
532 Rental and Leasing Services	450	760	310	68.9%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	595	915	320	53.8%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,345	2,025	680	50.6%
721 Accommodation	2,160	3,240	1,080	50.0%
484 Truck Transportation	8,275	12,025	3,750	45.3%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	350	500	150	42.9%
561 Administrative and Support Services	9,365	13,185	3,820	40.8%
488 Support Activities for Transportation	615	845	230	37.4%
611 Educational Services	33,315	45,700	12,385	37.2%
492 Couriers and Messengers	1,075	1,445	370	34.4%
313 Textile Mills	15	20	5	33.3%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,265	10,840	2,575	31.2%
511 Publishing Industries	1,200	1,570	370	30.8%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	1,645	2,120	475	28.9%
493 Warehousing and Storage	2,940	3,775	835	28.4%
236 Construction of Buildings	2,465	3,160	695	28.2%
811 Other Services (except Public Administration)	560	1,120	560	100.0%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	258,500	305,600	47,100	18.2%

## Mississippi Valley LWDA

The Mississippi Valley LWDA is most dependent on Manufacturing employment, with 19.2 percent of all jobs being in this sector. Additionally, Mississippi Valley can suffer from a tight labor market which can impede growth. Health Care and Social assistance is the second largest sector with 13.8 percent of employment. Hiring in the Health Care and Social assistance sector has suffered recently as employment has steadily trended down with losses in the sector beginning in 2017, even before the COVID pandemic impacted the sector. Over all Mississippi Valley is expected to add 26,520 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030, increasing industry employment is expected to 223,640 from the current 197,120, a 13.5 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The Administrative Support Services and Waste Management and Remediation Services sector is expected to add 3,925 jobs. This will mostly reflect the continuous recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 3,855 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the number of ageing populations. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for Mississippi Valley.

**Mississippi Valley LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1**

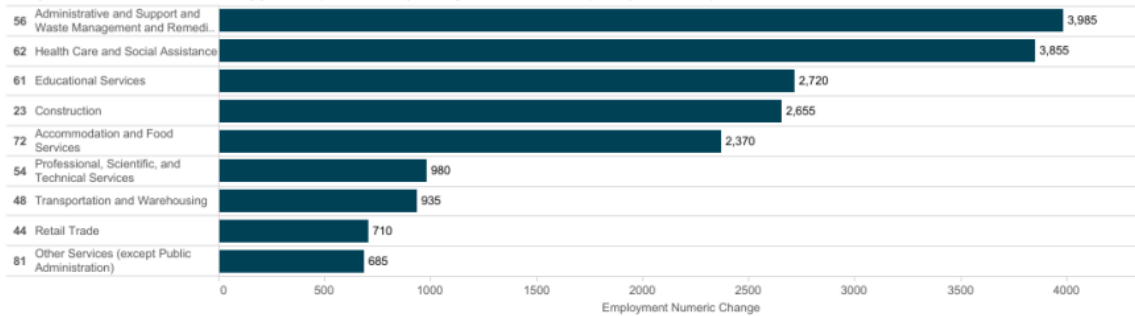
<b>Sector/Subsector</b>	<b>Total Locations</b>	<b>Employment Month 1</b>	<b>Employment Month 2</b>	<b>Employment Month 3</b>	<b>Average Emp</b>	<b>Ave Weekly Wage</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	12,848	176,900	177,059	177,469	177,141	\$1,072
Manufacturing	552	33,966	34,092	34,180	34,079	\$1,436
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,878	24,565	24,544	24,448	24,519	\$1,021
Retail Trade	1,376	22,473	22,087	21,895	22,152	\$684
Accommodation and Food Services	974	15,587	15,816	15,952	15,784	\$387
Educational Services	338	14,722	14,915	14,936	14,858	\$849
Construction	1,079	8,661	8,699	9,036	8,798	\$1,253
Admin Support & Waste Management	766	8,528	8,315	8,285	8,376	\$859
Transportation and Warehousing	536	8,136	7,986	7,935	8,020	\$1,119
Public Administration	286	6,867	6,877	6,969	6,904	\$1,075
Wholesale Trade	822	6,492	6,440	6,441	6,458	\$1,594
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	1,184	5,509	5,619	5,596	5,574	\$1,406
Other Services (except Public Administr..	914	5,137	5,159	5,214	5,169	\$751
Finance and Insurance	790	5,037	5,041	5,038	5,039	\$1,670
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	189	4,613	4,655	4,686	4,651	\$2,206
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	172	1,952	2,159	2,209	2,106	\$422
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	471	1,342	1,336	1,322	1,334	\$991
Information	238	1,224	1,226	1,222	1,224	\$1,157
Utilities	97	1,146	1,147	1,140	1,144	\$1,955
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	183	912	916	935	922	\$930
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	3	31	30	30	30	\$928

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## Mississippi Valley Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 Mississippi Valley LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
561 Administrative and Support Services	9,295	13,220	3,925	42.2%
611 Educational Services	14,060	16,780	2,720	19.3%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,155	10,540	2,385	29.2%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	6,505	8,115	1,610	24.8%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	12,405	13,965	1,560	12.6%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,980	3,300	1,320	66.7%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	5,050	6,030	980	19.4%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	18,650	19,525	875	4.7%
721 Accommodation	2,055	2,865	810	39.4%
551 Management of Companies and Enterpris...	3,365	4,065	700	20.8%
236 Construction of Buildings	1,795	2,480	685	38.2%
452 General Merchandise Stores	4,485	5,125	640	14.3%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,965	6,565	600	10.1%
484 Truck Transportation	3,200	3,770	570	17.8%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	1,500	2,040	540	36.0%
622 Hospitals	5,875	6,335	460	7.8%
492 Couriers and Messengers	795	1,250	455	57.2%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,275	1,725	450	35.3%
624 Social Assistance	4,400	4,810	410	9.3%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	197,120	223,640	26,520	13.5%

2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
113 Forestry and Logging	5	10	5	100.0%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	105	190	85	81.0%
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	310	520	210	67.7%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,980	3,300	1,320	66.7%
321 Wood Product Manufacturing	160	265	105	65.6%
492 Couriers and Messengers	795	1,250	455	57.2%
561 Administrative and Support Services	9,295	13,220	3,925	42.2%
721 Accommodation	2,055	2,865	810	39.4%
237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	915	1,275	360	39.3%
236 Construction of Buildings	1,795	2,480	685	38.2%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	1,500	2,040	540	36.0%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,275	1,725	450	35.3%
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	390	520	130	33.3%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	160	210	50	31.3%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,155	10,540	2,385	29.2%
488 Support Activities for Transportation	630	805	175	27.8%
812 Personal and Laundry Services	1,345	1,690	345	25.7%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	6,505	8,115	1,610	24.8%
551 Management of Companies and Enterpris...	3,365	4,065	700	20.8%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	197,120	223,640	26,520	13.5%

## Northeast Iowa LWDA

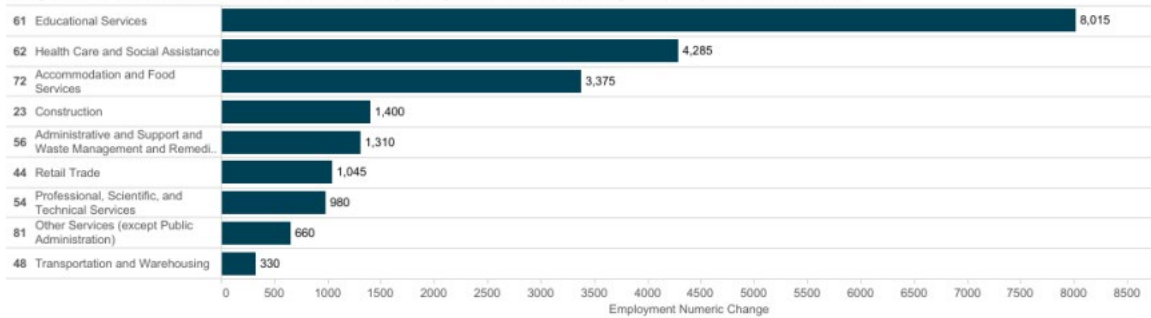
The Northeast Iowa LWDA is also heavily dependent on the Manufacturing sector, with 17.8 percent of all covered employment in this sector. While employment did drop some in 2021, the total number of jobs in Manufacturing has recovered over the last twenty-four months with jobs rivaling per-COVID marks. On the other hand, weekly wages for individuals in this sector have expanded by 8.7 percent as efforts are made to retain workers. As demonstrated with statewide and other LWDA data, the Health Care and Social assistance sector suffers from the same issues in Northeast Iowa. Health Care and Social assistance remains the second largest employing sector in the LWDA, despite trending down 5.6 percent since 2020, and this is despite rising wages. Workers in this sector in Northeast Iowa averaged \$1,039 per week, up 1.1 percent annually. The Northeast LWDA is expected to add 29,000 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 292,415 from the current 263,415, an 11 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020: low base-year employment for 2020 due to the COVID-19. The educational services sector is expected to add 8,015. The Educational Services sector is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to

add 4,285 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the number of aging populations. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for Northeast Iowa.

Northeast Iowa LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1						
Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	17,485	240,861	241,374	241,904	241,388	\$1,035
Manufacturing	889	48,123	47,905	47,851	47,958	\$1,307
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,182	37,541	37,562	37,672	37,590	\$1,039
Retail Trade	2,004	28,478	28,410	28,360	28,416	\$650
Educational Services	432	24,033	24,597	24,535	24,388	\$824
Accommodation and Food Services	1,133	16,131	16,294	16,393	16,275	\$346
Wholesale Trade	1,189	11,053	11,050	11,143	11,084	\$1,434
Transportation and Warehousing	896	11,082	10,943	10,808	10,947	\$1,065
Finance and Insurance	1,184	10,822	10,881	10,852	10,851	\$1,712
Construction	1,579	10,163	9,960	10,514	10,211	\$1,163
Public Administration	565	8,825	8,939	9,025	8,930	\$985
Admin Support & Waste Management	833	7,165	7,244	7,247	7,219	\$860
Other Services (except Public Administr..	1,212	6,869	6,926	6,933	6,910	\$839
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	1,465	6,822	6,956	6,922	6,901	\$1,373
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	560	3,820	3,792	3,854	3,824	\$916
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	242	2,751	2,795	2,676	2,739	\$518
Information	349	2,513	2,469	2,463	2,484	\$1,439
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	176	2,406	2,388	2,397	2,398	\$1,873
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	535	1,545	1,534	1,535	1,539	\$834
Utilities	53	702	711	705	706	\$2,002
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	7	17	18	19	18	\$883

## Northeast Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 Northeast Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 Northeast Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	22,760	30,775	8,015	35.2%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	13,145	15,715	2,570	19.6%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,235	10,870	1,635	17.7%
561 Administrative and Support Services	6,760	7,980	1,220	18.0%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	11,920	13,115	1,195	10.0%
493 Warehousing and Storage	3,500	4,505	1,005	28.7%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	6,435	7,415	980	15.2%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	6,270	7,100	830	13.2%
721 Accommodation	1,820	2,625	805	44.2%
622 Hospitals	10,685	11,460	775	7.3%
930 Local Government, Excluding Education a...	9,115	9,880	765	8.4%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	25,355	26,115	760	3.0%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	4,410	5,160	750	17.0%
624 Social Assistance	5,600	6,280	680	12.1%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	2,755	3,425	670	24.3%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	5,340	5,885	545	10.2%
333 Machinery Manufacturing	12,575	13,120	545	4.3%
452 General Merchandise Stores	5,075	5,600	525	10.3%
236 Construction of Buildings	2,615	3,005	390	14.9%
334 Food Manufacturing	2,225	2,615	390	17.5%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	263,415	292,415	29,000	11.0%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 Northeast Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	165	270	105	63.6%
213 Support Activities for Mining	10	15	5	50.0%
721 Accommodation	1,820	2,625	805	44.2%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	545	755	210	38.5%
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	215	295	80	37.2%
611 Educational Services	22,760	30,775	8,015	35.2%
493 Warehousing and Storage	3,500	4,505	1,005	28.7%
814 Private Households	95	120	25	26.3%
492 Couriers and Messengers	1,145	1,430	285	24.9%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	2,755	3,425	670	24.3%
443 Electronics and Appliance Stores	730	885	155	21.2%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	13,145	15,715	2,570	19.6%
561 Administrative and Support Services	6,760	7,980	1,220	18.0%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,235	10,870	1,635	17.7%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	4,410	5,160	750	17.0%
321 Wood Product Manufacturing	2,080	2,425	345	16.6%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	6,435	7,415	980	15.2%
236 Construction of Buildings	2,615	3,005	390	14.9%
523 Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Oth...	1,025	1,165	140	13.7%
532 Postal and Courier Services	225	365	140	62.2%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	263,415	292,415	29,000	11.0%

## South Central Iowa LWDA

The South Central LWDA contains the smallest percentage of employment compared to all other LWDA's; however, Manufacturing remains vital with 22.6 percent of all covered jobs. This sector experienced substantial losses in 2021 due to the pandemic, yet recovered quickly and are expanding upon all-time highs in 2023. Weekly wages are up 22.5 percent since 2021 and employment has gained 11.9 percent. Like other LWDA's, Health Care and Social Assistance is the second largest industry sector in South Central Iowa, with 14.2 percent of all covered employment, however, employment has decreased slightly in this sector, shrinking from a high of 13,350 in 2014 to 11,812 in 2022. The South Central LWDA is expected to add 10,375 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 107,355 from the current 96,980, a 10.7 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020: low base-year employment for 2020 due to the COVID-19. The educational services sector is expected to add 1,745. The educational Services sector is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 1,665 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the



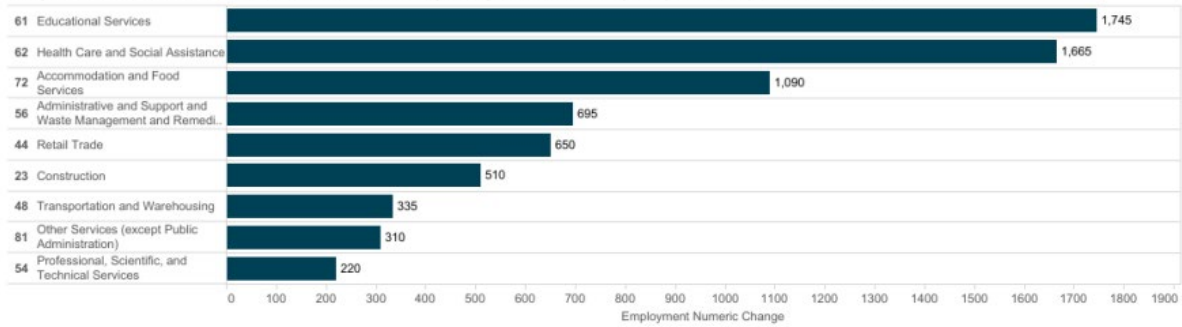
number of ageing populations. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for South Central Iowa.

South Central Iowa LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1						
Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	6,947	83,617	83,652	83,739	83,676	\$1,022
Manufacturing	343	18,980	18,879	18,816	18,893	\$1,341
Health Care and Social Assistance	803	11,881	11,912	11,883	11,890	\$1,016
Retail Trade	759	10,037	9,918	9,911	9,956	\$597
Educational Services	199	9,104	9,213	9,112	9,143	\$850
Accommodation and Food Services	442	5,378	5,466	5,635	5,494	\$390
Public Administration	343	4,280	4,232	4,316	4,277	\$941
Finance and Insurance	431	3,646	3,637	3,623	3,636	\$1,487
Transportation and Warehousing	400	3,195	3,170	3,158	3,174	\$1,082
Wholesale Trade	446	3,044	3,046	3,091	3,060	\$1,361
Construction	608	2,817	2,824	2,933	2,856	\$1,088
Admin Support & Waste Management	317	2,480	2,489	2,420	2,463	\$887
Other Services (except Public Administr..	446	1,964	1,986	1,983	1,980	\$679
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	629	1,923	1,960	1,950	1,944	\$1,217
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	237	1,775	1,776	1,802	1,786	\$1,175
Information	173	825	819	811	820	\$1,014
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	60	656	660	656	658	\$2,342
Utilities	38	605	620	600	608	\$1,977
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	88	561	589	584	579	\$325
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	185	466	456	455	459	\$731
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..						

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## South Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 South Central Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 South Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	9,210	10,955	1,745	18.9%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	4,035	4,895	860	21.3%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	11,020	11,785	765	6.9%
561 Administrative and Support Services	2,695	3,370	675	25.0%
930 Local Government, Excluding Education a...	4,765	5,365	600	12.6%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,555	3,120	565	22.1%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,685	4,130	445	12.1%
624 Social Assistance	1,815	2,200	385	21.2%
447 Gasoline Stations	1,835	2,185	350	19.1%
311 Food Manufacturing	7,280	7,610	330	4.5%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	2,010	2,330	320	15.9%
484 Truck Transportation	1,700	2,005	305	17.9%
622 Hospitals	3,440	3,710	270	7.8%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,730	1,975	245	14.2%
721 Accommodation	550	780	230	41.8%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	1,790	2,010	220	12.3%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	1,400	1,565	165	11.8%
333 Machinery Manufacturing	2,625	2,780	155	5.9%
523 Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Oth...	970	1,110	140	14.4%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	96,980	107,355	10,375	10.7%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 South Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	85	135	50	58.8%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	80	125	45	56.3%
721 Accommodation	550	780	230	41.8%
331 Primary Metal Manufacturing	190	260	70	36.8%
519 Other Information Services	15	20	5	33.3%
814 Private Households	35	45	10	28.6%
812 Personal and Laundry Services	400	505	105	26.3%
561 Administrative and Support Services	2,695	3,370	675	25.0%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,555	3,120	565	22.1%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	4,035	4,895	860	21.3%
624 Social Assistance	1,815	2,200	385	21.2%
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	50	60	10	20.0%
339 Miscellaneous Manufacturing	275	330	55	20.0%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	450	540	90	20.0%
447 Gasoline Stations	1,835	2,185	350	19.1%
611 Educational Services	9,210	10,955	1,745	18.9%
484 Truck Transportation	1,700	2,005	305	17.9%
236 Construction of Buildings	615	725	110	17.9%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In...	555	650	95	17.1%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	96,980	107,355	10,375	10.7%

## Iowa Plains LWDA

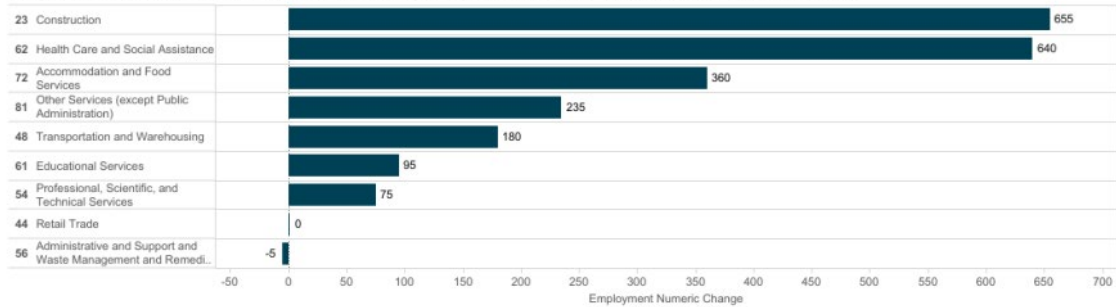
The Iowa Plains LWDA was created on July 1, 2023, when four previous LWDAs merged. Because of this, data and projections for all 42 counties as one local area are still being developed, but we can look at the projections of the four previous local areas to determine current and projected economic conditions for the new local area. The Iowa Plains LWDA consists of the former Northwest, North Central, Western, and Southwest Iowa LWDAs. While the Iowa Plains LWDA is large geographically, the in-demand industry sectors and occupations are consistent across the area.

The counties of the former North Central LWDA include Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, and Wright. This area of the state is expected to add 3,405 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 44,700 from the current 41,295, an 8.2 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The Construction sector is expected to add 655 jobs. This will mostly reflect the continuous recovery from the

virus-induced recession of 2020. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 640 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the number of ageing populations. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the counties of the former North Central LWDA.

### North Central Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 North Central Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
236 Construction of Buildings	890	1,400	510	57.3%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	470	780	310	66.0%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	1,785	2,085	300	16.8%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	1,175	1,385	210	17.9%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	1,900	2,090	190	10.0%
811 Repair and Maintenance	400	580	180	45.0%
484 Truck Transportation	1,525	1,695	170	11.1%
622 Hospitals	1,930	2,080	150	7.8%
930 Local Government, Excluding Education a..	2,015	2,125	110	5.5%
493 Warehousing and Storage	520	625	105	20.2%
611 Educational Services	3,555	3,850	95	2.7%
311 Food Manufacturing	2,120	2,215	95	4.5%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	1,005	1,100	95	9.5%
624 Social Assistance	595	685	90	15.1%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	150	235	85	56.7%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	4,595	4,675	80	1.7%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser..	625	700	75	12.0%
452 General Merchandise Stores	750	820	70	9.3%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	620	685	65	10.5%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	41,295	44,700	3,405	8.2%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re..	10	20	10	100.0%
519 Other Information Services	5	10	5	100.0%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	35	60	25	71.4%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	470	780	310	66.0%
236 Construction of Buildings	890	1,400	510	57.3%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	150	235	85	56.7%
811 Repair and Maintenance	400	580	180	45.0%
812 Personal and Laundry Services	180	230	50	27.8%
721 Accommodation	230	290	60	26.1%
331 Primary Metal Manufacturing	40	50	10	25.0%
321 Wood Product Manufacturing	105	130	25	23.8%
493 Warehousing and Storage	520	625	105	20.2%
492 Couriers and Messengers	110	130	20	18.2%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	1,175	1,385	210	17.9%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	1,785	2,085	300	16.8%
326 Plastics and Rubber Products	220	255	35	15.9%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In..	190	220	30	15.8%
624 Social Assistance	595	685	90	15.1%
442 Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	75	85	10	13.3%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	41,295	44,700	3,405	8.2%

The counties of the former Northwest LWDA include Lyon, Osceola, Dickinson, Emmet, Sious, Kosuth, Obrien, Clay, Kossuth, and Buena Vista. This area of the state is expected to add 10,705 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 89,370 from the current 78,665, a 13.6 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The educational services sector is expected to add 2,000 and is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 1,340 jobs in the next ten years, driven by an increase in the number of aging populations. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the counties of the former Northwest LWDA.

The counties included in the former Western Iowa LWDA include Plymouth, Cherokee, Woodbury, Ida, Sac, Manona, Crawford, Carroll, Greene, Harrison, Shelby, Audubon, Guthrie, Pottawattamie, Cass, Mills, Fremont, and Page. This area of the state is expected to add 15,535 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 199,830 from the current 184,295, an 8.4 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster growth than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 3,270 jobs in the next ten years driven by an increase in the number of the ageing populations. The Construction sector is expected to add 2,085 jobs. This will mostly reflect the continuous recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The charts below summarize the –in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the counties of the former Western Iowa LWDA.

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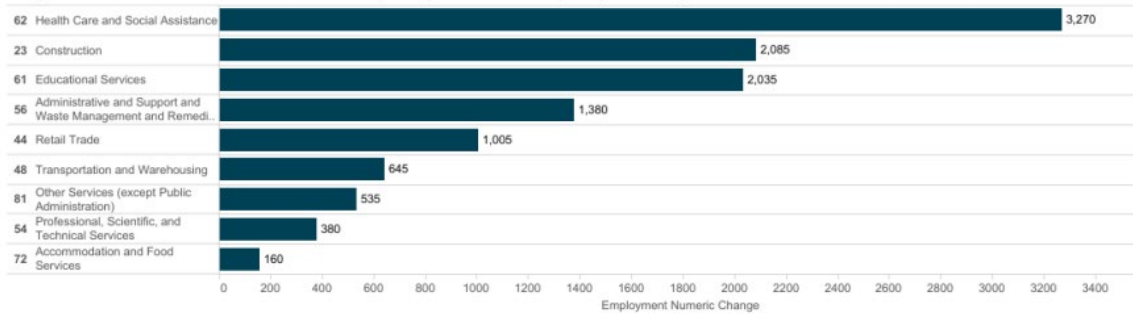
### Western Iowa LWDA Industry Employment, 2023 Quarter 1

Sector/Subsector	Total Locations	Employment Month 1	Employment Month 2	Employment Month 3	Average Emp	Ave Weekly Wage
<b>Grand Total</b>	24,810	296,443	296,696	298,006	297,044	\$981
Manufacturing	1,002	53,026	53,097	53,149	53,092	\$1,244
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,753	45,403	45,362	45,405	45,391	\$1,012
Retail Trade	2,707	36,327	36,003	35,974	36,098	\$612
Educational Services	631	29,729	30,352	30,194	30,092	\$776
Accommodation and Food Services	1,596	23,170	23,156	23,811	23,379	\$399
Wholesale Trade	1,722	14,651	14,670	14,771	14,698	\$1,436
Construction	2,530	14,479	14,371	14,936	14,597	\$1,128
Transportation and Warehousing	1,690	14,452	14,374	14,124	14,316	\$1,079
Public Administration	1,026	14,305	14,219	14,283	14,268	\$1,009
Admin Support & Waste Management	1,102	9,441	9,414	9,411	9,420	\$859
Finance and Insurance	1,626	8,983	8,965	8,932	8,959	\$1,453
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti..	1,226	8,587	8,708	8,757	8,686	\$1,015
Other Services (except Public Administr..	1,561	6,769	6,769	6,827	6,790	\$817
Professional, Scientific, and Technical S..	1,843	6,627	6,675	6,697	6,664	\$1,257
Information	489	3,543	3,561	3,557	3,555	\$1,249
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	299	2,164	2,199	2,324	2,230	\$442
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	667	1,908	1,932	1,963	1,933	\$900
Utilities	147	1,686	1,671	1,682	1,679	\$1,811
Management of Companies and Enterpr..	183	1,143	1,150	1,160	1,149	\$2,741
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr..	10	50	48	49	48	\$827

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## Western Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 Western Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 Western Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	15,100	17,135	2,035	13.5%
561 Administrative and Support Services	5,635	6,955	1,320	23.4%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,215	7,475	1,260	20.3%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	5,345	6,480	1,135	21.2%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	7,535	8,645	1,110	14.7%
721 Accommodation	2,900	3,945	1,045	36.0%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,930	2,755	825	42.7%
622 Hospitals	8,500	9,170	670	7.9%
311 Food Manufacturing	13,485	14,100	615	4.6%
236 Construction of Buildings	1,400	1,995	595	42.5%
452 General Merchandise Stores	4,410	4,875	465	10.5%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser..	3,180	3,560	380	11.9%
237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,645	2,000	355	21.6%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,805	2,150	345	19.1%
484 Truck Transportation	3,870	4,190	320	8.3%
524 Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	1,840	2,150	310	16.8%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	19,720	20,010	290	1.5%
812 Personal and Laundry Services	1,040	1,310	270	26.0%
447 Gasoline Stations	3,125	3,375	250	8.0%
492 Couriers and Messengers	870	1,110	240	27.6%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	184,295	199,830	15,535	8.4%

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

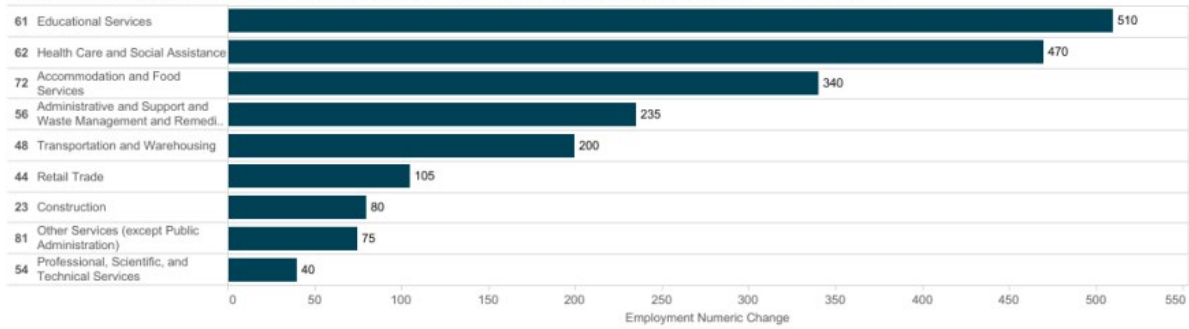
Long-Term 2020-2030 Western Iowa LWDA Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	300	505	205	68.3%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	145	230	85	58.6%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	380	545	165	43.4%
493 Warehousing and Storage	1,930	2,755	825	42.7%
236 Construction of Buildings	1,400	1,995	595	42.5%
721 Accommodation	2,900	3,945	1,045	36.0%
532 Rental and Leasing Services	430	560	130	30.2%
492 Couriers and Messengers	870	1,110	240	27.6%
442 Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	240	305	65	27.1%
812 Personal and Laundry Services	1,040	1,310	270	26.0%
481 Air Transportation	20	25	5	25.0%
561 Administrative and Support Services	5,635	6,955	1,320	23.4%
237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,645	2,000	355	21.6%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	5,345	6,480	1,135	21.2%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,215	7,475	1,260	20.3%
451 Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music ..	590	705	115	19.5%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,805	2,150	345	19.1%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	680	800	120	17.6%
524 Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	1,840	2,150	310	16.8%
237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,645	2,000	355	21.6%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	184,295	199,830	15,535	8.4%

The counties included in the former Southwest Iowa LWDA include Adair, Montgomery, Adams, Union, Clarke, Taylor, Ringgold, and Decatur. This area of the state is expected to add 3,165 nonfarm jobs from 2020-2030. Industry employment is expected to increase to 29,060 from the current 25,895, a 12.2 percent increase. The 2020-2030 projections growth is faster than the past projections, this reflects recovery from the virus-induced recession of 2020. The educational services sector is expected to add 510 jobs and is expected to benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is projected to add 470 jobs in the next ten years, driven by an increase in the number of the ageing populations. The charts below summarize the in-demand industry sectors and occupations for the counties of the former Southwest Iowa LWDA.



## Southwest Iowa LWDA Industry Projections

Long-Term 2020-2030 Southwest Iowa LWDA Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



### 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	2,440	2,950	510	20.9%
561 Administrative and Support Services	485	715	230	47.4%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	2,990	3,180	190	6.4%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	1,010	1,185	175	17.3%
721 Accommodation	360	525	165	45.8%
930 Local Government, Excluding Education a..	1,170	1,330	160	13.7%
484 Truck Transportation	380	530	150	39.5%
624 Social Assistance	585	730	145	24.8%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	1,305	1,440	135	10.3%
493 Warehousing and Storage	155	285	130	83.9%
447 Gasoline Stations	605	730	125	20.7%
622 Hospitals	1,410	1,520	110	7.8%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	650	730	80	12.3%
452 General Merchandise Stores	475	545	70	14.7%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	405	470	65	16.0%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In..	135	195	60	44.4%
326 Plastics and Rubber Products	190	250	60	31.6%
311 Food Manufacturing	1,390	1,450	60	4.3%
333 Machinery Manufacturing	1,365	1,420	55	4.0%
844 Dental and Miscellaneous	55	55	0	0.0%
<b>000 Total All Industries (Nonag)</b>	<b>25,895</b>	<b>29,060</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

### 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re..	5	10	5	100.0%
493 Warehousing and Storage	155	285	130	83.9%
451 Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music ..	15	25	10	66.7%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	95	145	50	52.6%
561 Administrative and Support Services	485	715	230	47.4%
721 Accommodation	360	525	165	45.8%
713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation In..	135	195	60	44.4%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	85	120	35	41.2%
484 Truck Transportation	380	530	150	39.5%
326 Plastics and Rubber Products	190	250	60	31.6%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	20	25	5	25.0%
624 Social Assistance	585	730	145	24.8%
611 Educational Services	2,440	2,950	510	20.9%
447 Gasoline Stations	605	730	125	20.7%
515 Broadcasting (except Internet)	25	30	5	20.0%
444 Building Material and Garden Equipment	235	280	45	19.1%
237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	230	270	40	17.4%
722 Food Services and Drinking Places	1,010	1,185	175	17.3%
811 Repair and Maintenance	300	350	50	16.7%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	2,990	3,180	190	6.4%
<b>000 Total All Industries (Nonag)</b>	<b>25,895</b>	<b>29,060</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

## ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

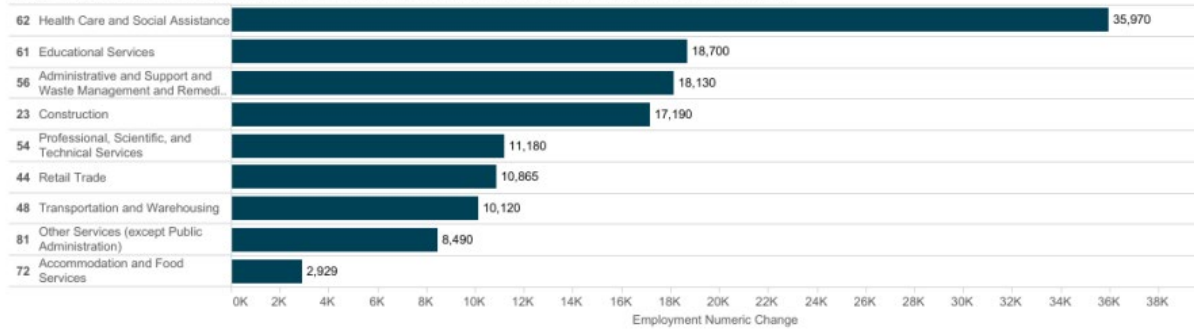
Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Industry employment in Iowa is projected to add 198,915 non-farm jobs in the next 10 years: 2020-2030. Industry employment will increase to 1,854,185; that is a 12 percent increase from the current 1,655,270 base. Nationally, the U.S. is expected to add 11.9 million jobs in the same decade; employment will grow 7.7 percent and increase to 165.4 million jobs by 2030, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2020-2030 industry projections.

Because of the impact of COVID-19 (low base effect), the 2020-2030 projections growth rate is 3.7 percentage points higher than the 2018-28 industry projections for Iowa, and the national industry projections growth rate is 2.7 percentage points higher than the 2018-28 projections period.

The Health Care and Social assistance industry is projected to add the most jobs in the next ten years, driven by an increase in the number of aging populations. Adaptation of new technologies and demand for continuous change will support solid jobs gains in the Professional and Business services. The ongoing adaptation of e-commerce will continue to support growth in Transportation and Warehousing. Educational services will benefit from a growing need for workers upskilling and reskilling, and from a greater digital economy. Meanwhile, Administrative, Support and Waste Management, and the Leisure and Hospitality sectors will continue to recover from the virus-induced recession of 2020.

Long-Term 2020-2030 Statewide Top 2-digit NAICS Industry Projections by Numeric Growth.



Iowa 2020-2030 Employment Numeric Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 Statewide Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
611 Educational Services	171,975	190,675	18,700	10.9%
561 Administrative and Support Services	57,875	75,375	17,500	30.2%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	56,975	72,950	15,975	28.0%
541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Ser...	52,385	63,565	11,180	21.3%
238 Specialty Trade Contractors	49,545	60,425	10,880	22.0%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	52,910	61,600	8,690	16.4%
484 Truck Transportation	29,995	37,765	7,770	25.9%
493 Warehousing and Storage	14,740	22,065	7,325	49.7%
671 Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	144,555	151,680	7,125	4.9%
624 Social Assistance	35,700	42,810	7,110	19.9%
930 Local Government, Excluding Education a...	52,795	57,875	5,080	9.6%
551 Management of Companies and Enterpris...	21,000	25,965	4,965	23.6%
721 Accommodation	15,190	19,695	4,505	29.7%
813 Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Profession...	27,820	32,270	4,450	16.0%
622 Hospitals	64,975	69,170	4,195	6.5%
236 Construction of Buildings	15,020	19,145	4,125	27.5%
522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	43,230	47,135	3,905	9.0%
492 Couriers and Messengers	6,920	10,485	3,565	51.5%
452 General Merchandise Stores	31,835	35,245	3,410	10.7%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	1,655,270	1,854,184	198,914	12.0%

Iowa 2020-2030 Employment Percent Change

Long-Term 2020-2030 Statewide Industry Projections				
NAICS + Industry Description	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Employment Numeric Change	Employment Percent Change
114 Fishing, Hunting and Trapping	25	45	20	80.0%
512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording	1,225	2,145	920	75.1%
492 Couriers and Messengers	6,920	10,485	3,565	51.5%
711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Re...	2,130	3,215	1,085	50.9%
493 Warehousing and Storage	14,740	22,065	7,325	49.7%
316 Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	235	350	115	48.9%
483 Water Transportation	140	205	65	46.4%
115 Support Activities for Agriculture	3,515	5,025	1,510	43.0%
481 Air Transportation	345	490	145	42.0%
485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transport	2,250	3,055	805	35.8%
313 Textile Mills	75	100	25	33.3%
113 Forestry and Logging	45	60	15	33.3%
561 Administrative and Support Services	57,875	75,375	17,500	30.2%
721 Accommodation	15,190	19,695	4,505	29.7%
448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	6,580	8,530	1,950	29.6%
336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	11,915	15,270	3,355	28.2%
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	56,975	72,950	15,975	28.0%
236 Construction of Buildings	15,020	19,145	4,125	27.5%
488 Support Activities for Transportation	4,370	5,545	1,175	26.9%
484 Truck Transportation	29,995	37,765	7,770	25.9%
000 Total All Industries (Nonag)	1,655,270	1,854,184	198,914	12.0%

The charts above reflect two different views of projected industry growth. The left is total growth by number of positions, whereas the chart on the right shows percentage change and demonstrates newly emerging industries. Iowa is growing faster than the national economy. For example, Fishing, Hunting and Trapping shows the highest percent of growth at 80% but is only expected to add 20 positions. Additionally, Couriers and Messengers show a high percentage growth, but this data is reflective of pandemic business practices, when gig economy workers such as uber drivers and delivery drivers where in high-demand. Thus, while these industries are growing, they do not reflect a high total employment industry making it less of an in-demand industry than other sectors. The industries highlighted yellow show both high percentage growth and a high number of new positions, making those industries emerging in-demand industries. Additionally, administrative support, waste management, and leisure and hospitality sectors will



continue to recover from the virus-induced recession of 2020. These industries are growing due to the recovery from the COVID-19 recession, however, is somewhat of a false growth. While these industries will need assistance replenishing their workforce, large growth from pre-pandemic levels is not anticipated.

Statewide occupational employment projections are reflective of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy. For example, Food Preparation & Serving related occupations are expected to have 24,940 total annual openings; Office & Administrative Support Occupations are expected to have 24,340 total annual openings. These respective figures reflect the expected rebounds from COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the pandemic has increased demand for some occupation groups. For example, Transportation & Material Moving related occupations are projected to have 24,675 total annual openings. As businesses adapt telework or hybrid work arrangements, plus the wider adaptation of e-commerce are expected to drive strong growth for the transportation and material moving related occupations. That is, an increase in online shopping, and the use of delivery services is expected to benefit light truck drivers, package delivery services, stockers, and order fillers. In contrast, occupational groups in business management, healthcare related occupations and social service occupational groups are expected to growth at a healthy rate due to fundamental structural changes in the economy. The healthcare support occupational group, which includes home health and personal care aids, nursing assistants, and other health related support are expected to benefit from an aging population. Furthermore, strong employment growth is expected for computer and mathematical related occupations due to a long-term economic shift: adaptation of new technologies and greater digital economy will induce great demand for the computer and mathematical related occupations. All in all, some occupational major groups are expected to experience faster growth because 2020 is low base due to COVID-19 pandemic related impact, and some major occupational groups are expected to grow due to underlying changes in the broader economy. Nevertheless, over the projections period, many of the occupational groups are expected to require post-secondary education, as well as experience in a related occupation.

### Iowa 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings

Long-Term (2020-2030) Statewide Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	86,595	89,380	0.3%	8,765	\$17.47	\$28.29	
41-2011 Cashiers	43,830	44,830	0.2%	8,115	\$9.67	\$11.28	
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wkrs	35,340	39,205	1.1%	7,940	\$9.29	\$11.17	
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	39,695	45,440	1.4%	6,470	\$10.28	\$13.49	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	44,860	53,505	1.9%	6,215	\$16.92	\$23.17	
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	31,120	36,815	1.8%	5,010	\$13.00	\$17.88	
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	20,360	23,640	1.6%	4,570	\$8.63	\$10.15	
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	23,885	31,585	3.2%	4,115	\$11.45	\$13.89	
43-4051 Customer Service Reps	30,445	32,195	0.6%	4,110	\$13.15	\$18.01	
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	25,990	29,850	1.5%	4,085	\$11.10	\$14.41	
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	20,305	25,315	2.5%	4,025	\$11.95	\$14.69	
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	28,840	30,105	0.4%	3,480	\$12.55	\$17.74	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>1,757,895</b>	<b>1,981,145</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>225,840</b>	<b>\$12.46</b>	<b>\$18.75</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Iowa 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth

Long-Term (2020-2030) Statewide Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
49-9081 Wind Turbine Service Technicians	430	775	8.0%	95	\$21.77	\$29.07	
39-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	735	1,305	7.8%	290	\$8.39	\$9.17	
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	2,045	3,225	5.8%	255	\$42.00	\$58.40	
43-3041 Gaming Cage Wkrs	185	285	5.4%	35	\$11.23	\$13.41	
39-3021 Motion Picture Projectorists	60	90	5.0%	20	\$8.76	\$9.04	
27-4011 Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	390	590	5.0%	70	\$16.85	\$23.32	
39-3011 Gaming Dealers	1,035	1,535	4.8%	235	\$8.18	\$9.06	
33-9031 Gaming Surveillance Officers & Gaming Investigators	125	185	4.8%	25	\$13.09	\$14.28	
15-1212 Information Security Analysts	1,110	1,640	4.8%	150	\$31.40	\$49.08	
41-2012 Gaming Change Persons & Booth Cashiers	245	360	4.7%	65	\$10.47	\$13.98	
15-2098 Data Scientists & Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	940	1,375	4.6%	125			
31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants	1,100	1,580	4.4%	205	\$21.40	\$23.67	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>1,757,895</b>	<b>1,981,145</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>225,840</b>	<b>\$12.46</b>	<b>\$18.75</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience

Long-Term (2020-2030) Statewide Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	44,860	53,505	1.9%	6,215	\$16.92	\$23.17	
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	22,800	25,725	1.2%	3,215	\$13.61	\$14.42	
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	23,035	23,915	0.4%	2,665	\$14.32	\$19.15	
29-1141 Registered Nurses	33,105	37,070	1.2%	2,215	\$25.70	\$29.71	
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	19,180	21,245	1.1%	2,055	\$10.05	\$13.72	
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	21,430	23,710	1.1%	1,625	\$19.24	\$26.57	
11-9198 Personal Service/Entertainment/Rec Mgrs, Ex Gambling; & Mgrs, All Other	19,350	20,920	0.8%	1,610	\$33.17	\$49.53	
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	12,580	14,545	1.6%	1,310	\$20.92	\$36.98	
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	11,870	13,745	1.6%	1,305	\$22.83	\$30.17	
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	14,515	16,060	1.1%	1,165	\$20.12	\$28.76	
15-1256 Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers	9,960	12,335	2.4%	1,040	\$33.63	\$47.84	
13-1190 Project Management Specialists/Business Operations Specialists, All Other	10,935	12,760	1.7%	1,040	\$19.00	\$29.74	
<b>00-0000 Total All Occupations</b>	<b>1,757,895</b>	<b>1,981,145</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>225,840</b>	<b>\$12.46</b>	<b>\$18.75</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Local Workforce Development Area Emerging Sectors and Occupations

The same trends hold true in local level data, with slight variances between local areas on the order of the most in-demand sectors and occupations. Data for each of the Local Areas is shown below.

Central Iowa LWDA

## Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings

### Long-Term (2020-2030) Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wks	10,766	11,855	1.0%	2,400	\$9.65	\$11.39
41-2011 Cashiers	11,375	11,455	0.1%	2,070	\$9.97	\$11.51
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	11,170	12,750	1.4%	1,815	\$10.64	\$13.80
43-4051 Customer Service Reps	10,910	11,350	0.4%	1,440	\$14.64	\$18.60
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	6,380	7,280	1.4%	1,410	\$8.79	\$10.29
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	7,210	8,625	2.2%	1,210	\$13.11	\$18.17
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	6,745	8,160	2.1%	1,130	\$11.02	\$14.33
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,050	9,620	2.0%	1,120	\$18.15	\$23.76
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	8,130	8,125	3.3%	1,060	\$11.68	\$14.03
43-9081 Office Clerks, General	8,095	8,525	0.5%	990	\$13.07	\$18.02
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	4,575	5,400	1.8%	855	\$12.68	\$14.79
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	5,920	6,235	0.5%	700	\$15.92	\$22.94
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>436,410</b>	<b>502,735</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>57,305</b>	<b>\$13.09</b>	<b>\$22.70</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth

### Long-Term (2020-2030) Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
43-3041 Gaming Cage Wks	80	140	7.5%	20		
39-1013 First-Line Supvs of Gambling Services Wks	60	105	7.5%	15		
39-3011 Gaming Dealers	125	210	7.2%	35		
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	420	715	7.0%	60	\$38.86	\$58.40
27-2042 Musicians & Singers	75	125	6.7%	15	\$17.10	\$25.37
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	500	825	6.5%	95		
25-1072 Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	170	280	6.0%	30	\$24.90	\$31.25
11-8081 Lodging Mgrs	225	375	6.4%	50	\$15.95	\$22.46
39-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	205	330	6.1%	75	\$8.36	\$8.74
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	990	1,575	5.9%	235	\$9.73	\$17.34
39-5031 Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	1,080	1,630	5.4%	265	\$11.37	\$17.51
27-4011 Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	175	265	5.1%	30	\$19.20	\$23.89
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>436,410</b>	<b>502,735</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>57,305</b>	<b>\$13.09</b>	<b>\$22.70</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Central Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience

### Long-Term (2020-2030) Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,050	9,620	2.0%	1,120	\$18.15	\$23.76
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	5,920	6,235	0.5%	700	\$15.92	\$22.94
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	4,620	6,295	3.6%	695	\$10.37	\$13.92
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	4,545	5,130	1.3%	640	\$14.04	\$14.70
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	6,110	6,910	1.3%	615	\$22.69	\$38.91
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	4,695	6,755	4.4%	610	\$18.75	\$29.02
29-1141 Registered Nurses	8,185	9,110	1.1%	540	\$26.35	\$30.33
15-1256 Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers	4,930	6,270	2.7%	540	\$34.17	\$48.02
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	4,420	5,050	1.4%	475	\$24.84	\$30.76
13-1111 Management Analysts	3,655	4,170	1.4%	405	\$29.66	\$39.27
11-3031 Financial Mgrs	3,895	4,720	2.1%	385	\$39.42	\$60.88
25-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	1,980	2,940	4.8%	375	\$13.78	\$17.50
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>436,410</b>	<b>502,735</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>57,305</b>	<b>\$13.09</b>	<b>\$22.70</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

East Central Iowa LWDA

**East Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings**

Long-Term (2020-2030) East Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	9,315	12,300	3.3%	1,480	\$18.46	\$23.68
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	12,870	13,560	0.5%	1,340	\$20.87	\$35.20
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wrks	5,355	6,155	1.5%	1,245	\$9.55	\$11.27
41-2011 Cashiers	6,230	6,290	0.1%	1,135	\$9.98	\$11.42
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	6,255	7,220	1.5%	1,030	\$10.42	\$13.50
43-4051 Customer Service Reps	5,360	5,975	1.1%	775	\$13.02	\$17.91
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	4,005	4,845	2.1%	770	\$12.58	\$14.91
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	3,245	3,840	1.8%	745	\$8.74	\$10.28
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	3,535	4,815	3.6%	830	\$11.57	\$14.09
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	3,540	4,400	2.4%	610	\$11.53	\$14.80
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	3,495	4,385	2.5%	605	\$12.58	\$15.01
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	4,895	4,975	0.8%	580	\$13.28	\$18.20
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>267,295</b>	<b>313,570</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>35,660</b>	<b>\$12.96</b>	<b>\$22.55</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**East Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth**

Long-Term (2020-2030) East Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
39-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	105	225	11.4%	90	\$8.40	\$9.83
27-4011 Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	95	185	9.5%	25	\$20.48	\$23.35
27-2042 Musicians & Singers	90	160	7.8%	20	\$15.15	\$18.17
39-3011 Gaming Dealers	50	80	6.0%	15		
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	2,090	3,220	5.6%	355	\$30.15	\$60.27
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	385	600	5.6%	50	\$41.75	\$68.40
49-2098 Security & Fire Alarm Systems Installers	85	190	5.4%	10	\$16.91	\$22.89
25-1072 Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	195	300	5.4%	35	\$24.54	\$37.32
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	805	1,210	5.0%	180	\$9.42	\$18.16
33-9091 Crossing Guards	150	225	5.0%	45	\$13.45	\$17.13
25-2021 Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	450	675	5.0%	85	\$10.36	\$17.61
35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant	2,090	3,080	4.7%	470	\$11.81	\$14.34
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>267,295</b>	<b>313,570</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>35,660</b>	<b>\$12.96</b>	<b>\$22.55</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**East Central Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience**

Long-Term (2020-2030) East Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	F <sup>1</sup>	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	F <sup>2</sup>	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers		9,315	12,300	3.3%	1,400		\$18.46	\$23.68
31-1131 Nursing Assistants		3,100	3,695	1.4%	455		\$13.00	\$14.51
28-1141 Registered Nurses		6,600	7,300	1.1%	440		\$27.90	\$29.85
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary		3,100	4,105	3.2%	430		\$10.28	\$13.91
15-1258 Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers		4,060	5,020	2.4%	425		\$36.42	\$47.86
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary		2,060	3,220	5.6%	355		\$30.15	\$60.27
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks		3,020	3,155	0.4%	350		\$14.84	\$22.47
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education		2,695	3,655	3.6%	320		\$20.20	\$28.87
25-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term		1,620	2,275	4.0%	285		\$14.43	\$17.82
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education		2,180	2,965	3.6%	250		\$19.83	\$29.23
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs		2,335	2,795	1.7%	250		\$21.46	\$37.73
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors		1,745	1,900	1.3%	185		\$23.24	\$30.04
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>		<b>267,295</b>	<b>313,570</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>35,660</b>		<b>\$12.96</b>	<b>\$22.55</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

Mississippi Valley LWDA

**Mississippi Valley Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) Mississippi Valley LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wkrs	4,900	5,290	0.8%	1,070	\$9.05	\$10.89
41-2011 Cashiers	5,860	5,906	0.1%	1,065	\$9.27	\$11.09
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	4,420	4,906	1.1%	695	\$10.13	\$13.07
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	3,945	4,735	2.0%	645	\$12.71	\$17.48
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	2,950	3,315	1.2%	640	\$8.53	\$10.12
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,540	5,270	1.6%	605	\$15.03	\$22.77
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	3,130	3,830	2.3%	530	\$10.71	\$14.32
43-4091 Customer Service Reps	3,510	3,845	1.0%	485	\$12.62	\$17.48
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	2,770	3,515	2.7%	455	\$11.05	\$13.70
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	2,250	2,745	2.2%	435	\$10.96	\$14.14
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	3,425	3,600	0.5%	355		
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	2,580	2,785	0.8%	345	\$13.51	\$14.19
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>186,145</b>	<b>211,355</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>24,695</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>\$18.12</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**Mississippi Valley Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) Mississippi Valley LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
15-1212 Information Security Analysts	95	165	7.4%	15	\$21.20	\$36.81
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	200	330	6.5%	25	\$45.06	\$60.31
39-1013 First-Line Supvs of Gambling Services Wkrs	75	115	5.3%	15	\$15.99	\$22.83
39-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	95	150	5.3%	35	\$8.24	\$9.17
33-9098 School Bus Monitors & Protective Service Wkrs, All Other	60	90	5.0%	20	\$14.92	\$18.89
31-9011 Massage Therapists	90	135	5.0%	15	\$15.16	\$22.06
39-3011 Gaming Dealers	145	215	4.8%	35	\$8.19	\$8.81
51-9195 Molders, Shapers, & Casters, Ex Metal & Plastic	95	140	4.7%	15	\$13.50	\$17.82
11-9021 Construction Mgrs	380	580	4.7%	50	\$31.55	\$45.34
11-9081 Lodging Mgrs	130	190	4.6%	25	\$16.06	\$22.30
27-2012 Producers & Directors	55	85	4.5%	10	\$14.53	\$18.63
15-1258 Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers	590	855	4.5%	80	\$28.62	\$46.02
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>186,145</b>	<b>211,355</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>24,695</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>\$18.12</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**Mississippi Valley Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) Mississippi Valley LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,540	5,270	1.6%	605	\$15.93	\$22.77
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	2,580	2,785	0.8%	345	\$13.51	\$14.19
29-1141 Registered Nurses	3,640	4,245	1.7%	265	\$24.79	\$29.11
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	2,215	2,320	0.5%	260	\$13.22	\$18.26
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	2,320	2,635	1.4%	235	\$19.76	\$35.88
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	1,845	2,200	1.9%	180	\$19.47	\$28.87
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	1,475	1,740	1.6%	175	\$9.96	\$13.63
25-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	1,110	1,380	2.4%	170	\$13.85	\$17.38
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	1,800	2,155	1.9%	165	\$19.01	\$28.06
31-9092 Medical Assistants	715	935	3.1%	120	\$14.01	\$17.73
49-3023 Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	815	875	0.7%	90	\$12.84	\$17.85
25-2022 Middle School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	910	1,085	1.9%	90	\$19.69	\$28.42
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>186,145</b>	<b>211,355</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>24,695</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>\$18.12</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report



Northeast Iowa LWDA

**Northeast Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings**

Long-Term (2020-2030) Northeast Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
41-2011 Cashiers	7,656	7,680	0.0%	1,390	\$9.90	\$11.42
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Woks	4,800	5,400	1.5%	1,096	\$9.10	\$10.03
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	9,800	10,415	0.0%	1,030	\$18.83	\$28.29
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	6,080	6,695	1.0%	945	\$10.17	\$13.12
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	5,490	6,150	1.2%	825	\$13.50	\$18.03
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,000	7,425	0.6%	825	\$16.94	\$22.88
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	3,340	3,920	1.7%	755	\$8.60	\$9.85
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	4,020	4,930	2.3%	630	\$11.56	\$13.77
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	3,160	3,780	1.9%	600	\$11.54	\$14.48
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	3,800	4,370	1.5%	595	\$11.46	\$17.14
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	4,375	4,845	0.8%	570	\$13.44	\$14.28
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	4,720	4,730	0.0%	540	\$12.24	\$17.46
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>260,840</b>	<b>289,790</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>33,210</b>	<b>\$12.25</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**Northeast Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth**

Long-Term (2020-2030) Northeast Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
49-9081 Wind Turbine Service Technicians	135	235	7.4%	30	\$23.34	\$28.83
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	240	375	5.6%	40	\$23.64	\$37.18
25-1072 Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	100	150	5.9%	15	\$22.52	\$29.63
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	845	1,240	4.7%	180	\$8.65	\$14.71
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	395	580	4.6%	45	\$44.72	\$58.21
15-1212 Information Security Analysts	100	145	4.5%	15	\$25.95	\$46.22
11-9081 Lodging Mgrs	90	130	4.4%	15	\$15.11	\$22.38
35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant	1,695	2,440	4.4%	375	\$11.05	\$13.99
25-1126 Philosophy & Religion Teachers, Postsecondary	70	100	4.3%	10	\$20.10	\$29.21
29-1127 Speech-Language Pathologists	215	305	4.2%	25	\$26.39	\$36.28
30-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	60	85	4.2%	20	\$8.37	\$10.67
20-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	890	1,250	4.1%	155	\$13.33	\$17.34
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>260,840</b>	<b>289,790</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>33,210</b>	<b>\$12.25</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**Northeast Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience**

Long-Term (2020-2030) Northeast Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,000	7,425	0.6%	825	\$16.94	\$22.88
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	4,375	4,845	0.6%	570	\$13.44	\$14.28
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	3,290	4,400	3.4%	465	\$9.83	\$13.55
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	3,555	3,510	-0.1%	385	\$13.30	\$18.27
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	3,075	4,155	3.5%	365	\$19.32	\$28.53
29-1841 Registered Nurses	5,305	5,810	1.0%	340	\$24.79	\$29.91
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	2,940	3,105	0.6%	265	\$19.78	\$35.19
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	2,275	3,075	3.5%	260	\$20.33	\$28.81
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	845	1,240	4.7%	180	\$8.65	\$14.71
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	1,645	1,815	1.0%	165	\$20.77	\$29.36
25-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	890	1,250	4.1%	155	\$13.33	\$17.34
25-2022 Middle School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	1,255	1,695	3.5%	150	\$19.74	\$28.82
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>260,840</b>	<b>289,790</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>33,210</b>	<b>\$12.25</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

South Central Iowa LWDA

**South Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings**

Long-Term (2020-2030) South Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	7,800	8,155	0.5%	805		
41-2011 Cashiers	2,845	3,025	0.6%	550	\$9.10	\$11.02
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wkrs	2,040	2,300	1.3%	465	\$8.94	\$10.80
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,180	3,530	1.1%	400	\$16.62	\$22.49
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	2,420	2,665	1.0%	360	\$11.30	\$14.41
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	2,310	2,455	0.6%	345	\$10.05	\$11.53
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	1,830	2,080	1.4%	325	\$11.61	\$17.23
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	2,065	2,230	0.8%	300	\$13.44	\$17.89
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	1,810	1,840	0.2%	210	\$12.12	\$17.21
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	910	1,065	2.0%	210	\$8.44	\$8.94
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	1,575	1,695	0.8%	210	\$13.44	\$14.17
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	1,805	1,780	-0.1%	195	\$12.91	\$17.92
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>109,400</b>	<b>119,945</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>13,665</b>	<b>\$12.04</b>	<b>\$18.03</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**South Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth**

Long-Term (2020-2030) South Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
39-3011 Gaming Dealers	55	85	5.5%	15		
35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant	710	1,045	4.7%	160	\$10.17	\$13.74
31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants	100	150	4.5%	20	\$21.85	\$23.22
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	115	165	4.3%	10	\$41.92	\$58.21
21-1018 Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors	190	265	3.9%	30	\$14.75	\$18.67
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	80	110	3.8%	10	\$19.04	\$37.52
22-1072 Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	55	70	3.6%	10	\$25.50	\$29.63
39-9031 Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	145	195	3.4%	30	\$9.28	\$13.87
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	160	215	3.4%	30	\$10.00	\$18.05
11-9111 Medical & Health Services Mgrs	385	515	3.4%	45	\$29.70	\$37.29
53-3058 Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Ex Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	475	620	3.1%	80		
27-4021 Photographers	115	150	3.0%	15	\$9.70	\$16.74
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>109,400</b>	<b>119,945</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>13,665</b>	<b>\$12.04</b>	<b>\$18.03</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**South Central Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience**

Long-Term (2020-2030) South Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,180	3,530	1.1%	400	\$16.62	\$22.49
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	1,575	1,695	0.8%	210	\$13.44	\$14.17
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	1,805	1,780	-0.1%	195	\$12.91	\$17.92
26-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	1,755	2,090	1.9%	170	\$10.71	\$23.39
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	1,285	1,510	1.8%	150	\$9.54	\$11.08
29-1141 Registered Nurses	1,855	2,040	1.0%	120	\$24.15	\$20.11
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	1,080	1,105	1.1%	105	\$10.82	\$30.07
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	930	1,110	1.9%	85	\$18.99	\$23.29
11-0108 Personal Service/Entertainment/Rac Mgrs, Ex Gambling & Mgrs, All Other	665	1,020	0.7%	80	\$31.78	\$47.84
39-9012 Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists	465	515	2.4%	75	\$6.83	\$14.55
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	805	665	1.0%	60	\$20.97	\$26.31
25-2022 Middle School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	590	705	1.9%	55	\$19.80	\$23.35
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>109,400</b>	<b>119,945</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>13,665</b>	<b>\$12.04</b>	<b>\$18.03</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

Iowa Plains LWDA (Data displayed via old Local Areas)

**North Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) North Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Managers	2,820	2,940	0.4%	290		
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,835	2,025	1.0%	230	\$16.02	\$22.31
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	965	1,020	0.6%	145	\$10.02	\$13.37
41-2011 Cashiers	825	785	-0.5%	140	\$9.39	\$11.06
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	635	730	1.5%	140	\$8.49	\$9.06
53-7082 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	785	825	0.5%	110	\$13.73	\$17.87
53-7065 Stackers & Order Fillers	570	645	1.4%	160	\$11.33	\$17.17
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	820	805	-0.2%	90	\$11.80	\$17.27
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	800	790	-0.1%	85	\$13.76	\$18.27
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	665	705	0.7%	85	\$13.65	\$13.97
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	580	590	0.2%	80	\$10.98	\$14.18
47-2061 Construction Laborers	385	560	4.5%	65	\$15.07	\$18.26
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>43,195</b>	<b>46,665</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>5,235</b>	<b>\$12.29</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**North Central Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) North Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
51-4081 Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, & Tenders, Metal & Plastic	100	155	5.5%	20		
47-2061 Construction Laborers	385	560	4.5%	65	\$15.07	\$18.26
49-9044 Millwrights	115	165	4.3%	15	\$23.02	\$29.07
35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant	250	345	3.8%	55	\$10.15	\$13.64
11-9021 Construction Managers	135	185	3.7%	15	\$27.39	\$38.46
49-3031 Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	185	245	3.5%	25	\$18.98	\$23.17
49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics	215	290	3.5%	30	\$21.39	\$28.70
11-9111 Medical & Health Services Managers	180	240	3.3%	20	\$31.30	\$37.85
47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	200	265	3.3%	25	\$24.00	\$29.42
47-2031 Carpenters	245	315	2.9%	30	\$15.59	\$22.28
13-1161 Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	95	120	2.6%	10	\$15.94	\$23.15
51-4121 Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	200	245	2.5%	30	\$17.00	\$22.42
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>43,195</b>	<b>46,665</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>5,235</b>	<b>\$12.29</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

**North Central Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience**

**Long-Term (2020-2030) North Central Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections**

SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,835	2,025	1.0%	230	\$16.92	\$22.31
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	800	790	-0.1%	85	\$13.76	\$18.27
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	665	705	0.7%	85	\$13.65	\$13.97
29-1141 Registered Nurses	845	915	0.8%	55	\$24.49	\$29.34
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	590	605	0.3%	55	\$10.76	\$13.83
11-1021 General & Operations Managers	430	465	0.9%	40		
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	185	210	1.6%	30	\$8.65	\$8.83
25-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	280	275	0.8%	30	\$13.92	\$16.86
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	440	460	0.2%	30	\$18.92	\$23.22
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	405	415	0.2%	30	\$19.58	\$23.75
49-3023 Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	210	225	0.7%	25	\$14.00	\$17.09
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	235	250	0.6%	25	\$21.38	\$26.55
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>43,195</b>	<b>46,665</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>5,235</b>	<b>\$12.29</b>	<b>\$18.23</b>

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report



## Western Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings

Long-Term (2020-2030) Western Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
41-2011 Cashiers	5,420	5,435	0.0%	965	\$9.08	\$11.13	
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wkrs	4,540	4,200	-0.8%	850	\$9.30	\$11.05	
41-3031 Retail Salespersons	5,140	5,745	1.2%	815	\$10.26	\$13.31	
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	7,235	7,655	0.6%	760	\$21.80	\$28.25	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,880	6,390	0.9%	720	\$16.67	\$22.76	
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	4,080	4,525	1.1%	605	\$13.25	\$18.03	
53-7065 Stockers & Order Fillers	2,465	3,070	2.5%	490	\$11.80	\$14.42	
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	3,265	3,690	1.0%	445	\$13.62	\$14.54	
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	2,810	3,435	2.2%	440	\$11.83	\$14.03	
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	2,285	2,555	1.2%	350	\$10.78	\$14.38	
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	2,950	2,950	0.0%	335	\$12.37	\$17.51	
35-3031 Waiters & Waitresses	1,715	1,605	-0.6%	310	\$8.58	\$10.39	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>180,745</b>	<b>196,550</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>22,590</b>	<b>\$12.20</b>	<b>\$18.13</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Western Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth

Long-Term (2020-2030) Western Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
39-3031 Ushers, Lobby Attendants, & Ticket Takers	60	95	5.8%	20			
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	230	355	5.4%	25	\$45.33	\$68.21	
51-9195 Molders, Shapers, & Casters, Ex Metal & Plastic	75	110	4.7%	10	\$13.90	\$18.05	
11-9021 Construction Mgrs	300	425	4.3%	40	\$30.20	\$38.89	
31-9011 Massage Therapists	60	85	4.2%	10	\$15.33	\$21.20	
11-9081 Lodging Mgrs	75	110	4.0%	15	\$15.85	\$22.62	
33-9098 School Bus Monitors & Protective Service Wkrs, All Other	65	90	3.8%	20	\$14.31	\$19.06	
29-1071 Physician Assistants	105	145	3.8%	10	\$42.77	\$61.17	
31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants	120	165	3.8%	20	\$21.60	\$23.69	
11-9111 Medical & Health Services Mgrs	800	1,075	3.4%	100	\$29.67	\$37.78	
25-1072 Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	115	150	3.0%	15	\$23.67	\$37.09	
25-1071 Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	115	150	3.0%	15	\$17.45	\$29.53	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>180,746</b>	<b>196,550</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>22,590</b>	<b>\$12.20</b>	<b>\$18.13</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Western Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience

Long-Term (2020-2030) Western Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,880	6,390	0.0%	720	\$16.67	\$22.76	
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	3,265	3,690	1.0%	445	\$13.02	\$14.54	
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	2,780	2,780	0.0%	305	\$13.54	\$18.37	
25-4048 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	2,565	2,905	1.2%	280	\$10.00	\$13.78	
29-1141 Registered Nurses	3,795	4,210	1.1%	250	\$25.03	\$29.22	
28-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	2,265	2,665	1.3%	200	\$19.80	\$26.61	
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	1,950	2,135	0.9%	185	\$20.32	\$35.99	
26-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	1,200	1,465	1.4%	110	\$20.21	\$28.16	
25-2022 Middle School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	1,220	1,385	1.4%	110	\$20.92	\$29.28	
49-3020 Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	1,025	1,080	0.6%	105	\$13.52	\$18.39	
11-9111 Medical & Health Services Mgrs	800	1,075	3.4%	100	\$29.67	\$37.78	
13-2011 Accountants & Auditors	915	1,025	1.1%	95	\$20.97	\$29.27	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>180,746</b>	<b>196,550</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>22,590</b>	<b>\$12.20</b>	<b>\$18.13</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Southwest Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Openings

Long-Term (2020-2030) Southwest Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs	2,886	3,085	0.7%	310			
41-2011 Cashiers	1,220	1,305	0.7%	235	\$9.33	\$10.83	
53-7062 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	655	790	2.1%	110	\$12.45	\$17.48	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	815	930	1.4%	105	\$16.78	\$22.73	
35-3023 Fast Food & Counter Wks	415	490	1.8%	190	\$9.24	\$10.90	
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	565	620	0.9%	75	\$13.23	\$14.00	
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	420	545	3.0%	70	\$11.69	\$13.97	
53-3058 Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Ex Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	470	540	1.5%	65			
45-2099 Agricultural Wkrs, All Other	410	425	0.4%	65			
37-2011 Janitors & Cleaners, Ex Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	400	465	1.6%	65	\$11.19	\$14.10	
43-9061 Office Clerks, General	480	480	0.0%	55	\$11.94	\$17.98	
53-7064 Packers & Packagers, Hand	340	360	0.6%	50	\$12.90	\$17.23	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>31,555</b>	<b>34,790</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>\$12.05</b>	<b>\$17.90</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Southwest Iowa LWDA 2020-2030 Employment Annual Growth

Long-Term (2020-2030) Southwest Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant	125	175	4.0%	25	\$10.22	\$13.71	
43-4081 Hotel, Motel, & Resort Desk Clerks	65	90	3.8%	15			
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	110	150	3.6%	20	\$8.58	\$11.51	
35-3011 Bartenders	75	100	3.3%	15	\$8.41	\$8.79	
35-9011 Dining Room & Cafeteria Attendants & Bartender Helpers	65	85	3.1%	15			
31-1120 Home Health & Personal Care Aides	420	545	3.0%	70	\$11.69	\$13.97	
49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics	190	250	2.9%	25	\$19.08	\$22.62	
11-9111 Medical & Health Services Mgrs	145	185	2.8%	15	\$31.20	\$37.99	
35-9031 Hosts & Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, & Coffee Shop	55	65	2.7%	15			
25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Ex Special Education	95	120	2.6%	10	\$9.81	\$13.79	
11-3031 Financial Mgrs	95	120	2.6%	10	\$29.94	\$47.48	
39-6012 Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists	100	125	2.5%	15	\$9.63	\$13.22	
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>31,555</b>	<b>34,790</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>\$12.05</b>	<b>\$17.90</b>	

\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

## Southwest Iowa 2020-2030 Annual Openings Requiring Post-secondary Experience

Long-Term (2020-2030) Southwest Iowa LWDA Occupational Projections							
SOC + Occupational Title	Base Estimated Employment	Projected Estimated Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Total Annual Openings	Entry Wage*	Median Wage*	
53-3032 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	815	930	1.4%	105.0	\$16.78	\$22.73	
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	565	620	0.9%	75.0	\$13.23	\$14.00	
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	445	440	-0.1%	60.0	\$13.24	\$17.08	
26-1141 Registered Nurses	590	605	0.5%	35.0	\$24.94	\$28.13	
26-0046 Teaching Assistants, Ex Postsecondary	205	355	2.0%	35.0	\$9.92	\$13.42	
11-1021 General & Operations Mgrs	300	365	1.3%	35.0	\$18.82	\$28.08	
26-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Ex Special Education	310	375	1.9%	30.0	\$19.78	\$23.39	
26-3031 Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	100	200	2.9%	25.0	\$13.79	\$21.73	
26-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special & Career/Technical Education	285	340	1.9%	25.0	\$20.51	\$28.18	
26-2051 Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	225	240	0.7%	20.0	\$18.37	\$22.43	
27-2022 Coaches & Scouts	110	150	3.6%	20.0	\$8.58	\$11.51	
11-9198 Personal Service/Entertainment/Rac Mgrs, Ex Gambling & Mgrs, All Other	235	255	1.3%	20.0			
<b>00-0000 Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>31,555</b>	<b>34,790</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>\$12.05</b>	<b>\$17.90</b>	

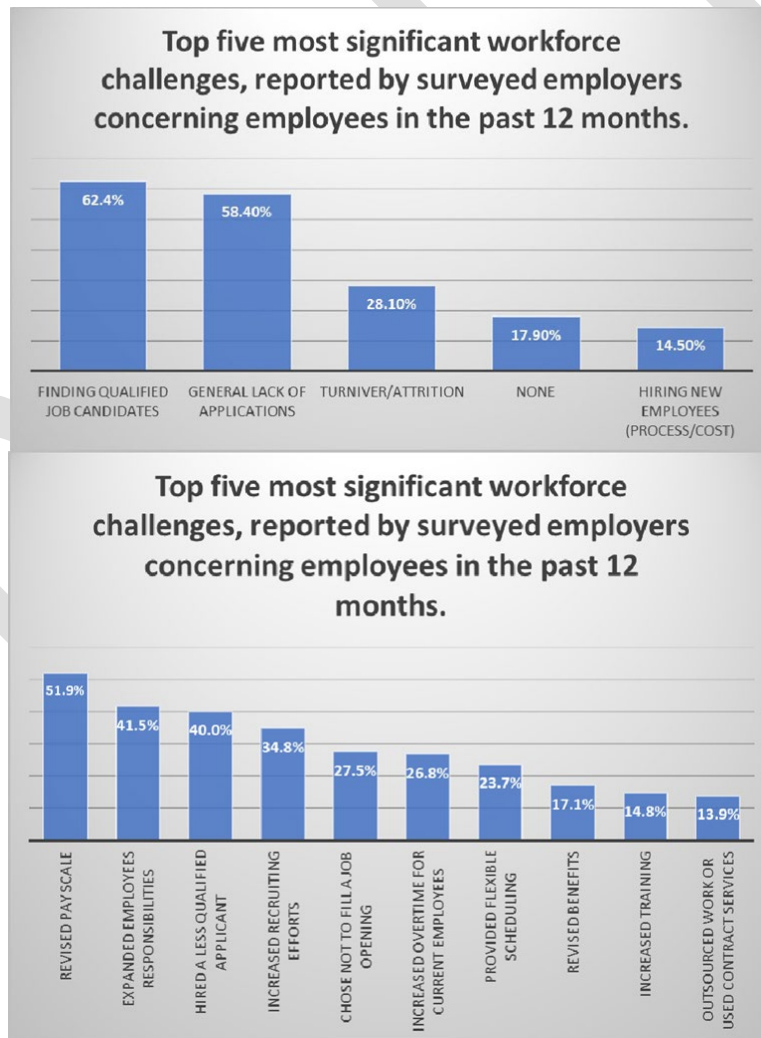
\*Wage Data Source: 2022 Iowa Wage Report

### iii. Employers' Employment Needs

Regarding the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) conducted the current Workforce Needs Assessment Survey during the fall of 2022 through the spring of 2023. This survey collects information from employers across the state regarding their vacancies, workforce challenges, difficulties in hiring, perceptions of applicants, advertising outlets for job openings, and upcoming retirements—among other questions.

In October of 2022, 25,160 employers operating 39,254 locations in the State of Iowa were contacted and asked to participate in the survey. By the end of the survey period (March 2023), IWD received 11,212 responses for a response rate of 28.6% (by locations contacted). The top challenges identified by Iowa employers are summarized in the graphs below.



Employers in the following industries reported the greatest percentages of “finding qualified candidates” as a top workforce challenge:

- Education Services – 71.6%
- Healthcare and Social Assistance – 71.2%
- Construction – 68%
- Manufacturing – 68%
- Transportation & Warehousing – 67.9%

Large employers with 100 or more employees were more likely to report “finding qualified job candidates” as a top workforce challenge than mid-size employers with 11-99 employees or small employers with 10 or fewer employees.

Over half, 53%, of all surveyed employers stated that their experience filling job openings in 2022 (in terms of difficulty) was the same as it had been in 2021. However, 24.5% reported that it had been more difficult in 2022 when compared to their experience in 2021.

Over two-thirds, 71.9%, of surveyed employers either “agree” or “strongly agree” that a “lack of qualified applicants” is a problem when filling job openings. Closely followed by “a general lack of applicants” (70.5%)

When employers were asked, “what are the most difficult occupational categories to fill?” the top 5 answers were:

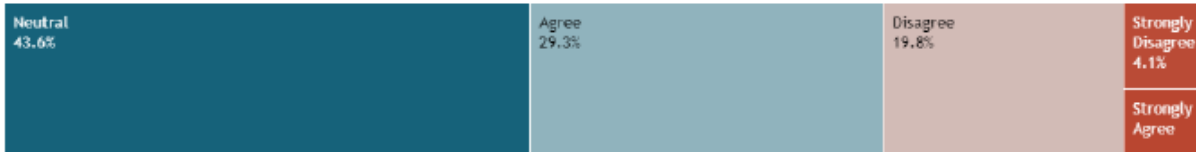
- Sales & Related jobs – 15.8%
- Office & Administrative Support jobs – 15.1%
- Transportation & Material Moving jobs – 12.6%
- Food Preparation & Serving Related jobs – 12.4%
- Installation, Maintenance, & Repair jobs – 12.3%

41.8% agree that applicants, in general, fulfill the necessary requirements of their job openings. While less than 1/3 (32.5%) agree that applicants fulfill the hard/occupational requirements of their job openings. And just over 1/3 (34.9%) agree that applicants fulfill the soft/interpersonal skill requirements of their job openings. Overall, 95.3% of surveyed employers find that applicants lack soft/interpersonal skills and 65.0% find that they lack hard/occupational skills.

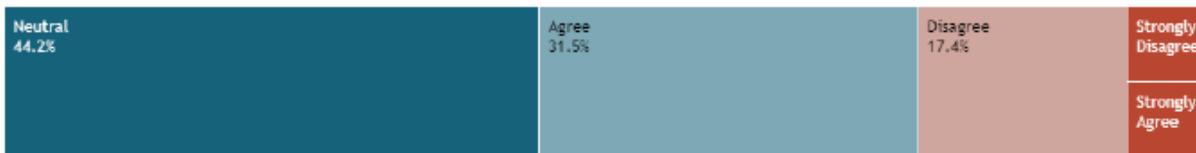
Applicants In General, Fullfill Necessary Skill Requirements, by Area: State of Iowa



Applicants Fulfill Hard/Occupational Skill Requirements, by Area: State of Iowa



Applicants Fulfill Soft/Interpersonal Skill Requirements, by Area: State of Iowa



The top skills reported by employers to be lacking in applicants include:

- 44.5% - strong work ethic
- 42.9% - dependability 40.8% - attention to detail
- 38.7% - self-motivated
- 28.8% - responsibility

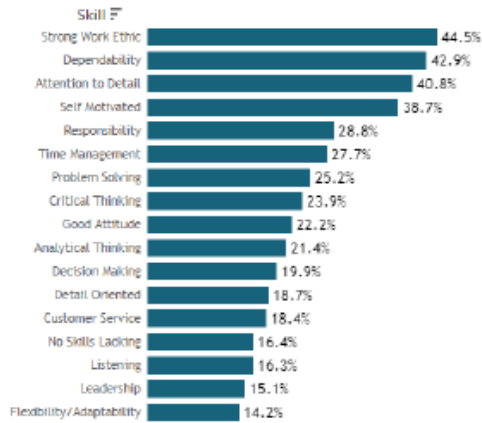
The top reasons reported by employers to reject an applicant:

- 45.6% - does not show up to interview
- 35.0% - lack of experience 34.3% - attitude
- 26.7% - does not meet education/training requirements

**Percentage of Employers Who Perceive a Lack of Skills Among Applicants Across All Categories by Skill Type,**  
by Area: [State of Iowa](#)



**Skills Reported to be Lacking in Applicants,**  
by Area: [State of Iowa](#)



**Reasons Reported by Employers for Rejecting an Applicant,**  
by Area: [State of Iowa](#)

Reason for Rejection	Percentage
Does Not Show Up to Interview	45.6%
Lack of Experience	36.0%
Attitude	34.3%
Does Not Meet Education or Training Requirements	26.7%
None	17.4%
Failure to Pass a Background Check	17.4%
Lack of Drivers License	14.4%
Inadequate Resume or Documentation	12.4%
Less than Acceptable Driving Record	11.7%
Illegible/Incomplete Application	11.2%
Failure to Pass Controlled Substance Testing	11.0%
Failure to Meet Physical Requirements	7.7%
Does Not Meet Minimum Age Requirements	6.5%
Credit Problems/Bad Credit	2.1%
Other	0.6%
Lack of Time at Previous Employer/Job Hopping	0.4%
Lack of Communication	0.4%

Looking at Iowa’s existing in-demand sectors and occupations, in addition to the skills reported by employers outlined above from the Workforce Needs Assessment, additional skills are required throughout each in demand-sector reported in A.1.i. The charts below show the top advertised detailed job skills and the top advertised certification groups found in openings advertised in IowaWORKS for the related occupations across Iowa.

**Healthcare and Social Assistance Skills**

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Discharge planning	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
3	Medication administration	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
4	Typing	Office Clerk Skills
5	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills
6	Crisis intervention	Mental Health Counselor Skills
7	Administer medications	Pharmacists Skills
8	Exceed customer expectations	Loan Processor Skills
9	Knowledge of medical terminology	Medical Coding Skills
10	Risk management	Risk Analyst Skills



## Healthcare and Social Assistance Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
2	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
3	American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certifications	Medical Professional
4	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue
5	Social Worker Credentials & Certifications	Social and Human Services
6	National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)	Medical Treatment and Therapy
7	State Licensed Counselors	Counseling
8	American Red Cross - First Aid Certifications	Nursing
9	American Medical Technologists (AMT) Certifications	Medical Professional
10	National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Certifications	Nursing

## Educational Services Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Supervise students	Instructor or Teacher Skills
3	Record keeping	Bookkeeper Skills
4	Word processing	Office Clerk Skills
5	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills
6	Discharge planning	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
7	Communicate with parents	Instructor or Teacher Skills
8	Curriculum development	Instructional Coordinator Skills
9	Crisis intervention	Mental Health Counselor Skills
10	Identify opportunities	Account Executive Skills

## Educational Services Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
2	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
3	Iowa (IA) Board of Educational Examiners License and Authorization	Teaching
4	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
5	American Red Cross - First Aid Certifications	Nursing
6	Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)	Pharmaceutical
7	American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certifications	Medical Professional
8	Council for Professional Recognition - Credentials	Personal Care and Service - All Other
9	International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) Certifications	Counseling
10	Social Worker Credentials & Certifications	Social and Human Services

## Retail Trade Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Ensure customer satisfaction	Customer Service Skills
3	Inventory control	Bill and Account Collectors Skills
4	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills
5	Fills orders for medications	Pharmacists Skills
6	Cash handling	Cashier Skills
7	Administer vaccines	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Skills
8	Stock merchandise	Merchandiser Skills
9	Dusting	Housekeeper Skills
10	Record keeping	Bookkeeper Skills

## Retail Trade Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
2	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
3	Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)	Pharmaceutical
4	StateFoodSafety Certifications	Food and Beverage Serving
5	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
6	Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)	Dental
7	ASE Parts Specialist Certifications	Automotive
8	ASE Automobile & Light Truck Certifications	Automotive
9	American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications	Financial Specialists
10	CompTIA Certifications	Information Technology - All Other

## Manufacturing Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Welding	Welding Skills
3	Preventative maintenance	Maintenance Technician Skills
4	Root cause analysis	Reliability Engineer Skills
5	Exceed customer expectations	Loan Processor Skills
6	Calculate figures	Mathematical Skills
7	Mathematical Skills	Mathematical Skills
8	Effectively manage time	Dispatcher Skills
9	System design	Information Systems Manager Skills
10	Design tools	Tool and Die Maker Skills

## Manufacturing Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
2	Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP)	Safety and Quality
3	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
4	Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)	Human Resources
5	Board for Global EHS Credentialing	Safety and Quality
6	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
7	American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications	Financial Specialists
8	Institute for Supply Management (ISM) Certifications	Material Moving and Logistics
9	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue
10	Cisco Certifications	Computer Network

## Accommodation and Food Service Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills
3	Cash handling	Cashier Skills
4	Leadership development	Management Analyst Skills
5	Restaurant management	Restaurant Manager Skills
6	Welcome patrons	Host/Hostess Skills
7	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills
8	Achieve maximum guest satisfaction	Concierge Skills
9	Guest service skills	Concierge Skills
10	Taking orders	Waitress or Waiter Skills

## Accommodation and Food Service Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
2	TIPS Training Program	Food and Beverage Serving
3	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
4	ServSuccess Certifications	Food Service Management
5	Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) Certifications	Nutritional
6	National Restaurant Association (ServSafe) Certifications	Food and Beverage Serving
7	State Licenses for Dietitians and Nutritionists	Food Service Management
8	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue
9	American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications	Financial Specialists
10	Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)	Human Resources

Across the 5 different industries, the top advertised detailed job skill in each sector is customer service. Additionally, across all 5 industries, 17,091 total current job listings require customer service as a needed skill. Conversely, the needed certifications across industries understandably varies. However, this directly illustrates the skills and certifications that Iowa should currently be focusing on to upskill Iowans and fill business needs in the state.

Looking at Iowa's emerging in-demand sectors and occupations, in addition to the skills reported by employers outlined above from the Workforce Needs Assessment, additional skills are required throughout each growing in demand-sector reported in A.1.ii. The charts below show the top advertised detailed job skills and the top advertised certification groups found in openings advertised in IowaWORKS for the related occupations across Iowa.

### Healthcare and Social Assistance Skills

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Advertised Detailed Job Skill</b>	<b>Advertised Skill Group</b>
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Discharge planning	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
3	Medication administration	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
4	Typing	Office Clerk Skills
5	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills
6	Crisis intervention	Mental Health Counselor Skills
7	Administer medications	Pharmacists Skills
8	Exceed customer expectations	Loan Processor Skills
9	Knowledge of medical terminology	Medical Coding Skills
10	Risk management	Risk Analyst Skills

## Healthcare and Social Assistance Certifications

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Advertised Certification Group</b>	<b>Advertised Certification Sub-Category</b>
1	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
2	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
3	American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certifications	Medical Professional
4	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue
5	Social Worker Credentials & Certifications	Social and Human Services
6	National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)	Medical Treatment and Therapy
7	State Licensed Counselors	Counseling
8	American Red Cross - First Aid Certifications	Nursing
9	American Medical Technologists (AMT) Certifications	Medical Professional
10	National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Certifications	Nursing



## Professional and Business Services Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Identify opportunities	Account Executive Skills
3	Typing	Office Clerk Skills
4	Identify trends	Market Research Analyst Skills
5	Pricing strategies	Chief Financial Officer Skills
6	Financial analysis	Financial Analyst Skills
7	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills
8	Product marketing	Marketing Manager Skills
9	Curriculum development	Instructional Coordinator Skills
10	Managing relationships	Account Manager Skills

## Professional and Business Services Skills Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Professional Pricing Society (PPS) Certification	Advertising and Marketing
2	Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Certifications	Human Resources
3	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
4	Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)	Human Resources
5	National Association of Qualified Intellectual Disability Professionals (QIDPs)	Social and Human Services
6	Institute of Consumer Financial Education (ICFE) Certifications	Banking and Credit
7	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing

## Transportation and Warehousing Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Delivers mail	Mail Clerk Skills
2	Maintains records	Technical Writer Skills
3	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
4	Communicate professionally	Property Manager Skills
5	Preventative maintenance	Maintenance Technician Skills
6	Unloading freight	Cargo and Freight Agent Skills
7	Welding	Welding Skills
8	Transportation management	Transportation Manager Skills
9	Typing	Office Clerk Skills
10	On-time delivery	Delivery Driver Skills

## Transportation and Warehousing Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
2	Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) - Craftworker and Coating Certifications	Safety and Quality
3	Refrigerating Engineers & Technicians Association (RETA)	Appliances
4	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
5	National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) Certifications	Medical Treatment and Therapy
6	Six Sigma Certifications	Business Planning
7	American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Certifications	Nursing
8	Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)	Medical Testing
9	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue
10	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing

## Educational Services Skills

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills
2	Supervise students	Instructor or Teacher Skills
3	Record keeping	Bookkeeper Skills
4	Word processing	Office Clerk Skills
5	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills
6	Discharge planning	Registered Nurse (RN) Skills
7	Communicate with parents	Instructor or Teacher Skills
8	Curriculum development	Instructional Coordinator Skills
9	Crisis intervention	Mental Health Counselor Skills
10	Identify opportunities	Account Executive Skills

## Educational Services Certifications

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category
1	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications	Nursing
2	Nursing Credentials and Certifications	Nursing
3	Iowa (IA) Board of Educational Examiners License and Authorization	Teaching
4	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation
5	American Red Cross - First Aid Certifications	Nursing
6	Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)	Pharmaceutical
7	American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certifications	Medical Professional
8	Council for Professional Recognition - Credentials	Personal Care and Service - All Other
9	International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) Certifications	Counseling
10	Social Worker Credentials & Certifications	Social and Human Services

Across the 4 different industries identified to be emerging, the top advertised detailed job skill in each sector with the exclusion of Transportation and Warehousing is customer service. However, customer service was ranked at the third most advertised detailed skill for this industry. Additionally, across these 4 industries, 4,809 total current job listings require customer service as a needed skill. Although this is lower than in the average number of existing in-demand industries, this is expected as the number of job openings is currently lower overall as well.

Conversely, the needed certifications across industries understandably varies. However, this directly illustrates the skills and certifications that Iowa should be planning to focus on to upskill Iowans and fill emerging business needs in the state.

Iowa is in the mid-range of total population compared to other states with 3,190,369 residents according to the 2020 Census, Iowa has a low unemployment rate reported at 2.7% in June 2023, and Iowa has an aging workforce which all contribute to a lack of available labor force in the state. At the conclusion of PY22, Iowa's labor force participation rate was 68.1%.

72.2% of employers report they plan on maintaining their current size in the next 2 years. 25.9% of employers report they plan to expand their workforce in the next 2 years 1.9% of employers report they plan to downsize their workforce in the next 2 years.

Top reasons to expand:

- 64.1% - meet current market demand
- 43.8% - increased market share

Top reasons to downsize:

- 39.6% - lack of available labor
- 29.7% - expenses related to wages

Top occupational categories impacted by expansion/downsizing:

- 24.5% - Office & Administrative Support jobs
- 20.2% - Sales & Related jobs
- 17.2% - Production jobs
- 15.4% - Management jobs

Of those employers who completed the 2023 Workforce Needs Assessment, 25.9% reported that employee retirements are a concern for them within the next two years. To fill those vacant positions due to retirement, 81.9% reported they plan to hire new workers, 43.9 reported they plan to promote from within, and 10.4% reported they do not plan to refill those positions. With the lack of available labor in the state, it will be a challenge for employers to fill their retirement positions with new workers, expressly given that finding qualified candidates is their number one workforce challenge as is stands.

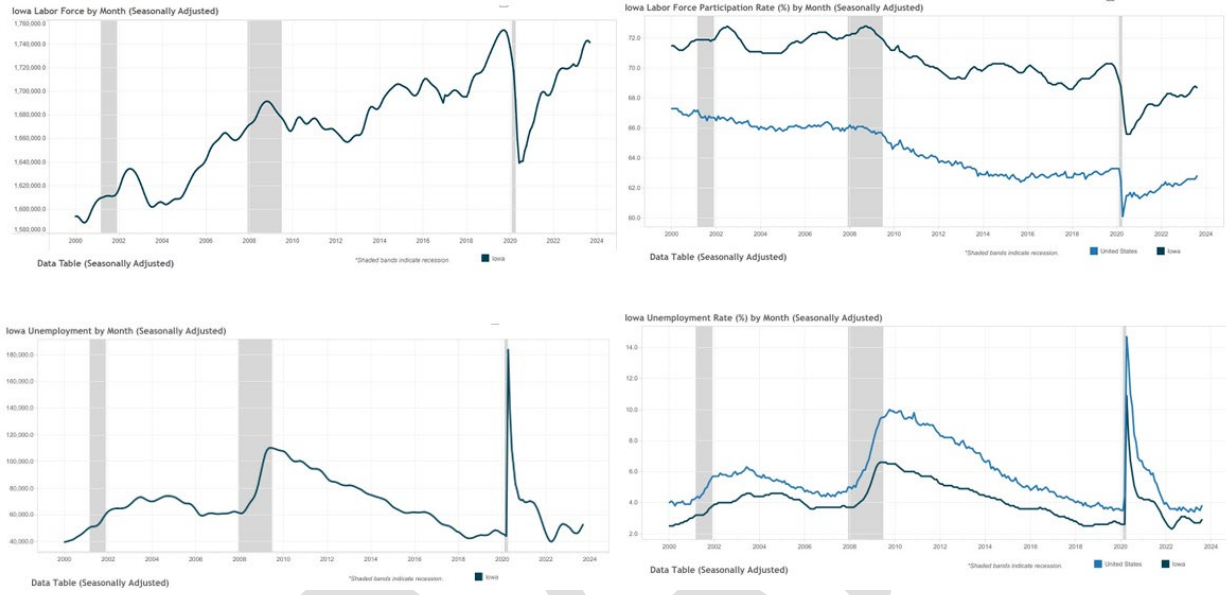
## **B. Workforce Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include —

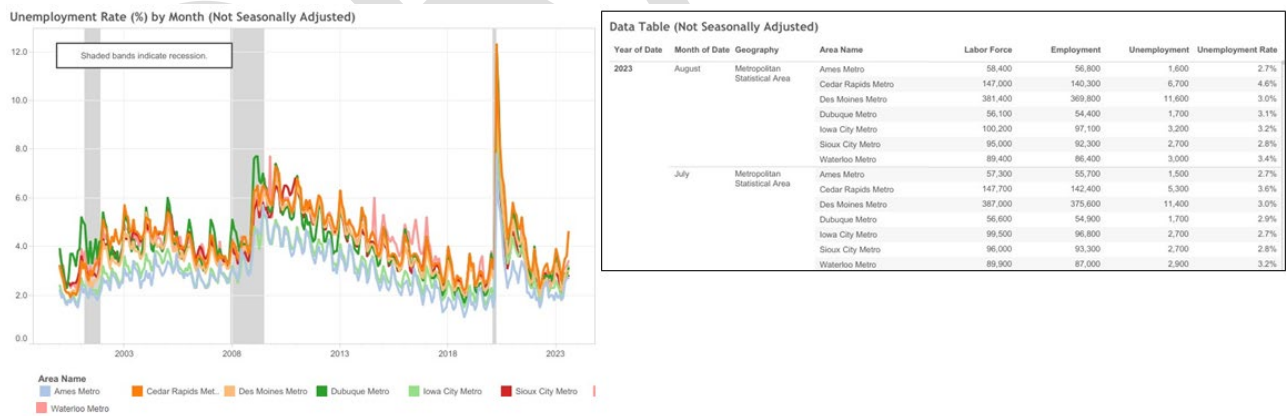
### **i. Employment and Unemployment**

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

Iowa's labor force has been steadily growing since 2000, however our labor force participation rate has been declining. One reason for this is that our population is not growing fast enough to make up for the older Iowans who are leaving the labor force.

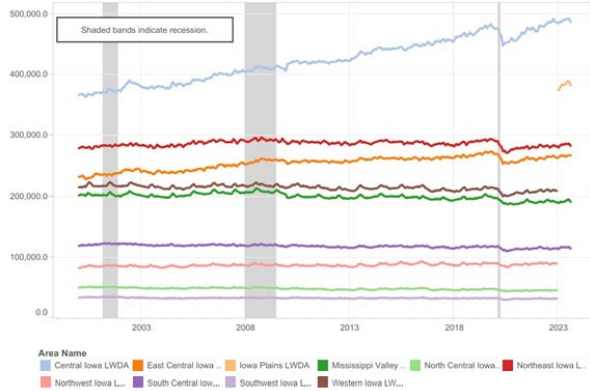


Ames, Des Moines, and Sioux City have recovered from the pandemic and the other four MSAs are only slightly behind their early 2020 labor force numbers.



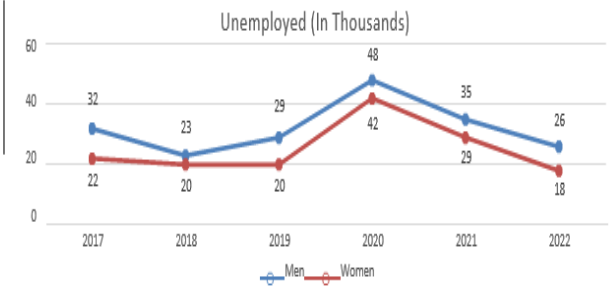
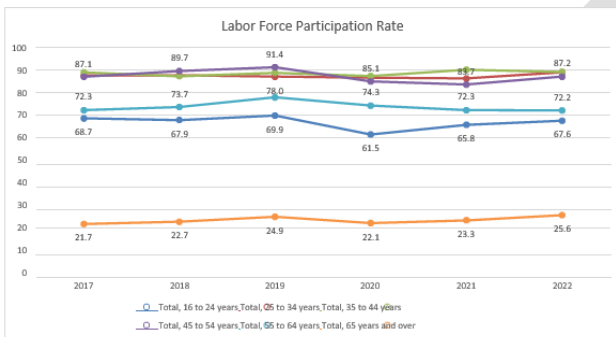
While the labor force in all the LWDA's have recovered from the pandemic, the Central Iowa LWDA has experienced the most growth.

Labor Force by Month (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Year of Date	Month of Date	Geography	Area Name	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2022	August	IWD Workforce Regions (2020)	Central Iowa LWDA	487,200	472,700	14,500	3.0%
			East Central Iowa LWDA	267,900	257,300	10,700	4.0%
			Iowa Plains LWDA	382,900	371,600	11,300	2.9%
			Mississippi Valley LWDA	191,500	184,000	7,500	3.9%
			Northeast Iowa LWDA	293,600	274,400	19,200	6.5%
			South Central Iowa LWDA	114,800	110,500	4,200	3.7%
July	IWD Workforce Regions (2020)	Central Iowa LWDA	492,500	476,200	16,300	3.3%	
		East Central Iowa LWDA	267,900	259,300	8,600	3.2%	
		Iowa Plains LWDA	389,100	378,400	10,700	2.8%	
		Mississippi Valley LWDA	194,900	187,700	7,200	3.7%	
		Northeast Iowa LWDA	296,800	277,900	18,900	6.4%	
		South Central Iowa LWDA	117,900	112,700	5,200	4.4%	

The 25- to 34-year-olds are the only group to increase their labor force participation rate in 2022 (89.1 percent) compared to 2019 (87.2 percent) and at the same time lower their unemployment rate.



All race and ethnicity groups saw lower unemployment rates in 2022 compared to 2021. Additionally, most ethnicity groups saw a slight increase in their labor force participation rate from 2021 to 2022. The chart below shows increased labor force participation rates and decreased unemployment rates highlighted in green.

RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	Labor Force Participation Rate Estimates		Unemployment Rate Estimates	
	2021	2022 Difference	2021	2022 Difference
White alone	65.2%	66.0% 0.8%	2.9%	2.6% -0.3%
Black or African American alone	67.8%	68.1% 0.3%	10.9%	9.1% -1.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	65.7%	N -	8.5%	N -
Asian alone	71.6%	69.7% -1.9%	2.0%	1.3% -0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	N	N -	N	N -
Some other race alone	73.5%	78.3% 4.8%	6.8%	2.5% -4.3%
Two or more races	74.0%	70.4% -3.6%	7.6%	4.9% -2.7%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	75.0%	74.8% -0.2%	6.4%	3.1% -3.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	65.1%	65.8% 0.7%	2.9%	2.6% -0.3%

In Iowa, individuals with disabilities are much more likely to earn less than individuals without. Nearly half (46.7%) of individuals with a disability earn less than \$25,000 per year while 29.5% of their counterparts earn less. When comparing the median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) 12-month earnings, those with a disability earned \$15,000 less in 2022. 31.3% of individuals with a disability had income less than 150% of the poverty level.



Of those employed with a disability have a higher concentration of employment in industries like Retail (15.2%), Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations & Food Services (9.1%), and Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities (6.5%). The former industries on the list are typically lower paying industries and utilize part-time employment possibly leading to fewer hours available. They also generally require lower levels of education and training which displays the correlation between education, employment and earnings.

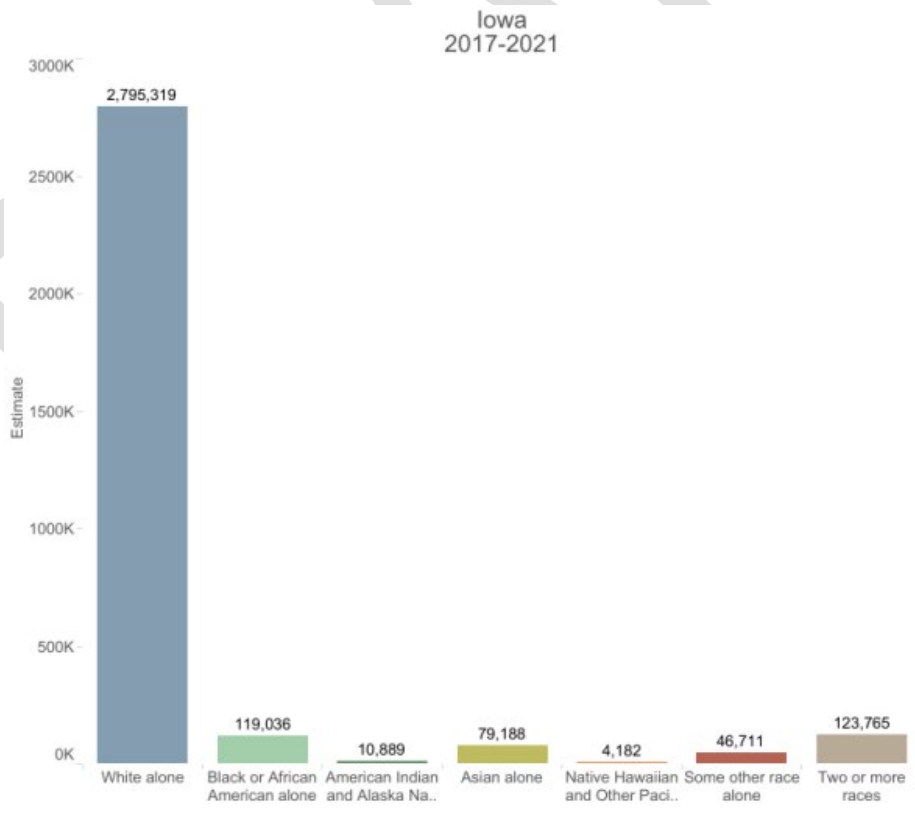
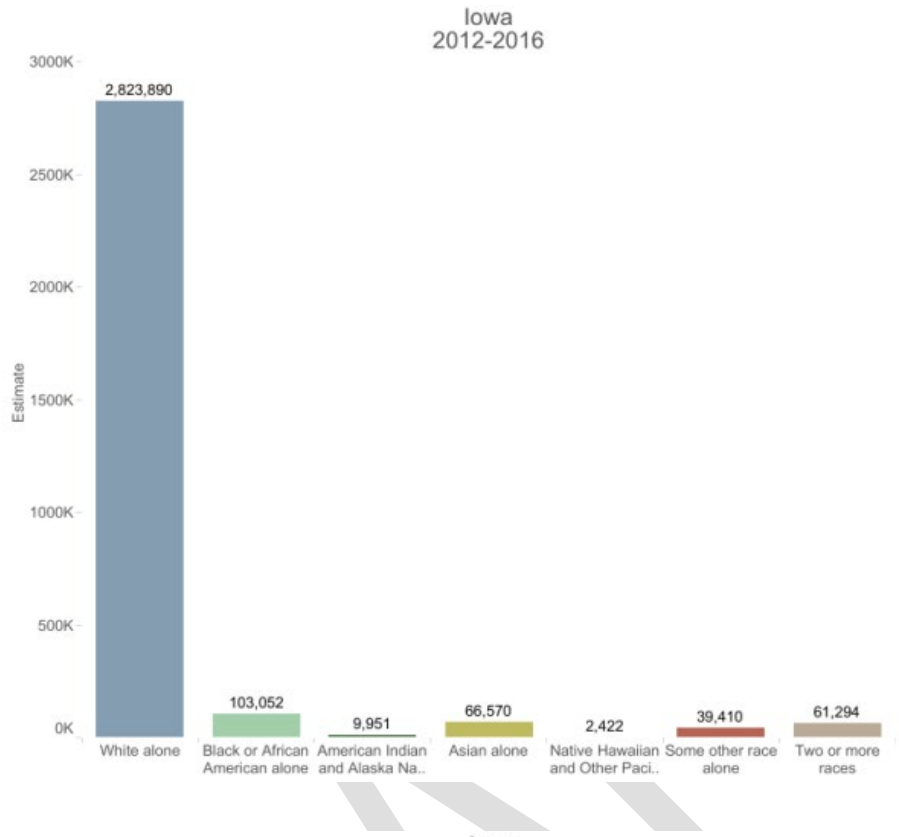
Individuals with a disability are more likely to work from home (12.0%), carpool (11.4%), walk (4.3%), or utilize other methods of transportation (taxi, public transportation, bicycle). The increase in teleworking options since the Covid-19 pandemic has been a real benefit for these individuals by providing more job opportunities as employers navigated and accepted this as an option for their employees. It is also clear these individuals depend upon multiple forms of transportation in their work commute other driving oneself. These additional options are vital for individuals who are not able to drive themselves to their work locations.

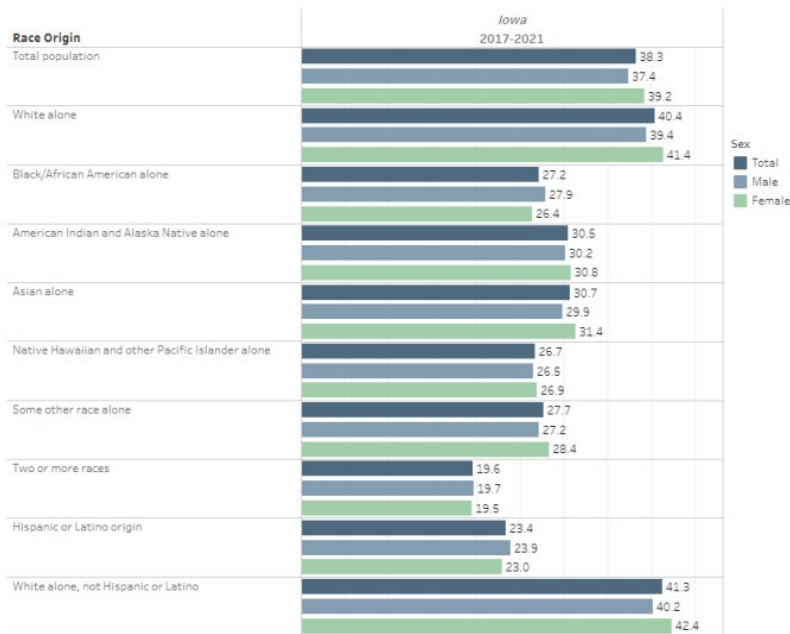
## **ii. Labor Market Trends**

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

Iowa's population levels have remained consistent with an estimate of just over 3.2 million people. Iowa saw a 4.7% increase in population from the 2010 to the 2020 U.S. Census population count and ranked 30th nationally in total population and 28th in population growth. Overall population and population growth have been steady and middle of the pack when compared to other states, as many leave the Northeast and Midwest for states in the south and western U.S., however, Iowa is in a much better position than other Midwestern states.

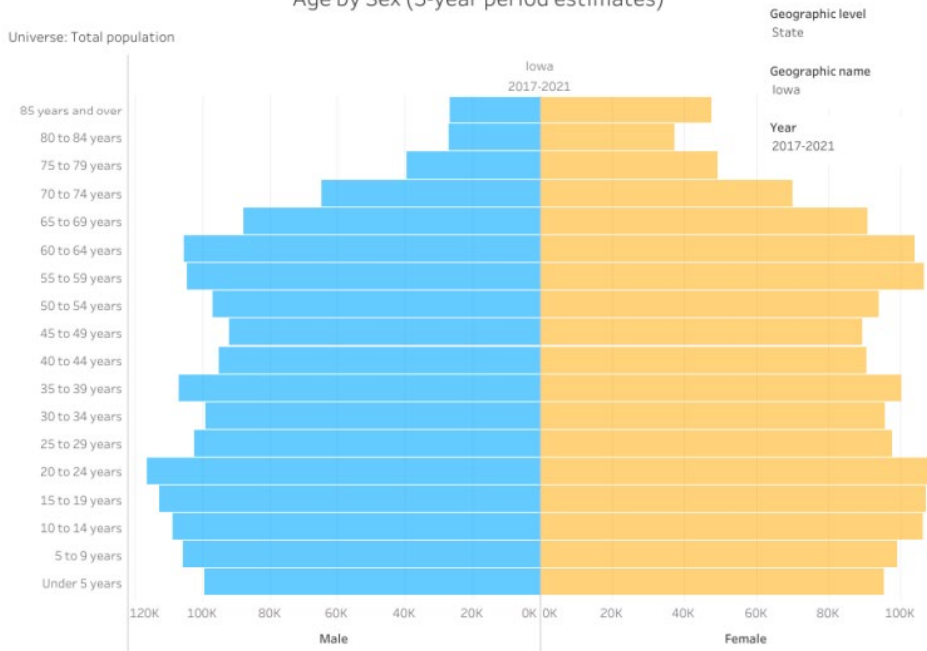
While Iowa's population changes have been relatively small and consistent, the demographic make-up of Iowa's population is changing. Iowa's population is, by a large majority, white, with four out of five individuals identifying white as their race. Iowa's racial and ethnic mix is becoming more diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of Iowa's White Alone population fell by 6.8%, from 91.3% to 84.5%. Every other minority race category added population and increased the percentage representation in Iowa's population. Individuals who identified as having Two or More Races added nearly 126,000 (+3.8%) individuals followed by Black or African American adding nearly 43,000 (+1.2%) individuals. Individuals who identified as Hispanic or having Latino origins grew by 64,442 (+1.8).





Iowa's White population is also its oldest population. When comparing the median age of individuals by race, White Iowans have a median age of 40.4. Iowa's minorities have a much younger median age ranging from 30.5 (American Indian) to 19.6 (Two or More Races). Hispanics or Latinos have the second lowest median age at 23.4. Women across all categories, except for Hispanic or Black/African American, have slightly higher median ages than their male counterparts. Looking at the age groupings in Iowa, it can be expected that more Baby Boomer Iowans will age out of the labor force with fewer Iowans to replace them in the 40- to 54-year-old categories. Without an influx of individuals to the state, this could cause a shock to Iowa's labor market in the coming years.

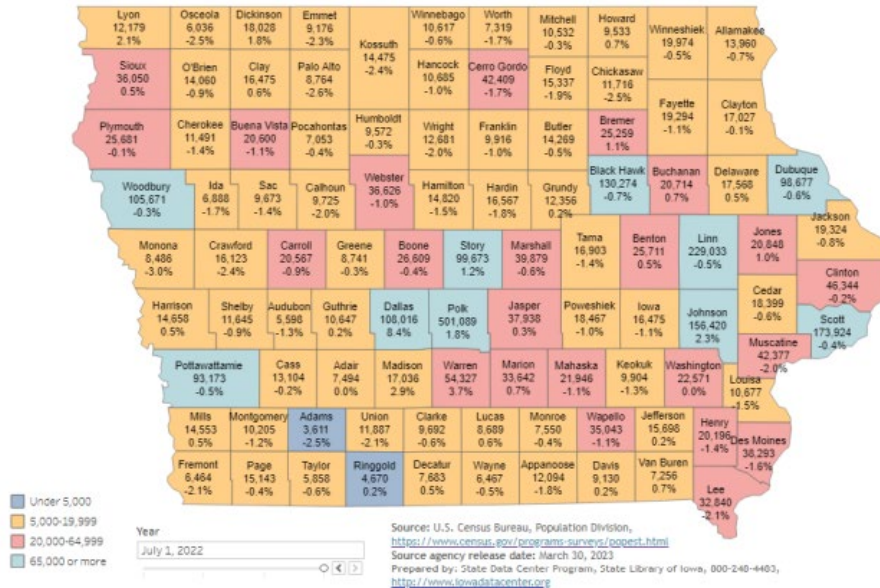
### Age by Sex (5-year period estimates)



Population change growth is not distributed evenly for all geographic areas of Iowa.

### Iowa County Population and Percent Change

(from April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022)



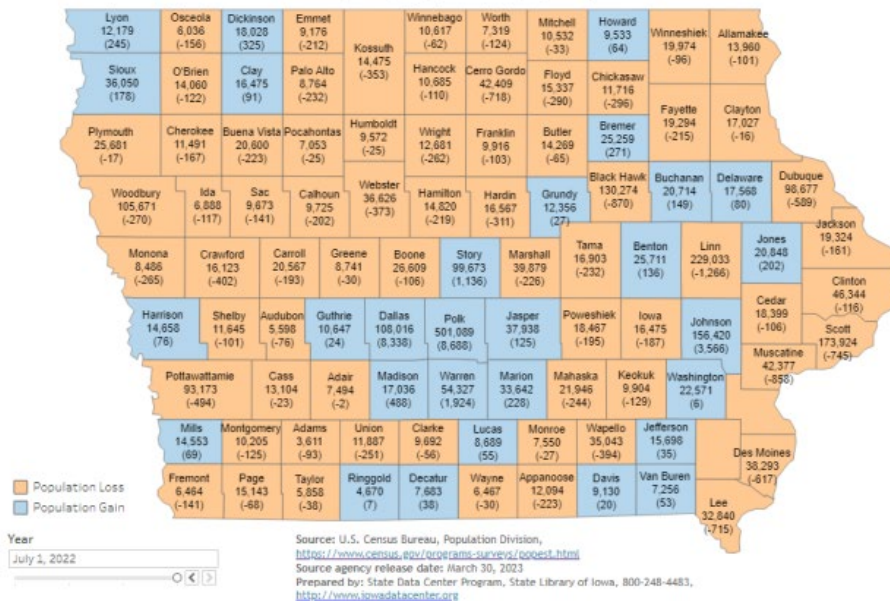
Population growth is happening in pockets across the state with the largest growth happening in Central Iowa counties (Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA, Ames MSA). Population growth in Polk County and its contiguous counties (Dallas, Warren, Story, Madison, Jasper) are the highest in the state. The Iowa City MSA (Johnson County) is also seeing increase population growth

adding nearly 20,000 people since 2010, the second highest percentage change in the state (16.8%).

Other counties that are seeing growth, albeit at a much smaller scale, are contiguous counties other Iowa metro areas: Cedar Rapids (Linn County), Waterloo (Black Hawk County), Dubuque (Dubuque County). This often happens as families/workers want to live in smaller communities and commute into these cities for employment and other amenities. There are a few rural county exceptions that show very small county population growth over the last two years: Lyon County, Sioux County, Dickinson County, Clay County, Ringgold County, Decatur County, Davis County, Jefferson County, and Howard County.

### Iowa County Population and Numeric Change

(from April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022)



The few rural counties listed with an estimated positive population growth are the exception. Two-thirds of Iowa’s counties are losing population and of the growth that is happening, 75% of is occurring in Iowa’s metro areas and contiguous counties. When comparing the changes from the 2010 to 2020 Census many of the counties with the decreases in their population are in the eastern, southeastern parts of the state: Clinton County (-2,656), Lee County (-2,307), Des Moines County (-1,371), Jefferson County (-1,180), Clayton County (-1,086), Cerro Gordo (-1,024) Webster County (-1,014) and Winneshiek County (-986). Many of these areas tend to have higher unemployment rates or have seen major employer closures or layoffs than the state, metro, and other areas of the state. Fremont County in southwest Iowa is one of Iowa’s least populated counties yet it saw a drop in population of 836, or an 11.2% decrease, from 2010 to

2020 as the area communities faced multiple flooding events during the decade destroying residence and businesses.

Overall, Iowa is experiencing population challenges throughout the state, however the rural counties are seeing decreases in population at higher rates. 66% of Iowa counties have lost population, conversely, there has been a 75% growth rate in metro areas per the state demographer. Since population leads to overall labor force, Iowa will continue to experience challenges related to its labor force moving forward.

Industries with the highest hourly earnings were: Construction, Government, Manufacturing, Transportation and Finance. Industries with the lowest hourly wages were: Wholesale & Retail Trade, Education, Personal Services & Entertainment, and Agriculture. Industries with the highest annual salary were: Finance, Manufacturing, and Professional Services. Industries with the lowest annual salary were: Personal Services & Entertainment, Education, and Wholesale & Retail Trade. The high and low paid industries were similar for hourly workers and salaried workers. Much of the difference is attributable on the occupational makeup of each industry. However, some industries pay higher wages for similar occupations.

Of the occupational categories the lowest hourly wages occurred in sales and service occupations, correlating to the lower levels of education and education required in those occupations and typical industry employment (Retail, Personal Services).

When considering educational attainment, earnings increased as education increased in all categories. Individuals with “Some College, or Associate Degree” earned \$6,000 more over the year than high school graduates, while those with a bachelor’s degree earned nearly \$20,000 per year more and graduate degrees earned nearly \$35,000 more. These are high-level trends and aren’t absolutes as it depends on fields of study and training. It can be financial rewarding if a certificate or degree leads to a high earning, in demand occupation like healthcare, finance, manufacturing, information technology for example.

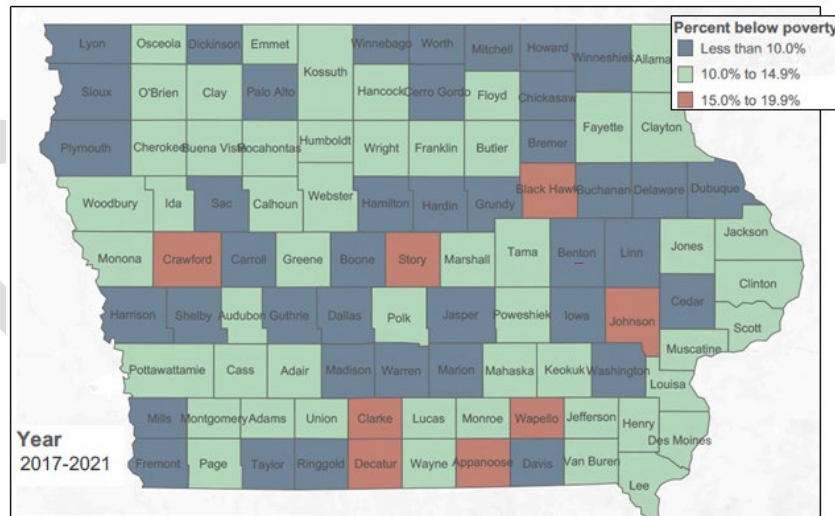
Earnings also differs by race; Asians had the highest yearly average of stable monthly earnings of \$5,695 per month followed by White earners at \$5,039 per month. The lowest average of stable monthly earnings was: Two or more (\$3,605 per month), Black of African American: \$3,644 per month, American Indians or Alaska Natives: \$3,723 per month. Some of this disparity correlates highly with educational attainment as these group of higher rates of high school diplomas or equivalency and lower levels of bachelor’s degree or higher. The lower levels of education often lead to lower paying industries and occupations.



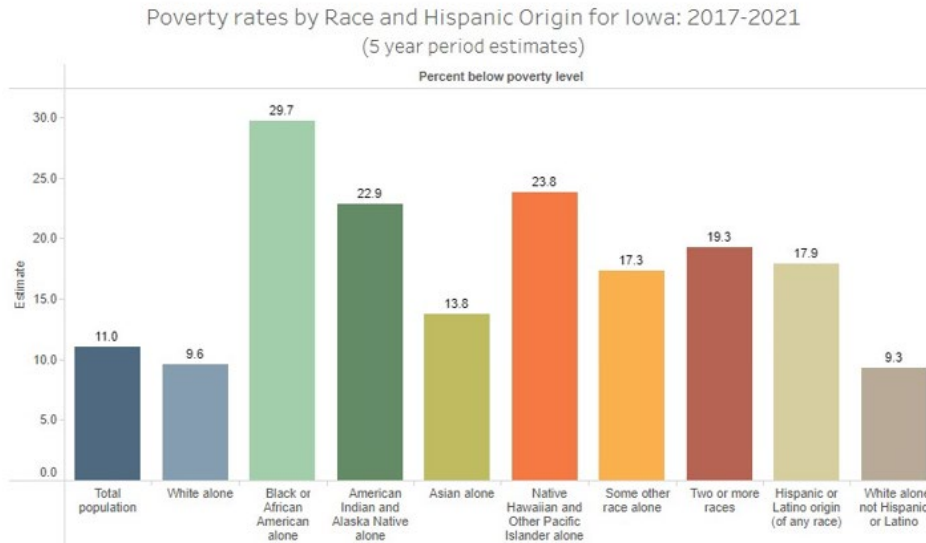


The poverty levels in Iowa counties ran from a high of 19.4% to a low of 4.5% over the period of 2017 to 2021. Most counties with a higher poverty percentage were rural, while larger populated counties (MSA) areas had lower poverty rates. Eight counties in Iowa had a poverty rate of 15% to 19.9%. Story and Appanoose counties had the highest poverty rates of 19.4% each. Lyon county had the lowest poverty rate of 4.5%. Most counties (about 50%) fell within a 10% - 14.9% poverty rate.

Poverty levels in Iowa were, primarily, highest in rural areas across the state in 2021. The counties where the states three public universities are located had higher poverty rates, Story County (Iowa State University), (17.9%), Johnson County (University of Iowa), (14.7%) and Black Hawk County (Northern Iowa University), (13.5%). Story and Appanoose counties had the highest poverty rates, 17.9% and 17.0%, respectively. Dallas county had the lowest poverty rate at 5.3%.



## Poverty Levels in Iowa by Race & Hispanic Origin



Poverty by race and ethnicity in Iowa was at 11% for overall total population during the period of 2017 to 2021. Black or African Americans had the highest percentage of population living in poverty (29.7%), approximately 32,909 out of approximately 110,945 individuals. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander had the second highest rate at 23.8% (972 of 4,092 individuals). Hispanic or Latino Americans had a poverty rate of 17.9% (35,442 of 198,024 individuals). White Americans had the lowest poverty rate at 9.6% (261,729 of 2,716,065 individuals). American Indian and Alaskan Native populations had a poverty rate of 22.9%. The poverty rate for Asian Americans was 13.8%. Hispanic or Latino Americans had a poverty rate of 17.9%.

The poverty levels across Iowa are concerning as poverty has a direct impact on labor market trends. As the data below shows, lower educational attainment levels result in a workforce with lower skills and abilities, resulting in lower earnings, leaving Iowans in poverty or one paycheck away from poverty.

### iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

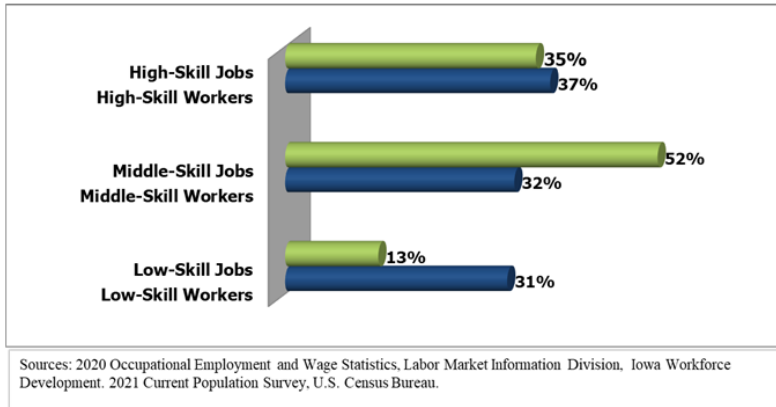
Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

Iowa, like many states, has experienced a “skills gap” for a number of years. Skills gaps exist when there is a disparity between the skills required for a job and the skills workers actually possess. Although progress has been made through initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa, creating new opportunities and continuing to identify and remove barriers to education and training for Iowans will continue to help progress the state’s economic infrastructure.

In Iowa, the number of workers considered to have high skills is fairly close to the number of high-skill jobs which has remained consistent in the state. Looking at low-skill jobs, there is a considerable number of low-skill workers, but few low-skill jobs. Conversely, there are vastly

more middle-skill jobs than workers who possess those skills.

Iowa Jobs and Workers, 2020-2021



Iowa recognizes the importance of working towards closing the skills gap. One of Iowa Workforce Development’s (IWD) strategic principles include: IWD will get the right people with the right skills in the right jobs as quickly as possible. This includes ensuring that individuals with barriers to employment who may now be in the low-skill worker category, are provided opportunities to engage in Iowa’s workforce delivery system to enhance their skills and engage in meaningful careers across the state.

Labor force participation rates increased for those with a High School Diploma or higher while the unemployment rates decreased for all education levels from 2021 to 2022.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Labor Force Participation Rate Estimates			Unemployment Rate Estimates		
	2021	2022	Difference	2021	2022	Difference
Population 25 to 64 years	82.7%	83.6%	0.9%	3.2%	2.3%	-0.9%
Less than high school graduate	67.6%	67.4%	-0.2%	7.5%	4.4%	-3.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	76.4%	78.9%	2.5%	4.8%	3.6%	-1.2%
Some college or associate's degree	84.0%	84.3%	0.3%	3.4%	2.1%	-1.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	89.5%	89.5%	0.0%	1.3%	1.2%	-0.1%

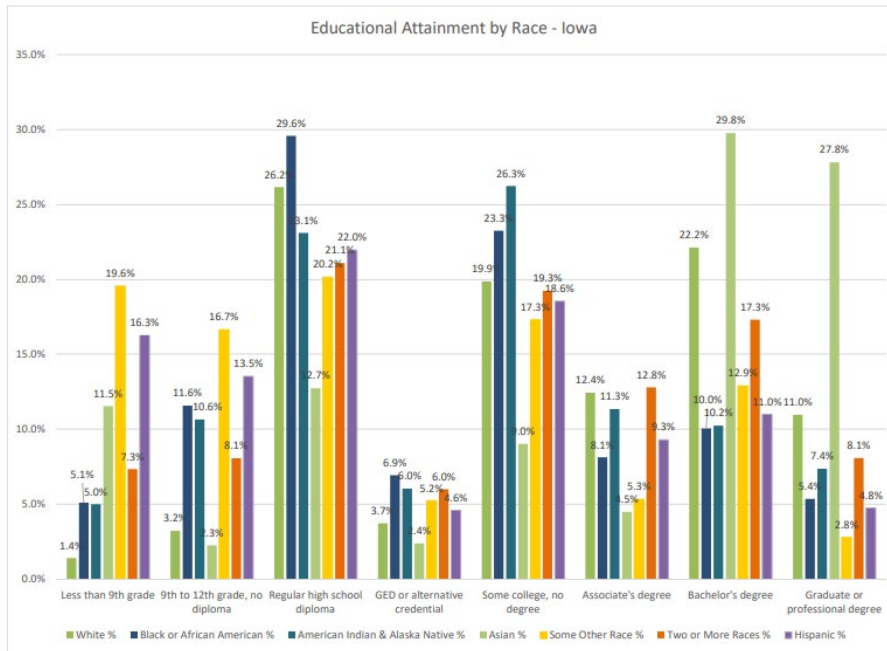
Among the people 25 years and older, 32.3% holds at most a high school degree or equivalent; this number is 37.6% for male-only and 26.7% for female-only populations. In other words, a bigger percentage of the female population pursues a post-secondary education compared to their male counterparts in this age group, 73.3% vs 62.4%.

Educational Category	Overall 25-64 years		Male 25-64		Female 25-64	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Less than 9th grade	38,857	2.5%	20,175	2.5%	18,682	2.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	64,146	4.1%	38,104	4.8%	26,042	3.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	403,576	25.7%	242,734	30.3%	160,842	20.9%
Some college, no degree	311,134	19.8%	158,628	19.8%	152,506	19.8%
Associate's degree	209,660	13.3%	94,402	11.8%	115,258	15.0%
Bachelor's degree	368,270	23.4%	171,866	21.4%	196,404	25.6%
Graduate or professional degree	174,989	11.1%	76,034	9.5%	98,955	12.9%

Among the youth population, who are 24 years and younger, 41.6% holds at most a high school degree or equivalence while this number is 47.6% for male-only and 35.1% for female-only population. As expected, a smaller percentage of this age group can pursue a post-secondary education compared to the older age group. Similar to the older age group, the percentage of the female population who pursue post-secondary education is higher than the male counterpart, 64.9% vs 52.4%

Youth	Overall 18-24		Male 18-24		Female 18-24	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Less than 9th grade	5,287	1.6%	2,407	1.4%	2,880	1.9%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	28,203	8.7%	17,229	10.2%	10,974	7.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	101,453	31.3%	60,930	36.0%	40,523	26.1%
Some college, no degree	121,661	37.5%	57,130	33.7%	64,531	41.6%
Associate's degree	27,479	8.5%	13,127	7.8%	14,352	9.3%
Bachelor's degree	38,671	11.9%	17,858	10.5%	20,813	13.4%
Graduate or professional degree	1,504	0.5%	605	0.4%	899	0.6%

Regarding the differences in educational attainment with respect to race and ethnicity, 34.5% of White population holds a high school diploma (or equivalent) or less while this figure is 53.2% for Black or African American population, 44.7% for American Indian Alaska Native, 28.9% for Asian population, and 56.4% for Hispanic population. To summarize, there is a significant variation in educational attainment among different races and ethnicities with Hispanic and Black or African American groups being at the bottom.



Race 25 Years & Older Educational Category	White		Black or African American		American Indian & Alaska Native		Asian		Some Other Race		Two or More Races		Hispanic		White Alone, Not Hispanic	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Less than 9th grade	26,725	1.4%	3,416	5.1%	419	5.0%	5,904	11.5%	8,616	19.6%	7,338	7.3%	18,076	16.3%	24,168	1.3%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	60,943	3.2%	7,733	11.6%	891	10.6%	1,160	2.3%	7,339	16.7%	8,056	8.1%	14,992	13.5%	58,436	3.1%
Regular high school diploma	493,746	26.2%	19,779	29.6%	1,936	23.1%	6,513	12.7%	8,882	20.2%	21,109	21.1%	24,392	22.0%	488,183	26.2%
GED or alternative credential	70,442	3.7%	4,637	6.9%	506	6.0%	1,227	2.4%	2,302	5.2%	5,993	6.0%	5,102	4.6%	69,902	3.8%
Some college, no degree	375,405	19.9%	15,553	23.3%	2,198	26.3%	4,617	9.0%	7,629	17.3%	19,262	19.3%	20,611	18.6%	369,993	19.9%
Associate's degree	234,406	12.4%	5,429	8.1%	949	11.3%	2,297	4.5%	2,343	5.3%	12,771	12.8%	10,309	9.3%	231,518	12.4%
Bachelor's degree	417,898	22.2%	6,714	10.0%	857	10.2%	15,244	29.8%	5,665	12.9%	17,338	17.3%	12,198	11.0%	415,379	22.3%
Graduate or professional degree	206,640	11.0%	3,581	5.4%	616	7.4%	14,244	27.8%	1,230	2.8%	8,065	8.1%	5,276	4.8%	204,512	11.0%

This data shows that there are apparent disparities between race and educational attainment, and thus lower earnings. This supports WIOA and Iowa’s strategy of focusing on underserved populations.

Comparing Iowa counties in educational attainment, there is a noticeable correlation between the size of the total population of 25 years and older and the percentage with associate degree or higher: Top three Iowa counties with respect to the percent- age with associate degree or higher are Johnson County (65.6%), Story County (65.5%) and Dallas County (64.4%) have the total population of 25 years and older of 71,906, 40,211, and 51,746 respectively. In the meantime, the bottom three Iowa counties are Clarke County (28.1%), Lucas County (26.7%), Crawford County (25.4%) have the total population of 25 years and older of 4,590, 4,201, and 7,875 respectively. This can be attributed to a higher demand for high skilled labor in highly populated areas.

Top 25 Iowa Counties Highest Education Levels

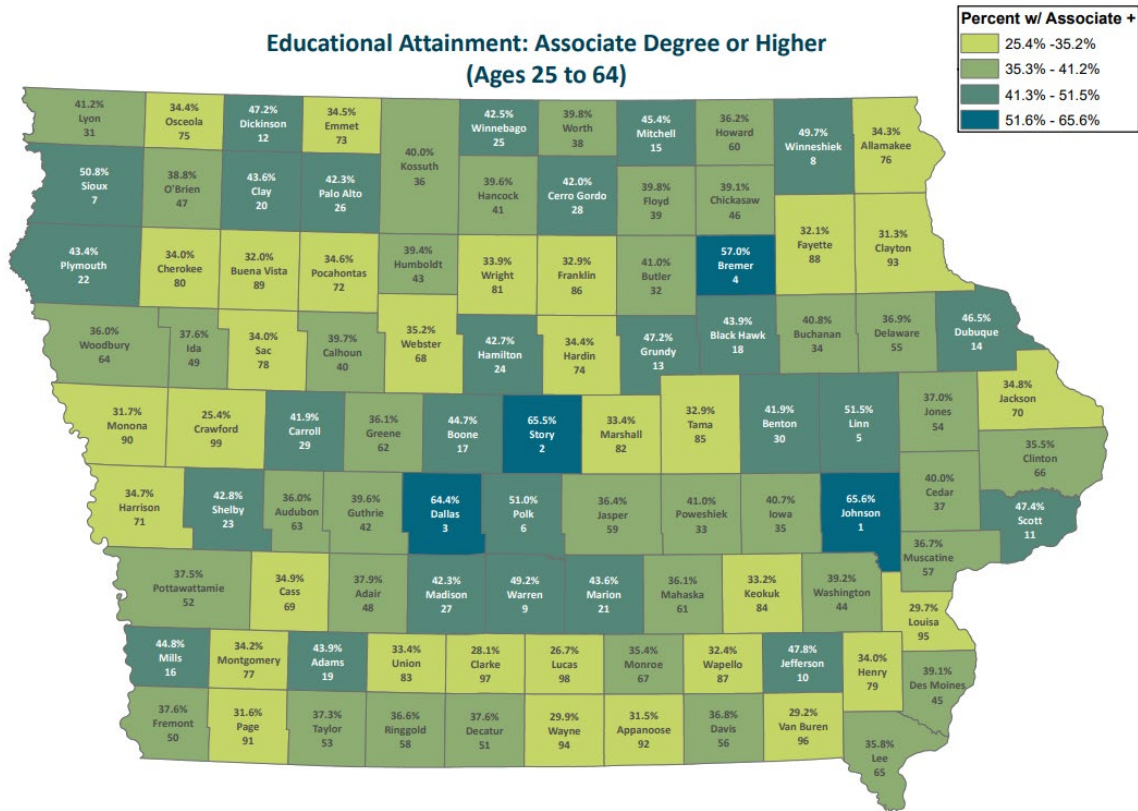
County	Associate's Degree or Higher (25-64)	Total Pop. 25-64	% with Associate Degree or Higher	Rank
Johnson County, Iowa	47,140	71,906	65.6%	1
Story County, Iowa	26,325	40,211	65.5%	2
Dallas County, Iowa	33,345	51,746	64.4%	3
Bremer County, Iowa	6,570	11,532	57.0%	4
Linn County, Iowa	60,926	118,348	51.5%	5
Polk County, Iowa	133,121	261,061	51.0%	6
Sioux County, Iowa	7,960	15,671	50.8%	7
Winneeshiek County, Iowa	4,456	8,971	49.7%	8
Warren County, Iowa	12,834	26,099	49.2%	9
Jefferson County, Iowa	3,774	7,889	47.8%	10
Scott County, Iowa	42,651	89,961	47.4%	11
Dickinson County, Iowa	3,993	8,456	47.2%	12
Grundy County, Iowa	2,869	6,082	47.2%	13
Dubuque County, Iowa	22,542	48,491	46.5%	14
Mitchell County, Iowa	2,279	5,015	45.4%	15
Mills County, Iowa	3,318	7,414	44.8%	16
Boone County, Iowa	6,288	14,056	44.7%	17
Black Hawk County, Iowa	27,196	61,949	43.9%	18
Adams County, Iowa	807	1,839	43.9%	19
Clay County, Iowa	3,417	7,832	43.6%	20
Marion County, Iowa	7,063	16,192	43.6%	21
Plymouth County, Iowa	5,359	12,362	43.4%	22
Shelby County, Iowa	2,441	5,701	42.8%	23
Hamilton County, Iowa	3,196	7,478	42.7%	24
Winnebago County, Iowa	2,109	4,965	42.5%	25

Bottom 25 Iowa Counties Lowest Education Levels

County	Associate's Degree or Higher (25-64)	Total Pop. 25-64	% with Associate Degree or Higher	Rank
Osceola County, Iowa	1,038	3,021	34.4%	75
Allamakee County, Iowa	2,276	6,627	34.3%	76
Montgomery County, Iowa	1,651	4,830	34.2%	77
Sac County, Iowa	1,590	4,678	34.0%	78
Henry County, Iowa	3,462	10,188	34.0%	79
Cherokee County, Iowa	1,890	5,563	34.0%	80
Wright County, Iowa	2,040	6,025	33.9%	81
Marshall County, Iowa	6,473	19,366	33.4%	82
Union County, Iowa	1,953	5,850	33.4%	83
Keokuk County, Iowa	1,612	4,857	33.2%	84
Tama County, Iowa	2,728	8,290	32.9%	85
Franklin County, Iowa	1,607	4,890	32.9%	86
Wapello County, Iowa	5,746	17,757	32.4%	87
Fayette County, Iowa	3,042	9,467	32.1%	88
Buena Vista County, Iowa	3,190	9,958	32.0%	89
Monona County, Iowa	1,297	4,094	31.7%	90
Page County, Iowa	2,450	7,755	31.6%	91
Appanoose County, Iowa	1,861	5,900	31.5%	92
Clayton County, Iowa	2,598	8,312	31.3%	93
Wayne County, Iowa	895	2,991	29.9%	94
Louisa County, Iowa	1,647	5,551	29.7%	95
Van Buren County, Iowa	1,002	3,430	29.2%	96
Clarke County, Iowa	1,292	4,590	28.1%	97
Lucas County, Iowa	1,123	4,201	26.7%	98
Crawford County, Iowa	2,004	7,875	25.4%	99

Educational attainment in Iowa counties can also be analyzed regionally. For example, a significant number of counties with the higher percentage of associate degree or higher are located in the central region of the state such as Story County (65.5%), Dallas County (64.4%), Polk County (51.0%), Grundy County (47.2%), and Boone County (44.7%). Moreover, several counties with the lower percentage of associate degree or higher are located in the southern part of the state such as Lucas County (26.7%), Clarke County (28.1%), Van Buren County (29.2%), Wayne County (29.9%), Page County (31.6%). There are pockets of low post-secondary education in Southern Iowa, Northwest, and the very NE corner of the state. Labels in the map below include the percentage and the statewide ranking.





Source: American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Estimates (Table B15001)

Among the people who are 25 years and older, 32.3% holds at most a high school degree or equivalence while this number is 37.6% for male-only and 26.7% for female-only population. In other words, a bigger percentage of female population pursue a post-secondary education compared to the male counterpart in this age group, 73.3% vs 62.4%. Among the youth population, who are 24 years and younger, 41.6% holds at most a high school degree or equivalence while this number is 47.6% for male-only and 35.1% for female-only population. As expected, a smaller percentage of this age group can pursue a post-secondary education compared to the older age group. Similar to the older age group, the percentage of the female population who pursue post-secondary education is higher than the male counterpart, 64.9% vs 52.4%.

Individuals with disabilities face some of the most challenging barriers in the Iowa labor market. There are nearly 190,000 Iowans between the ages of 20-64 that have a disability with 109,000 in Iowa's labor force. The labor force participation rate for individuals with disabilities is 57.6%, 20% to 25% less than Iowa's overall labor force between the ages of 20-64. When looking at individuals 16 years and older, only one-third (33.7%) of individuals with a disability are employed. Seven out of ten individuals (71.3%) without a disability are employed leaving a disparity of nearly 40%.

Educational attainment is one challenge that begins for many individuals with a disability that occurs prior to joining the work- force but directly impacts labor force participation, employment, and earnings. Individuals with disabilities are twice as likely to have an education less than high school. One out of ten individuals (10.7%) did not complete high school or the equivalent. 67.2% of individuals without a disability have either some college experience or completed a postsecondary degree (Associate, Bachelors, Graduate/Professional) while only 49.7% of individuals have the same experience. The difference is stark when comparing bachelor's degrees or higher with a disparity of 15.8%.

#### **iv. Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion**

Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion. Describe areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and skills needs identified in the economy compared to the assets available in the labor force in the state.

Iowa's labor market continues to be tight with very few unemployed individuals when compared to the number of job opportunities within the state. The ratio of unemployed persons per job opening in the state has been near historic lows, in recent years. Rural areas are seeing population and labor force declines while many of Iowa's' metros and their contiguous counties are experiencing nearly all the population, labor force, and job growth for the state.

Manufacturing and agricultural related industries continue to be the backbone of Iowa's economy. A substantial portion of Iowa's job opportunities are found in the Healthcare & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Educational Services industries, across Iowa. Regionally, a few labor markets are being driven by additional industries, other than manufacturing: Finance and Insurance in the Des Moines MSA, Educational Services in the Ames and Iowa City metros.

Iowa's aging population is leading to lower labor force participation rates and driving the increased need for healthcare services, health practitioners and healthcare support workers; much like many of its Midwest peer states. Iowa currently is projected to need healthcare providers on many fronts, largely impacting the following occupations: registered nurses, nursing assistants, home & personal care aides, childcare workers, medical assistants, specific practitioners, and multiple human services occupations. The Healthcare & Social Assistance industry is expected to add nearly 36,000 jobs by 2030, which is nearly double the next largest industry, by numeric growth over the same period.

Manufacturing touches every region and local economy throughout the state. It has been Iowa's largest employing industry for decades and is vital to Iowa's communities. Iowa's manufacturing industry includes food production, agricultural equipment, construction equipment, metals, machinery, furniture, construction materials, fuels, advanced technologies, and everything in between. As manufacturing technology and processes advance, so does the need for Iowa's labor force. The skills and knowledge needed to operate machinery has changed and workers need the technical skills, knowledge, and experience to program and operate these new advanced tools.

Iowa's Educational Services industry has seen its need for teachers and support staff grow as the industry surpassed pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels in October of 2022. The employment needs are expected to see growth out to 2030 as the industry is forecasted to see the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest increase in number jobs in Iowa over that time span. There is, and will continue to be, a need for workers at multiple levels of education, especially in these occupations: teaching assistants, preschool, elementary, middle school, secondary, vocational training, career & technical, special education, librarians, and many other disciplines and staff support. These occupations are also needed to prepare students for Iowa's labor market.

Skill development of Iowa's existing and future workforce is a must to meet the future workforce demand of Iowa's employers not only in these three industries but across the board. Information technology, business operations (accounting, management, human resources, customer service), transportation and material moving occupations are vital to Iowa's employers. These business operations and support occupations can be found across numerous industries completing crucial functions for employers. These functions range from financial reporting, talent recruitment, improving technology for employees and customers, and getting products to market. The need for these support occupations will continue to grow with employer's reliance on these business functions and their overall growth.

The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed in all these industries and occupations are growing and changing. Areas of the state that are lacking the needed education or training will continue to face challenges in the labor market, the greatest of among those being: employability, poverty, low earnings, population loss, and labor force loss. These impacts will continue to be felt in areas with lower levels of education and technical training which tend to be more prevalent in Iowa's rural areas. These areas of the state face additional challenges in gaining access to education and training due to: public transportation, broadband access, and fewer training providers/opportunities. These are hurdles that will need to be addressed to ensure equity in future growth.

Supporting these industries, job seekers, students, and communities has been a focus for the State of Iowa's workforce, education, and economic leaders. Iowa has invested resources and created new programming to support these industries and occupations through expanding work-based learning, creating non-traditional registered apprenticeship programs in healthcare, education, and IT, as well as expanding traditional registered apprenticeship programs. Iowa has created scholarships for students entering high demand occupations to respond to the need in these areas. The State will continue to partner with employers to remove barriers and expand opportunities for populations (including formerly incarcerated individuals, individuals with disabilities, and minority populations) that have historically found entry to employment difficult with lower levels of labor force participation, higher unemployment rates, and poverty.

With an aging population and only small gains in population growth through migration into the State, Iowa must look inward to develop and increase the skilled workforce it needs to continue to grow our economy. By serving previously underserved populations, including: displaced

homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals and increase the skills of Iowans with low skills, as identified in the “Iowa Jobs and Workers” chart in section II.a.1.B.iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce above, Iowa will provide our employers with the skilled and available workforce needed.

## **2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) (Education and Skill Level of the Workforce) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) (Employers’ Employment Needs) above. This must include an analysis of –

### **A. The State’s Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required<sup>4</sup> and optional one-stop delivery system partners.<sup>5</sup>

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help place individuals into high-quality jobs and careers and to help employers hire and retain skilled workers. Although all four core programs, and required programs for that matter, have different requirements – all WIOA core and required programs are ultimately working towards the same goal - To provide Iowans with access to high-quality education, training and career opportunities, and provide Iowa businesses with outstanding business services for a skilled and diverse workforce.

Iowa’s labor force has recovered since the pandemic in 2020, and Iowa’s labor force has been steadily growing since such time as well. However, the labor force participation rate has been declining as Iowa’s population has not been seeing growth fast enough to fill positions being

<sup>4</sup> Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

<sup>5</sup> Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

vacated by Iowa's older labor force. Iowa is in the mid-range of total population compared to other states with 3,190,369 residents according to the 2020 Census, Iowa has a low unemployment rate reported at 2.7% in June 2023, and Iowa has an aging workforce, all of which contribute to a lack of available labor force in the state. At the conclusion of PY22, Iowa's labor force participation rate was 68.1%.

Iowa's previous vision and goals focused on ensuring Iowa's workforce partners collaborate to build a talent pipeline of skilled workers. Thus, focus included ensuring youth and other individuals with barriers to employment receive services needed to grow and prosper in Iowa's workforce, while simultaneously ensuring we were meeting the needs of our employers.

One major initiative that was adopted to meet these goals included the Future Ready Iowa Act. The goal of Future Ready Iowa is to connect Iowans to education and training required for good paying jobs and careers to improve people's lives – and to have 70 percent of Iowans with education and training beyond high school by 2025.

Data from Iowa's 2021 Laborshed study found that 61.6% of Iowans have completed certificates or education or training beyond high school. Remarkably, the 2022 Laborshed data showed that 71.8% of Iowans completed certificates or education and training beyond high school. Iowa's workforce delivery system contributed to this and will continue to build off these successes with the new vision and goals outlined in this plan.

Iowa's One-Stop Delivery System, Iowa*WORKS*, provides customers, both job seekers and employers, a variety of in-person and virtual services. Through the Iowa*WORKS* integrated service delivery system:

- Customers are provided career services
- Services are provided through the 15 integrated one-stop centers, four satellite offices, and six expansion offices
- Dedicated Wagner-Peyser staff are located in each of the 15 integrated one-stop centers, four satellite offices, and six expansion offices
- Customers ready for employment after receiving career services may receive staff assisted job search and placement
- Customers in need of training services are referred to other core partners depending on customer needs
- Training services are provided through WIOA Title I, Title II, and Title IV services

Virtual services include, but are not limited to:

- Resume Builder
- Targeted job leads
- Career exploration and assessments
- Identification of gaps in skills, experiences and education
- Virtual workshops
- Virtual one-on-one appointments with a career planner



- Virtual job club - provides job seeking assistance with a different topic each week. Sessions are designed for any job seeker and the job seeker may ask and receive responses automatically and in real time when they attend the workshop. Topics include Business Panels, Negotiate Successful Job Offers, Who Would You Hire, LinkedIn and much more.

One-stop services aim to respond to business demand for workforce improvement by upskilling job seekers and equipping them with current, in-demand skills to help them compete in today's job market. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of job seekers, form the backbone of the one-stop delivery system. All customers have immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in basic career services, with connection of the customer to additional individualized career services, when determined appropriate for a customer to achieve their career goals and obtain or retain employment.

In addition to the services Iowans can receive in-person at Iowa*WORKS* centers across the state, in 2024 Iowa will be deploying a mobile one-Stop unit. The Iowa*WORKS* Mobile Unit will offer workforce development services in a mobile capacity by providing services on-site to individuals through rapid reemployment events, job fairs, training workshops, unemployment, and reemployment activities, etc.

One goal of the Iowa*WORKS* Mobile Unit is to meet customers where they are. The unit will travel to locations throughout Iowa to connect job seekers and employers through hiring events, workshops and support community events. Additionally, it allows for creating and facilitating access to training and education opportunities through events that promote work based learning and higher education. The Iowa*WORKS* Mobile Unit also provides a connection between the public, Iowa*WORKS* and claimants. The mobile unit will provide similar services that are provided in our bricks and mortar Iowa*WORKS* Centers such as the ability to provide assistance on unemployment claims, effective job search strategies, interviewing skills, and referrals to other partners and resources.

### **Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth**

The one-stop system provides universal access to career services to meet the diverse needs of adults and dislocated workers. Through this system, adults and dislocated workers can access a continuum of services. The services are classified as career and training services. Career services include job search assistance, workforce preparation, and career development services, while training services include both classroom and work-based learning opportunities.

Iowa's WIOA Title I Youth program connects eligible youth to a continuum of services and activities, aimed at teaching the youth to navigate the appropriate educational and workforce systems based on an established career pathway. Services are based on the unique needs of each individual participant, and include, but are not limited to:

- Creating awareness of career opportunities



- Connecting a youth’s skills, interests and abilities to career opportunities
- Assistance in addressing and overcoming barriers to education and training
- Connection to education, training and work-based learning opportunities
- Support in attaining career goals

## **Title II – Adult Education and Literacy**

Adult education has a rich history in Iowa of providing services that assist adults in improving their skills, achieving their educational goals, and transitioning to further education or employment. Instruction is designed for adults functioning at the lowest levels of basic skills and English language instruction to advanced levels of learning. By improving the education and skill levels of individual Iowans, the programs enhance the competitiveness of Iowa’s workforce and economy. Title II assists individuals to:

- gain employment or better their current employment; obtain a high school equivalency diploma by passing the state approved assessment;
- attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training;
- exit public welfare and become self-sufficient;
- learn to speak, to read, and to write the English language;
- master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school;
- become U.S. citizens and participate in a democratic society;
- gain self-esteem, personal confidence, and a sense of personal and civic responsibility.

## **Title III – Wagner-Peyser**

Iowa*WORKS* offices are located across the state and provide critical services for individuals and businesses in pursuit of their workforce goals. As Iowa's network of American Job Centers, each office serves as a one-stop shop created to provide universal access to employment services.

Services include:

- One-on-one career and skills assistance
- Virtual workshops and resume building
- Labor market information
- Interview prep
- Job fairs and special events
- Unemployment insurance assistance
- Connection to training and workforce programs

Additional services including career counseling, job search and academic skills development, High school equivalency testing (HiSET) preparation, college research, and much more. All Iowans, including those employed and unemployed, can receive services to support their future career paths.

## **Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (General)**

Iowa's Title IV program provides a wide variety of services for individuals with disabilities that lead to the attainment of their employment, independence, and economic goals. Business and industry is also a customer to whom various services are provided to help meet workplace and workforce needs. The desired outcome is competitive integrated employment that meets the needs and interests of eligible job candidates. Services include: assessment; counseling and guidance; referral for other services; physical and mental restoration services; vocational and other training services; maintenance; transportation; vocational rehabilitation services to family members; interpreter services; reader services; job-related services including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services; supported employment services; personal assistance services; post-employment services; occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies; rehabilitation technology; transition services; technical assistance and other consultation services to assist with self-employment or similar employment outcomes; customized employment; and other goods and services necessary to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment outcome.

## **Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)**

The mission of the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is to empower Iowans who are blind or have low vision to be gainfully employed and live independently. The IDB Vocational Rehabilitation program provides employment services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision and are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a person who is blind or has low vision can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB offers the following programs and services to address the education and skill needs of Iowa's workforce.

## **Trade Adjustment Assistance Act**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA or Trade) Act is a federally funded reemployment program providing specialized benefits and services to workers who have experienced layoff as a result, either direct or indirect, of foreign trade. Benefits available to eligible participants include fully funded assistance up to 2½ years towards post-secondary education, up to 2 years of on-the-job training, job search and relocation allowances for eligible activities outside the workers' commuting area, and wage subsidies for workers aged 50 or older.

Through case management and access to career planning, TAA participants upgrade their knowledge and experience to enhance their marketability in today's labor force and attain suitable reemployment after a trade-affected layoff. This is achieved through various methods

such as evaluations, assessments, workshops, training, and more to support the career-pathway goals of impacted workers. Outcomes are most successful when a TAA participant is co-enrolled in a partner program like Title I Dislocated Worker or Adult programs, which allows eligible workers to receive additional supportive services while enrolled in TAA.

On July 1, 2022, Federal TAA Termination provisions took effect. Under termination, the Department of Labor cannot conduct new investigations or issue certifications of eligibility for new groups of workers. However, workers who were separated or threatened and covered under petitions certified on or before June 30, 2022, may still receive benefits and services. Currently enrolled participants continue with their training uninterrupted, and eligible participants can apply for TAA benefits and services as usual. The only TAA benefit affected by termination is the RTAA/ATAA wage subsidy for older workers which is now disallowed. RTAA/ATAA applications are still being accepted but cannot be approved.

### **Rapid Response Assistance and Layoff Aversion**

Rapid Response (RR) efforts in Iowa continued to play an important part in business engagement. As Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARN) are received, RR staff immediately begin working with company officials and local area leadership to organize and deploy RR activities. Iowa legislated that employers with any layoffs of more than 25 employees must notify IWD. This state requirement is in addition to the federal requirement to notify in the event of a layoff impact of 50 or greater.

When WARN notices are received, each employer is contacted by State RR staff. Subsequently, most receive local-level delivery of RR services. The RR Worker Information Meetings (WIMs) are scheduled as soon as possible to ensure services reach as many employees as possible. Iowa's Dislocated Worker Survey remains a key component to the WIM. During PY18, Iowa began experimenting with timing of survey distribution to promptly establish services. This does require support by the employer. An example of this type of unique partnership is the opportunity Procter and Gamble allowed for IWD staff to conduct WIMs and distribute the survey prior to the official layoff. This allowed for advanced planning on services required for the worker group. This re-enforces the importance of collaboration with the community and the importance of building these relationships with the American Job Centers and allows for layoff aversion to address the needs of the workers prior to layoff.

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants**

Iowa received a major disaster declaration on 3/23/20, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Iowa was awarded \$1,665,000 in emergency funds on 6/11/20, to administer statewide employment and training services to 320 dislocated workers through 6/30/22. On 6/30/22, Iowa received approval to extend the grant period of performance to 6/30/23.

Beginning 1/1/21, Iowa sub-contracted service provision to 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) to provide employment and training services focused on individualized career services, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Occupational Skills Training (OST). Iowa utilized \$400,000 to implement a statewide project to provide virtual Information Technology (IT)

training to 80 individuals. The statewide project began in February 2022 and successfully served the 80 planned individuals in IT training by March 2023.

Iowa worked with core partners to recruit individuals for the grant. Reemployment Services Eligibility and Assessment (RESEA) and state funded Reemployment Case Management (RCM) staff were the largest referral source. Successful grant outreach included identifying RESEA customers via Iowa's data management system and sending emails about training services available.

Iowa surpassed the enrollment goal but did not meet the expenditure goal. Barriers included: less individuals coming to the American Jobs Centers (AJC), lack of interest in OJT, immediate need for individuals to return to work, and competing funding sources such as co-enrollment with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Areas with the highest enrollments had business closures with 22 many participants co-enrolled with TAA covering training expenditures. Staff time is the only expense involved in the provision of individualized career services, which minimized expenditures for these services.

Overall, Iowa enrolled 420 individuals in the grant and expended \$1,004,426.18 (over 61% of the award). All enrolled individuals received individualized career services. Iowa planned to serve 210 individuals in training and exceeded that goal by serving 314 individuals in training. Iowa's launch of the statewide IT training project was key to meeting the enrollment goal. Targeted marketing efforts for the statewide project generated more than 400 interested individuals and drastically increased grant participation. Employment outcomes for individuals served by the grant have been favorable.

As a state, we will continue to take advantage of available NDWG funds when necessary, to ensure Iowans receive the services they need during these trying times.

### **Unemployment Insurance**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) administers unemployment insurance benefits in the state of Iowa. Benefits are made available to workers who meet all requirements and have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, such as when a plant closes, they are laid off or in other similar circumstances.

Job seekers file for benefits online or in certain circumstances can be assisted over the phone through Iowa's call center or by calling any of the Iowa*WORKS* centers. Weekly certifications are also online and benefits can be direct deposited or customers can take advantage of Iowa's debit card.

Unemployment services are blended between a central call center that customers can dial tollfree to speak to a live agent or at any of the 15 comprehensive one-stop centers, four satellite Iowa*WORKS* offices or eight expansion locations with cross-trained state merit staff. Iowa's new case management system is tied into the online unemployment claim filing site, capturing full registration data for claimants not likely to return to the same employer and feeding that information back to the Iowa*WORKS* system, satisfying registration requirements for both programs.

At the Iowa *WORKS* centers, customers can utilize computer labs to file their initial or weekly claims, engage with trained staff who can answer the hard questions, adjudicate or fix issues on the spot. Customers can take advantage of Iowa *WORKS* centers in person for claim assistance to share services, connect with programs, classes and training options all on their first visit.

Iowa's unemployment system supports Iowa *WORKS* centers infrastructure and staffing costs, which allows services to be integrated into all functions of the workforce system.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based training program for older Americans. SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profits and public facilities, called host sites. Participants work an average of 20 hours per week and are paid the highest of federal, state, or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities. Beginning January 3, 2023, Iowa's state SCSEP grant transitioned from the Iowa Department on Aging to Iowa Workforce Development. This has strengthened participants' connection to employment assistance from the Iowa *WORKS* field offices. Participants take advantage of workshops hosted by Iowa *WORKS* as part of their pre-employment training hours.

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program is a federal tax credit available to Iowa employers who hire and retain veterans and individuals from other target groups with barriers to employment. During Federal Fiscal Year 2023 (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023), IWD certified 15,923 applications. Target groups with the highest number of certifications included: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (7,235), Designated Community Resident (4,283) and Ex-Felon (1,731). After being awarded a Federal WOTC Backlog Funding Grant for Federal Fiscal Year 2022, IWD eliminated its backlog of WOTC applications. IWD is now processing applications within 30 days of receipt. During Federal Fiscal Year 2023, IWD was able to implement and refine two interfaces for application processing. This has greatly reduced the time staff spends manually processing applications, creating even more efficiency in processing.

### **PROMISE JOBS**

PROMISE JOBS, "Promoting Independence and Self-Sufficiency through Employment, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills," provides case management, employment, education, training, and supportive services to recipients of the Family Investment Program (FIP), Iowa's cash assistance program under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

IWD provides PROMISE JOBS services on behalf of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); families are co-enrolled into other programs offered through the AJCs, as appropriate.

PROMISE JOBS case managers, co-located in Iowa *WORKS* Centers, served an average of 3,013 PROMISE JOBS families each month. IWD continues to work with two other state agencies,



HHS and the Department of Human Rights, on the Two-Generation Initiative, geared toward providing a whole-family approach to public services. IWD and PROMISE JOBS also continue working in the new data management system in conjunction with HHS to enhance performance reporting and overall, better serve PROMISE JOBS families.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T)**

The SNAP E&T program provides employment and training services to non-FIP SNAP recipients for the purpose of enhancing their employability and moving participants forward towards self-sufficiency. The program offers training and support services, such as transportation and childcare, to increase workforce skills and help reduce barriers to employment.

In October 2023, IWD became the statewide Intermediary Network for Iowa's SNAP E&T program. In conjunction with our partners at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), IWD will administer the SNAP E&T program in Iowa. Additionally, SNAP E&T services are now offered directly from all IowaWORKS centers in the state, expanding accessibility to all 99 counties in Iowa. The initial goal of this partnership is to increase enrollment into the SNAP E&T program by 50% by December 1, 2025.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant**

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) provides federal funding through a formula grant to State Workforce Agencies (SWA) for hiring dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBEs), as well as helping employers fill vacancies with job-seeking veterans.

The JVSG funding supports Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist staff and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff. Iowa refers to DVOP staff as Veteran Career Planners.

For the JVSG program in Iowa, 2023 marked a new beginning through an internal reorganization of veteran services within IWD. The JVSG program and Home Base Iowa (HBI) program were brought together and integrated to maximize their reach and impact across the state. This new work unit is referred to as the Office of Veteran Workforce Services. This reorganization has increased our capacity, communication, and consistency in the way we deliver services to veterans, service members, and employers. The JVSG program continues to serve eligible persons as defined by Department of Labor guidance, but both programs now work more closely with one another to leverage the knowledge and skillsets of all team members.

### **Veterans Services and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program**

Veteran Career Planners work with eligible veterans and eligible persons that have significant barriers to employment. These barriers may include service-connected disabilities, homelessness, long-term unemployment, low income as defined by WIOA, an offender as defined by WIOA,



aged 18-24, or lacking a high school diploma or equivalent. There are also additional eligible populations as defined in guidance provided by the Department of Labor.

Veteran Career Planners provide individualized career services to these eligible veterans and eligible persons with an emphasis on assisting veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. These services include but are not limited to completing comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels, developing an individual employment plan, career planning, individual and group counseling, referrals to other supportive service agencies, and identifying training opportunities.

LVER staff conduct outreach to employers and business associations and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and to encourage the hiring of disabled veterans. Most recently, Iowa has been approved as a third-party provider of the DoD SkillBridge program. LVERs will play an important role in working with interested businesses to join this program in hopes of attracting transitioning service members back to Iowa for internship opportunities.

LVERs explain and demonstrate why it is a good business decision to hire and retain veterans. Additionally, LVERs play a big role with the state's Home Base Iowa (HBI) program and help ensure IowaWORKS Business Engagement team members are properly trained to provide information to employers about veteran hiring initiatives. LVERs are located throughout the state in such a way as to maximize their effectiveness and collaboration with those Business Engagement teams and to serve our business customers.

### **Foreign Labor Certification**

The H-2A program allows agricultural employers, who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers, to bring nonimmigrant, foreign workers into the U.S. to perform agricultural work of a temporary or seasonal nature. In PY22, Iowa's agricultural employers submitted 505 job orders. All these job orders were posted for U.S. domestic workers but not filled by domestic workers, resulting in the hiring of foreign labor.

The H-2B temporary non-agricultural program permits eligible employers to hire nonimmigrant workers to temporarily come to the U.S. and perform non-agricultural work, based on the employer's temporary need. The demand for temporary workers has increased annually over the past few years. Due to this increased demand and workload, Iowa Workforce Development will be hiring an additional full-time dedicated Foreign Labor Certification workforce advisor. With this staffing change, the SWA will be better positioned to complete the extra duties associated with the trending increase.

### **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker/Monitor Advocacy System**

As a top-20 significant state, Iowa has seen improvement in the provision of Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) services during this program year; a likely contributor being pandemic recovery. During PY22, 10 offices were designated as significant offices to include: Iowa City, Burlington, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Spencer, Denison, Des Moines, and Fort Dodge. Peak season comes in July in Iowa with the arrival of migrant

workers and H2A workers, mainly from Texas, Georgia, South Africa, and Mexico, however some come from Central and South America and Ukraine.

In situations where the MSFWs are unable to visit an Iowa *WORKS* Center, outreach workers provide services offsite. This enables MSFWs to access necessary services in a way that was most appropriate for their circumstances.

Outreach workers continue to be the primary points of contact for all scheduling events, such as registrations, presentations, logging complaints, and secondary needs. Additionally, outreach workers focused on building relationships with agricultural employers and MSFWs. These workers spend time marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and in PY22, secured ten ARS job orders requesting 150 workers in total. Outreach workers stay in contact with farm workers throughout the year, answering questions about ARS and helping them understand the benefits and processes associated. Iowa is actively promoting the ARS system in hopes to increase participation in ARS as a business strategy that also protects the interests of Iowa farm workers.

### **National Farmworker Jobs Program**

Proteus administers the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in Iowa. The NFJP responds to chronic seasonal unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The NFJP offers assistance that strengthens the ability of farm workers and their families to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Since its inception with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the farmworker program has been an integral part of the national workforce strategy. NFJP provides access to education services and job training, support, and additional services suited to the customer's career goals.

### **Job Corps**

Job Corps, a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Originally established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the program currently operates under the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program to help young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Many Job Corps participants face significant barriers to education and employment. About 25 percent of students self-reported that they had a disability, such as a cognitive or mental health disability. About 25 percent of students entered Job Corps without having progressed beyond the ninth grade, and the mean reading and math skills of students were below the eighth-grade level. Eight percent identified as English-language learners.

Job Corps students receive individualized services that are organized into four service periods: (1) outreach and admission, (2) career preparation, (3) career development, and (4) career transition services. There are two Job Corps locations in Iowa: one in Denison and one in Ottumwa.

### **Career and Technical Education (Perkins)**

The rapidly evolving skill requirements of the global economy pose challenges for young workers and businesses. Increasingly, workers of all ages must update their skills and credentials to obtain a job with family-sustaining wages, remain employable, or move ahead in a career. At the same time, businesses need a robust pipeline of qualified workers to meet the changing skill demands of their sector. Employers are generally looking for three types of skills in their entry-level employees: (1) employability or soft skills, (2) hard skills, and (3) occupation- or industry-specific skills. The intent of Iowa's Career and Technical Education (CTE) is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equip students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As students evolve through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics, and the support necessary to succeed.

### **Federal Bonding Program**

Federal bonding benefits an employer by providing free fidelity bond insurance to protect them against loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. The advantage of the program is that the employer benefits from the worker's skills and abilities while opening up doors of opportunity to job seekers that might otherwise struggle to overcome those barriers. The bond promotes confidence in a job seeker who needs to gain re-entry into or maintain a connection to the labor market and demonstrate that he or she can be a productive worker.

### **Re-Entry**

The State of Iowa has six Reentry Career Planners at the following locations: Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville, North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City, Newton Correctional Facility in Newton, Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility in Mount Pleasant, Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Fort Dodge, and the Clarinda Correctional Facility in Clarinda. Additionally, one Reentry Operations Manager oversees operating procedures and the program.

The program staff partner with the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) and other offender-related partners throughout Iowa, to assist in the overall goal of reducing recidivism. IDOC has nine correctional institutions that house around 8,516 individuals. Nearly 90% will return to their communities; just over 3,000 were released in PY21. Community Based Corrections (CBC) has eight judicial districts that supervise about 40,200 individuals on probation, parole, special sentence, and pretrial release. CBC also has 22 residential facilities that house and supervise around 1,180 individuals.

Nearly 50,000 individuals are currently incarcerated or on community supervision in Iowa. The average daily cost of incarceration per individual is \$101.81, totaling just under \$37,000 per individual per year. The IDOC reports that the three-year recidivism rate for FY2022 is 34.3%; or 2.7% lower than the recidivism rate observed in FY2021. These numbers show three consecutive years of reduction in the systems overall recidivism rate. The national average for state prisons is around 70%.

Training is in progress so that the Reentry Career Planners in Iowa institutions are certified as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS). This certification requires a person to utilize specific competencies and their related skills to assist incarcerated individuals to make informed decisions about jobs and career paths, based on knowledge of their interests, skills, abilities, and values; educational and occupational opportunities; and the realities of the world of work. Currently, three out of six of our Reentry Career Planners that are working in the correctional institutions are OWDS certified.

Iowa's re-entry program supports WIOA through recording registered-only individuals and program enrollment into Wagner-Peyser. The goal is to teach work-related skills, find a career pathway, job placement prior to release from the institution, and network with employers and community reentry service providers to ensure a successful transition for the returning citizen. The Reentry Career Planners help create resumes, assist with mock interviews, and proctor the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and O\*NET assessments.

Empowering and Motivating Ex-offenders to Reach Gainful Employment (EMERGE) is a workshop they teach that focuses on how to get back into the workforce and explain their criminal history to potential employers. Our staff act as a sponsor for the IDOC Registered Apprenticeship programs and host career fairs inside the institution. They also network with employers and educate them on incentives to hire returning citizens, including the Federal Bonding program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and the Iowa income tax benefit. They perform individualized job referrals based on skill set and job search three weeks prior to the incarcerated individual's release, including referrals to IowaWORKS Centers in the area the individual will return to. Referrals also happen through Earn and Learn Iowa's electronic referral form for apprentices that need to continue in their program after release.

### **Home Base Iowa**

Home Base Iowa (HBI) is Iowa's premier veteran initiative focused on connecting Iowa businesses to skilled veterans, current and transitioning service members, and spouses looking for career opportunities. FY 2023 marked a new beginning for Home Base Iowa through an internal reorganization of veteran services within IWD. The creation and launch of the IowaWORKS for Veterans portal ([iowaworksforveterans.gov](http://iowaworksforveterans.gov)) highlighted this reorganization and offers a gateway for military job seekers to find training and education resources. Additionally, it offers employers a pathway to improve their veteran recruitment and retention efforts. As part of the broader IowaWORKS for Veterans system, HBI is integrated with IWD's veteran services and programs maximizing its reach and impact across the state of Iowa.

Vision: Iowa is the "State of Choice" for veterans and transitioning service members for employment, education, and/or continued service; and service members are valued in communities which are welcoming, affordable, safe, and family-friendly.

HBI's three Focus Areas are:

1. Workforce Solutions and Growth
2. Quality Education and Student Access

### 3. Community Support

The HBI community initiative designates communities as centers of opportunity for veterans and further highlights Iowa's statewide commitment to welcoming and employing veterans, service members, and spouses.

#### **Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

Iowa Workforce Development has worked strategically and relentlessly for years to grow Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs throughout the state. IWD coordinates with the U.S. DOL/Office of Apprenticeship (U.S. DOL/OA) toward this end and is working with the appropriate agencies to spark new apprenticeship innovation in Iowa by creating a state Office of Apprenticeship.

An employer-driven model, Registered Apprenticeships benefit both workers and employers. Employers create a pipeline of workers trained to meet the specific needs of their industries and worksites, thus leading to increased productivity and a stronger bottom line. Apprentices benefit by increasing their skills without taking on the cost of education. Registered Apprenticeship training is an "earn while you learn" model in that an apprentice receives a paycheck while learning on the job and in the classroom, freeing him or her from the difficult choice of pursuing additional education or providing for themselves in the short term.

Iowa currently has more than 950 Registered Apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing, energy, health care, hospitality, construction, transportation, information technology and other fields, and the number of Registered Apprenticeship programs in Iowa is rising. Iowa currently has more than 70 high schools with students participating in apprenticeship programs.

Because apprenticeships are directly linked to private sector demand, workers who participate in the programs are prepared with in-demand skills that can lead to significant increases in lifetime earnings. Per the DOL, the post-apprenticeship employment rate is more than 93 percent. The average starting salary in Iowa for apprentices after finishing Registered Apprenticeship programs is \$77,000 per year.

Data from the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship shows Iowa registered 5,947 new apprentices and 169 new programs during the Federal Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2023. During the same period, Iowa also reached a record level of 9,954 active apprentices. The state has expanded RA programs in health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing along with increasing the traditional RA occupations within the skilled trades. Iowa's leadership also sparked the creation of new apprenticeships in health care, education (teacher/paraeducator), and other non-traditional occupations.

Growth can be attributed to outreach efforts led by Governor Reynolds' office to grow high school RA programs. Iowa will continue to utilize RA to fast-track careers and engage students in opportunities that lead to careers in high demand fields. In addition, Iowa will expand high-quality work-based learning experiences to provide exposure to high-demand fields and careers, creating pathways for all students-- particularly for traditionally underrepresented students. IWD



leverages several federal funding sources and grants including SAE, SAEF to support growth for the apprenticeship ecosystem in Iowa.

In October 2021, IWD took over administration of the Iowa Apprenticeship Act Funding Program (15B) as well as Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (15C), both previously administered by Iowa Economic Development Authority. By aligning RA efforts and related funding under IWD, sponsors, apprentices, interested businesses, high schools and have direct access to one centralized resource for RA-related information and expertise. The 15B program was created to increase the number of skilled registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. The program currently is administered in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) / Office of Apprenticeship (OA).

A worker who graduates from a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a national, industry-recognized, portable credential that provides a guarantee to employers that the graduate is fully qualified to do the job. An apprenticeship program registered with U.S. DOL/OA is referred to as a “sponsor.” Sponsors include both union and non-union programs. A “lead sponsor” is an organization representing a group of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. During Fiscal Year 2023, a total of \$2.94 million was allocated to 64 eligible sponsors and lead sponsors representing 5,162 Registered Apprentices. Combined, these applicants represent nearly 589,100 contact hours.

The Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (15C) was established to provide annual grants for small- to mid-sized Registered Apprenticeship sponsors who are establishing an RA program in a high-demand occupation. The 15C program supports the growth of Registered Apprenticeship programs in these occupations. Competitive grants are available for Registered Apprenticeship programs that create a new program with an eligible high-demand occupation or add an eligible high-demand occupation to their existing program. During Fiscal Year 2023, 15C grants totaling \$459,011 were awarded to 26 participating businesses.

### **Statewide Intermediary Work-Based Learning Network**

The purpose of the Statewide Intermediary Work-Based Learning Network is to prepare students for the workforce by facilitating cooperation and collaboration among businesses and entities within the state system of education. This is done by offering relevant, work-based learning activities to students and teachers from all school districts in Iowa. (See Iowa Code §256.40 (2)).

### **Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)**

This program provides intensive family development services to families receiving Family Investment Program (FIP) assistance who are identified as having multiple or severe barriers to self-sufficiency. FaDSS participants leaving FIP can continue to receive services for up to 90 consecutive days after leaving FIP.



## **Future Ready Iowa Governor’s Initiative**

The Future Ready Iowa Initiative set the tone for many other initiatives to improve the Iowa labor force with its 2018 goal that 70 percent of Iowa’s workforce have post-secondary education, training, or a credential of value by 2025.

Future Ready Iowa programs continue to help Iowans achieve a higher standing in today’s knowledge-based economy. Results from the 2022 Statewide Laborshed Survey found that 61.6 percent of Iowans have now completed education and training beyond high school, while 71.8 percent of Iowans have received a certificate and/or attended some post-secondary training that, according to them, added value to their career path.

## **Last Dollar Scholarship**

The scholarship, created as part of the Future Ready Iowa Act in 2018, pays the cost of tuition up to an associate degree for training in high-demand occupations at any community college. A total of 9,895 Iowans received a total of \$29,177,867 in scholarships in FY2023, with an average award of \$2,949.

The Iowa Legislature has appropriated \$23,927,005 for FY2024. At the same time, legislators also introduced an Expected Family Contribution (EFC), a financial need metric derived from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Any student applying for funding in FY2024 must have an EFC at or below \$20,000 to receive an LDS award with level funding appropriated.

Use of the Last Dollar Scholarship continues to grow. Between FY2022 and FY2023, the number of program participants grew by more than 27 percent, from 7,764 to 9,895. The highest-demand occupation during this time was associate degree-nursing, which had 1,619 participants, followed by licensed practical nurse/vocational nurse with 679.

## **STEM Internship Program**

The purpose of the STEM internship program is to assist in placing Iowa students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into internships that lead to permanent positions with Iowa employers. The intern must participate in a substantive experience in an area closely related to the student’s STEM field.

## **Iowa Student Internship Program**

The Iowa Student Internship Program provides grants to small and medium-sized Iowa companies in the advanced manufacturing, biosciences, and information technology industries to help support internship programs with a goal of transitioning the interns to full-time employment in Iowa upon graduation. Export internships are eligible through this program to support a company’s current or prospective international efforts.

## **Industrial New Jobs Training Act – 260 E**

The 260E program is a business incentive program. It shares in the cost of training employees in new jobs created by a business expansion or startup in Iowa. An eligible business must be

engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing, or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in interstate commerce. Retail, health, and professional services businesses are excluded. Businesses that substantially reduce operations in one area of the state and relocate substantially the same operations in another area of Iowa, as well as businesses involved in a strike, lockout, or other labor dispute in Iowa, are not eligible.

Community colleges enter into training agreements with eligible businesses to establish single or multiple projects to provide training to employees in new jobs. A final agreement executed between a community college and a business is a binding contract. To fund training, colleges borrow money from investors in the form of bond certificates. Like other bonds, revenues are pledged for repayment with interest to certificate purchasers. Certificates are repaid by capturing a portion of the State of Iowa tax dollars generated by the new jobs payroll and diverting these dollars into special funds controlled by the colleges.

The 260E program is a key incentive for retention of existing Iowa industries and assisting new businesses that locate in Iowa.

#### **Iowa Jobs Training Act – 260 F**

The 260F program is an incentive program that assists Iowa-based businesses to train, develop, and upscale skills of their existing workforces to remain competitive. To be eligible for 260F assistance, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in interstate commerce. Retail, health, and professional services businesses are not eligible, nor are businesses that substantially reduce operations in one area of the state to relocate substantially the same operations to another area of Iowa, and businesses that are involved in a strike, lockout, or other labor dispute in Iowa.

A community college may enter into a training agreement with an eligible business to establish a training project for providing program services. A training plan can be no longer than two years in length. A business can request an extension up to one additional year.

#### **Accelerated Career Education Program Act – 260G**

The Accelerated Career Education (ACE) Program was created to help develop a workforce pool of individuals skilled in the occupations most needed by Iowa businesses. It assists Iowa community colleges in expanding current training programs or establishing new programs for these occupations. To participate in 260G, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing, or assembling products; construction; conducting research and development; or providing services in interstate or intrastate commerce. Retail businesses are not eligible.

#### **Economic Development Loan Program**

Through its Economic Development Loan program, IFA issues bonds and loans the proceeds to private entities or organizations for eligible purposes. The interest on the bonds may be tax-

exempt (if eligible under the Internal Revenue Code), taxable or a combination of both. In 2018, the State of Iowa received \$330 million of volume cap for allocation to eligible projects in the following categories: single-family, job training, student loans, beginning farmers, industrial and political subdivision.

### **Private Activity Bond Cap Allocation**

The State of Iowa annually receives several millions of volume cap (the “State Ceiling”) to be allocated to certain Private Activity Bonds set forth in Section 146 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Section 7C of the Iowa Code distributes the State Ceiling among these types of bonds. In 2018, the State of Iowa received \$330 million of Private Activity Bond Cap (“Cap”) for allocation to certain private activity bonds. These include industrial revenue bonds, affordable multifamily housing bonds and other purposes specifically defined by the IRS.

### **Weatherization Assistance Program**

Is a federal grant program established to help reduce the heating and cooling costs for low-income persons, particularly the elderly, disabled, and children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. The installation of energy efficiency measures for each dwelling is based on a computerized energy audit which determines the cost effectiveness of each measure.

### **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program**

A federally funded block grant designed to help eligible low-income Iowa households in the payment of a portion of their non-business residential heating costs for the winter heating season.

### **Community Services Block Grant**

A federal block grant program administered by the states. The purpose of the Program is to provide funding to states and local agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become a fully self-sufficient.

### **Credit Union Family Partnership Individual Development Account**

This Iowa Credit Union Foundation Program offers matched savings accounts for Iowa families with limited resources who meet income-based criteria.

## **B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Iowa has a longstanding history of providing exceptional services across all of the workforce activities and programs identified above, however, those programs have operated independently of each other in many cases. WIOA envisions a "one workforce system” where programs work together to wholistically serve their customers, expanding the capabilities of each program and increasing the success of its participants. One of the greatest strengths of Iowa’s workforce system going forward is the alignment of the administration of the four WIOA core programs

(Titles I, II, III, and IV) into one state agency, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). Senate File 514, effective July 1, 2023, consolidated the administration of federal and state workforce programs at IWD. While this alignment is just beginning, the commitment of the core partners to breakdown silos and design an aligned workforce system is remarkable; the future is bright for the workforce system in Iowa!

The WIOA Core Partner Working Group, described more fully below in section IV of this plan, is one of the biggest strengths Iowa exudes. This has allowed us to develop stronger working relationships at the State level, and pass that down to the local level, along with joint policy and guidance on various topics. This has strengthened partner collaboration and service delivery. With Iowa *WORKS* at the center of service delivery across programs, any staff is able to assist a customer walking in to the door and provide career services to individuals and initiate program referrals as needed.

A key priority of Governor Reynolds is the expansion of high-quality, in-depth Work-Based Learning opportunities; this means outcome-focused professional experiences, such as projects designed by industry experts and educators, internships, quality pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeships, which engage students in building academic, technical and soft skills. To do this, Iowa has set a goal to assist every high school to offer registered apprenticeship opportunities by the 2025-2026 school year.

Work is already underway to provide intensive registered apprenticeship outreach to business, industry, economic development organizations, high schools, higher education entities, nonprofits, Area Education Agencies, etc. A strategic marketing campaign will accompany these efforts by promoting high school registered apprenticeship, quality pre-apprenticeships and internships, along with a clearly designated location where employers, schools, students and parents can request assistance. Lastly, a Work-Based Learning Team – led by IWD and the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council will be established to set additional goals for expanding work-based learning strategies to meet those goals.

The statewide work-based learning intermediary network is another program which prepares students for the workforce by connecting business and education, offering work-based learning activities to both students and teachers. Services include career awareness activities, career exploration activities, career preparation activities, and training opportunities. Previously, Iowa Department of Education had responsibility of administration of the program, however effective November 2022 this shifted to Iowa Workforce Development which will further strengthens the alignment of similar programming.

SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) is a voluntary program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. The program offers recipients job seeking skills, classroom training, and structured employment search, at no cost to participants.

SNAP E&T services are a combined effort between the Iowa Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Workforce Development (IWD), and community partnerships. HHS

determines participant eligibility and provides oversight to IWD who is the administrative intermediary for the program. This provides for more seamless services for customers. The program is planned to expand opportunities for Iowans and empower them to achieve sustainable wage employment through training, employment services, and job readiness activities in all 99 counties by December 31, 2025.

With the ever-changing needs of Iowa businesses, as well as Iowa's landscape continuing to change, continued challenges are expected to meet job seekers where they are and fill businesses workforce needs. Changing demographics, the advancement of technology, to include the programs included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the vast need across business and industry creates opportunities for improvement for Iowa's workforce development activities.

Additional opportunities for improvement include enhanced system integration efforts as although collaboration between programs have improved, there are still areas for improvement. With Governor Reynolds alignment efforts, modernizing state government and transitioning similar programs to one agency, efforts to improve integration will be more streamlined and supported. The same goes for data sharing. Currently there are challenges with access to partner's program data, however with alignment and further integration of data systems, Iowa will be able to continue working on progressing in this area.

Iowa has limited financial resources to address its many workforce development challenges. Under WIOA, federal program funds are allocated to states based on population size. Within these federal funds the allowable allocation for program administration has always been capped at 5% of the total. As a result, less populous states such as Iowa have substantially lower levels of funding to cover the fixed costs, infrastructure funding and required administrative activities in order to be in compliance.

### **C. State Workforce Development Capacity**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Iowa is well positioned to support the enhanced capacity of its state workforce partners across workforce activities in the state. With the implementation of alignment of state agencies and programs, all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs are now housed at Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), with the exception of Title IV-Blind, which remains a separate agency. Although not required for all programs to be under one agency, the opportunities this presents for system integration is not only imminent, but exciting for the State.

Additionally, programs just as the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA), Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), the State Unemployment Compensation Program (UI), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Reentry, PROMISE JOBS (TANF), Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and SNAP Employment and Training programming are all administered through IWD. This alignment of other required program partners also poses



an area of opportunity to increase the capacity of workforce investment across workforce systems.

Overall, alignment will increase the total capacity of the workforce system as we share resources and work together across programs to prevent duplication of services.

The range of workforce development programs and activities provided by Iowa's workforce delivery system programs represent a significant investment of both human and capital resources into Iowa's workforce development system. Since 2014 when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed, the State has made concerted efforts to increase interagency collaboration to better coordinate federal employment services and training for adults, dislocated workers and youth, and adult education, as well as create additional access points for participants with barriers to employment. These activities resulted in a developed network of physical assets, including strategically located Iowa*WORKS* centers.

Though the workforce system has made improvements since the passage of WIOA, we recognize the need to increase integration efforts. The programs represented in this plan will develop a streamlined customer experience through drafting an updated customer flow and collaborating on a referral process from and to core and required program partners to coordinate workforce activities and increase the capacity of each partner by allowing specialized services to function optimally and assist in the elimination of the duplication of services. Local referral systems must further define how documentation will be completed to show the result of the referral. With decreased funding across programs, it is imperative that services are coordinated to ensure funds are maximized across partners.

## **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

### **1. Vision**

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Iowa's Vision: An aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce.

The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) recognizes the importance of the workforce system in Iowa and the need to serve both customer groups – job seekers and employers – to have a thriving workforce system and economy. The vision of this plan clearly identifies the focus of Iowa's workforce system over the next four years, by stressing an aligned and streamlined workforce delivery system that serves both customer groups equally. The vision begins with “an aligned” system as alignment is a key focus of Governor Reynolds, the SWDB, and the system partners. The vision also calls out both customer groups of the workforce system, as neither can be successful without the other. Without a pool of skilled and available workers,



employers will not have the workforce they need to grow and achieve success, and without employers offering high-paying, quality jobs, job seekers will not have the career opportunities to support their families. The goals below were specifically curated by the SWDB to expand upon these concepts and allow Iowa to achieve its vision and provide the best workforce system possible.

## 2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

### A. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment<sup>6</sup> and other populations.<sup>7</sup>

### B. Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers

The Iowa SWDB identified two broad goals, each with corresponding strategies designed to achieve the goals, for the PY24-PY27 planning cycle. In keeping with the design of the vision statement, Goal 1 is related to serving individuals/job seekers while Goal 2 is focused on serving employers. Each goal and its corresponding strategies will guide the core partner programs over the next four years as they work together to design and implement policies and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of this plan.

Goal 1: Increase the engagement and awareness of Iowa's current, potential, and future workforce to the continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities in Iowa.

- Strategy #1: Align and implement an accessible, integrated service delivery model incorporating all workforce system partners.
- Strategy #2: Ensure all Iowa students have opportunities for meaningful work-based learning experiences.
- Strategy #3: Target services to underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, minorities, returning citizens, women, rural Iowans, new citizens, veterans, etc.

Goal 2: Increase employer engagement and awareness of the Iowa *WORKS* system as the premier provider of business services for a skilled and diverse workforce.

<sup>6</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>7</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

- Strategy #1: Support local workforce boards in the development and enhancement of sector partnerships.
- Strategy #2: Create and implement a unified and collaborative business engagement model.
- Strategy #3: Increase the awareness and engagement by employers in work-based learning opportunities.

### **3. Performance Goals**

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Please see Appendix 1.

### **4. Assessment**

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Iowa's State Workforce Development Board is engaged in a review of performance outcomes through its Systems Committee. The first priority of the committee is performance data. This includes having an accessible dashboard, with information and data that is easily able to be understood by any stakeholder. Based on this feedback, a Tableau dashboard was created to show quarterly and annual performance outcomes, investment vs. return on investment (participant and expenditure data) and unemployment rate by local workforce development area.

Iowa has planned to begin evaluation activities in PY23, and has made progress on evaluation activities under WIOA Title I. Currently, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has an MOU in place with Iowa State University and Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) to assist with WIOA Title I Evaluation in accordance with 20 CFR § 682.220. The project will begin with a pilot and planning effort to evaluate Iowa's WIOA Title I programs between May 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023.

Areas of opportunity in regard to assessment include evaluating the effectiveness of alignment of core programs into Iowa Workforce Development. The Iowa Department of Management is responsible for standing up Data Dashboards across state agencies to help assess the effectiveness of the alignment of workforce programs. Additional emphasis will be placed on improvement of co-enrollment and increased data collection in this area.

The goals of implementation of the data dashboards include:

- Increase co-enrollment of WIOA core programs by 30% by December 31, 2025.

- Triple the number of PROMISE JOBS (TANF) and Title I co-enrollments by December 31, 2025.
- Increase the number of Iowan's enrolled in SNAP E&T by 50% by December 31, 2025.

The results from the dashboard data will inform gaps and areas for strategic development related cross program collaboration.

### **c. State Strategy**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

#### **1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).**

Sector partnerships are comprised of industries with shared needs, as well as various education, workforce, economic, and community organizations in supportive roles. These partnerships develop and continuously evaluate goals, policies, and service-delivery strategies to meet the needs of employers in a given sector. In doing so, they operate within labor market regions and are not confined to municipal, county, educational, or state boundaries. Effective sector partnerships are industry-driven, meaning industries identify needs and assume the lead role in developing strategies which address their identified needs.

As a part of state government realignment, in the fall of 2022, administration of Iowa's Business Sector Partnerships and the Iowa Intermediary Work-Based Learning Network moved from the Iowa Department of Education to Iowa Workforce Development. Many of the broader goals, initiatives, and priorities connected to these programs align with programs and goals within IWD.

In 2023, IWD met with and surveyed the Sector Partnerships in Iowa and confirmed the existence of 29 active Sector Partnerships and 13 paused sector partnerships. In some instances, several sector partnerships were being coordinated by one agency, with a total of nine agencies across the state in coordinating roles. Iowa Workforce Development is working toward transitioning sector board work to Local Workforce Development Boards in regions with capacity and to build capacity in areas where it is needed.

To do this in the most effective way possible, IWD is working with a national consulting organization, The Center for Workforce Excellence, to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Outline a Sector Partnership model that can be replicated regardless of industry, resources available and location in the state. This will include the roles and activities of key stakeholders.
- Deliver training to establish best practices and strategies to facilitate sector partnership meetings and record decisions and action items to advance priorities.
- Identify appropriate staffing required for sustainability, including positions and responsibilities.
- Identify public and private resources to support the sustainment of sector partnerships.
- Identify performance management measures and key performance indicators to be achieved.
- Establish reliable and efficient data sources to use which describe the economy, including current, past, and projected employment, average wages, and specialty industries.

Prior to the transition of this program to IWD, the Iowa Department of Education awarded Sector Partnership Planning Grants to five Community Colleges. An extension of this funding was provided by IWD to allow time for the transition and for awardees to coordinate efforts with the direction of state efforts in some cases. Four of the five awardees opted to accept the extension.

Work-based learning has long been a priority for the state. The Statewide Intermediary Work-Based Learning Network was initially funded in 2014, and the work conducted helped create a strong foundation for career awareness and exploration in many schools. As the state continues to adapt and strengthen work-based learning, the intermediary program also is evolving. The Intermediary Work-Based Learning Grant program transitioned from the Iowa Department of Education to Iowa Workforce Development over the last year as part of the state's goal of aligning workforce programs. Iowa's changing work-based learning landscape includes the following aspects:

- The number of organizations focusing on work-based learning across the state is growing.
- More and more school districts are employing Work-Based Learning Coordinators and support staff to work toward the goal of comprehensive work-based learning programs.
- Iowa has a high need from employers to build and strengthen workforce pipelines.
- According to Iowa's Area Education Agencies PREP data, the number of students exiting high school without a post-secondary plan continues to grow every year while the number of students who enroll in a post-secondary training program is declining.

The focus of these grant awards in previous years has been on supporting schools and helping students gain access to career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities.

Career pathways are one strategy utilized by sector partnerships to address industry-identified labor market needs. Career pathways organize education and training into a coherent, stackable sequence aligned within specific occupations within a given industry. In that way, career pathways support an individual in developing the personal, technical, and employability skills

required for advancement within an industry and transitioning from training and education into the workforce. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce service providers, employers, labor groups, and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of career pathways.

**2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

Modernization efforts to align Iowa's state governance structure is one of the top strategies imposed by Governor Reynolds to streamline state government, improve efficiency and integrate programming. One focus of alignment included centralizing similar programs that were housed across multiple agencies into a single department to better improve services for Iowans. Thus, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), as the designated state workforce agency, now houses all four WIOA core programs with the exception of Title IV- Blind.

Beyond the core programs now being administered by IWD, many required programs are also administered by IWD to include: Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training, PROMISE JOBS (Iowa's TANF program), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), ReEntry Employment Opportunities, State Unemployment Compensation and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program (RESEA). The alignment of workforce programs will support enhanced coordination efforts across programs to improve outcomes.

Additional focus is being put on modernization efforts of Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Benefits System. In an effort to improve customer service, eliminate labor-intensive processes, allow real time data sharing, improve security, increase data accuracy and improve maintenance and support, the new system will go-live in June 2024. The UI Benefits System will integrate with Iowa's already established data management system, IowaWORKS. The alignment of systems will support customer service efforts and streamline benefits and services to Iowans.

Other state initiatives that support integrated customer services include the establishment of the Business Engagement Division within IWD and the Reemployment Case Management. IWD launched the Business Engagement Division in September 2022. The Division was created to provide a one-stop shop for Iowa's employers to help meet their workforce needs. Since its inception, the Business Engagement Division has focused on creating relationships with Iowa businesses and engaged in a 100-day visit endeavor where Business Engagement Consultants

met with countless businesses to make contact and share information about valuable business resources to help support them throughout their business cycle.

The Reemployment Case Management (RCM) program is another state initiative that was implemented in January 2022 which puts more intensive focus on getting unemployed Iowans back to work more quickly. Engaging claimants more quickly in the UI process and enrolling them in Title III Wagner-Peyser services and providing a direct connection to the labor exchange system right away has proven to be a beneficial approach. Since the onset of RCM through the end of October 2023, 35, 208 Iowans receiving unemployment or who were temporarily laid off completed an RCM appointment. Of those, 8,121 have reported employment.

Although historically there has been some siloing of programs, the alignment of core programs and further collaboration among multiple program partners will help to programs to be more knowledgeable about one another and foster improved working relationships. Additionally, this work will provide for a more seamless customer experience to Iowans by providing them the best services necessary for them to meet their career goals and improve job seeker placement for Iowa businesses.

### **III. Operational Planning Elements**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

#### **a. State Strategy Implementation**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### **1. State Board Functions**

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) implements its required functions under section 101(d) of WIOA through its authority granted by Governor Kim Reynolds and codified in Iowa Code Chapter 84A. The Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the designated state workforce agency which provides support to the Iowa SWDB by providing an Executive Director to the SWDB, along with other support staff from the agency. The Iowa Attorney General’s office provides legal support to the SWDB, as needed.

To support the work of the SWDB, the Board has multiple standing committees, as outlined in the SWDB Bylaws. These committees provide information and assist the Board in carrying out its duties. The following Standing Committees are in place for the Iowa SWDB:



**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee is composed of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and five additional voting members. This committee is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the activities of the Board and its other Committees to ensure the satisfactory performance of functions stipulated by the Governor, the Bylaws, and all relevant statutes and regulations. The Executive Committee monitors and guides the administrative management of the Board.

**State Workforce Development System Committee:** The Workforce Committee provides information and assistance to the Board in relation to operational and other issues relating to the workforce system in Iowa.

**Policies and Practices Committee:** The Policies and Practices Committee provides recommendations regarding the best policies, procedures, and practices regarding workforce development programs, activities, and services.

**Youth Services Committee:** The Youth Services Committee provides information and assists with issues relating to the provision of services to youths. This Committee includes representatives of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youths and includes the Chairs of the Local Workforce Development Board Youth Committees.

**Disability Services Committee:** The Disability Services Committee provides information and assists with issues relating to services to individuals with disabilities, including compliance with state and federal nondiscrimination laws relating to the workforce development system and appropriate training for staff regarding the provision or support, accommodations, and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee:** The Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee is dedicated to assisting with issues related to disparities in the minority unemployment rate in Iowa.

**Ex-Offender Re-Entry Committee:** The Ex-Offender Re-Entry Committee is focused on aligning efforts by State and local entities to give ex-offenders a better opportunity to start a new career and find self-sustaining employment to help them successfully re-enter Iowa communities.

**Iowa Plains Local Workforce Development Area Committee:** The Iowa Plains Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Committee provides recommendations regarding the policies, procedure, operational and other issues relating to the local workforce system in the Iowa Plains LWDA. As the Iowa Plains LWDA is being run by the State via the American Job Center Division (AJC) of IWD, the State Workforce Development Board fulfills the role of Local Workforce Development Board in the Iowa Plains area. This committee consists of business members, community-based organizations, program representation, etc. Geographically

located in the Iowa Plains area to ensure a local voice leads the charge for strategic decisions impacting the area.

The Iowa SWDB meets quarterly to conduct the business of the Board, hosting two virtual meetings and two in-person meetings annually, with the goal of holding the in-person meetings in a different area of the state each time. Each Standing Committee provides a report at each SWDB meeting and the information and recommendations of the Committees are discussed and voted on by the full Board, if required. All WIOA policies impacting the core partner programs (Titles I, II, III and IV), are reviewed and approved by the full SWDB, based on information and input from the Policies and Practices Committee.

## **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

### **A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy**

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

The most significant activity implemented to ensure true integration across programs includes Iowa's alignment strategy. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) being the lead state agency for all core programs was the first step in working towards an aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of our customers. Although this formalized department alignment is a more current initiative implemented in July 2023, and will undoubtedly provide structure for enhanced partnerships, the core partners have been working together weekly for several years within what is called the Core Partner Working Group.

The Core Partner Working Group has published various joint policy, guidance and provided joint technical assistance for a multitude of WIOA requirements. Some include, but are not limited to: local planning guidance, one-stop certification and memorandum of understanding and infrastructure funding agreements. Additionally, the core partners are also engaging in the 2023 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort which will assist in identifying joint areas of evaluation, data collection and support enriched partnerships.

IWD has also become the intermediary network for SNAP Employment and Training Program, which will allow us to access to additional low-income households who may have not otherwise engaged in the full workforce deliver system – another step to inclusion of integrated services. The same could be said for the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) which has also more recently been taken on by IWD in January 2023.

Historically, the number of individuals aged 55 and older receiving core program services has been lower than other age categories. For example, those ages 55-59 served in the Title III

program in program year 2022 was 2,802 in comparison to 5,928 individuals served ages 45-54, and 13,942 individuals served ages 25-44 during the same timeframe. Similarly, fewer adults ages 55+ were also served in Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in program year 2022. Further integrating SCSEP into the workforce delivery system will provide more Iowan's age 55 and older enhanced wrap-around services through co-enrollment to support their success in today's workforce.

Another exciting opportunity for program collaboration is the Core4 Project. The Core4 Project brings together Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (General), Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services and Business Engagement Consultants to provide enhanced services to Title IV participants. Current data shows that it takes an estimated 274 days for Title IV customers recognized as being “job-ready” to become employed. In an effort to provide additional services and decrease the time it takes for these individuals to become successfully employed, three Iowa*WORKS* comprehensive centers will pilot the Core4 Project. These locations include: Des Moines, Ottumwa, and Sioux City.

These Title IV customers will be co-enrolled in Title III, and any other applicable program, be provided career services and will become engaged with a business services consultant to engage in a job development process. The job development process includes contacting employers, who do not already have a job listed, to determine if the employer has an interest in interviewing and potentially hiring a specific participant who possesses skills required by that employer. This consists of working with a specific employer to develop a position/job for the participant. This more hands-on approach is expected to drastically reduce the number of days it takes for job-ready customers to obtain employment.

## **B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Beyond Iowa's alignment initiatives which will streamline services and increase coordination among core and required partners, additional priorities are being implemented to provide Iowan's access to programs to increase their competitiveness in today's job market. One key priority includes expansion of Work-Based Learning opportunities and to assist every high school to offer registered apprenticeship opportunities by the 2025-2026 school year.

To support this, intensive registered apprenticeship outreach will be conducted to business, industry, economic development organizations, high schools, higher education entities, nonprofits, Area Education Agencies, etc. A strategic marketing campaign will accompany these efforts by promoting high school registered apprenticeship, quality pre-apprenticeships and internships, along with a clearly designated location where employers, schools, students, and parents can request assistance. Lastly, a Work-Based Learning Team – led by IWD and the

Governor's STEM Advisory Council will be established to set additional goals for expanding work-based learning strategies to meet those goals.

The statewide work-based learning intermediary network is another program which prepares students for the workforce by connecting business and education, offering work-based learning activities to both students and teachers. Services include career awareness activities, career exploration activities, career preparation activities, and training opportunities. Previously, Iowa Department of Education had responsibility of administration of the program, however effective November 2022 this shifted to Iowa Workforce Development which will further strengthen the alignment of similar programming.

SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) is a voluntary program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. The program offers recipients job seeking skills, classroom training, and structured employment search, at no cost to participants. SNAP E&T services are a combined effort between the Iowa Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Workforce Development (IWD), and community partnerships. HHS determines participant eligibility and provides oversight to IWD who is the administrative intermediary for the program. This provides for more seamless services for customers. The program is planned to expand opportunities for Iowans and empower them to achieve sustainable wage employment through training, employment services, and job readiness activities in all 99 counties by December 31, 2025.

### **C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Coordination and alignment at the State level occurs in a variety of ways. Governor Reynold's recent alignment efforts is a key step forward in coordinating efforts across programs. Weekly Core Partner Working Group meetings occur to ensure collaboration among core partners. Integration efforts have proved successful in Iowa in the past and will once again be a focus to better align programs and services moving forward.

At the local level, Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) developed by Local Workforce Development Boards describe how core partner programs, and other required and optional One-Stop Partner programs will coordinate the provision of services to individuals in their local area. The Core Partner Working Group has provided local stakeholders policy, guidance, and technical assistance resources on establishing MOUs and the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) component to ensure appropriate execution of agreements and aligned services.

At the State and local levels, an example of coordination of services and resources, is the use of [iowaworks.gov](http://iowaworks.gov) by WIOA Title I, WIOA Title III, Trade Adjustment Assistance, TANF, and Registered Apprenticeship. Utilization of a common data management system for multiple

programs ensures consistency, reduces duplication of services and supports career planning efforts. Iowa's UI system is currently undergoing a modernization effort to use iowaworks.gov beginning June 2024.

The Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model has been used as a strategic approach to provide coordinated services to individuals, initially under the Disability Employment Initiative grant Iowa received in 2012, however this method has been utilized inconsistently since. IRT's are a proven customer centered approach that brings together a team of individuals representing different programs and organizations to provide coordinated wrap-around services to support a job seeker with their employment goals.

At its core, the Integrated Resource Team is a microcosm of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It is a customer-centered partnership between a jobseeker with barriers to employment and the diverse Workforce and service systems. Its goal is to coordinate services and leverage funding to give the individual comprehensive, wrap-around services tailored to their unique needs and employment goals.

Now more than ever, workforce system customers experience multiple and complex resource needs. This can often result in a "hands-off" approach in which those most in need actually receive the least assistance as they may be handed off from partner to partner without any true strategic approach to meet their employment and self-sufficiency goals. The IRT process improves coordination and communication between service and support providers within and outside of the overall system support by WIOA. This approach is effective in:

- Increasing access to intensive services for jobseekers
- Addressing multiple challenges to employment
- Improving employment outcomes

To supplement Iowa's renewed focus on effective integration, IRT's will be an essential approach to serve individuals receiving services from multiple programs by working together to support the participant in achieving their career goal and meeting shared programmatic metrics. IRT's reduce duplicative processes, provides consistency, and improve cross-provider partnering and communication, as well as empowering the jobseeker to create, lead and manage their team.

Iowa is a relatively rural state where job seekers do experience barriers, just as transportation, in accessing services do to geographic and economic factors. Virtual service delivery has been implemented as an extremely viable option for individuals to access services, however some Iowan's face challenges with internet availability and access to reliable broadband. With smaller budgets and ongoing staffing challenges, integration efforts and implementation of IRT's will strengthen relationships among partners and community organizations and ultimately provide more streamlined services and service provision and will inherently provide valuable cost savings to programs.

#### **D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers



to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the coordination and alignment of services to employers became quite disparate. In response, Iowa's Governor Reynolds approved the creation of a new Business Engagement Division of the state workforce agency. Reflecting efforts to streamline services to employers; the Business Engagement Division began on September 1, 2022, with the goal of assisting employers navigate Iowa's landscape of 132 workforce-related programs spanning 10+ agencies. The Business Engagement Division provides centralized oversight and training for staff of the Workforce system to provide coordinated and effective services to employers across the state.

The leadership of the Business Engagement Division is responsible for:

- Supervision and Administration of Business Engagement Consultants and the programs within Business Engagement Division.
- Providing data-informed training and value-added strategy to employers in-line with Iowa's high-demand and growth industries.
- Providing a central Point of Contact (POC) within IWD for local economic developers and employer-facing partnerships.
- Dedicated and ongoing collaboration with the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), Sector Partnerships, and Intermediary Networks.
- Strategy Development for State Apprenticeship Agency and Disability Engagement Bureau.

The majority of the Business Engagement Division is comprised of a team of workforce professionals known as Business Engagement Consultants (BECs) working throughout the state to proactively serve employers at the speed of business. Regionally located, the BECs provide guidance, resources, and responsive workforce solutions to meet the needs of Iowa's growing economy. This consultative approach to serving employers includes addressing their specific, regional, and statewide workforce needs in relation to economic trends, introducing and providing access to employers of untapped and underrepresented labor forces (veterans, persons with disabilities, new Iowans/Americans, individuals returning from the criminal justice systems, and others), and the connection of employers to additional training and resources including economic developers, nonprofits, community colleges, and contacts within other state agencies.

In calendar year 2023, this resulted in more than 5,000 engagements with Iowa employers and is nearing contact with 2,500 employers that did not previously have a relationship with the state Workforce system. Following the state of Iowa's realignment effective July 1, 2023; Adult Education and Literacy (Title II) and the Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) general agency were moved under the umbrella of the state workforce agency. This strategic process has created the pathway for more seamless partnering across the core systems and services such as the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I) programs, Wagner-Peyser (Title III), and the continued strengthening of the relationship with the Iowa Department of the Blind (Title IV). This is in addition to work with earn and learn and work-based learning models such as Registered



Apprenticeships, Sector Partnerships and Iowa's Intermediary Networks which connects students in the state with career exploration opportunities.

Efforts to reduce and eliminate duplication of employer engagement is supported on the both the local and state level with the establishment of Business Services Team which are aligned with the various AJC locations within the Local Workforce Development Areas and include representatives from the Titles of WIOA, as well as partners such as Local Workforce Development Boards, Community Based Organizations, and industry groups. Further, many (but not all) partners utilize a Customer Relationship Module or CRM known as IowaWORKS. This system is designed to support relationships between Workforce system staff and employers, centralize case management activities (case notes, services, contacts, reports, etc.) and has the capacity to create and send surveys and conduct outreach campaigns. The use of the CRM is also of value-add to employers as they are able to post and manage job orders, direct targeted and large-scale recruitment events and have real-time management of their accounts which allows for a responsive system that moves at the speed of business.

### **E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

Iowa's core, required, and other workforce system partners have strong partnerships with our education institutions. Historically, community colleges have been a strong partner in the workforce system in Iowa and have their own relationships with local economic development entities and businesses.

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has partnered with Iowa Department of Education (DOE) to streamline reporting for community college programs on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). To enact a less burdensome process, DOE provides IWD annual performance information on behalf of the community colleges. This makes for a more streamlined process to ensure high-quality in-demand industry training programs remain on the ETPL.

DOE and IWD have also partnered to launch a teacher and paraeducator registered apprenticeship. The program began during the 2022-2023 school year and provides opportunities for current high school students to earn a paraeducator certificate and associate degree and paraeducators to earn their bachelor's degree all while learning and working in the classroom.

Through the grant program, school districts are required to partner with local community colleges or four-year colleges/universities to provide the required education and training. The

DOE and IWD will provide up to \$40,500 over a three-year period for each high school student that completes the Paraeducator Certificate or Associate degree model. The DOE will provide up to \$47,000 over a two-year period for each paraeducator that completes the bachelor's degree model.

Funding supports:

- Tuition and fees up to \$7,000/year for up to three years at a community college.
- Tuition and fees up to \$17,000/ year for up to two years at a public or private four-year college/university.
- Hourly rate of \$12 for high school aides while still in school and 50% of wages that districts currently pay for aides and paraeducators for up to 30 hours per week for 36 weeks.

Iowa has recognized that integrating Title II as a fully integrated partner has historically been challenging. Most Title II partners are not co-located in the Iowa*WORKS* centers across the state, and standard operating procedures to provide direct program linkage could be improved. Iowa will be reviewing how Title II programming could become more holistically engaged and have increased participation within the Iowa*WORKS* centers. Improved access will assist with Iowa's strategy in ensuring integration across programs to provide customers seamless service provision.

## **F. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

The alignment of programs, to include ensuring that they are accessible and integrated will help to provide more collaborative services to Iowans. Meeting their needs and reducing the duplicative efforts that have been in place for far too long. Incorporation of all workforce system partners being at the table to provide effective services and meaningful opportunities for skill building, training and work-based learning will improve outcomes across systems.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are services offered through IVRS and IDB for students with disabilities. They provide an early start at career exploration services and assist with the exploration of post-secondary education and employment.

Portable and stackable credentials are essential to developing an ever-progressing workforce. Partly due to their open access admission policies, community colleges serve a heterogeneous population of students, from those in high school earning college credit through joint enrollment opportunities, to displaced workers seeking industry-recognized training to improve employment prospects. Iowa's community colleges are helping to build the state's talent pipeline by upskilling and recertifying the current workforce. The colleges accomplish this through a variety of program offerings, including arts and sciences college parallel (transfer) programs designed to transfer to four-year colleges and universities; career and technical education (CTE) programs to

prepare students for industry-specific careers; training and retraining programs for Iowa's businesses and industries; and a variety of adult education and noncredit courses.

The Chips and Science Act will allocate funds to Iowa's three public universities. This opportunity will promote additional research in the areas of product development and technology, while also placing a greater emphasis on STEM careers. Iowa Workforce Development will serve as a conduit for connecting Iowa's workforce to these training opportunities, leading to portable and stackable licenses and certifications.

Iowa also offers Gap and Pathways for Academic Careers and Employment (PACE) programming to students seeking credentials through non-credit opportunities aligned with in-demand occupations. These programs provide targeted populations with financial need, a direct pipeline to employment using employer-driven academic and skills training through community college non-credit academic, career and employment programs.

Community college pathway navigators have been the anchor to the success of the PACE and Gap program funding providing wrap-around family support funding, academic counseling along with career and employment services to ensure the academic and employment success for students as they navigate their career pathway. Working directly with local and regional employers has been key to moving these students forward in their academic and employment journey.

WIOA Title I funds help eligible Iowans access training. Approved training programs enhance skills for Iowans and help prepare them for successful career pathways. Iowans using WIOA funds can select from the list of approved programs on Iowa's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) are providers with approved programs of study that provide training services.

Under WIOA, participants who need training to enhance their skills and job readiness to advance along their career pathway may access approved programs of study through the state list of eligible training providers and programs (ETP list). In consultation with a career planner, participants can select from the list of ETP programs that meet their needs.

Eligible programs are one which leads to a credential, employment or measurable skill gain towards a credential. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) uses Chapter 7 Eligible Training Provider List Policies to make initial and continued eligibility determinations regarding programs included on the ETPL. Training programs may be approved for initial eligibility for one year. Then, continued eligibility may be granted every two years after that. Training providers wishing to remain on the ETPL must reapply for continued inclusion prior to the end of the eligibility period.

ETPL policies can be found at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>

## **G. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) has representation on Iowa's State Workforce Development Board in accordance with Iowa Code §84A.1A, ensuring coordination between economic development and workforce activities. Due to their seat on the board, IEDA was included in the development of the State Plan's vision and goals. IEDA's mission is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business, which directly ties in to the State Plan vision by ensuring we are providing an aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce.

IWD began administering three new programs in PY22 that provide customized training to Iowa business and industry. These programs were previously administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). The partnership between IEDA and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) made the transition of programs seamless.

- Industrial New Jobs Training Act – 260E: Assists businesses creating new positions with new employee training.
- Iowa Jobs Training Act – 260F: Provides job training services to current employees of eligible businesses.
- Accelerated Career Education Program Act – 260G (ACE): Assists Iowa's community colleges to either establish or expand programs that train individuals in the occupations most needed by Iowa businesses.

Another valuable piece to the partnership includes the sharing of labor market information (LMI). The LMI Division within IWD maintains a dynamic web site <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/labor-market-information-division> that provides data and information for individuals, workforce professionals, researchers, and economic development professionals and produces customizable query tools using Tableau. Reports are available by region and local area such as workforce analysis reports, including employment and industry/occupation projections that will enable workforce partners to plan and coordinate their efforts more effectively. The Iowa Sector Partnership Leadership Council will use the most relevant and up to date labor market information to expand and develop appropriate and employer driven sector partnerships in the region most in need.

Laborshed studies are supply-side, labor availability studies. They provide community leaders, economic developers, site selectors and existing or prospective employers a flexible tool for understanding the workforce characteristics of their local labor market. These studies are done on a two-year cycle and provide stakeholders, including IEDA, insight into the availability and characteristics of Iowa's local labor force which is not captured in other traditional LMI data. Laborshed Studies are jointly funded by IEDA and IWD, and IWD's LMI Division collaborates with local economic development officials to promote data collection, determine the most effective methods of delivering the resulting information, and presenting to local stakeholders.

In 2019, Governor Reynolds announced a new marketing campaign to encourage individuals from across the United States to visit, live and work in Iowa. The “This is Iowa” campaign was designed to increase economic growth by highlighting Iowa’s quality of life. Research commissioned by IDEA resulted in outcomes showing nearly two-thirds of individuals seriously consider moving to a new place after visiting. However, most people cannot relocate without having a job lined up, preferably in an industry with growth potential, and most do not associate Iowa with cutting-edge careers or quality of life attributes like recreational or cultural activities.

The campaign has continued to evolve with FY24 communication goals being:

- Increase awareness and consideration of Iowa’s benefits as a place to live and work
- Increase awareness and consideration within key industries of Iowa as an ideal place to start, relocate, or expand a business
- Help support and grow businesses across the state

Communication pillars include: affordability, low cost of living, work-life balance, qualified workforce, cutting-edge careers, award-winning education and thriving communities. The target audience of the campaign include both workforce recruitment and business attraction.

Workforce Recruitment:

- Gen Z and Millennials (A 22-29) looking to start and/or grow careers and experiences
- Millennials and Gen X (A 30-39) with young families looking for a place to raise their families
- Gen X and Boomers (A 40-55) who may recommend Iowa to younger generations to visit, live and work

Skillset Targeting:

- Engineering
- Healthcare
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Transportation and Logistics
- Information Technology
- Business and Management
- Trade/Skilled
- Entrepreneurs

Business Attraction:

- Business Decision Makers:
  - Business Development
  - CFO
  - COO
  - R&D

- Entrepreneurs
- Site Selection consultants

The skillset targeting occupations falls in line with Iowa’s LMI data related to in-demand industries, but also highlights a connection to occupations lined to the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD). The BEAD program is a federal grant program that aims to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed internet. The overshadowing concern is that by 2026 there will be large worker shortages in the occupations that support the program.

The BEAD occupation groups include:

- Equipment operators (including construction equipment, crane, and industrial equipment operators)
- Fiber and wireless technicians (including industrial aerial installers and repairers, radio and base station installers / fiber technicians, splicing and wireless technicians and foremen supervisors)
- Inspectors (including health and safety and permit inspectors)
- Laborers and material movers
- Master and stage electricians
- Network architects and coordinators
- RF & field engineers (including telecommunications hardware designers)
- Software Engineers
- Structural engineers (including civil and structural engineers, tower engineering technicians)
- Surveyors and drafters (including construction drafters, land surveyors and map makers, and surveying and map technicians)
- Trenchers
- Trucking Crew (including supervisors of crane and trucking crews)

With many of these occupations also being included in the “This is Iowa” communication plan skillset targeting, it is anticipated that individuals interested in relocating to Iowa who may have these skillsets, or would be willing to obtain them, will have jobs readily available to them.

Additionally, workforce and economic development goals and strategies at the state and local levels align with many of the strategies and objectives of Iowa’s Digital Equity Plan. Increased technology access and usage will allow more students and job seekers to participate in education and upskilling programs to earn post-secondary credentials, supporting efforts to reach these learning and workforce goals and create a more skilled Iowa workforce.

## **b. State Operating Systems and Policies**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in **Section II Strategic Elements**. This includes—



## **1. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (for example labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.).**

Iowa's Labor Market Information Division, housed at Iowa Workforce Development, provides extensive information on labor force data, statistics, and research on Iowa's labor pool and economy. Information and data are easily accessible to workforce programs, researchers, economic development entities, and the general public at <https://workforce.iowa.gov/labor-market-information>. A few of the many resources available are labor market indicator information, occupation employment and wage trends, labor supply and availability studies, and industry and employer trends. The data is easily able to be viewed statewide or per local workforce development area. As the main source of information regarding the labor force in Iowa, the LMI Division is an invaluable resource for the State and local areas to identify trends and areas of focus for implementation of workforce strategies.

Iowa's data management system, [iowaworks.gov](http://iowaworks.gov), facilitates integrated case management for:

- WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- WIOA Title III: Wagner-Peyser Employment Service
- Dislocated Worker Grants
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA)
- PROMISE JOBS (Iowa's TANF Program)
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Foreign Labor Certification
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

As Iowa continues assessing best practices in streamlining services, evaluation of how other programs can be integrated into the system will occur for improved customer access. Modernization efforts of Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Benefits System is currently being implemented to improve customer service, eliminate labor-intensive processes, allow real time data sharing, improve security, increase data accuracy, and improve maintenance and support; the new system will go-live in June 2024.

IowaWORKS is also the State's labor exchange system and Iowa's largest job bank. Job seekers have the have virtual access to enter work registrations, resumes, and explore careers from their homes, or by visiting an AJC. Similarly, employers can easily enter job order information virtually at their own convenience. Iowa has added the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module which offers Employer Outreach Specialists, Business Services Representatives (BSRs), and other workforce system staff a full range of tools and resources to actively manage employer recruitment efforts.

The State of Iowa is working to implement Single Sign On (SSO)/OKTA. This initiative will simplify login processes to state resources for internal and external users by allowing all users to utilize one login to access state resources, including IowaWORKS. This change will impact staff, individuals (job seekers and claimants), employers, providers, and out-of-state entities (WOTC). Implementation of SSO will increase secure access to IowaWORKS and other state resources.

**2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (for example., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.**

Iowa's co-enrollment procedure includes Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Ticket to Work, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW), Returning Citizens, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Registered Apprenticeship (RA).

The procedure includes 100% co-enrollment between Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Dislocated Workers who are Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) certified and co-enrollment with other programs when it is beneficial to the customer. The use of Integrated Resource Teams is encouraged to maximize the benefits of co-enrollment without placing a burden on the customer while ensuring all programs have met their individual program policy requirements.

The Core Partner Working Group will conduct research on if policy is needed related to co-enrollment across programs in addition to the current procedure.

Across programs, emphasis is placed on working, and supporting, individuals through their career pathway and goals. The time in which a customer may actively participate in a program differs based upon many factors. However, under common exit, the participant must complete services from all programs in which they are co-enrolled in order to exit from the system. In Iowa, common exit applies to participants who are co-enrolled in Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

The Core Partner Working group worked to develop guidance related to Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) throughout the majority of 2023, and published updated policy [1.4.10 Memorandum of Understanding](#) in September 2023 which incorporates IFA requirements. Additional guidance and a corresponding template were also developed by the group and provided to the local areas to assist them in effective implementation of IFA.

The IFA process and agreement is an important and necessary step in outlining the financial plan to fund the services and operating costs described in the MOU. The goal of the one-stop operating budget is to develop a funding mechanism that:

- Establishes and maintains the local workforce system and meets the needs of all customers
- Reduces duplication and maximizes program impact through Partner sharing of services and resources
- Reduces overhead costs for any one Partner by streamlining and sharing costs
- Ensures costs are appropriately shared by Partners by determining contributions based on proportionate use and relative benefit received

Iowa's 6 local workforce development areas are required to have their MOU/IFAs negotiated and executed prior to July 1, 2024, to coincide with program year 2024 funds.

### **3. State Program and State Board Overview**

#### **A. State Agency Organization**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

Pursuant to Senate File 514, signed into law on April 4, 2023, by Governor Kim Reynolds, the administration of the four WIOA Core Programs, Titles I, II, III, and IV, resides with the designated state workforce agency, Iowa Workforce Development.

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is led by Executive Director Beth Townsend, who has general oversight of all program areas within the Department. Director Townsend has two Deputy Directors, each of whom oversees separate functional areas of the Department.

Deputy Director Ryan West oversees the following Divisions of IWD:

**Unemployment Insurance Division** – The Unemployment Insurance Division collects unemployment insurance taxes, maintains the Iowa Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund and determines eligibility for unemployment insurance to make payments to eligible jobless Iowans. In addition, the Unemployment Insurance appeals unit has administrative law judges who hear and decide administrative appeals regarding unemployment insurance benefits. Four departments comprise the Unemployment Insurance Division: UI Benefits, UI Tax, UI Integrity and UI Appeals. Each bureau serves an important role in ensuring Iowa's unemployment insurance program is administered efficiently and with integrity.

**Labor Market Information Division** - The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division collects, analyzes and prepares a wide array of labor market data including the unemployment rate, employment levels, industry and occupational statistics, wages, projections, trends and other workforce characteristics for the State of Iowa as a whole as well as for other defined

geographic areas within the State. It is the mission of this division to produce and deliver information in a reliable and timely manner in order to inform data-driven decisions for business, career, educational programming and economic development.

Administrative Services Division - The Administrative Services Division provides a variety of services to keep the agency operating smoothly and to assist with the upkeep of the Iowa*WORKS* offices (AJCs). Duties of this division include: human resources, building and grounds management, printing services, accounting and financial reporting.

Disability Determination Services Division - Disability Determination Services Division is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs.

Deputy Director Jon Peppetti oversees the following Divisions of IWD:

American Job Centers (AJC) Division – In conjunction with local workforce partners and Local Workforce Development Boards and service providers, the AJC Division is responsible for the delivery of various state and federally funded employment and training services at the local level. The Iowa*WORKS* offices and affiliate sites provide a variety of services to meet the workforce and workplace needs of job seekers, dislocated workers, unemployed persons, and Iowa businesses through partnerships of state and local service providers. They provide career counseling, assessments, workshops, job training, and assistance to all populations with an emphasis on special needs populations. Iowa’s Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) services and Re-Entry programs, including Federal Bonding, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant are also administered from this Division.

Business Engagement Division – The Business Engagement Division was launched on September 1, 2022, to provide a “one-stop shop” for the businesses and employers of Iowa to receive individualized assistance and connection to the federal and state services available to them. The BE Division utilizes Business Engagement Consultants (BECs) to help businesses navigate the available resources by serving the company through the life cycle of the business, identifying the appropriate services to assist at each point of need. These BECs proactively serve businesses throughout the state, and in conjunction with the Local Workforce Boards, working at the speed of business to provide guidance, resources, and responsive workforce solutions that meet the needs of Iowa’s growing economy.

Workforce Services Division – The Workforce Services Division (WFS) is responsible for the administration of the following employment and training programs:

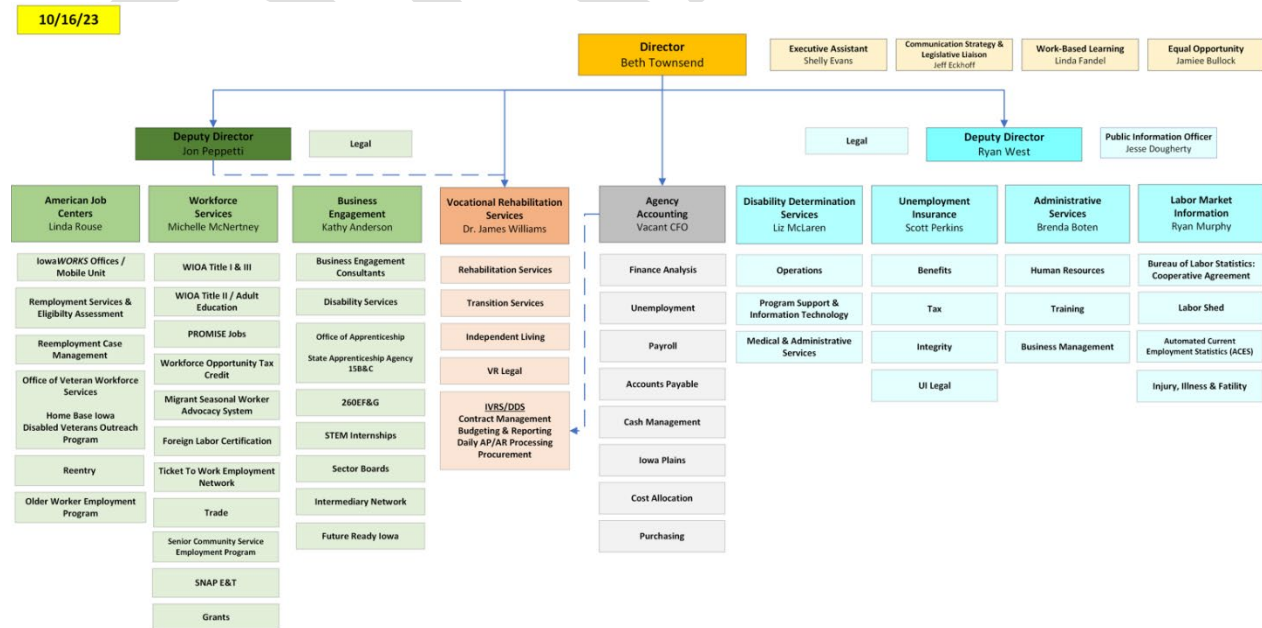
- WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Advocacy System
- Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- PROMISE JOBS (Iowa’s TANF Employment & Training program)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Intermediary Network

Administration of these grants and programs includes establishing state policy and procedures for all programs, providing training and technical assistance to all stakeholders for the programs, and conducting monitoring and oversight off all grants/programs. The WFS division acts as the liaison between the state and our federal and local partners and completes and issues all required state and federal reporting for the above grants.

Division Administrator Dr. James Williams oversees the following Division of IWD:

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division (also known as IVRS) – IVRS provides expert, individualized services to eligible Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support. The division has 13 area offices and 32 service units across the state, with most locations being co-located in the One-Stop Centers across Iowa. The vocational rehabilitation program in Iowa is funded with 78.7% federal funds and 21.3% state funds. The division is responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to potentially eligible and eligible individuals in order to prepare for, obtain, maintain and/or advance in employment. The Division Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the statewide program, including the program scope, budget and policies as well as promoting public interest and acceptance. Under the umbrella of the Division Administrator is the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).





## Iowa Department for the Blind

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities an individual who is blind, DeafBlind or has low vision can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB provides employment services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. Its library features one of the world's most comprehensive collections of reading materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille and digital audio). The Department continues to utilize innovative methods and technology to provide quality services to eligible individuals. The administrative rules define the specific standards, criteria and guidelines that govern the Department's operations. The administrative rules are based on the legislation defined in the Iowa Code. The rules are created through a process of confirmation by the Department, the public and legislative rules committees.

Iowa Department for the Blind Organizational Chart is attached at Appendix 2.

### **B. State Board**

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

Please see section III.a.1. State Board Functions above to see the committees that support the SWDB. The SWDB also holds a strategic planning event biennially, with the next planned session set to occur in 2025. The two-year strategic plan of the SWDB sets a vision, mission, and goals for the SWDB to ensure Iowa develops and maintains a robust workforce.

### Iowa State Workforce Development Board Membership Roster

#### Voting Members

- Kim Reynolds, State of Iowa, Governor
- Dawn Driscoll, State of Iowa, Senator appointed by President of the Senate
- Dave Deyoe, State of Iowa, Representative appointed by the Speaker of the House
- Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development, Executive Director
- McKenzie Snow, Iowa Department of Education, Executive Director
- Emily Wharton, Iowa Department for the Blind, Director
- James Williams, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division, Division Administrator
- Jay Iverson, Home Builders Association of Iowa, Executive Officer (Business)



- Alicia Stafford, Wellman Dynamics, Director of Human Resources (Business)
- Scott Naumann, Point Builders, LLC, Director of Business Development (Business)
- Daren Westercamp, Ag Leader Technology, Human Resource Manager (Business)
- John (Jack) Hasken, Jackson Manufacturing, Inc., President/CEO (Business)
- LuAnn Scholbrock, Coloff Digital, Vice President (Business)
- Teresa Hovell, Vermeer, Benefits Manager (Business)
- Kellie Gottner, Connectify HR, LLC, Chief Human Resources/Client Experience Officer (Business)
- Jessica Dunker, Iowa Restaurant Association, President and CEO (Business)
- Mary Landhuis, Lisle Corporation, President (Business)
- Brad Elliott, Podium Ink, Owner (Business)
- Ofelia Rumbo, Merrill Manufacturing, Human Resources Director (Business)
- Alexander Severn, Capitol Data Analytics, Business Data Strategist (Business)
- Deb Mauricio, Smithfield Foods, Regional Human Resources Director (Business)
- Kelly Barrick, CIBC Bank USA, Managing Director (Business)
- Matthew Nicol, HNI Corporation, Senior Talent Acquisition Manager (Business)
- Nick Glew, Community Savings Bank, Vice President of Lending (Business)
- Carrie Duncan, International Association of Machinists Local 1010 (Labor)
- Charles Wishman, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO (Labor)
- Andy Roberts, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local #33 (Labor)
- Jason Shanks, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local #33 (Joint Labor-Management Apprenticeship program)
- VACANT, Labor Organization
- Jayson Henry, The Well, CEO (Community Based)
- Josh Cobbs, Employment Initiatives for Autism Speaks (Community Based)
- Tiffany O'Donnell, City of Cedar Rapids, Mayor (Local Elected Official – City)
- Nancy McDowell, O'Brien County Board of Supervisors (Local Elected Official – County)

#### Nonvoting, Ex Officio Members

- William Dotzler, State of Iowa, Senator (Minority Leader Appointee)
- Jeff Cooling, State of Iowa, Representative (Minority Leader Appointee)
- Drew Conrad, University of Northern Iowa (Board of Regents Designee)
- John Smith, Drake University (Association of Independent Colleges Appointee)
- Kristie Fischer, Kirkwood Community College (Iowa Association of Community College Trustee Designee)
- Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Executive Director
- Linda Miller, Iowa Department on Aging, Director
- Beth Skinner, Iowa Department of Corrections, Executive Director
- Kelly Garcia, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Executive Director
- Scott Thompson, AFSCME (Largest Statewide Labor Organization for State Employees)

- VACANT – Labor Organization, Construction Industry
- VACANT – Labor Organization, Manufacturing Industry

## **4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

### **A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs**

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

For WIOA performance accountability measures, each Core Program has a monitoring and corrective action process at the state level that assures identified deficiencies are addressed. These processes are based on annual monitoring and ongoing data analysis and integrity efforts to review data and local planning goals. If a local area shows deficiencies in their annual performance outcomes, the State will provide technical assistance to address the deficiency. If the annual targets are not met for two consecutive years, the State will require the local area to complete a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the deficiency. The local area must provide regular progress updates to the applicable state partner.

Additional steps have been taken to work towards more combined and comprehensive annual monitoring. Beginning in program year 2023, monitoring of WIOA Title I programs started to include both programmatic and fiscal monitoring to ensure Title I monitoring is comprehensive and that all pieces of monitoring are connected to obtain the whole picture of the local workforce development area's operations.

A programmatic and fiscal file review occurs using a random sample methodology and a File Review Checklist Tool. Each LWDB that submits a Title I drawdown request is sampled based on established sampling criteria or are automatically reviewed based on the threshold criteria. In completing the review, IWD Financial Management checks for reasonableness and accuracy of the drawdown request. Financial Management ensures the LWDB completes the drawdown request properly through the financial management system and that appropriate signatures or approvals are provided. If there are expenditures related to participants, Financial Management notifies the Title I monitoring team to review for participant eligibility and appropriateness of the expenditure. Both teams meet quarterly to review the cumulative financial information for WIOA Title I funds as reported on the ETA 9130 Report prior to submitting the report to the USDOL. IWD analyzes the financial data to measure successful outcomes for participants, ensure sound service delivery and reporting practices, and determine whether federal funds are achieving maximum benefits.

The State Workforce Development Board has appointed a Systems Committee to provide information and assist with operational and other issues related to the workforce system in Iowa. The committee has identified five priorities to focus on, with the first being performance data. Based on committee feedback, a tableau dashboard located at <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/iowalmi/viz/WIOAPerformanceOutcomes/WIOAPerformanceOutcomes> was created to visually show WIOA performance outcomes for the State of Iowa and the local workforce development areas.

Key data points include:

- Performance Measures (negotiated vs. actual)
  - Employment Rate – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit
  - Employment Rate – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit
  - Median Earnings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit
  - Credential Attainment
  - Measurable Skills Gains
- Investment vs. Return on Investment
  - Participant and Expenditure Date
- Unemployment rate by local workforce development area

Data currently includes WIOA Title I programs and WIOA Title III. It can be filtered by program year and either quarterly or annual assessment outcomes. Iowa will explore including the other core programs in this dashboard throughout this state plan period. An additional state performance improvement strategy is to reestablish a Performance and Reporting Work Group to include representation from all core programs. Initial data that has been identified as to further explore is co-enrollment across core programs and analyzing trends related to barriers being addressed through programming.

**B. Previous Assessment Results**

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Iowa uses the results of WIOA section 116 Primary Indicators of Performance outcomes data to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in serving Iowans. These results are shared with the SWDB via the Workforce Systems Committee and are available publicly on the following dashboard: [Iowa WIOA Performance Outcomes](#)

The two most recent years of available data are Program Year 2021 and 2022. The charts below summarize the performance outcomes for each of the core programs.

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
<b>Title I - Adult</b>				
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	73%	80.3%	72.5%	78.3%

Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	70%	75.4%	66%	79.3%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$5,400	\$6,717	\$6,100	\$7,077
Measurable Skill Gains	44%	54.8%	44%	73.3%
Credential Attainment	67%	72%	65%	75.3%

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
<b>Title I – Dislocated Worker</b>	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	85%	82.6%	81%	84%
Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	83%	86.1%	81.5%	81.7%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$8,400	\$9,369	\$8,900	\$11,074
Measurable Skill Gains	31%	56.4%	44%	77.6%
Credential Attainment	68%	73%	69%	81.6%

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
<b>Title I - Youth</b>	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	73%	76.6%	73%	75.7%
Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	72%	78.1%	73%	75.1%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$3,600	\$4,389	\$3,700	\$3,849
Measurable Skill Gains	41%	43.9%	41%	51.5%
Credential Attainment	59%	60.5%	56%	58.2%

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
<b>Title II – Adult Education and Literacy</b>	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	50%	52.29%	51%	55.48%
Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	44%	54.52%	45%	57.46%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$5,700	\$6,069	\$6,400	\$7,318
Measurable Skill Gains	baseline	48.84%	46%	47.71%
Credential Attainment	baseline	73.1%	48%	77.38%

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
<b>Title III – Wagner-Peyser</b>	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	73%	63.2%	60%	73.9%
Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	70%	64.1%	67%	68.9%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$6,100	\$7,568	\$6,600	\$8,926

	PY21	PY21	PY22	PY22
<b>Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome	Negotiated Rate	Actual Outcome
Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	baseline	59.3%	57%	59.6%
Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	baseline	55.5%	54.3%	58.3%
Median Earnings, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	baseline	\$4,509	\$4,256	\$4,541
Measurable Skill Gains	40.6%	43.8%	40%	51.8%
Credential Attainment	baseline	45.9%	60%	53.3%

With the exception of three performance outcomes in program year 2021 (a result of the pandemic on services and outcomes to be sure), Iowa met or exceeded all performance metrics for all core programs. Outcome data is continually reviewed to evaluate the state and local workforce area implementation of WIOA programs. Program and performance training, reports, and technical assistance delivered by the state to local programs are utilized as methods to assist in obtaining successful programmatic outcomes.

Additionally, the partners of the IowaWORKS centers use an automated surveying tool within the IowaWORKS data management system to measure customer satisfaction and analyze the effectiveness of services. The survey questions and process were developed collaboratively between state program staff and local one-stop operators to ensure consistency across local workforce development areas. The survey is sent twice a month based on pre-determined services recorded in the IowaWORKS system in the 15 days prior to the survey date. During program year 2022, 72,932 individuals were surveyed with 80% responding they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services and assistance received. Survey data is available to state and local partners in real time and is utilized locally to make decisions on service provision.

With the creation of the Business Engagement Division at Iowa Workforce Development in Spring 2022, a renewed focus on services to employers began. Beginning in program year 2024, a similar automated survey tool will be implemented for surveying business customers of the IowaWORKS system. The survey questions and process are currently under development by a team of state and local partners from across the core programs. Previously, the effectiveness of business customers of the system was measured using the Effectiveness in Serving Employers key performance measures established by WIOA. Iowa measured the Employer Penetration Rate and Repeat Business Customer Rate to measure effectiveness in serving employers during program year 2021 and 2022. The Employer Penetration rate increased from 4.2% in program year 2021 to 6.0% in program year 2022. The Repeat Business Customer Rate was 37.2% in program year 2021 down to 19.4% in program year 2022. The creation of the Business Engagement Division demonstrates how Iowa has adapted strategies based on assessment of services and will ensure the continued focus and improvement of services provided by the workforce system in Iowa.

Title IV is required to develop and monitor agency performance reports. The information in the report is intended to improve decision-making and increase accountability to Iowa stakeholders and citizens. The agency performance report provides update on progress towards strategic plan goals and information on performance on core functions within the agency.

Title IV programs also conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that is addressed within the specific VR portions of this plan.

## **B. Evaluation**

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

Research and strategic planning efforts took place throughout program year 2022 in relation to WIOA Title I Evaluation. Iowa has routinely engaged in bi-monthly Evaluation Meetings hosted by U.S.DOL, and participated in one-on-one technical assistance sessions, which early in the program year assisted Iowa in learning more about the requirements, expectations, and best practices of WIOA Title I Evaluation. As included in the State Plan, Iowa planned to engage in research and planning during PY22, with an intention of beginning evaluation in PY23.

Currently, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has an MOU in place with Iowa State University and Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) to assist with WIOA Title I Evaluation in accordance with 20 CFR § 682.220. The project will begin with a pilot and planning effort to evaluate Iowa's WIOA Title I programs between May 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. IWD's Workforce Services Division is responsible for overseeing this work and has dedicated \$41,023.00 of state set-aside funds to support the initial planning phase of this project.

The planning phase includes the following:

- A comprehensive inventory of existing administrative data systems that contain relevant information to inform study of Iowa's WIOA Title I program.
- Acquire WIOA datasets from IWD and conduct a rigorous quality exploration to inform future data collection and evaluation efforts. Secure datasets and existing data documentation, profiling dataset contents, exploring patterns within data, and developing preliminary codebooks to aid development of analytic/evaluation approaches.
- Development of an evaluation plan that includes scope of possible evaluation questions that can be addressed with IWD data and possibly with other I2D2 data holdings, datasets and elements necessary to address IWD priority questions, proposed analyses, evaluation timelines, and budget estimates for the work to address IWD's evaluation goals.

Additionally, Iowa applied for and was accepted to be a part of DOL ETA's 2023 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (PLC). The cohort group includes members from all WIOA core partners, required partners, and a regent university to include:

- Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Title III – Adult Education & Literacy



- Title III – Wagner-Peyser
- Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- TANF
- SNAP E&T
- Iowa State University – I2D2 (Iowa’s Integrated Data System for Decision Making)

State teams will be provided technical assistance from evaluation coaches as well as learn best practices from other states. The goal of the cohort is to bring teams together to collaborate and work on a specific evaluation project to support the development and implementation of evaluations.

## **5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs**

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### **A. Title I Programs**

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

#### **i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3).**

Following the Within State Allocations options detailed in WIOA section 128(b)(2) and C.F.R. 20 § 683.120(c)(1), Iowa will utilize the formula allocation method to distribute youth funds to the local areas. All funds not reserved by the Governor in WIOA section 128(a) will be allocated using the following federally prescribed formula:

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged youth in each local area compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each local area compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each local area compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

Additionally, no local area shall receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding fiscal years. Any amount needed to provide increased allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

During this state planning period, IWD plans to convene a group of stakeholders to include local Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Development Boards, IWDs Labor Market Information Division, and IWD’s Financial Management Division to research and evaluate the effectiveness of the current formula and consider if it should be updated.

#### **ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3).**

Following the Within State Allocations options detailed in WIOA section 133(b)(2) and C.F.R. 20 § 683.120(d)(1), Iowa will utilize the formula allocation method to distribute adult funds to the local areas. All funds not reserved by the Governor in WIOA section 133(a) will be allocated using the following federally prescribed formula:

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged adults in each local area compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each local area compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each local area compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

Additionally, no local area shall receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding fiscal years. Any amount needed to provide increased allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

During this state planning period, IWD plans to convene a group of stakeholders to include local Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Development Boards, IWDs Labor Market Information Division, and IWD's Financial Management Division to research and evaluate the effectiveness of the current formula and consider if it should be updated.

**iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.**

After allowing for Governor's reserve funds per WIOA section 133(a)(1) and (a)(2), state dislocated worker funds will be allocated using the following six factors and giving equal weight to each factor:

**Insured Unemployment Data:** For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who were receiving unemployment insurance.

**Unemployment Concentrations Data:** Based on the most recent calendar year, local areas with unemployment rates above the state average.

**Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data:** The number of employees during the most recent calendar year that were impacted by a mass layoff or plant closing.

**Declining Industries Data:** During the most recent 24-months, the total number of jobs lost in the most recent four quarters as compared to the previous four quarters.

**Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data:** During the most recent calendar year, the number of farmers/ranchers who have delinquent loans as reported by U. S. Department of Agriculture.

**Long-Term Unemployment Data:** For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who meet the definition of long-term unemployed. An individual is considered to be long-term unemployed if he/she was out of work for 15 weeks out of a continuous 26-week period of time.

For the dislocated worker allocation process, equal application of all six factors of the formula ensures that all possible economic and workforce elements that exist in each local area impact the allocation process. In this manner, factors that might favor or disadvantage certain areas are equally applied.

The federal statute also requires that a minimum funding provision be applied to the WIOA Dislocated Worker funding stream. A local area must not receive an allocation percentage for a program year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding program years. This minimum funding provision will also apply after any local area redesignation in Iowa. Iowa will calculate the amount of funding for each new local area by applying the funding allocation amounts from the previous two program years to the new local areas to ensure the minimum funding provision is met. Any amount needed to provide increased allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

During this state planning period, IWD plans to convene a group of stakeholders to include local Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Development Boards, IWDs Labor Market Information Division, and IWD's Financial Management Division to research and evaluate the effectiveness of the current formula and consider if it should be updated.

## **B. Title II Program**

### **i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.**

All organizations who meet the definition of "Eligible Provider" as provided in WIOA Title II—AEFLA Federal Requirements and described below are invited to submit bids. Interested Applicants shall complete an Eligible Provider Form and submit it with the proposal. The Department will review all proposals to determine eligibility as defined by the requirements below. Applicants determined to be ineligible because they did not meet the eligible provider requirements will not be considered for funding. Applicants will be notified in writing that they are ineligible and will have appeal rights as outlined in PART V, F. Refer to PART V, A for the eligibility review process.

- Applicants may apply if they meet the definition of eligible provider. An "eligible provider" means an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in two consecutive years (*state requirement*) in providing adult education and literacy activities and may include (WIOA §203(5)):
  - a local educational agency;
  - a community-based organization or faith-based organization;
  - a volunteer literacy organization;
  - an institution of higher education;
  - a public or private nonprofit agency;

- a library;
  - a public housing authority;
  - a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (g) and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
  - a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (h);
  - a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (i); and
  - any other organization type, even if not specifically listed above, to apply if they meet the demonstrated effectiveness requirement (34 CFR 463 Preamble).
- Applicants are eligible to submit bids if they have provided services to eligible individuals in the past two consecutive years (*state requirement*) in any of the areas outlined below.

An eligible provider must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on its record in improving the skills of eligible individuals, in particular, individuals who are basic skills deficient in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training (34 CFR 463.24). Eligible Providers can demonstrate past effectiveness in two ways:

1. An eligible provider that has been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide two consecutive years (*state requirement*) of performance data to demonstrate past effectiveness in the areas listed above.
2. An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide two consecutive years (*state requirement*) of performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in the WIOA Title II AEFLA Federal Requirements. (See WIOA Final Rules Subpart C, §463.24 and 29 U.S.C 3272(5)).

Effective July 1, 2023, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the State's Eligible Agency (SEA) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. The Department is responsible for administering the funds and providing program and performance oversight to grantees. AEL eligible providers competed and were awarded funds July 1, 2020, for a multi-year award and local providers will be funded for 5 years. Funding during this grant cycle will be based on their ability to meet demonstrated effectiveness and fulfillment of grant expectations which is measured annually through a status update, financial reports, program performance reports and monitoring. During the program year 2020, the Department extended the due date for the grants due to the impact of the pandemic. Between May 1 and the announcement of awardees, all grant applications from eligible providers were reviewed based on the considerations specified in Sec. 231 (e) of WIOA. with additional state priorities, standards, and context. All eligible providers that can demonstrate effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals were considered.

Grant applicants were required to describe their activities planned to support the adult education and literacy in their proposed service delivery area as well as their local workforce development area, using the previously submitted local plans which did not reflect the newly approved reduction in areas. However, applicants were asked to discuss (1) outreach efforts for attracting participants with low literacy skills to the program; (2) program design accommodations particularly focused on the needs of participants (i.e., child care, class times and locations, curriculum content, and materials); and (3) linkages established with education, workforce and community partners to facilitate the integration of services for participants. The Department has continued to consider an equitable and inclusive approach for services. These efforts have included reaching out to community, faith-based and local education agencies to share information and discuss potential partnerships or collaborations in addressing literacy and basic skill needs.

The grant application has been aligned with and awarded providers in alignment with subpart C for both sections 225 activities and 243 funds and will be monitored based on compliance and the following principles of Iowa's AEL Program Standards associated with high quality and continuous program improvement.

**ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.**

IWD will use internal processes to ensure that there is direct and equitable access to the grant funds. All currently funded providers and all other identified eligible agencies receive a grant or contract application notification by email. This includes all known community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, literacy councils, public housing authorities, and any other provider that is eligible pursuant to Section 203(5). An announcement is posted on the Iowa Grants website at <https://www.iowagrants.gov/> and a press release will be issued to further reach potential interested parties. In addition, IWD provides application information at conferences, workshops, and other activities attended by potential providers. IWD requires all eligible providers for Sections 225, 231 and 243 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. Statewide leadership activities are provided through contracted service providers in compliance with state contracting requirements. IWD ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts IWD with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. IWD believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access.

**C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

Federal VR basic support state grant in Iowa is divided between Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the ratio of 19 percent to 81 percent. This is a historical agreement and has been in place in excess of 40 years. The total allocation of basic support dollars to the State of Iowa are granted by RSA to the two state agencies in the ratio of 19 percent to Iowa Department for the Blind and 81 percent to IVRS.

## **6. Program Data**

### **A. Data Alignment and Integration**

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date. Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

#### **i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.**

Iowa's core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place that provide the ability for partners to request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data for performance reporting. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs.

The IowaWORKS data management system houses comprehensive modules for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, TAA, WOTC, SNAP E&T, PROMISE JOBS, and Wagner Peyster, including JVSG and RA services.

IowaWORKS incorporates a common intake system which:

1. Determines program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;
2. Assigns a unique identifier to each program participant that is used across programs;
3. Gathers required reporting elements common across all partners;
4. Creates a common portal by which customers may access services;
5. Allows participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes; and
6. Creates a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.



Iowa is currently exploring ways to integrate Titles II and IV into the system and/or pursue the development of interface system(s) that integrate data via API tools when applicable. Currently, information is batched into the system and shared with Titles that do not have mainframe access. All core partners utilize a single reporting system for the Employer Services tracking functionality. This allows partners to report Effectiveness in Serving Employer measures jointly. As Iowa continues to develop and refine data management systems, the exchange of information and common data elements will improve and expand.

**ii. Describe the State’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.**

Those core partners not currently accessing the IowaWORKS data management system are currently maintaining existing legacy data systems due to the complexity of the reporting needs and the need to conduct analysis, evaluate data, and engage service providers. Each system has the capability to mark and track co-enrolled participants and is able to provide all of the WIOA required reports in Section 116.

While a common intake through a single data management system isn’t being utilized across all core partners currently, all Titles are collecting and reporting based on the WIOA required PIRL data elements through their respective systems. This process lends itself toward co-enrollment and referrals to core partner programs and/or outside community agencies. While current field practices have included secure tracking sheets and frequent core partner meetings to track service delivery among shared co-enrolled participants, best practices are still being reviewed by the state. The realignment bill has provided an opportunity to explore additional ways to move towards a common data management system leading to a streamlined intake and service delivery and an easier method to track participation across all programs.

**iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.**

The development and implementation of WIOA and the one-stop delivery system is facilitated by the State Workforce Development Board. Standing committees and workgroups continue to provide additional resources in many capacities including process improvement and recommendation to continue to move WIOA forward on behalf of the State WDB.

State standing committees provide direction, guidance, and technical assistance to local standing committees in order to meet the goals of the state system as a whole. Improved data collection ensures streamlined processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement to help improve decision-making. Iowa’s WIOA compliant data management system, IowaWORKS, was implemented in June 2019 to include a common intake and reporting system among core and relevant agencies. For partners who are not

currently utilizing IowaWORKS for case management, additional processes and procedures must be in place to facilitate partnership and data collection.

The WIOA core programs are an integral part of service delivery in the Iowa*WORKS* centers and Iowa's workforce system overall. Referrals to partner programs who may not participate in the IowaWORKS case management system, are tracked at the local level between career planners and respective partner staff. Referrals among all core programs include a "warm hand-off," which entails the career planner introducing the customer to the other program's case manager, and follow-up regarding the partner services provided. If a customer is co-enrolled, ongoing collaboration between program case managers occurs. Currently, the referral is tracked in the Title II data system, TopsEnterprise, as well as IowaWORKS and the Title IV case management systems, IRSS and eFORCE, by recording a participant-level service code. This tracking allows for internal reporting to enhance case management and for required performance reporting.

Iowa is dedicated to developing a plan towards greater data alignment and integration. With the alignment of programs of core programs within IWD, with the exception of Title IV – Blind, greater emphasis will be placed on researching and implementation of Title II and Title IV into IowaWORKS. Data sharing and data integration efforts make the most sense where there is a commonality of interest, need, or purpose and a set of shared goals. Any efforts to develop data-sharing agreements or, where appropriate, move towards data- integration will proceed on the basis of value-added partnership such that all partners gain something from the partnership.

The WIOA core programs are an integral part of service delivery in the Iowa*WORKS* centers and Iowa's workforce system overall. Referrals to partner programs who may not participate in the IowaWORKS case management system, are tracked at the local level between career planners and respective partner staff. Referrals among all core programs include a "warm hand-off," which entails the career planner introducing the customer to the other program's case manager, and follow-up regarding the partner services provided. If a customer is co-enrolled, ongoing collaboration between program case managers occurs. Additionally, the referral is tracked in the Title II data system, TopsEnterprise, as well as IowaWORKS and the Title IV case management systems, IRSS and eFORCE, by recording a participant-level service code. This tracking allows for internal reporting to enhance case management and for required performance reporting.

**iv. Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

The four core partner programs currently collect all data necessary to develop and produce performance accountability reports required under Section 116(d)(2). Each partner submits quarterly and annual reports to the Departments of Labor and Education respectively to meet federal reporting requirements. These reports are reviewed with state and local program administrators to ensure Iowa continues to meet and exceed negotiated performance levels. Predictive Reports in the IowaWORKS case management system is an important tool to assist state staff to identify service gaps and areas for technical assistance.

With the inception of WIOA, Iowa created a performance and reporting workgroup consisting of performance representatives from across core programs. Unfortunately, after a period of time, the group's efforts were paused. However, there is a renewed emphasis in this area and Iowa will be resurrecting this group to plan and outline data procedures across programs. It will be highly important to identify how independent program data can be collectively gathered, analyzed and reported to the State Workforce Development Board.

Iowa has piloted the Department of Labor's Quarterly Results Analysis (QRA) for the past several years. The QRA addresses data expectations where logical validation cannot be applied and graphically places state results in context. Iowa is piloting the QRA for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs. Iowa receives results quarterly from DOL and responds to identified issues, as applicable. This exercise has greatly impacted Iowa's data integrity efforts across several measures. Although this is currently a voluntary pilot, it is expected this will soon become a requirement for all states.

### **B. Assessment of Participant's Post-Program Success**

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

The State assesses performance of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core programs using performance outcome data and further assesses the overall effectiveness of the workforce system on the basis of all workforce programs' collective ability to produce positive outcomes such as credential attainment, work-based learning enrollment/completion, and job placement.

Iowa will research ways in which assessment can include an evaluation of local programs investments in in-demand industry training and credentialing. Including this as an approach to assessment will help State leaders identify if local focus is being put on the core purpose of WIOA including facilitation of the attainment of marketable skills that ultimately will improve labor market outcomes of the individuals being served. Focus on labor market relevant skills attainment (as measured by the receipt of industry-valued credentials) is intended to reinforce the and increase the performance outcomes of local boards by requiring investments that actually develop the workforce skills of the individuals they serve. If local boards make training-related investments consistent with the needs of their local and regional labor markets, their performance numbers should benefit. The State work with local boards and other partners to determine the extent to which persons receiving training and education services aligned with regional industry needs are actually obtaining employment in occupations and sectors directly related to their programs of study.

### **C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data**

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market

information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Unemployment insurance wage record data has and will continue to be matched to assist program data collection for students, apprenticeships, training participants, and TANF participants for purposes of matching it to employment, wages, and industry. Individual contracts and data sharing agreements are established between Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and training providers. In return, IWD will provide an aggregate analysis of how their students fared economically after they left their program using wage records.

IWD has an internal-earnings transfer procedure, and contracts with other national agencies in order to use quarterly wage information to measure progress for state and local performance measures. Each quarter, earnings from Iowa employers are uploaded, and the state system performs the job match by way of Social Security Number matches. Iowa also has a contract with the state of Maryland's administration of the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) and with the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS), a data sharing tool jointly managed by the Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Labor (DOL) which provides earnings data for out-of- state individuals who participated in Iowa's workforce programs. These systems also provide information on individuals who, as a result of our services, obtain employment with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Postal Service, and federal jobs, in general. All earnings data is secured through multiple, fire-walled systems, and access is granted only to individuals with a legitimate business need. By participating in SWIS, Iowa has a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the workforce delivery programs, and is able to report more comprehensive outcomes against performance measures.

#### **D. Privacy Safeguards**

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Confidential information follows each organization's internal policies - no universal release is available at this time.

The usage of TopsEnterprise (TE®), the information management system of Iowa's adult education and literacy, is in line with FERPA regulations and monitored on an ongoing basis to assure alignment. Personally identifiable information at the individual record level is protected by having all staff sign a confidentiality agreement and, when appropriate for non-departmental agencies, release of information forms signed by customers are obtained in order to release UI data to that agency. In terms of outside agencies personally identifiable information is protected by aggregating individual records and standardized confidentiality screening. AEL public facing results are aggregated to protect the confidentiality of participants being measured. In addition, outcomes with fewer than 10 participants are suppressed for confidentiality purposes. AEL also requires each local program to sign an assurance as a part of the funding application indicating adherence to outlined GEPA requirements.

In regard to IowaWORKS, the vendor, Geographic Solutions, is subject to the security and privacy requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Administrative Simplification, and its regulations, in addition to state privacy security laws and regulations. Security commitments are standardized and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Security principles within the fundamental designs of Virtual OneStop application that are designed to permit system users to access the information they need based on their role in the system while restricting them from accessing information not needed for their role
- Use of encryption technologies to protect customer data both at rest and in transit

Iowa Workforce Development utilizes data sharing agreements with the schools, agencies and training providers. The entities permit us social security numbers through Globalscape, a secured FTP site provided by IT. The social security numbers are then matched to unemployment insurance records. IWD reports findings in aggregate and reports if we have three or more participants. If we don't have at least three that information is suppressed. This is done so that you can't identify any individual specifically.

## **7. Priority of Service for Veterans**

### **A. Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor.**

Iowa policy [8.3.3.3 Veterans Priority of Service](#) defines the requirements surrounding serving Veterans and eligible spouses.

Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program.

Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, priority of service may mean:

- The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person.
- If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.

Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) will develop and include in their local plans, policies, and procedures for implementing priority of service for the local American Job Center (AJC) and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers. Written copies of local priority of service policies are to be maintained at all service delivery points and, to the extent practicable, should be posted in a way that makes it possible for members of the general public to easily access them.



## Qualified Job Training Programs

Priority of service must be implemented in all programs and services for workforce preparation, development, or delivery that are directly funded, in whole or in part, by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), to include:

- Programs and services that use technology to assist individuals in accessing workforce development programs.
- Any such program or service under the public employment service system, the AJC, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), demonstrations or other temporary programs, and programs implemented by states or local service providers based on federal block grants.
- Any such program or service that is a workforce development program targeted to specific groups.

## Covered Persons

Priority of service must be applied uniformly across all local systems to veterans and eligible spouses as defined below:

- Veteran - A person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
  - Active service includes full-time service in the National Guard or a Reserve component
  - Active service does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (weekend or annual training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel who are mobilized by state rather than federal authorities
- Eligible Spouse - A spouse to any of the following:
  - Veteran who died of a service-connected disability
  - Member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
    - Missing in action
    - Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force
    - Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power
- Veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veteran who died while a disability was in existence

## Identifying and Informing Veterans and Eligible Spouses

Local WDBs must develop policies and procedures to ensure that veterans and eligible spouses are identified, or able to self-identify, at the point of entry and informed of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service



- The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service
- Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services

Point of entry includes reception through an AJC, the application process for a specific program, or through any other method by which covered persons may express an interest in receiving services, either in person or virtually.

### **Self-Service Tools**

Informational and service delivery websites developed with funding from a qualified job training program or grant must provide information on priority of service and how to access assistance from applicable programs or grants via the nearest AJC, beyond a mention of or referral to Local Veterans' Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists.

### **Verifying Status**

The processes for identifying covered persons are not required to verify the status of an individual at the point of entry unless they immediately undergo eligibility determination and enrollment in a program, or the applicable federal program rules require verification at that time. In these instances, the covered person should be enrolled, provided immediate priority, and given the opportunity to follow up with verification of status.

For programs that cannot rely on self-certification, verification only needs to occur at the point at which a decision is made to commit outside resources to one individual over another.

### **Applying Priority of Service**

Local WDBs will develop policies and procedures to ensure that priority of service is applied as outlined below:

- Universal Access Programs
  - For workforce programs that operate or deliver services to the public without targeting specific groups, covered persons must receive priority of service over all other program participants
- Programs with Eligibility Criteria
  - For workforce programs with specific eligibility criteria, covered persons must meet all statutory eligibility and program requirements for participation, and priority of service must be applied as follows:
    - Covered persons who meet the eligibility requirements must receive the highest priority of service
    - Non-covered persons who meet the eligibility requirements must receive second priority
- Programs with Eligibility Criteria and Statutory Priorities
  - For workforce programs with a federal mandate that requires a priority or preference for a particular group of individuals or requires spending a certain portion of program funds on a specific group, priority of service must be applied as follows:

- Covered persons who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirement or limitation must receive the highest priority
- Non-covered persons within the program’s mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation, must receive priority for the program or service over covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation
- Covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over non-covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation
- Programs with Eligibility Criteria and Discretionary Priorities
  - o For workforce programs that focus on a particular group or make efforts to provide a certain level of service to such a group, but do not mandate that the favored group be served before other eligible individuals, priority of service must be applied as follows:
    - Covered persons must receive the highest priority for the program or service
    - Non-covered persons within the discretionary targeting will receive priority over non-covered persons outside the discretionary targeting

**B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.**

To monitor and ensure Veterans are aware of all services, IowaWORKS operations managers run a monthly report that displays all registered individuals which allows them to identify Veterans that may have registered outside of the center. Non-JVSG Career Planners then contact those veterans, share information regarding programs and services, and invite them into the Center. Core partner programs refer customers to JVSG and DVOP services, and DVOP’s often refer customers to core partner programs, ensuring Veterans receive the services they need. Additional oversight occurs during annual monitoring through file reviews and on-site monitoring visits. File reviews provide an opportunity to review service delivery to Veterans and on-site visits allow for a review of the process in practice.

**C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.**

All IowaWORKS team members are trained on veteran services and resources to include understanding of Priority of Service. State policies across Department of Labor funded programs contain requirements for Veterans Priority of Service, which ensures veterans and their eligible spouses receive access to services before or instead of a non-covered person. Iowa’s Standard Operating Procedure is designed to identify veterans and eligible spouses at their first point of contact.

During Welcoming, a customer who self-discloses their veteran status during their IowaWORKS system registration, will be prompted to answer additional veteran-related questions regarding their service and potential barriers to employment. Non-JVSG Career Planners will refer any veteran who discloses one or more of the following barriers, and who expresses interest in receiving additional services from the Veteran Career Planner:

- a) Receiving service-connected disability benefits or have a disability claim pending with the VA;
- b) Discharged or released from the military because of a service-connected disability;
- c) Homeless, living in a shelter, at risk of losing your current living arrangements, is fleeing or attempting to flee a domestic violence situation or other dangerous or life-threatening condition (see VPL 03-14, Change 2);
- d) A Vietnam era veteran who served between Feb. 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, in the Republic of Vietnam or between Aug. 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, in all other cases;
- e) Released from active duty in the last three years and have been unemployed for 27 or more weeks;
- f) Incarcerated or have been released from incarceration;
- g) Without a high school diploma or equivalent certificate such as a GED/HSED;
- h) Aged 18-24;
- i) A member of the Armed Forces who is wounded, ill or injured and receiving treatment in a military treatment facility or warrior transition or the spouse or other family caregiver of such an Armed Forces member;
- j) Income in the last six months – excluding any military wages or disability benefits – less than 70 percent of lower living standard income levels.

All eligible veterans who self-attest to one or more of the significant barriers to employment (SBE) criteria will complete a Wagner-Peyser (WP) application before his/her appointment with a Veteran Career Planner. Non-JVSG Career Planners will enroll the veteran into Wagner-Peyser, set the JVSG Eligibility date, and refer the veteran to the Veteran Career Planner using service code 151 – Referred to DVOP. If available, the Veteran Career Planner will meet with the veteran on the same day that the veteran visits the office; however, if the Veteran Career Planner is not available, the veteran will be served by IowaWORKS team members and an appointment will be scheduled with the Veteran Career Planner as soon as possible. Any services provided by non-JVSG Career Planners will be documented in the IowaWORKS system. On rare occasions, Veteran Career Planners may also meet with an SBE veteran before the (WP) application is completed and can then assist the veteran with completing the application.

When customers register in IowaWORKS from outside the center and attest to having a SBE, a system-generated email is sent to the office email address and then passed along to the Veteran Career Planner so that they can reach out to the customer and offer services.

## **8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard

to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

In accordance with Federal regulations, Iowa has developed One-Stop Certification Standards in three areas, all of which are in alignment with Federal requirements and guidance:

1. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility
2. Effectiveness; and
3. Continuous Improvement.

The developed process sets standard expectations for a minimum level of quality and consistency of customer-focused services provided by partners in the Iowa workforce delivery system and through Iowa *WORKS* centers across the state. The certification standards in these three areas were developed by the core partners, in consultation with local partner representatives who participated in the development process. To ensure compliance and support, the WIOA core partners and local partner representatives also developed a certification process guide, recorded training, as well as related tools, to support the official launch of the process.

Three types of certification can be awarded from the One-Stop Center certification review team:

- Full Certification
- Provisional Certification
- Not Certified/ Decertified

A scoring approach was developed that allows each evaluation team member to individually determine if a standard has been met. The final determination for each category will be based on the number of standards successfully achieved. The evaluation team must reach a consensus on the category decision for determination of certification status. If the recommendation is provisional certification or not certified, the team must clearly describe the specific issues identified for corrective action.

A center that has received provisional certification must be re-evaluated within six months of the initial review. At the six-month review, a decision can be made to remain provisionally certified for no more than an additional six months or to fully certify or de-certify the center. The local area is encouraged to re-evaluate a provisionally certified center as soon as the issues identified by the review team have been resolved.

If a center is not certified or is de-certified, a three-month corrective action plan to either achieve provisional certification or to close/transition services to another center location must be submitted to the State Workforce Development Board. The center must then achieve full

certification within six months of being not certified/decertified. State core partners are available to consult on correction action and provide technical assistance throughout the process.

In addition to the process identified, local areas conduct accessibility and assistive technology assessments at the local level.

While all standards are critical, the core partner team has made a commitment to ensuring that all future hardware/software within Centers are accessible and are a specific focus of the partners.

Partner staff are cross-trained on Windmills Disability Awareness training to ensure staff understand the culture of disability in the workplace. Additionally, partner staff are offered ADA training where they can become certified ADA trainers.

## **9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners.**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

One-Stop certification standards set expectations for a minimum level of quality and consistency across three primary areas: physical and programmatic accessibility, effectiveness, and continuous improvement. Iowa's certification standards in these three areas were developed by the WIOA Titles II-V Core Partners, in consultation with local partner representatives who participated in the development process.

The Physical and Programmatic Accessibility standards align with the One-Stop certification requirements described at 20 CFR 678.800 (as well as 34 CFR 361.800 and 34 CFR 463.800) and in USDOL-ETA's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 16-16, "One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center Network." Per these requirements, certification standards related to physical and programmatic accessibility must include evaluations of how well the center ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in or benefit from center services. The Physical and Programmatic Accessibility certification standards also address center program, service, and resource accessibility for individuals whose first language is not English and individuals with lower literacy levels.

When a WARN is received, a question on the Employer Questionnaire includes if there are any language barriers of employees for which an interpreter would be needed. In these cases, or in cases where a business has a high population of employees who are non-English speaking, interpreters are secured and documents are translated to the applicable language(s). Many times, these Worker Information Meetings are recorded so they are easily accessible to other workers

who may need to receive the information in the necessary language. This includes the availability of Iowa*WORKS* services.

The American Job Center Division in reviewing creating a Standard Operating Procedure specific to serving English Language Learners in the Iowa*WORKS* centers, as well as any other applicable training or resources that may be needed.

#### **IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs**

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

The alignment of the core WIOA programs and most of the required program's administration into one agency has increased the coordination of the workforce system programs drastically. The Division Administrators of the American Job Center Division, Business Engagement Division, Vocational Rehabilitation Division, and the Workforce Services Division meet on a weekly basis to ensure program planning, design, and implementation is done as a group with the entire system in mind. This allows leadership to provide input and feedback from different perspectives and ensure decisions are made that will not negatively impact other programs or divisions. Additionally, senior leadership as well as program team members have developed strong working relationships with their peers across divisions and agencies, allowing for collaboration and consultation whenever necessary.

The WIOA Core Partner Working Group, a functional partnership comprised of representatives from the agencies overseeing key workforce programs, continues to govern and carry out many of the key tasks and requirements required by WIOA. The Working Group is charged with collaborating to carry out the vision and strategy established by the Governor and the State Workforce Development Board by developing joint policy and an integrated approach for monitoring, program oversight/support and technical assistance for local service design and delivery. The Group contains an appointed representative, authorized with decision making authority from each of the core partner programs.

The objectives of the WIOA Core Partner Working Group are:

- Ensure policy and guidance issued to the local system is aligned across agencies and programs and advances the objectives of WIOA and the priorities outlined in the State WIOA Plan;
- Develop integrated and collaborative approaches for cross program functions that support the local system including monitoring, performance measurement, resource braiding, and the provision of technical assistance; and
- Support implementation of customer-centered approaches designed to drive continuous improvement of the workforce system to meet the needs of Iowa businesses and individuals.



Post-alignment of state agency programs, the group will re-focus efforts and commitment to their objectives to ensure that all policies, to include program specific policies, are drafted with the input of all program representatives of the Core Partner Working Group. In 2024 a charter will be composed for the group to follow. Required partners will be included as needed and determined necessary.

Additionally, a WIOA Summit Planning Group has been formed with representatives from all core programs, and other Iowa *WORKS* system partners. Historically, program conferences and training has been siloed with the exception of some past integrated meetings/conferences between programs. Iowa is committed to bringing together programs for a WIOA Summit in 2024. Initial planning has only just begun, but the need for consistent training across Iowa's workforce development system is apparent. The audience will include, but it not limited to: front line staff, local workforce development board staff, and leadership.

## V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that —

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; **Yes**
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; **Yes**
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; **Yes**
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; **Yes**  
  
(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; **Yes**
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and

accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; **Yes**

6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); **Yes**
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; **Yes**
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; **Yes**
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; **Yes**
10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); **Yes**
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and **Yes**
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. **Yes**

## **VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs**

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

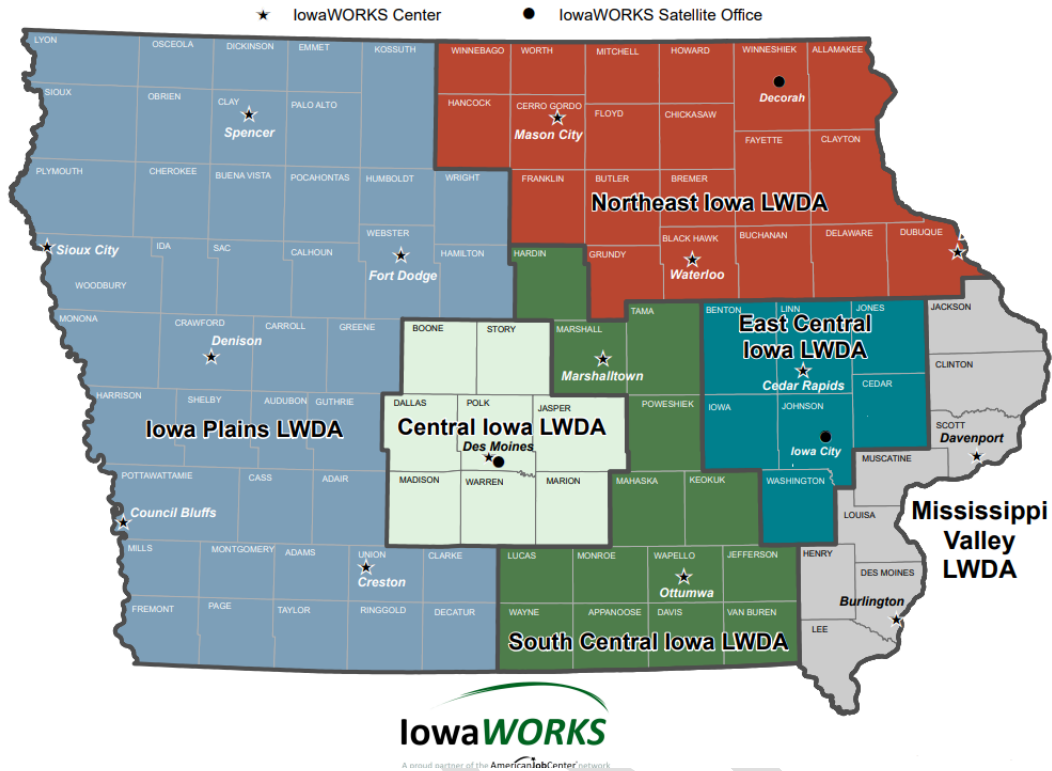
#### **a. General Requirements**

##### **1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas**

###### **A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.**

Effective July 1, 2023, Iowa transitioned from 9 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) to 6.

## Local Workforce Development Area Map



### Northeast Iowa LWDA

Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Buchanan, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Mitchell, Winneshiek, Worth, and Winnebago counties.

### Central Iowa LWDA

Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren counties.

### East Central Iowa LWDA

Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties.

### South Central Iowa LWDA

Appanoose, Davis, Hardin, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Marshall, Monroe, Poweshiek, Tama, Wapello, Van Buren and Wayne counties.

### Mississippi Valley LWDA

Clinton, Des Moines, Henry, Jackson, Lee, Louisa, Muscatine, and Scott counties.

### Iowa Plains LWDA

Adair, Adams, Audubon, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Cherokee, Clarke, Clay, Crawford, Decatur, Dickinson, Emmet, Fremont, Greene, Guthrie, Hamilton, Harrison,

Humboldt, Ida, Kossuth, Lyon, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, O'Brien, Osceola, Page, Palo Alto, Plymouth, Pocahontas, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Sac, Sioux, Shelby, Taylor, Union, Webster, Woodbury, and Wright counties.

**B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.**

Policy 1.1.1.2 outlines Iowa’s policy on designation of local areas and can be found on the ePolicy site: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/230>, also is included below.

The purpose of a Local Workforce Development Area, each with its own Local Workforce Development Board (WDB), is to serve as a jurisdiction for the administration of workforce development activities and execution of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I program funds allocated by the Governor through the State workforce agency (Iowa Workforce Development).

#### **Local Workforce Development Area Designation**

WIOA at 189(i)(1) states, “A State that has enacted, not later than December 31, 1997, a State law providing for the designation of service delivery areas for the delivery of workforce investment activities, may use such areas as local areas under this title, notwithstanding section 106.” As a result of this provision, the State of Iowa follows Iowa Code Section 84B.3 to designate Local Workforce Development Areas. This Code section allows that, after consultation with applicable Local WDBs and with the approval of the State WDB, IWD may designate Local Workforce Development Areas.

#### **Considerations**

IWD may designate or redesignate a Local Workforce Development Area in accordance with this policy, which includes consideration of the extent to which the proposed area:

- Is consistent with labor market areas in the State
- Is consistent with regional economic development areas in the State
- Has the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA subtitle B
- Is consistent with population centers
- Is consistent with commuting patterns that demonstrate movement of workers from their residences to their workplaces

#### **Process for Designating Local Workforce Development Areas**

IWD shall consult with Local WDBs and Chief Lead Elected Officials (CLEOs). This consultation must include the opportunity for Local WDBs and CLEOs to provide input regarding the proposed designation.

IWD will consider all information gathered during the Local WDB and CLEO consultation process and provide a recommendation for Local Workforce Development Area designation to

the State WDB. The State WDB will issue a decision on the designation of Local Workforce Development Areas.

### **Local Workforce Development Area Review**

IWD may review the designation of a Local Workforce Development Area at any time but must review all Local Workforce Development Area designations prior to submitting the Combined or Unified State Plan during each four-year state planning cycle. Reviews are performed to ensure the Local Workforce Development Area is meeting the requirements for redesignation as it relates to:

- Consistency with labor markets in the State
- Consistency with regional economic development areas in the State
- Whether the Local Workforce Development Area has the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA subtitle B
- Consistency with commuting patterns that demonstrate movement of workers from their residences to their workplaces
- Whether the Local Workforce Development Area, in the prior two program years, met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance or the common measures
- Whether the Local Workforce Development Area has the capacity to manage funds, provide oversight of programs, and provide for the proper stewardship of public funds
- Whether the Local Workforce Development Area met the local planning requirements outlined in the state and local plans
- Whether a Local Workforce Development Area in a planning region met the regional planning requirements outlined in both the state and regional plans

If IWD's review determines that a Local Workforce Development Area or areas does not meet the requirements for redesignation, IWD, following established processes for Local Workforce Development Area designation, will redesignate or realign Local Workforce Development Areas to ensure compliance with WIOA legislation and state policies.

Iowa's reduction from nine local workforce development areas to six effective July 1, 2023, was the result of four previous local workforce development areas, Northwest, North Central, Western, and Southwest Iowa LWDAs, choosing to refuse to receive WIOA Title I funds. In late fall 2022, IWD provided training to all local workforce development areas to further install fiscal procedures to ensure compliance with WIOA. In December 2022 a Chief Lead Elected Official (CLEO) from one of the local areas inquired as to what would happen if the Chief Elected Officials dissolved the shared liability agreement and refused WIOA Title I funds. IWD worked closely with the DOL ETA Region 5 and National offices to provide a response and technical assistance, which was provided on January 17, 2023. The guidance included the following details:

1. Any local area having discussions about refusal of funds should contact IWD to schedule a technical assistance call between the local area, IWD, and the DOL ETA Region 5 office.
2. All CEOs in the local area must agree and provide a written notice to the State, addressed to Director Townsend and signed by all CEOs and the Local Board Chair in the local

area, stating their intention to stop operating as a local workforce area and refuse WIOA Title I funding. By refusing the funds, the CEOs of the local area will no longer have fiscal liability for the WIOA funds.

3. This change would take effect July 1, 2023, for the Program Year 2023 WIOA Title I funds. At this time, IWD would work to ensure continuity of service for the constituents of the former local area.
4. Continuity of Service may include IWD working with other local areas to merge areas (Option A), or IWD would step in to ensure continuity of service (Option B)
  - a. Option A - in this option, the existing area CEOs and LWDB would absorb the counties that refused funds and create a new local area. In this new local area, the CEOs from the "old" local area that refused Title I funds would not have fiscal liability and the CEOs from the other local area would assume fiscal liability for all of the funds and ensure services to Iowans in the "old" local area. For example, if Local area A consists of 5 counties and they decide to refuse the funds and disband as a local area, those 5 counties can merge with Local Area B, which consists of 10 counties. In this scenario, the funding for both the old Local Area A and Local Area B would be given to the new 15 county local area, but only the 10 counties of the old Local Area B would agree to fiscal liability for all of the funds.
  - b. Option B - in this option, IWD would function as the local area, including seating a new LWDB and following all WIOA requirements for a local area.
  - c. In both Option A and B the CEOs of the local area that refused funds will have no fiscal liability but will also have no participation in the workforce system of the local area and will not provide input to how, where, when, etc. services are provided.

After issuing this guidance, holding technical assistance calls with the local areas, attending local board meetings, etc., IWD received notification from the Chief Elected Officials of four local areas of their intent to refuse WIOA Title I funds effective July 1, 2023.

Local Area	Date Refusal Received
Western	2/23/23
Southwest	3/31/23
Northwest	4/7/23
North Central	4/27/23

Following notification from each local area, IWD contacted the contiguous local areas of Northeast, Central, and South Central Iowa to determine if there was interest to absorb or combine with any of the dissolving local areas, as required by guidance from USDOL. None of those local areas were interested, therefore, IWD assumed responsibility for providing WIOA Title I program services in those areas to ensure continuity of services. At the June 2023 SWDB meeting, IWD asked the SWDB to merge the 42 counties of the four previous local areas into one local workforce development area to provide the most effective and cost-efficient way. This process included a local area consultation session on May 5, 2023, as well as a public comment period from May 8 – May 27, 2023, followed by a consultation session with the SWDB at the



June 2023 SWDB meeting. The SWDB voted unanimously to merge the former four areas into one LWDA, the Iowa Plains LWDA effective July 1, 2023.

**C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.**

Policy 1.1.1.2 outlines Iowa's policy on appealing a designation decision found on the ePolicy site: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/230>, and is included below.

**Appealing a Designation Decision**

A Local WDB chair or CLEO may appeal a designation decision to the State WDB within 30 calendar days of the date such designation is approved by the State WDB.

Appeals must include the following information:

- Intent or notice to appeal
- Name and contact information of the Local WDB chair or CLEO filing the appeal
- Provide justification for the appeal, including the reason the Local Workforce Development Area disagrees with the decision and a proposed alternative Local Workforce Development Area designation as outlined under the Local Workforce Development Area Designation section of this policy.
- Signature and date of the Local WDB chair or CLEO

The appeal must be submitted electronically to the State WDB at: [WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov).

The State WDB will review the appeal, provide the appellant with the opportunity for a hearing at the next regularly scheduled State WDB meeting, and make a ruling on the appeal within 30 calendar days of that meeting. The State WDB shall notify the Local WDB chair or CLEO in writing of its decision.

In accordance with the WIOA regulations, in the event the State WDB denies the appeal or fails to issue a decision within 30 calendar days following the State WDB meeting that considered the appeal, the Local WDB or CLEO may further appeal the State WDB's decision, or lack thereof, to the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The appeal must be filed within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the written notification of the State WDB's denial or failure to issue a decision.

The appellant must establish in its appeal to the USDOL that the appellant was not afforded procedural rights under the appeal process set forth in this policy, or that it meets the requirements for local designation provided under state Local Workforce Development Area Designation criteria.

The appeal must be submitted by certified mail, with return receipt requested, to: Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: ASET.

A copy of the appeal must be submitted to the State WDB at: [WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov) at the same time the appellant sends the appeal to USDOL.

**D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.**

Per state policy [1.4.10 Memorandum of Understanding](#), the appeals process is as follows:

Any Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) or One-Stop required partner may appeal for cause, within 10 business days, the Governor's determination regarding the portion of funds (or non-cash contributions) it is to provide for One-Stop infrastructure costs.

WIOA stipulates that the State mechanism allocation determination may be appealed only if the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA sec. 121(h)(2)(E). The Final Rule further limits admissible grounds for an appeal to three possibilities. The appellant must make a case that the State's determination is inconsistent with the:

- Proportionate-share requirements
- Cost-contribution limitations
- Cost-contribution caps

To be officially received, an appeal must fully contain and evidence the following:

- An introduction identifying the appellant and designating the correspondence letter as a formal appeal.
- Full citations from WIOA or the corresponding regulations that support the appeal.
- Identify the basis for the appeal.
- Signature and date of the appellant.

The appeal must be submitted electronically to: [WIOAgovernance@jwd.iowa.gov](mailto:WIOAgovernance@jwd.iowa.gov).

The state shall review the appeal and documentary evidence submitted by the board or one-stop partner for the grounds that the governor's determination was inconsistent with proportionate-share requirements, cost-contribution limitations, or cost-contribution caps. Additional information may be requested, or an investigation conducted if necessary. A written response/decision will be issued within 20 business days of the receipt of the appeal.

Appellants who do not receive a decision within 20 business days or who received an adverse decision may file an appeal with the State WDB. The appeal must be filed in writing within 10 business days after the adverse decision was received or if no decision is received. Upon receiving an appeal, the State WDB will review the appeal and issue a final decision within 20 business days after the appeal was filed.

## **2. Statewide Activities**

### **A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.**

Policy is maintained on a public [ePolicy](#) website that includes Iowa's WIOA related policies, both administrative and programmatic. To date, policy chapters include Administration and Governance which details out guidance and requirements for the administrative pieces of the

workforce development system in Iowa, Eligible Training Provider List, Title IB Programs, Title IB Programs Oversight and Monitoring, Registered Apprenticeship. With program alignment, Iowa will work towards maximizing the use of the ePolicy website by aligning WIOA policy and including additional partner policies.

Iowa also utilizes various Standard Operating Procedures to guide the provision of services under WIOA. Additional guidance is disseminated via field memos, desk aids, standard operating procedures, webinars, and technical assistance sessions.

The State of Iowa provides several sources of State funding to aid the workforce development system in the state. These funds are used in accordance with state law. If State funds are passed through to third parties, such as state funding for Intermediary Networks, IWD follows State procurement laws to ensure funding is utilized effectively and fairly.

**B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.**

Governor's set aside funding is available for a variety of activities. To prioritize projects a Special Projects Team has been assembled to identify areas of need or interest where a statewide project would be beneficial. They are also responsible for project planning and implementation. All special projects are reviewed and approved by the Governor.

Some ideas to date include enhancing partnerships between Title I and Registered Apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities for returning citizens, expanding incumbent worker training, enhanced OJT model for underserved populations, targeted outreach and engagement of homeless Iowans (specifically Veterans who are or are at risk of being homeless, additional assistance to local areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth.

Iowa has made progress in the area of incumbent worker training and has developed a project plan for expanding incumbent worker training across the state by helping to off-set a portion of skills-based training costs for incumbent workers employed by Iowa's private sector. Funding will be provided directly to Iowa businesses in in-demand industries through a competitive funding opportunity. Grant awards may vary in amounts as determined by the scope outlined in their application. IWD will seek to maximize grant awards to those programs which demonstrate the most significant programming and project responses, and for those whose projects indicate the possibility of the most significant community impacts.

In regard to evaluation, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has an MOU in place with Iowa State University and Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) to assist with WIOA Title I Evaluation in accordance with 20 CFR § 682.220. The project has begun with a pilot and planning effort to evaluate Iowa's WIOA Title I programs. IWD's Workforce Services

Division is responsible for overseeing this work and has dedicated \$41,023.00 of state set-aside funds to support the initial planning phase of this project.

The planning phase includes the following:

- A comprehensive inventory of existing administrative data systems that contain relevant information to inform study of Iowa's WIOA Title I programs.
- Acquire WIOA datasets from IWD and conduct a rigorous quality exploration to inform future data collection and evaluation efforts. Secure datasets and existing data documentation, profiling dataset contents, exploring patterns within data, and developing preliminary codebooks to aid development of analytic/evaluation approaches.
- Development of an evaluation plan that includes scope of possible evaluation questions that can be addressed with IWD data and possibly with other I2D2 data holdings, datasets and elements necessary to address IWD priority questions, proposed analyses, evaluation timelines, and budget estimates for the work to address IWD's evaluation goals.

**C. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.**

As the Rapid Response Plan is being developed, it should be determined if additional funding is needed by the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to carry out the planned services. Rapid Response Additional Assistance (RRAA) funds provided for dislocation events are event-driven and can be used for direct career services to participants. This can include basic, individualized and follow-up services as defined in 20 CFR 678.430.

RRAA funds can only be requested from local areas that have insufficient resources to address a natural disaster, mass layoff or plant closings, or in the event that precipitate substantial increase in number of unemployed individuals. A LWDB may only request RRAA funds when WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker formula funds are insufficient to assist workers impacted by a layoff event. Documentation must be provided which demonstrates at least 70% of the Dislocated Worker Title I funds, for the current and previous program year, have been obligated. The opportunity for RRAA from IWD includes the request process outlined below.

- Complete RRAA Form
- Complete Budget Narrative
- Submit RRAA form to [Dislocated.Worker@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:Dislocated.Worker@iwd.iowa.gov)

Approval of the request will be based upon:

- availability of state funds;
- submitted materials; and
- review of past Dislocated Worker program and project performance.

Iowa Workforce Development's Business Engagement Division deploys a team of Business Engagement Consultants to proactively serve employers throughout the state, to include providing layoff aversion strategies. Regionally located, the BECs within the Business Engagement Division serve employers at the speed of business, providing guidance, resources and responsive workforce solutions to meet the needs of Iowa's growing economy. One approach the BECs utilize is addressing workforce needs regardless of where the employer is at in the business cycle – exploring and building; surviving a slowdown; or expanding and developing.

The Iowa Workforce System Rapid Response Process and Procedure Guide outlines the various layoff aversion strategies defined in 20 CFR 682.320, however also includes practical examples of how these strategies might be executed or applied in Iowa's public workforce system. Incumbent Worker Training is being explored more by the state, however, is also being planned and executed in several LWDAs across the state. Historically, Incumbent Worker Training has not been used as a workforce solution in the state.

**D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.**

Following confirmation of a natural disaster, the State Rapid Response (RR) Coordinator will coordinate with Local Workforce Development Boards and IowaWORKS leadership to quickly begin the rapid response process for an organized, multifaceted response. The State RR Coordinator and local IowaWORKS leadership will determine if there is a need for a mobile one-stop unit. The local office or mobile one-stop will assist those affected by the natural disaster in filing an Unemployment Claim or disaster unemployment assistance claim. The State RR Coordinator will coordinate with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or other disaster-response organizations to assist those in the affected area.

Contact will be made with the company(s) and labor officials were applicable, affected by the natural disaster to hold an Employer Meeting. This meeting can be conducted via phone or virtually as the need arises. Information will be gathered on workforce and determine the best plan for Worker Information Meetings. The company will need to send Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) to the employees' last known address, even if their homes were destroyed.

Worker Information Meetings are conducted in the same format as regular layoff notifications. The Dislocated Worker Survey will be given to all those attending to gather demographic information for potential emergency grant applications. Information will be given on services available through the IowaWORKS centers including Unemployment Insurance benefits, finding new employment, career counseling, training in a new career, and the impact of the layoff with regards to health care. Other state agencies or community-based organizations are invited to participate in the meeting to help workers adjust in a time of crisis.

**E. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) and ensures the provision of appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A) and TAA**

**Section 221(a)(2)(A) .) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition and how the state will ensure the provision of appropriate career service to workers in the groups identified in the petition (TAA Sec. 221(a)(2)(A)).**

Iowa's Rapid Response procedures are outlined in an Iowa Workforce System Rapid Response Process and Procedure guide available to all staff on an accessible SharePoint site. Although WARNs are received by the State Rapid Response Coordinator, the local area for which the layoff has occurred is generally responsible for the administration and delivery of rapid response services. This is done through the Local Rapid Response Team (LRRT).

The Local Rapid Response Team (LRRT) is comprised of individuals that provide information, resources, and services to assist affected employers and workers. The LRRT will oversee planning implementation, and tracking/reporting of Rapid Response services, including Layoff Aversion at the local level.

The LRRT must include representation from the following partner programs to include, but is not limited to:

- WIOA Title I
- Wagner Peyser – Title III
- Local Trade Coordinators
- Business Engagement representative

Additional partner programs may be added to the team based on the unique circumstances of an event and specific needs of the impacted business and workers. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Department of Human Services
- Adult and Basic Education
- Iowa Vocation Rehabilitation Business Services representative
- Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)

A Local Rapid Response Team Lead (LRRTL) must be identified and responsibilities at a minimum, include:

- Engaging in regular two-way communication with the State Rapid Response Coordinator (SRRC) and local system partners.
- Coordinating business and job seeker services across partners; and
- Ensuring Rapid Response activities are reported accurately and timely in IowaWORKS and preparing accurate and timely reports for the LWDB.

Early intervention is provided to impacted worker groups through a functionally aligned and coordinated effort between state and local area staff. Providing early intervention both prior to and immediately following dislocations where TAA benefits may be available is an essential



component to ensuring those affected receive information detailing the comprehensive services offered through TAA and its partner programs.

The process begins with State Rapid Response and TAA Program Coordinators reviewing WARN notices, and other layoff notifications, to make an initial determination regarding potential Trade eligible factors evident in the layoff. Trade Program Coordinators attend all initial rapid response meetings with company officials to explain the benefits of the Trade program and discuss the potential for a Trade certification based on the dislocation circumstances. As soon as evidence of Trade impact is identified and if a petition has not already been filed, the state TAA program coordinator submits a petition to DOL. While awaiting a determination, TAA program information is disseminated to impacted workers at Rapid Response Worker Information Meetings (WIMs). In addition to an overview of all benefits available to dislocated workers, these meetings provide basic Trade program information while emphasizing that these benefits will be accessible if the petition is certified. Additionally, a brochure containing information on TAA program benefits is provided to all potentially Trade eligible workers.

Upon certification of a Trade petition, Trade specific WIMs are scheduled, and targeted outreach is conducted to notify impacted workers of eligibility and disseminate program information. Workers are notified by various methods including mailed letters, emails, newspaper publications, and any other means necessary to reach all workers certified under the petition. State staff coordinate with the employer and local area staff to host in-person WIMs at various locations and times to ensure all workers receive the information. For example, if a manufacturing plant that runs three shifts is closing and is trade certified before the layoff occurs, WIMs are held on location at the plant at the beginning of each of the three shifts. If WIMs are unable to be held on-site at the employer, they will be held at the AJC, other community locations, or virtually if needed. These meetings provide a full presentation on all Trade benefits, including: Training (including Registered Apprenticeships and OJTs), Job Search Assistance, Relocation Assistance, RTAA, TRA, and Case Management. Eligibility requirements are reviewed, including providing workers with the information specific to their corresponding Trade petition needed to apply for benefits. Additionally, IowaWORKS Career Planners (case managers) are in attendance at the WIMs, to introduce themselves, provide contact information, and begin assisting workers with applications. This comprehensive approach provides impacted workers with all necessary information on the TAA program and a clear path forward to apply for and utilize the available benefits.

Due to the TAA termination provisions that took effect July 1, 2022, the Department of Labor cannot conduct new investigations or issue certifications of eligibility for new groups of workers. However, workers who were separated or threatened and covered under petitions certified on or before 06/30/2022, may still have benefits and services. Currently enrolled participants continue with their training uninterrupted, and eligible participants can apply for TAA benefits and services as usual.

## **b. Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements**

### **1. Work-Based Training Models**

Governor Reynolds and Iowa workforce system partners are intensely focused on work-based learning as an effective training model. Beyond the work-based learning services offered through WIOA programming such as on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, customized training, etc., Iowa has engaged in other statewide initiatives to help support work-based learning, one being the Intermediary Work-Based Learning Grant.

The Intermediary Work-Based Learning Grant helps students experience one-on-one contact with potential employers and help them make informed decisions about postsecondary education and careers. The goal of the grant is to encourage the creation and development of a range of work-based learning programs including internships, job shadowing experiences, apprenticeable occupations, or other workplace learning opportunities in targeted industries. Work-based learning opportunities increase awareness of career opportunities for students and help employers build relationships with potential future employees.

Another opportunity that has bolstered work-based learning across the state includes the Summer Youth Internship Program. Iowa's Summer Youth Internship Grant program supports the creation of internship programs for Iowa's youth between the ages of 14 and 24 that help prepare them for high-demand careers in the workforce. Eligible grant applicants include non-profits, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. The target audience for participants includes high school youth who are at risk of not graduating, from low-income households, from communities underrepresented in the Iowa workforce, or youth who otherwise face barriers to success and upward mobility in the labor market.

The most recent round of funding focused on supporting youth internships in high-demand careers. \$379,000 of Federal and State funding supported 8 projects and an estimated 176 program participants. Priority funding was awarded to projects that included a focus on high-demand careers and the recruitment of at-risk youth participants – including youth who face barriers to success and upward mobility in the workforce. Grant funds supported participant wages and compensation, training resources and supplies, as well as other program and administrative costs. Projects were encouraged to co-enroll participants in the WIOA Title I Youth Program in their local area, thereby ensuring coordination and connection to local resources supporting Iowa's youth.

## **2. Registered Apprenticeship**

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

One key priority includes expansion of Work-Based Learning opportunities and to assist every high school to offer registered apprenticeship opportunities by the 2025-2026 school year.

To support this, intensive registered apprenticeship outreach will be conducted to business, industry, economic development organizations, high schools, higher education entities, nonprofits, Area Education Agencies, etc. A strategic marketing campaign will accompany these

efforts by promoting high school registered apprenticeship, quality pre-apprenticeships and internships, along with a clearly designated location where employers, schools, students and parents can request assistance. Lastly, a Work-Based Learning Team – led by IWD and the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council will be established to set additional goals for expanding work-based learning strategies to meet those goals.

In federal fiscal year 2023, Iowa registered 5947 new apprentices and 169 new programs. Data from the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship recently revealed that in federal fiscal year 2022, Iowa reached a record level of 9,954 active apprentices and created the highest number of new programs in the country. Iowa has also expanded RA programs in healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing along with increase the traditional RA occupations within the skilled trades. Iowa’s leadership also sparked an expansion into new apprenticeships in health care, education (teacher/paraeducator), and other non-traditional occupations. The state of Iowa has been successful in growing its registered apprenticeships and the number of registered apprentices, as demonstrated in the below chart.

	FFY 22	FFY 23
<b>New Programs</b>	163	169
<b>Active Programs</b>	890	957
<b>New High School Programs</b>	16	10
<b>IWD Create Programs</b>	38	63
<b>Employers Engaged</b>	1988	2136
<b>Total Apprentices</b>	9731	9954
<b>Total HS Apprentices</b>	204	293
<b>Total New Apprentices</b>	5402	5947
<b>Certificates Awarded</b>	1870	1946

By 2025, Iowa is committed to:

- Increasing the number of Registered Apprenticeship programs by 15% by December 31, 2025.
- Increasing the number of High School Apprentices by 25% by December 31, 2025.
- Increasing the number of Registered Apprenticeship completers by 10% by December 31, 2025.

Additionally, on May 10, 2023, Governor Reynolds signed into law Senate File 318 establishing the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship and the Iowa Apprenticeship Council in Iowa Code Chapter 84D. IWD is currently working with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship to transfer this role to the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship. This change will provide a more seamless and streamline process for businesses to follow to create apprenticeship programs and further grow apprenticeship in Iowa.

### 3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Iowa's state policies that describe the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs, are provided below. Iowa understands these policies meet the minimum requirements for ETPL and we are currently in the process of reviewing and updating these policies to include more rigorous requirements; ETPL policies will be updated during Program Year 2022.

**Iowa policy 7.2 Training Provider Eligibility:** provided below and located at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/108>

Providers may be eligible to receive training funds for participants who enroll in training services under WIOA Title I. Only eligible training providers and their eligible programs will be included in Iowa's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

### **Potential Eligible Training Providers**

Potential Eligible Training Providers include entities that provide a program of training services and must be one of the following types:

- Institutions of higher education that provide a program which leads to a recognized post-secondary credential
- An entity that carries out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act. Registered Apprenticeship programs will be included and maintained on the ETPL for as long as the program remains registered under the National Apprenticeship Act.
- Other public or private providers of training, which may include:
  - Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or private organizations of demonstrated effectiveness that provide training under contract with the Local Board
  - Joint labor-management organizations
  - Eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, if such activities are provided in combination with training services described at 20 CFR § 680.350.

Training providers may be classroom based, online based, or outside of the state. Providers of all types are required to meet the same eligibility and performance criteria. A provider must be in statutory compliance with Iowa laws in relation to operation as a training education institution.

Providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, paid or unpaid work experience, or transitional jobs are not subject to ETPL requirements.

### **Provider Registration**

All providers who seek to be included on Iowa's ETPL must complete the registration process via the data management system located at <http://www.iowaworks.gov>. After provider registration has been completed, training program applications must also be submitted through

the data management system. Please see the Initial Eligibility policy and the Iowa Eligible Training Provider User Guide for more information.

After a provider is successfully registered in the system, all changes in required information must be reported within ten days of the change through entry in the data management system. See the Iowa Eligible Training Provider User Guide for a list of required fields.

### **Iowa Policy 7.3: Training Program Eligibility:**

A program of training services is defined as one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen that leads to:

- An industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of a Registered Apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or the Federal government, an associate or baccalaureate degree
- A secondary school diploma or its equivalent
- Employment; or
- Measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment

Training services may be delivered in person, online, or in a blended approach. Training programs must make every effort to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.

After a program is approved in the system, all changes in required information must be reported within ten days of the change through entry in the data management system. See the Iowa Eligible Training Provider User Guide for a list of required fields.

**Iowa Policy 7.3.1 Initial Eligibility:** provided below and located at:  
<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/115>

In order to determine initial eligibility, a training provider is required to provide the following program specific information for each program of training services at initial application.

### **Information Submission Requirements**

After Provider Registration is complete in the data management system, an application for each education and training program must also be completed via the Iowa Workforce Development data management system located at <http://www.iowaworks.gov>.

When completing an application, the following information is required:

- Description of each program of training to be offered
- Information addressing a factor related to the indicators of performance as described in WIOA
- Description of whether the provider is in a partnership with a business
- Information which demonstrates high quality training services that leads to recognized post-secondary credentials

- Description of how the training program(s) align with in-demand industries and occupations, as identified in State or Local Plans

Completing all required fields in the application will meet the above requirements. Programs which are approved receive initial eligibility for one year. Once initial eligibility expires, these programs will be subject to the Continued Eligibility policy.

**Iowa Policy 7.10 Registered Apprenticeship:** provided below and located at:  
<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/119>

All Registered Apprenticeship Programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act with the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship are exempt from initial eligibility procedures and are automatically eligible to be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Registered Apprenticeship programs must be included and maintained on the list of eligible providers of training services as long as the corresponding program remains registered.

### **Termination of Registration**

Once included on the Iowa ETPL, Registered Apprenticeship Programs will remain on the list of eligible training providers until:

- They are deregistered,
- They notify Iowa Workforce Development that the program no longer wants to be on the list, or
- It is determined that they have intentionally supplied inaccurate information or have substantially violated any provision of WIOA Title I or WIOA Regulations. See the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs on Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) policy for more information.

**Iowa Policy 7.3.2 Continued Eligibility:** provided below and located at:  
<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index/114>

Prior to the end of the initial eligibility period, providers who wish to have each of their education and training programs continue to be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) must complete a review of continued eligibility. After the first continued eligibility determination, programs will be reviewed for continued eligibility on a biennial basis.

### **Information Submission Requirements**

For continued eligibility of programs, the provider must submit the following information through the renewal process in the data management system located at  
<http://www.iowaworks.gov>:

- Program-specific performance information regarding participants, including:
  - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter and fourth quarter after exit from the program
  - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program



- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one (1) year after exit from the program
- Information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants
- Cost of attendance, including the cost of tuition and fees
- Completion Rate
- A description of how the provider provides access to training services, including to rural areas, including the use of technology
- A description of the degree to which training program(s) align with in-demand industries and occupations in the State, as identified in State and Local Plans
- Any applicable state licensure requirements of training providers
- A description of training provider's ability to offer industry-recognized certificates and/or credentials through the program
- A description of training provider's ability to offer programs that lead to post-secondary credentials
- A description of the quality of the program of training services including a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential
- A description of the ability of the providers to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities
- The timeliness and accuracy of the eligible training provider's performance reports
- Relevant information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA Title I

Iowa's WIOA compliant data management system, IowaWORKS, requires providers to submit the required data elements for all students in a training program including WIOA participants. Once submitted by providers, it is reviewed by the ETPL Program Coordinator and approved accordingly. Data is then shown on the customer facing side of [www.iowaworks.gov](http://www.iowaworks.gov) for each program approved on the ETPL.

**4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor for the Adult Priority of Service requirement in WIOA section 134 (c)(3)(E) that requires American Job Center staff, when using WIOA Adult program funds to provide individualized career services and training services, to give priority of service to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners).**

**Iowa policy 8.3.3.2 Adult Priority of Service:**

WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult individualized career services and employment and training activities; there is no priority applied for receipt of basic career services. Funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals with barriers to employment. Priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area.

## **Veterans and Adult Priority of Services**

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA Title I programs. A veteran must meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

### **Application of Priority**

In regards to WIOA Adult funds, priority must be provided in the following order:

1. To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services with WIOA Title I Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
2. To non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Title I Adult formula funds.
3. To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. To priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local Workforce Development Board (Local WDB).
5. To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

### **Priority of Service for Adult Program Funds**

1. Recipients of public assistance
  - a. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
  - b. General Assistance (GA)
  - c. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
  - d. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - e. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - f. Other income based public assistance
2. Low Income Individuals
  - a. Receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the SNAP, TANF, SSI under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or state or local income based public assistance program; or
  - b. Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current U.S. DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level Guidelines and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, or
  - c. Is a homeless individual, or
  - d. Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above, but whose income does not meet this requirement
3. Individuals Who Are Basic-Skills Deficient must meet at least one of the following:
  - a. Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or

- b. Is enrolled in Title II adult education (including enrolled for English Language Acquisition); or
  - c. Has poor English-language skills and would be appropriate for ESL, even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA participation; or
  - d. The career planner makes observations of deficient functioning, and, as justification, records those observations in the data management system; or
  - e. Scores below 9.0 grade level (8.9 or below) on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) or other allowable assessments as per National Reporting System (NRS) developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy; or
  - f. Individual does not earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) (e.g., one or more of the scores are below a Level 3 on the Workplace Documents, Applied Math, or Graphic Literacy assessments)
4. Individuals with Barriers to Employment. Individuals with barriers to employment may include:
- a. Displaced homemakers
  - b. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
  - c. Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
  - d. Older individuals (age 55 and older)
  - e. Ex-offenders
  - f. Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
  - g. Individuals who are:
    - i. English language learners
    - ii. Individuals who have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve programs, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual's family, or in society); and
  - h. Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
  - i. Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
  - j. Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility
  - k. Single parents (including single pregnant women)
  - l. Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks)
  - m. Underemployed Individuals. Underemployed individuals may include:
    - i. Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment
    - ii. Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training
    - iii. Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual
    - iv. Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment, per state and/or local policy

The above list is used only for applying priority for the individual to receive individualized career services and training services. Certain individualized career services or training services may require pre- and post-test scores to measure skills gain for the specific activity; in this case

the determination is made by administering an acceptable skills assessment or by using scores from any partner's previous assessment.

Local WDBs must develop, and include in their local plan, policies, and procedures for determining priority of service for adults.

Monitoring policies have been drafted and are being refined prior to going to the SWDB for approval. Program year 2019 monitoring procedures have been developed and are outlined in Field Information Memo: 19-05, which includes a review of the application of Adult Priority of Service. Iowa plans to review Adult Priority of Service requirements within its annual compliance monitoring of each local area within the state.

### **5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.**

Field Information Memo: 21-01 outlines the process for the transfer of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIOA 683.130, and Iowa procedure accordingly, allows up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The following process must be used when initiating transfer of funds between programs.

To request a transfer of funds, the LWDB Chair is required to complete the WIOA Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker Transfer of Funds Request Form by April 30th of the program year. The following information must be included in the request:

1. Amount of funds requested to be transferred, including which program and funding allotment the funds are requested to be transferred to and from.
2. Current labor market information and/or general economic conditions of the local area to assess justification for the request to transfer the funds, for example, current unemployment rates that explain the need for more or less funding in one program or information on a mass layoff event in the local area.
3. Summarization of the outreach process the LWDB has used to recruit and market the availability of services for the programs.

Once this process has been completed, a program coordinator provides IWD Financial Management with a signed copy of the WIOA Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker Transfer of Funds Request Form to initiate the transfer of funds.

### **6. Describe the State's policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).**

Iowa's co-enrollment procedure includes Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Ticket to Work, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW), Returning Citizens, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Registered Apprenticeship (RA).

The procedure includes 100% co-enrollment between Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Dislocated Workers who are Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) certified and co-enrollment with other programs when it is beneficial to the customer. The use of Integrated Resource Teams is encouraged to maximize the benefits of co-enrollment without placing a burden on the customer while ensuring all programs have met their individual program policy requirements.

The Core Partner Working Group will conduct research on if policy is needed related to co-enrollment across programs in addition to the current procedure.

Across programs, emphasis is placed on working, and supporting, individuals through their career pathway and goals. The time in which a customer may actively participate in a program differs based upon many factors. However, under common exit, the participant must complete services from all programs in which they are co-enrolled in order to exit from the system. In Iowa, common exit applies to participants who are co-enrolled in Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

The co-enrollment procedure is on an accessible SharePoint site that houses procedures, desk-aids, training, etc. Training on co-enrollment has been provided to all local areas within the last program year, and targeted local area training occurs on an as needed basis.

**7. Describe the State's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c).**

Rapid Response teams work with employers and any employee representative(s) to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize disruptions associated with job loss. Rapid Response can provide customized services on-site at an affected company, accommodate any work schedules, and assist companies and workers through the painful transitions associated with job loss. One rapid response activity that is required through this is the delivery of services to worker groups for which a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance has been filed.

The Rapid Response process and procedure is shared jointly by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and the Local Workforce Development Boards. IWD is responsible for obtaining the layoff notification and monitoring of the event, while local areas are responsible for information gathering, service delivery and tracking and reporting.

Standard Services are provided at the Worker Information Meeting. Based on the needs of the affected workers, Expanded Services may also be provided at the Worker Information Meeting. Standard services include provision of information regarding:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Training Services
- Career Services
- Insurance and retirement

- COBRA- USDOL Employment Benefit Security Administration
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Adult Education- based on need
- Vocational Rehabilitation- based on need
- Outline next steps for affected workers
  - Schedule appointment with Career Planner, etc.
  - Trade Navigator or Career Planner may set up Office Hours at company location

Expanded Services includes the Standard Services plus additional activities developed and/or organized specifically for the affected workers of a specific dislocation event. Expanded Services can be delivered at the same event as the Worker Information Meeting(s) or at a different date, time, and location.

Examples of Expanded Services include, but are not limited to:

- Job Fair (can be provided in multiple formats: in-person, virtual, drive-through)
- Workshops
  - Resume writing
  - Interview Skills
  - Money Management

Rapid Response services (Standard and Expanded) are one on-ramp or entry point for an affected worker to access the myriad of services available to dislocated workers in the Iowa *WORKS* system.

The Trade Bureau implements monitoring to effectively oversee the operation and administration of the TAA Program and to improve the timeliness of reported data, as well as verify the accuracy of such data. The Bureau monitors the administration of the TAA program, the TRA Program, training, ATAA/RTAA, job search, relocation, and employment and case management services. Through the monitoring process, best practices are identified, deficiencies are identified and corrected, and staff training needs are identified.

The Trade Program Coordinator provides up-to-date training and notification to all TAA and partner programs in a timely manner. The training incorporates best practices as well as lessons learned from regional round tables to include local office feedback to ensure the TAA program is conducted in accordance with Federal and State policy.

**8. Describe the State’s process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305.**

Resources regarding TAA to include policy, procedure and training is available to Iowa *WORKS* center staff posted within an accessible SharePoint site. Iowa Workforce Development Workforce Services (WFS) Division Staff provide local area staff monthly training and on various workforce system related topics, to include TAA program updates. Monthly office hours are also held for local area staff to engage with Workforce Program Coordinators, including the TAA Program Coordinator. Office hours allow Workforce Program Coordinators to share



information and answer questions directly to field staff. Local staff members are often asked to present programmatic best practices and processes implemented in their local area.

With Iowa's landscape, and the status of the TAA program with termination, the Trade Program Coordinator is currently providing more one-on-one assistance to the two TAA Navigators, and local areas who are serving TAA eligible participants. Outside of termination, historically, TAA information and training has been more widely shared. WFS Division leadership meets monthly with local board staff, and provides updates – to include TAA updates, as applicable.

### **c. Youth Program Requirements**

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

**1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants or contracts.<sup>8</sup> Further, include a description of how the State assists local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.**

Iowa policy 1.4.8.1 Service Provider Procurement and 1.4.8.2 Allowable Methods for Competitive Procurement of Service Providers outline the procurement standards in Iowa.

When selecting an entity as the service provider for youth workforce investment activities, the Local WDB must consider the entity's programmatic and fiscal integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance and other factors that demonstrate transparency and responsibility.

State policy requires that local boards award grants for local youth activities through a competitive procurement process in accordance with their local procurement procedures which must be in compliance with the provisions of applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations and based on recommendations of the Local Youth Committee and/or Workforce Development Board.

The procurement must be a process that provides for full and open competition and avoids even the appearance of a conflict of interest (either individually or organizationally). Procurement actions must be conducted in a manner that provides for full and open competition and prevents the existence of conflicting roles that might bias judgment and cause unfair competitive advantage. Such actions must assure separation of those who develop or issue the solicitation, or are involved in the selection process, from those who bid upon it. Supporting documentation of the history of each procurement action must be maintained. Such documentation must include a

<sup>8</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

rationale for: the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. Such documentation also includes evaluation criteria or rating factors to support the provider's ability to perform successfully, with consideration given to integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, in addition to financial and technical resources, that follow state and federal guidelines.

Contracts must be awarded based on the vendor's:

- Ability to deliver services to the targeted population in accordance with locally established guidelines;
- Experience in working with youth in similar programs and activities; Page 182
- Past and current collaboration with other service providers
- Past performance record, including both programmatic and fiscal integrity;
- Understanding of and commitment to meeting goals and objectives; and
- Demonstration of understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement methods.

All policies supporting Iowa's WIOA Youth program can be found at:

<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>

**2. Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving equitable results for out-of-school and in-school youth. Describe promising practices or partnership models that local areas are implementing and the state's role in supporting and scaling those models within the state for both in-school and out-of-school youth.**

Iowa has worked to increase awareness of the Title I youth program to outside agencies, organizations and resource. As a result, relationships have been built across several systems to better align service delivery across the state of Iowa for Youth to help provide wrap-around services to individuals and groups that weren't previously utilized.

One such partnership is with the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care (IA BoS CoC). IA BoS CoC's mission is dedicated to ending homelessness through community collaborations, data-driven strategies, and best-practice housing interventions. In addition, the IA BoS CoC is committed to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The CoC engaged with Iowa Workforce Development and the Title I Youth Program as a partner in the submission of their third Youth Demonstration Program application in 2023. Although they were not awarded additional youth funding from this opportunity, it did ignite a partnership with the CoC and Title I Youth Programming. With this, Title I will be a party to conversations on a coordinated community plan specific to ending youth homelessness.

The South Central Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) applied for US DOL's 2023 Youth Systems Building Academy and was one of 9 "communities" to be accepted. IWD signed a letter of support and was identified as a key partner in the application.

The academy aims to provide training and technical assistance to workforce systems and their community partners to help them explore, design, test, implement or expand approaches to attract young workers and support them once they join the workforce. The academy seeks to

strengthen local organizations' ability to serve young people between 16 to 24 years of age who are disconnected from school and the workforce, and those in marginalized and underrepresented communities.

The South Central LWDB's overarching goal is to develop an equity-centered strategic plan to co-design a sustainable career pathway ecosystem infrastructure.

They plan to explore:

- Realistic and relevant activities and timelines to improve system efforts that support young workers.
- Revising policies or practices to increase young workers' access to quality career pathways.
- Building or scaling sustainable community partnerships (such as those with education, TANF, health, housing, transportation, child welfare or justice systems) to enhance youth workforce outcomes.
- Exploring how to offer seamless service arrays (along with other systems such as education, TANF, SNAP, housing, or disability services) to meet the needs of youth and young adult workers.
- Coordinating service delivery models across youth-serving programs to implement 'no wrong door' strategies.
- Improving the use of local workforce financial and other resources, with education or human service system resources while using them more flexibly to achieve system and service reforms.
- Using data insights (such as those from housing, education, and health systems) to increase equitable access to and understanding of quality career pathways for young people.
- Designing or creating data sharing agreements to increase knowledge sharing across community partners.
- Strengthening workforce, education, and other community partner staff skills, understanding, participation and commitment to youth and young adult workforce outcomes.
- Meaningfully engaging youth and young adults in providing feedback and designing programs.

As part of the academy, IWD's WIOA Title I Youth Program Coordinator has been engaged throughout the process, including attending a convening with the group in March 2023. The South Central LWDB has included youth voice throughout the process, inviting 3 young adults to the convening as well. Youth have been at the table in South Central providing feedback to the board's goals, integrating what they need to be successful.

They have also hired an Authentic Youth Engagement Coordinator, where youth were part of the hiring process. This position is a tri-funded role, where the local community school district will be able to sustain it moving forward.

Iowa State University has been engaged by the board to assist in a disengaged youth study. The study is planned to include youth as researchers so they can not only help conduct research, but learn, understand, and make recommendations.

Lastly, South Central has engaged the State in their partnership with Results for America (RFA). In 2019 RFA launched a State and Local Workforce Fellowship to help data- and evidence-driven state and local government leaders make tangible progress in improving employment outcomes. Iowa is engaged in the 2023 RFA Alumni Cohort Fellowship, and the State and local teams have utilized this opportunity to engage in discussions on procurement, evaluation and other workforce topics. Additional meetings facilitated by RFA are throughout the remainder of the cohort period.

Iowa looks forward to continued collaboration between the State and local programming to ensure Iowa's young adults are not only receiving the services needed to be successful in the labor market, but including analysis within this collaboration to better understand our population of young people and how they can be best served to provide positive outcomes.

**3. Describe how the State assists local workforce boards in implementing innovative models for delivering youth workforce investment activities, including effective ways local workforce boards can make available the 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2); and explain how local areas can ensure work experience, including quality pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, is prioritized as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy.<sup>9</sup>**

Iowa policy 8.2.5 Program Elements outlines that local programs must make each of the 14 youth elements available to youth participants. Local programs may determine what services a youth participant receives based on their objective assessment results and individual service strategy. Local programs are not required to provide every element to participants and should partner with other entities to provide program elements that cannot be provided by the local program.

Work experience services to include youth job shadows, internships, work experiences, one-the-job training, and pre-apprenticeship are valuable training methods – and one that Iowa continuously highlights the importance of. Iowa policy 8.2.6.3 Experiential Learning 20% Requirement states local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to them to provide in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) with paid and unpaid experiential learning activities.

Iowa's reviews ISY and OSY expenditures, to include the 20% work experience requirement, on an ongoing basis. The State Youth Workforce Program Coordinator conducts biannual fiscal technical assistance sessions for all local workforce development areas. The sessions include a review of where overall spending is at, broken down by funding category.

<sup>9</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Sessions also include guidance on ways in which the local area may be able to appropriately spend their funds, as needed. Several local areas have implemented local processes for which to review this information, such as pulling financial reports and reviewing them with their local workforce development board financial committees.

Iowa encourages career pathway design through policy 8.1.3 Career Pathways. Career planners and participants should work together to identify appropriate career pathways by utilizing the objective assessment results. Career pathway goals, timelines, and other considerations must be established and entered in the data management system. Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) must include in their local plan a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to implement career pathways.

Provision of youth program services is reviewed through annual monitoring and ongoing data integrity analysis. Additional procedures regarding monitoring are reviewed and updated annually and included in a Title I Monitoring Guide specific to the given program year.

Iowa provides ongoing training and technical assistance on these topics. Broad training is available to all local staff, and individual training and technical assistance in a given area is provided when requested or when the State identifies areas for improvement.

All policies referenced above can be found at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>

**4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.**

Iowa policy 8.2.3.4 Additional Assistance outlines the criteria for out-of-school youth who require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program and in-school youth requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment. The full policy can be found at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>, and states:

Youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, includes:

- Migrant youth
- Incarcerated parent
- Behavior problems at school
- Family literacy problems
- Domestic violence

- Substance abuse
- Chronic health conditions
- One or more grade levels below appropriate for age
- Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment
- American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
- Refugee; or
- Locally defined as needing “additional assistance” within local policy

#### **d. Single-area State Requirements**

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

- 1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)**
- 2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**
- 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**
- 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.**
- 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.**
- 7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.**
- 8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.**



This section does not apply to Iowa.

### **e. Waiver Requests (optional)**

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

#### **1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**

Waiver #1: The State of Iowa is seeking a waiver from the WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR Part 681.410, which require not less than 75 percent of funds allotted to states under Section 127(b)(1)(C), reserved under Section 128(a), and available for statewide activities under subsection (b), and not less than 75 percent of funds available to local areas under subsection (c), shall be used to provide youth workforce investment activities for Out-of-School Youth (OSY).

Iowa is requesting to:

- lower the minimum OSY expenditure requirement to 50 percent for formula funding at both the state and local levels; and
- eliminate the minimum OSY expenditure requirement for WIOA Statewide Activities funding when providing direct services to youth.

Iowa has continuously met the 75% OSY requirement, and although Iowa has recognized the importance of serving the OSY population, we have also determined that a shift in being able engage more in-school youth (ISY) earlier on may help yield better results in Iowa's overall workforce strategies.

Currently, the 75% OSY requirement limits the ability of the State and local areas to:

- effectively support Governor Reynolds work-based learning initiatives
- partner with state programs such as Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG)
- provide valuable services to Iowa's young adults who are at risk of becoming opportunity youth

Creating a system where unified services are available to at-risk young adults through State initiatives and programs are projected to strengthen long-term positive outcomes for this population.

#### **2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. Current State of Iowa laws, regulations, and policies follow federal law, regulations, and guidance.

**3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**

This waiver request aligns with Iowa’s goal outlined in the State Plan: Increase the engagement and awareness of Iowa’s current, potential, and future workforce to the continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities in Iowa.

Specifically, strategies:

- #2: Ensure all Iowa students have opportunities for meaningful work-based learning experiences.
- #3: Target services to underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, minorities, returning citizens, women, rural Iowans, new citizens, veterans, etc. (to include Youth)

To ensure this waiver positively impacts the Youth program in Iowa, IWD will report on the following projected programmatic outcomes for PY2024 and PY2025:

- Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serves at-risk youth ~~iJAG~~-participants by 10%
- Enroll five new Youth participants in a Registered Apprenticeship (currently there are zero)
- Iowa anticipates to maintain or improve outcomes for all six ~~fix~~-WIOA key performance outcomes for the Title I Youth program
- Increase overall Title I Youth program enrollment by 10% at the end of PY25

**4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department’s policy priorities, such as:**

- A. supporting employer engagement;**
- B. connecting education and training strategies;**
- C. supporting work-based learning;**
- D. improving job and career results, and**
- E. other guidance issued by the Department.**

WIOA places an emphasis on pre-employment education and training as well as access to a continuum of work-based learning opportunities. Further, as stated in TEN 31-16, Registered Apprentices is a valuable work-based training opportunity and a proven model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job training and related instruction to progressively increase workers’ skill level and wages. The approval of this waiver will provide local boards more flexibility to utilize funding to support these strategies in their schools, connecting students to the training and education they need and providing employers with an expanded talent pipeline of available workforce. Additionally, while students who are defined as “in-school” theoretically already

have supports available, many students are close to disengaging from the education system and the utilization of this waiver will allow local boards to connect with those students prior to dropping out, connecting them to different education and training strategies that will increase their likelihood of success and improving job and career results.

**5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**

This waiver will provide Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the flexibility to serve more youth and young adults in work-based learning, including apprenticeship, regardless of school status. It will facilitate the provision of the necessary funding and the ease of current regulations essential to designing programs that will aid youth and young adults in the preparation for long-term participation in Iowa's labor force. Economic growth in Iowa and its high-growth industries will be sustained with the infusion of skilled workers ready to fill current job openings and adequately trained for future openings. Additionally, this waiver supports Governor Reynolds plans to ensure all Iowa students have opportunities for meaningful work-based learning experiences. Iowa's students and eligible youth population, as well as Iowa employers who need immediate assistance to fill open positions and train their future workforce, will benefit from this waiver.

**6. Describes the processes used to:**

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will monitor the implementation and outcomes of this waiver through monthly tracking of youth expenditures, utilization of reporting from the statewide data management system, and through programmatic and fiscal monitoring. Notice to all six Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will be provided by IWD directly through email communication and monthly technical assistance meetings, as well as at the December 2023 State Workforce Development Board meeting. All LWDBs, business, and organized labor will be provided the opportunity to comment on the waiver request through the public comment period of the PY24 WIOA Unified State Plan during December 2023 – January 2024. IWD assures all data collected and reported, including waiver outcomes, will be included in the WIOA Annual Report as required.

**7. The most recent data available regarding the results and outcomes observed through implementation of the existing waiver, in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.**

N/A

**Title I-B Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; **Yes**
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; **Yes**
3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members; **Yes**
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2); **Yes**
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership; **Yes**
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions; **Yes**
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7); **Yes**
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan; **Yes**
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; **Yes**

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report; **Yes**
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3). **Yes**

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)**

### **a. Employment Service (ES) Staff.**

**1. Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.**

Iowa will continue to utilize state merit staff to provide Wagner-Peyser services.

**2. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

Wagner-Peyser staff are afforded many opportunities for professional development throughout the year such as:

- IowaWORKS team meetings which are held every Wednesday morning for one hour. All core partner staff are invited to attend this training and topics are selected based on current needs of the team which may include: customer service, program overview or updates, Priority of Service, team building, conflict resolution, and community and partner resources.
- In-Service Training twice per year on Columbus Day and President's Day. IowaWORKS team members attend full day trainings covering topics more in-depth such as safety, procedures and policy reviews, EEO and ADA, initiatives of the state governor or state workforce development board, or other topics identified by local workforce development boards or local partners.
- Monthly trainings are conducted by IWD Workforce Services (WFS) Division including topics related to program updates and the using the case management system.

Other areas of opportunity for professional development include webinars relevant to workforce system functions and operations such as business services, job seeker services and cross-functional systems building. In addition to webinars such as this, staff have access to LinkedIn Learning modules to build their knowledge and capacity in various topic areas. A strategic goal for the WFS Division includes developing and implementing a "Workforce Development Professional" training curriculum to foster program integration.

**3. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.**

Wagner-Peyser staff in the Iowa*WORKS* centers are trained when they are hired on core and required partner programs in order to build an understanding of the additional services available to individuals and how to refer customers to those programs. Wagner-Peyser staff, at the designation by local management, attend Basic and Advanced level Unemployment Insurance training, which is conducted virtually, allowing the provision on unemployment insurance services to be provided in local Iowa*WORKS* centers across the state.

Often individuals seeking UI benefits are not eligible, however can and should be referred to Title III, Title I or other core or required partner services. Iowa*WORKS* center services provide individuals, including unemployed and underemployed Iowans, valuable services to help them meet their immediate and long-term employment goals.

Iowa benefits from the joint administration of the unemployment insurance program and workforce services through Iowa Workforce Development, which allows efficient coordination between programs. Computer linkages coordinate and provide services between Iowa*WORKS* and the UI automation system. These links ensure that UI claimants who are required to register have done so, and that UI claimants comply with their work search requirements. This process will be strengthened through Iowa's UI modernization project where UI will go live in Iowa*WORKS* in June 2024. Title I, Title III and various other programs are already housed in the Iowa*WORKS* data management system.

**b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.**

All customers who visit an Iowa*WORKS* center receive a warm welcoming and register for an Iowa*WORKS*.gov account. Customers seeking assistance with filing an unemployment insurance claim will be provided with general information. These services are considered basic career/self-service and are provided immediately and continuously without further eligibility documentation requirements. Such services include labor exchange services, labor market information, initial skills assessments, workshops, program eligibility information, email assistance, and basic information regarding resumes and unemployment.

Through an enhanced triage process, Iowa*WORKS* career planners ask probing questions that help guide claimants to other Iowa*WORKS* services. Customers seeking further assistance are referred to complete a program application and, as a result of a warm handoff, meet individually with a career planner who provides specific assistance depending on the needs of the participant. At this time, the customer completes the appropriate program application and completes enrollment into the applicable program.



Career Planners encourage and facilitate access for center customers to all appropriate career services at each and every center visit to continuously engage them in the service delivery process until employed in self-sufficient employment.

Iowa's Unemployment Division is a One-Stop partner that provides a robust menu of services to UI claimants/unemployed individuals in partnership with the American Job Center Division. These individuals receive services beyond what they could obtain on their own using self-service tools including but not limited to staff-assisted services.

All offices have dedicated phones for customer use that can be used to dial directly into the UI customer service line for assistance if a team member is not available in person. All Wagner-Peyser Career Planners have received basic UI training and can answer basic unemployment related questions. Career Planners are able to submit questions or eligibility issues to the main UI department through technology if additional assistance is needed.

All Iowa*WORKS* Centers have dedicated phones for customer use to contact the UI customer service line for assistance if a Career Planner is not available in person. Additionally, all Iowa*WORKS* Career Planners have the ability to call the UI line to obtain additional assistance for a customer if necessary. Iowa*WORKS* Operations Managers also have access to the UI Benefits Managers if needed to assist a customer.

### **c. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.**

#### **Integrated Service Delivery**

The State of Iowa will provide reemployment services to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals using an integrated service delivery.

- Integrated data systems - RESEA, Rapid Response, TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers program use a common data system. This data system displays services, case notes, workshop attendance and the overall progression of the UI claimant/unemployed individual.
- Streamlining case management and assessments - Each program is able to see case notes and services provided to the UI claimant/unemployed individual. eliminates duplication of services and assessments.
- Job Search and Training Services - The One-Stop provides a variety of job search activities including but not limited to job search workshops (resume building, interviewing, career planning, mock interviews, application assistance and a variety of other workshops), hosting job fairs, employer meet and greets and assistance in filling out online/paper employment applications. The One-Stop has a direct referral process to training programs to provide short term training for high demand occupations through a variety of partner programs including but not limited to Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Title I. These services are available to all UI claimants/unemployed individuals.
- Helping UI claimants access the full range of on-line and in person services delivered through the American Job Centers - All UI claimants that come in person to the American Job Center is provided information on the range of services offered by the One-Stop. UI claimants are also encouraged to visit the website and the One-Stop when

call the UI ACD call center. This includes entering information into database to receive job alerts that meet their skills and abilities.

- Ensuring Claimants Meet Eligibility Requirements-
  - Iowa continues to incorporate Unemployment Insurance services in the Iowa*WORKS* Centers. Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Division regularly provides UI training at basic and advanced levels. The trainings are conducted in person with occasional virtual sessions. Team members from field offices attend these classes as local management determines necessary and provides in-service training to Iowa*WORKS* Center staff when appropriate. Additionally, online policy and procedure documents are available for any team member or partner staff to access if needed. The library of documents is in a keyword searchable format. This process has been very beneficial to ensure the most recent version of a procedure is available when handling UI issues. Each of the Iowa*WORKS* Centers and satellite offices have staff trained in recognizing and referring UI eligibility issues for adjudication. During these training sessions, local staff are encouraged to proactively identify and provide assistance to identified individuals on a case by case basis. If a local office team member has a question about a claimants' situation, IWD has a direct messaging system the team member can contact a UI expert in the main IWD office in Des Moines for assistance.
  - All customers that are selected to participate in an initial or sub RESEA program will complete a UI Eligibility Review to ensure the claimant is conducting appropriate work search contacts and is registered for work in the database system. The RESEA program staff have been fully trained in UI and are able to issue immediate decisions if an eligibility issue arises. There is an immediate feedback loop between UI program staff and the American Job Center for potential eligibility issues. The issue is reported via technology and then the UI program can establish a fact finding if necessary.
- Ensuring all Claimants are notified of all deadlines and eligibility requirements associated with the TAA program/seamless communication with case managers
- Working with rapid response teams
- Providing effective services for Veterans that file for UCX - Veterans that file for UCX will be profiled for the RESEA program to ensure services are offered early in the Veteran UI claim and is connected to the menu of services in the American Job Center. If these Veterans are identified as having a significant barrier, a referral to a local DVOP will be made to provide additional services.
- Undertaking strategies to promote entrepreneurship

### **Connecting UI claimants to career services through the RESEA (Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment) program**

#### **Initial RESEA Program**

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program is a program to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The program connects participants with in-person or virtual assessments and reemployment services through local American Job Centers (AJC). Activities include, but are not limited to, developing an individual reemployment plan, providing labor market information, identifying job skills and prospects, and reviewing claimant's continued UI benefit eligibility.

The following items will be reviewed/discussed at the RESEA appointment:

- Discuss the purpose of the appointment
- Complete Wagner-Peyser enrollment
- Review of UI claim
- Review weekly job searches and reemployment activities submitted by the claimant
- Unemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Review of work registration and quality information entered into database to set up Virtual Recruiter to receive job lead notifications
- Discussion on occupation, salary expectations and work availability
- Discussion on utilizing IowaWORKS for job searching, and reemployment services
- Labor Market Information for claimant's occupational profile will be provided
- Available community resources
- Referrals to core partner and other partner programs
- Brief review of resume
- Register in IowaWORKS Orientation and will register claimant for four weeks of Virtual Job Club
- Complete a re-employment service plan

Following the RESEA initial appointment RESEA customers enter the following information into their Iowa WORKS account in order to receive quality job referrals.

- Name, mailing address, email address
- Education
- Last 10 years or 3 jobs (whichever is less) employer or experience, including internships, volunteer work or military experience
- minimum of 20-word job description
- 6 job skills selected
- Virtual Recruiter must be set up
- Resume Status must be searchable/visible to employers

### **SUB RESEA Program**

The SUB Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program is a program to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The program connects participants with reemployment services through local American Job Centers (AJC). Activities include, but are not limited to, developing an individual re-employment plan, in depth resume assistance, business engagement meeting referral, discussion on job searching progress and job referrals and reviewing claimant's continued UI benefit eligibility.

The following items will be reviewed/discussed at the SUB RESEA appointment:

- Discuss the purpose of the appointment
- Review weekly job searches and reemployment activities submitted by claimant.
- Unemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Intense review of resume for occupation.
- If it is not "usable" for job searching the RESEA Career Planner will sign up the customer for a resume writing class. The resume will then need to be emailed and approved by RESEA Career Planner
- Discussion on occupation, salary expectations and work availability
- Customer will be registered for four weeks of A Game

- Discuss additional targeted re-employment questions
  - Applying for more than 3 jobs per week?
  - How many interviews and what companies in the past 4 weeks?
  - What is preventing you from securing a job?
  - What workshop did they choose during their initial?
  - What takeaways did they learn from the class?
  - Did they sign up for watch any other workshops?
  - Verify email address and that they are checking it regularly
- Refer them to three jobs from our website that match their skills
- Referrals to core partner and other partner programs
- Make a referral to Business Engagement team if resume and claimant is “business ready.”

### **REEMPLOYMENT CASE MANAGEMENT STATE INITIATIVE (RCM)**

The Reemployment Case Management (RCM) state initiative designed to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits to be connected to reemployment services and employment. The program connects participants with in-person or virtual assessments and reemployment services through local American Job Centers (AJC). Activities include, but are not limited to, developing an individual reemployment plan, identifying job skills and prospects, and reviewing claimant’s continued UI benefit eligibility on a regular basis.

The following items will be reviewed/discussed at the RCM appointment:

- Discuss the purpose of the appointment
- Review weekly job searches and reemployment activities submitted by claimant.
- Referrals to core partner and other partner programs
- Additional re-employment services will be assigned

In FY23, RCM completed 16,210 RCM appointments. The RCM initiative has helped impact the decline of the length of time individuals remain on unemployment and the UI duration has dropped the lowest it has been in the past 60 years. Iowa’s UI duration rate in 6/30/22 was 11.8 weeks and in 6/30/23 it was 10.0 weeks which is a decline of 1.8 weeks.

### **d. Describe how the State will use Wagner-Peyser Act funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between the Employment Service and UI, as appropriate, including the following:**

#### **1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;**

Iowa is committed to reducing the average amount of time a UI claimant receives benefits and getting Iowans back to work more quickly. Iowa has seen great successes through our Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program and our Reemployment Case Management (RCM) initiative. As described in VI. Wagner-Peyser Act.(c)., the RCM initiative has helped impact the decline of the length of time individuals remain on unemployment and the UI duration has dropped the lowest it has been in the past 60 years. In February 2023, Iowa received the 2022 Full Employment Award from the American Institute for Full Employment because of the Reemployment Case Management program.

Iowa*WORKS* career planners work together across programs to provide a range of services to reemploy Iowans. The Iowa*WORKS* center focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops, referrals to training and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. Iowa*WORKS* career planners use a messaging system to communicate with Unemployment Insurance experts should customer questions arise that the career planner does not know or does not have enough information to answer.

## **2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;**

Claimants who are not expecting to return to work must register for work in Iowa*WORKS*. When a claimant files an unemployment insurance claim online, they will answer questions to determine if there is still a job attachment and whether or not they will be required to complete work searches. If the claimant is required to complete work searches, the application system will check to see if the claimant has an active resume on file with our Iowa*WORKS* system for their work registration. If they do not have an active resume, the claim application will take them through a series of questions to get the claimant registered for work. When the application is submitted, the information provided on their application will be transferred to the Iowa*WORKS* system to create their account (if one does not exist), create a resume and set the resume to be online and searchable by employers. If a customer files a claim by phone in a few circumstances, the customer is instructed to complete the online work registration. If a customer is selected for the RESEA program, the claimant's information entered in the work registration is reviewed and additional information is required to be entered into the system to increase the number of job alerts.

## **3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and**

Claimants selected for RESEA or sub-RESEA will complete an eligibility review to ensure they are conducting appropriate work search contacts and are registered for work in Iowa*WORKS*. RESEA program staff are fully trained in UI and are able to issue decisions immediately, if applicable and necessary. RESEA staff conduct these appointments in the Iowa*WORKS* center and connect individuals to job search activities such as job search workshops, job fairs, employer meet and greets, and assistance in filling out job applications.

Unless waived by IWD, individuals are required to make a minimum of four job contacts each calendar week. Individuals are permitted to complete one job search activity, such as attending a meeting with a career planner or attending a workshop, in place of one of the four job contacts per week. Members of a union hiring hall are required to be in good standing and must contact



the union in accordance to hall rules. Individuals must be able and available for work while claiming unemployment and insurance benefits. Any reason that would prevent an individual from working, accepting work, or looking for work, must be reported to IWD.

#### **4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.**

Our integrated service delivery system provides customers assistance with employment applications, resume assistance, assessments, skills development and employment services programs. Career Planners provide information to participants on community resources, Labor Market Information, HiSET (high school equivalency program), occupational training, on-the-job training and support services.

Additionally, Career Planners share the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) with participants so they may make an informed decision on training providers. They also provide information on GAP/PACE, Title I programs, Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship, and other grants and scholarships that they may be eligible for. Career Planners identify participants' needs, assist with unemployment insurance, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, workshops and training. When Career Planners identify that a customer may benefit from a referral, they facilitate a "warm handoff" to the applicable program partner. Currently, each local area tracks these referrals through their own processes and procedures.

Looking forward, the state partners of the programs represented in this plan, in consultation with local boards and partner programs, will develop a streamlined customer experience through drafting an updated customer flow and collaborating on a referral process from and to core, required, and program partners to coordinate workforce activities and increase the capacity of each partner by allowing specialized services to function optimally and assist in the elimination of the duplication of services. Local referral systems must then further define how documentation will be completed to show the result of the referral.

#### **e. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)**

Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include--

##### **1. Assessment of Need**

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

The needs of farmworkers in Iowa vary depending upon the specific type of farmworker. Native Iowa farmworkers tend to have a higher need for employment assistance to fill gaps during slower farm periods. Domestic migrant workers needs pertain more to employment assistance, housing, medical services, legal services and knowing their rights as a migrant farm worker.



Temporary foreign agricultural farmworkers have slightly different needs like knowing their rights as a worker under their contract. They also tend to need assistance with medical services, community resources and legal services, specifically taxes.

A review of MSFW data of individuals (~12,000) who are registered in IowaWORKS shows that just over 50% of the MSFWs in the state are between the ages of 22-44, with 55% of all MSFWs being male. MSFWs registered in IowaWORKS shows that nearly all (90%) have at least a high-school diploma or its equivalent. However, during peak season, a total of 55,000 MSFWs will live and work in Iowa and the majority of these individuals lack a High School education.

## **2. Provide an assessment of the agricultural activity in the State:**

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

### **1. Identify the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity;**

Based on information from the United States Department of Agriculture, the Iowa Department of Agriculture, and Iowa State University - Extension & Outreach, Iowa's top five labor-intensive agricultural crops are corn, soybeans, barley, rye, milo, and oats. Major animal agricultural activities are hogs, cattle (including dairy production), lambs, alpaca, chickens (including egg production), and goats. Apple orchards, vineyards, wineries, strawberries, blueberries, nurseries and greenhouses are other significant labor-intensive agricultural products produced in Iowa. Additional agricultural products produced in Iowa include apiculture, fur-bearing animals, turtles. Soil preparation, landscaping, and support activities for crop production are other areas for consideration in Iowa. The months of heaviest agricultural activity in Iowa are during the months of July, August, and September. Iowa has a total 35.7 million acres of land. 30.6 million acres, or 86%, of Iowa's land is used for farming operations. Iowa has over 88,000 farms averaging roughly 345 acres in size. Given these statistics, and Iowa's overall nutrient-rich soil, the entire state is prime for farming activity.

### **2. Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and**

Agricultural employers in Iowa primarily hire seasonal workers from within their communities. It is becoming harder for these employers to fill their workforce needs with local workers. More and more they are using farm labor contractors to recruit workers. Additionally, employers are experiencing a decline in the number of farmworkers willing to migrate for seasonal opportunities. One reason for this decline is younger populations are not interested in migrating long distances as were previous generations. Many opt to stay closer to their permanent residences in southern states where climates allow for more year-round farming opportunities. Older generations are retiring and being supported by their younger generations who are not entering the farming industry at the levels their parents and previous generations once did. As a result, there is a shortage of available migrant workers from which to recruit. The H-2A visa

program continues to grow in Iowa. The majority of these jobs provide labor for construction needs on farms (the H-2A program allows U.S. agricultural employers anticipating a shortage of domestic workers to bring non-immigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature).

Employers have expressed difficulties in communicating with non-English speaking workers and the need for either workers to be more fluent in English or additional staff who are bilingual/multilingual and can act as translators for the employer.

Employers are requiring an increased need for individuals with advanced training and skills to operate equipment on their farms. Farm applicators are in high demand and require additional training and skills. Additionally, there is a shortage of workers with driver's license and/or a CDL license for employers to hire. An increasing number of agricultural jobs are requiring the ability to perform multiple job duties, including driving farm equipment.

### **3. Identify any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.**

Iowa has seen, and will likely continue to see more, intense swings in weather ranging from drought to flooding as weather continues to be affected by El Niño and La Niña weather patterns. Severe storms during summer months, the height of crop production, are always a factor in Iowa. Examples of these significant weather events include record floods in 2008, 2016, and 2019 resulting in a combined total of more than \$2.5 billion in damages. A record derecho in August of 2020 caused nearly \$11 billion in damages in the state. Since the spring of 2023, the state has experienced a significant draught, the loses of which have yet to be determined. While these damage estimates include urban areas, the impacts to the agricultural economy in Iowa is significant due to crop damages and soil erosion. Additionally, Iowa has been affected by multiple avian flu outbreaks and it is anticipated this could continue into upcoming years. It will be important to have outreach workers trained in unemployment to assist farm workers with applying for benefits if their work is affected by avian flu.

### **3. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers by summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.**

The vast majority of Iowa's farmworkers come from Texas and Mexico and are seasonal workers. Iowa also sees farmworkers come from Costa Rica, Central and South America, South Africa, and Ukraine. The primary languages spoken by MSFWs in Iowa include: Spanish, English, Russian, French, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Creole. Iowa typically has approximately 55,000 MSFWs during the peak season (July through September) and 14,000 during the low

season. Around 40% of our farmworker population is migrant, while approximately 10% is native to Iowa and around 50% are H2A. The use of seasonal H2A workers in Iowa continues to increase.

### **Language Barriers**

Many MSFWs lack English language skills which creates a communication barrier. This barrier makes it difficult to look and apply for employment, attend training, complete paperwork and obtain a job that will provide a livable wage. All outreach workers in Iowa are bilingual, speaking English and Spanish. Almost all of Iowa's American Job Centers (AJCs) employ individuals who speak Spanish. All AJCs have access to a language line that provides interpretation services for a variety of languages.

### **Available resources**

MSFWs in Iowa have many resources available to them, however, the lack of knowledge of these resources creates a greater need - the ability to access these resources. Iowa's outreach workers meet with individuals within their communities to provide information and educate them about available local resources and how to access them.

### **Health Issues**

Limited access to medical, public health, and preventive care services has consequences, especially among these isolated populations. New and older workers come unprepared to face the daunting work in the field which can lead to the need for medical care. Health needs also arise due to underlying health issues. Pregnant women need assistance as they are exposed to extreme heat and field conditions.

### **Housing**

The lack of affordable rental housing in rural Iowa creates a need for Iowa's MSFWs. Many, if not all, migrant workers who come with Farm Labor Contractors (FLCs) are required to pay for their own housing. These housing locations are not inspected prior to occupancy and are only inspected if the Iowa Department of Public Health receives a complaint. Other Iowa housing locations provided by FLCs are not reported or issued a housing permit. Outreach workers are only made aware of these locations when conducting outreach at worksites. MSFWs routinely complain about the lack of clean housing, overcrowding and high rent payments paid to the FLC. They are left with no other choice as they are here only for a short time and have no other accommodation options.

### **Public Benefits**

Iowa's MSFWs often need assistance with public benefit applications or to appeal application denials. Migrant workers often do not understand they can apply for food assistance while living in Iowa as a migrant worker. Outreach workers have contact with the Iowa Department of Human Services across the state to assist with the completion and processing of these applications. Outreach workers help MSFWs complete these applications online as well. Additionally, seasonal workers in Iowa may be eligible for Medicaid. This is another program for which outreach workers provide application assistance.

### **Mistreatment and lost wages**

Outreach workers in Iowa conduct vigorous outreach across the state. While conducting this outreach, MSFWs are informed about their work rights and the complaint system. Many times after the outreach worker leaves, the MSFW will contact the outreach worker to file a complaint. MSFWs must be paid for all hours worked and not be mistreated by employers. The majority of complaints are against farm labor contractors operating in the state.

### **Education**

There is a significant need for educational resources that focus on this population. Workshops for the general public are offered in AJCs, however, Spanish-language workshops are not offered, or very limited. Some workshops have been recorded in Spanish for on-demand access. Many MSFWs do not have a resume and may not understand the importance of maintaining an update-to-date one. Many of Iowa's MSFWs have less than a high school education. Although Iowa's AJCs market career development to everyone who walks in the door, the MSFW population is less likely to take advantage of those resources. Because this population is less likely to visit a center, it is crucial, and required, outreach workers make available AJC services, or provide information on what services are available within a center, where they work and congregate

### **Social Isolation and Chronic Poverty**

Due to the inherent isolation of this population, many issues arise such as lack of transportation and all that results from decreased mobility. Many MSFW cannot independently seek employment or supportive services even if they wanted to and/or knew how or where to go for such services. Childcare is a noted need of many MSFW families, but is difficult to secure, afford and access within the isolated MSFW communities and childcare deserts which exist across much of Iowa. Most MSFW populations live at or near the poverty line and are also considered to be underemployed. Currently, AJC efforts and resources are focused primarily on individuals who are chronically unemployed.

## **4. Outreach Activities**

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

### **1. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) serves the agricultural community through its outreach program designed to contact MSFW who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted at the AJC.

Iowa plans to continue strengthening cooperative partnerships with the National Farmworkers Jobs Program (NFJP), Proteus; the Iowa Department of Education; and Iowa Legal Aid to conduct outreach activities to enhance the service offerings to MSFWs.

IWD currently has five outreach workers. The outreach workers are strategically placed across the state to allow outreach to be conducted in each county without more than a two-hour drive. This allows the outreach workers to visit each local office in their area at least once each month.

### **Utilizing technology**

Outreach workers each carry an Apple iPad and their laptop to assist in recruitment efforts. These iPads and laptops are used to register MSFWs on location. MSFWs are able to search for jobs and make referrals to employment without traveling to an AJC. Outreach workers assist in resume writing, job search activity, and job referrals all from the MSFWs location and at times convenient for the MSFW.

### **Communication**

Outreach workers are assigned a state-issued cell phone which allows them to communicate timelier with MSFWs. Phone calls and text messages are used, when appropriate, by outreach workers to contact MSFWs.

### **Departure meetings**

Iowa's outreach workers continue to attend onboarding events when the workers arrive for the season and are exploring the option of departure meetings with employers. Departure meetings will be held on the last or near last day of work with MSFWs. These meetings will focus on how the MSFW's season went with the current employer, the possibility of returning to the same employer next season, and other job opportunities available in Iowa. Departure meetings will be beneficial to both employers and MSFWs.

### **Outreach Workers Schedule**

A normal day for an outreach worker is 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. These work hours can make it difficult to contact MSFWs, because MSFWs often have the same work hours. As expected, employers do not like to have MSFWs away from work during peak season. In coordination with their manager, outreach workers are permitted to work outside of their normal hours to allow for more targeted outreach. This also allows outreach workers to host and attend community events where the target population gathers outside of working hours. This effort will increase Iowa's outreach contacts.

### **Employer Visits**

It is important for IWD to establish positive working relationships with Iowa's agriculture employers. Employers are more willing to open their doors to outreach workers if they have been contacted prior to the season and understand the benefits of working together. Outreach workers will meet with employers in the off-season to explore needs for the upcoming season. This will help open the door for them when the workers arrive. Outreach workers will discuss the previous season and advise of any changes employers could make for the upcoming season in relation to the hiring and recruitment of workers.

### **Resources**

Iowa's AJCs offer materials about available resources. Materials are translated into Spanish, as necessary. AJCs review the provided material and determine what needs to be translated and



submit it to the IWD Communications bureau. Material is required to be available to MSFWs in their native language.

### **Unique needs**

Migrant workers often arrive with only a backpack of clothes and a willingness to work in Iowa. There is a great need for personal hygiene items, as well as food items for these workers. Each year outreach workers coordinate with local AJCs to collect items to distribute to MSFWs in their communities during onboarding events and while conducting outreach. Outreach workers also connect MSFWs to local resources to meet these needs.

**2. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System (“Complaint System” described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.**

As of July 1, 2023, Iowa is revamping the standard training provided to outreach workers. Training will be divided into pre-recorded modules, which can be updated, as needed, and viewed by outreach staff at any time. Topics for these modules are the Judge Ritchey Law, roles and responsibilities of an MSFW outreach specialist, MSFW reporting system, including how and why outreach workers need to document services they provide, the Agricultural Recruitment System, Complaint System, and role of the State Monitor Advocate.

Other technical assistance provided to outreach workers will include feedback from the State Monitor Advocate, Regional Monitor Advocate, and local office Operations Managers. Outreach Specialists will attend as many conferences as feasible to gain additional tools and best practices to serve the MSFW population in Iowa. Examples of Iowa Agriculture conferences Outreach Specialists have attended in the past include: Practical Farmers of Iowa, Iowa State Extension, Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, Women in Agriculture, Agribusiness Showcase, Iowa Organic Conference, and Farming for the Future. Outreach Specialists also are afforded the opportunity to attend meetings and conferences hosted or supported by U.S. Department of Labor.

Outreach Specialists will continue to attend quarterly MSFW Coalition meetings with Proteus (National Farmworker Jobs Program & Agriculture Health), Iowa Legal Aid and Migratory Education to increase awareness of new resources available to the MSFW population and to collaborate and establish best practices for serving this population in Iowa.

**3. Increasing outreach staff training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.**

#### Unemployment Insurance Training

Unemployment Insurance training Outreach workers will receive training from IWD’s Unemployment Insurance division. Many times, migrant workers will file unemployment in



Iowa prior to returning to their home state. Outreach workers will be trained to answer basic questions that may arise.

#### Weekly Training Meetings

Every Wednesday morning at each local AJC, all center staff come together for various trainings prior to opening to the public. These weekly trainings cover a wide range of topics throughout the year. Training topics typically include Title I, Registered Apprenticeship, Co-Enrollment, Self-Improvement and Mental Health, and a wide variety of others. Outreach workers may attend trainings at any of the local AJC's they cover. Trainings are always recorded so staff can listen at a later date/time if they are unable to attend in person.

#### **4. Providing outreach staff professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

##### Professional Development

Iowa offers Performance and Development Solution (PDS) classes to all state employees. These classes offer a way for employees to continue professional development. Outreach workers will be offered the opportunity to attend classes.

##### Training Bureau

IWD has a training bureau to onboard new agency employees. All new outreach workers are encouraged to attend the new worker training provided by the bureau. As new training classes are created, current outreach workers will attend when the training is beneficial.

##### Workforce GPS

All outreach workers will create an account in Workforce GPS and review all current training material. Outreach workers will attend all new webinars offered by the National Monitor Advocate. Outreach workers are encouraged to attend webinars held for the NFJP as well.

#### **5. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.**

##### National Farmworker Job Program

IWD maintains a current MOU with Proteus, the entity currently providing services under the National Farmworker Jobs Program. This MOU is important to aid in providing joint outreach, data sharing, and continued collaboration. Outreach workers attend events held by Proteus and vice versa. Outreach workers invite NFJP case managers to all outreach events they attend where MSFWs are present. Outreach workers carry NFJP brochures to give to MSFWs and provide information about the program when case managers are unable to attend events. Outreach workers utilize an electronic form to submit all referrals to the NFJP. This enables these referrals to be tracked between the agencies. Outreach workers are able to complete this form while conducting outreach when they determine an individual is interested in the program. The SMA, outreach workers and their AJC managers meet with the director and case managers of the NFJP quarterly to plan outreach activity and discuss upcoming events across the state.

### Iowa Migratory Education

IWD continues to maintain an MOU partner with Iowa's Migratory Education Program. This MOU sets the foundation for joint outreach and collaboration moving forward. It also assists in identifying data sharing elements will aid in conducting outreach. Outreach workers continue to attend events hosted by Migratory Education Program. During the summer, Migratory Education Program holds events at schools for students enrolled in summer reading programs. These events have assisted outreach workers in locating and identifying migratory workers. Outreach workers invite Migratory Education Program to all onboarding events where migratory workers are hired and families are present.

### Iowa Legal Aid

IWD currently works alongside Iowa Legal Aid to conduct joint outreach to MSFWs. Iowa Legal Aid provides free legal assistance to MSFWs through the farmworker program. Legal services available include employment rights, taxes, health and safety, immigration, education, and housing. Every complain IWD receives that requests a referral to Iowa Legal Aid is referred via the complaint form. Iowa Legal Aid attends outreach events with the outreach workers and addresses questions that arise during these events.

### MSFW Coalition

Iowa's SMA and outreach workers are part of a MSFW coalition that meets quarterly. At each meeting an organization is invited to discuss the services they offer and how these services may assist MSFWs. The coalition discusses trends across the state and any ideas that have arisen during the previous quarter. The coalition communicates regularly using a Google Group. IWD will continue to be an integral part of the coalition and participate in regular communication to ensure all participating agencies are receiving the same information.

### Business Engagement Teams

Outreach workers will continue to work alongside the business engagement teams in their local offices. They are encouraged to meet with each business engagement team on a regular basis and set up a business outreach plan regularly. This outreach plan targets new agricultural employers in the area along with employers the AJC has worked with in the past. Plans will include when employers will be contacted, who will contact the employer, and which employers will be visited that month. Outreach workers will discuss the hiring needs of the agricultural employers in the area during these periodic meetings.

### OSHA

A continued partnership with USDOL OSHA helps assist outreach workers in locating MSFWs in the event of an accident on a farm or facility. Outreach workers can be of assistance to OSHA during an investigation with both interpretation and completion of documents. This allows the outreach worker to document a complaint or apparent violation, if applicable.

### Department of Transportation

A relationship with the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) assists outreach workers when questions are asked about driver's licenses or CDLs. Migrant workers here on an H-2A visa often will have questions about obtaining state-issued licenses. The DOT offices in rural Iowa

are not always familiar with this type of visa. This partnership provides education to DOT staff as well as education to the outreach workers.

#### Latino Coalitions

Local Latino coalitions are beginning to form across the state. These coalitions consist of organizations providing services to the Latino population in their community in a unique way. Iowa's outreach workers will become members of these organizations as they are formed and attend meetings regularly. It is important that outreach workers become familiar with the services available in the communities to which they provide outreach.

### **5. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.**

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

**A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**

**i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**

WIOA Title I partners will be trained on identifying MSFWs. Outreach workers will meet with Title I staff to review MSFW referrals as applicable. Outreach workers will utilize the referral form created at the AJC to make referrals to the Title I provider. When completing a referral to the NFJP, a dual referral will be made to the Title I provider, if applicable.

**ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

#### Business Engagement Division

Iowa Workforce Development has implemented a Business Engagement Division specifically designed to be a one-stop shop where Iowa employers can find workforce solutions, regardless of where they are in the business cycle. This is beneficial for Iowa's agriculture businesses as they have a direct link to someone who can assist them with their specific business needs.

Business engagement teams across the state currently write job orders for agricultural employers. They recruit for employers, offer job retention courses, and labor marketing information. Hiring events are also held in the AJC for employers and cover topics such as layoff aversion, unemployment insurance and human resource assistance.

The business engagement teams receive annual training on the ARS. Training includes how to market the ARS, what benefits employers receive from utilizing it, and how workers are recruited through the system.

The Labor Market Division assists in identifying agricultural employers. Outreach workers will work with the division to assist in identifying potential agriculture employers that hire on a temporary or seasonal basis.

Practical Farmers of Iowa's mission is to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities. Many of Iowa's farmers are part of this organization. Each year they hold field days on farms across the state. These field days offer the opportunity for AJC staff and outreach workers to get to know their agricultural community. Farmers from the area attend these fields days to engage with other farmers. This is the perfect opportunity to learn how farms operate.

#### Employer's Council of Iowa

The Employer's Council of Iowa (ECI) is an advisory group that offers no-cost membership open to all Iowa businesses. Its purpose is to guide Iowa Workforce Development's business focus. ECI addresses topics of concern to employer by sponsoring training initiatives. Additionally, ECI advises not only IWD, but also legislators, and other officials concerning its products, services and policies that affect employers, and provides opportunities for employers to exchange information and develop education programs.

Iowa would like to focus on increasing agricultural employer participation in this group and its training initiatives, to ensure agricultural employers have a voice in this organization. Increased agricultural employer participation would be beneficial to highlight needs that overlap between agricultural employers and other employers throughout Iowa.

#### **B. Marketing the Complaint System to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.**

Complaint system training is conducted annually for all AJC staff. It is important that staff understand the system in order to explain it to MSFWs. Each office has a designated complaint specialist along with a back-up person. These individuals receive additional training each year.

The MSFW Coalition will receive a presentation once a year on the importance of utilizing the established complaint system. This presentation will be given by the IWD SMA and outreach workers. Complaint forms will be shared with the coalition and they will be encouraged to utilize these forms.

Outreach workers will explain the complaint system during every onboarding event held with MSFWs. They will distribute business cards to each worker and ensure they know how to file a complaint if an issue arises. During every departure event the complaint system will again be explained to the MSFWs and complaints taken onsite if one needs to be filed.

Outreach workers will carry a checklist that must be completed for every onboarding event and departure meeting. This will ensure the topic of the complaint system is covered and explained to MSFWs.

IWD's complaint poster with the SMA's information is prominently displayed at every AJC. Additionally, it is posted inside every housing location that is inspected by outreach workers or

IWD's designated agency. Agricultural employers are encouraged to post the complaint poster in break rooms where MSFWs gather.

### **C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.**

#### **Handbook**

IWD currently utilizes several different marketing materials to promote the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to agricultural employers and MSFWs. The current Agricultural Recruitment System Handbook is given to agricultural employers who hire seasonal labor and have had difficulty filling positions. Business engagement teams and outreach workers take the handbook with them when contacting businesses. The handbook will be updated to reflect current information.

#### **Brochures**

Two brochures have been created that give an overview of system benefits. One brochure targets the employer and the other provides information to the individual looking for work. The worker brochure describes the guarantees that are outlined in an ARS job order.

#### **Marketing Videos**

The IWD Communications division, along with the SMA and outreach workers, are creating marketing videos with testimony from an employer that utilized the ARS. This video will be shared on all IWD social media platforms to encourage employers to utilize this system. This video also will be shareable via email. An additional video will be created to attract individuals to Iowa to work on these contracts. It will share, from the workers' perspective, the benefits of working on an ARS contract. This video will be used in the recruiting process for employers.

IWD's SMA and outreach workers will present at conferences throughout the year that agricultural employers attend to market the ARS. This platform will raise awareness of the ARS and its benefits. Additionally, Business Engagement Consultants will promote the use of ARS as they speak to agricultural employers throughout the state.

## **6. Other Requirements**

### **A. Collaboration**

Describe any collaborative agreements the State Workforce Agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and establish new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The SMA established an MOU with Iowa's NFJP Grantee, Proteus, in July 2020. This MOU is required by DOL; however, the SMA and NFJP included additional items to enhance collaboration. This MOU will be renewed in July 2024.

Iowa will continue to collaborate via quarterly Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Coalition meetings. These meetings bring together Iowa Workforce Development and IowaWORKS staff, Proteus, Iowa Legal Aid, Migratory Education, and additional partners relevant to the MSFW population in Iowa. During each meeting an organization is invited to discuss the services they offer and how these services may assist MSFWs. The coalition discusses trends across the state and any ideas that have arisen during the previous quarter.

Iowa will provide, at minimum, annual training to all WIOA Core Partners to educate all partners on services available to the MSFW population and to form stronger partnerships with WIOA Core Partnerships with these entities to better serve MSFWs.

## **B. Review and Public Comment.**

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees,<sup>10</sup> other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

- i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The state will engage in a public comment period of over 30 days, including public consultation sessions, to solicit feedback on the Unified State Plan and the AOP. The Unified State Plan, in its entirety, will be posted on the Iowa Public Comments website at <https://comment.iowa.gov/> at which time it will be directly sent to all required partners, including the NFJP grantee, all appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations. After the public comment period is over, the list of organizations solicited, all comments received, and responses to those comments will be added to this section of the plan.

## **C. Data Assessment.**

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals

<sup>10</sup> Where the NFJP grantee is the subrecipient, the NFJP grantee would not need to submit comments. Instead, the SWA must solicit information from other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations.



were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Program Year	Data Elements	MSFWs		Non-MSFWs		Equity	
		#	%	#	%	Yes	No
PY22	Received Basic Career Services (Staff Assisted)	336	98.53	28174	97.16	X	
PY21	Received Basic Career Services (Staff Assisted)	345	95.04	19270	95.55		X
PY20	Received Basic Career Services (Staff Assisted)	282	99.3	11406	95.47	X	
PY19	Received Basic Career Services (Staff Assisted)	181	100	18818	99.97	X	
PY22	Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services	128	37.54	21558	74.45		X
PY21	Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services	981	27	14548	72.13		X
PY20	Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services	114	40.14	9531	79.78		X
PY19	Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services	140	77.35	11235	59.69	X	
PY22	Received Staff Assisted Job Search Activities	71	20.82	7197	24.82		X
PY21	Received Staff Assisted Job Search Activities	142	39.12	5188	25.72	X	

PY20	Received Staff Assisted Job Search Activities	93	32.75	1711	14.32	X	
PY19	Received Staff Assisted Job Search Activities	68	37.57	3290	17.48	X	
PY22	Referred to Employment	60	17.6	3177	10.96	X	
PY21	Referred to Employment	131	36.09	2372	11.76	X	
PY20	Referred to Employment	88	30.99	873	7.31	X	
PY19	Referred to Employment	67	37.02	3250	17.27	X	
PY22	Received Unemployment Claim Assistance	158	46.33	2194	75.67		X
PY21	Received Unemployment Claim Assistance	112	30.85	14046	69.64		X
PY20	Received Unemployment Claim Assistance	86	30.28	9455	74.1		X
PY19	Received Unemployment Claim Assistance	53	29.28	10785	57.3		X
PY22	Referred to Federal Training	46	13.49	46	0.16	X	
PY21	Referred to Federal Training	0	0	52	0.26		X
PY20	Referred to Federal Training	3	1.06	2	0.02	X	
PY19	Referred to Federal Training	1	0.55	1	0.01	X	
PY22	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	124	36.36	4972	17.15	X	

PY21	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	125	34.44	3730	18.49	X	
PY20	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	104	36.62	940	7.87	X	
PY19	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	38	20.99	1785	9.48	X	
PY22	Received Individual Career Services	178	52.2	15167	52.31		X
PY21	Received Individual Career Services	201	55.37	12232	60.65		X
PY20	Received Individual Career Services	144	50.7	10735	89.86		X
PY19	Received Individual Career Services	74	40.88	11768	62.52		X

Iowa met Received Basic Career Services in three of the previous four years. The only year not met was PY21, where the metric was only missed by .51%. Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services was only met in PY19. Received Staff Assisted Job Search Activities was met in all years except PY22, where the metric was missed by 4%. Referred to Employment was met in all four of the previous program years. Received Unemployment Claim Assistance did not meet in any of the previous four years. This will be an area of increased awareness in the coming years. It is possible that Iowa's MSFW population does not need a great deal of assistance with unemployment as the majority of the MSFW population are workers who travel from one location to another. Referred to Federal Training met in all years except PY21. Iowa saw a significant increase in the number of MSFWs referred to federal training in PY22. We believe this is the result of increased training and awareness of opportunities with the Outreach Specialists. Iowa will continue to watch this metric to be sure the increased referrals continue. Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance met in all four of the previous program years. Received Individual Career Service fell short in all four of the previous four years.

Additional training will be conducted during 2024-2028 for all AJC staff on the importance of recording services provided to MSFWs and providing equitable services. Training will continue

to be conducted to ensure AJC staff are able to identify MSFWs. Outreach workers will receive additional training on when it is appropriate to enroll MSFWs in Wagner Peyser based on the level of services needed. The two career service metrics that were not met during the previous four years could be a result of Outreach Specialists enrolling MSFWs in Wagner Peyser when they really needed only basic career services. This will be an area of focus in the coming years to better understand when to enroll, and ensure that services are recorded properly in the data collection system.

#### **D. Assessment of progress**

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

IWD's prior AOP focused heavily on H-2A housing inspections. Iowa's outreach workers still did housing inspections during 2022 and 2023, but they are no longer doing it as of September 2023 allowing them to devote their time solely to outreach. Iowa has had several vacancies in the outreach worker positions throughout the last four years. Iowa needs to be fully staffed with five outreach staff to meet the demands of the workers and employers. Continuing to increase coordination with our AJC partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers. The SMA recommends a total of six (6) Outreach workers instead of five due to the large number of counties that current outreach workers cover (average of 19).

The previous AOP stated that outreach workers would attend the MAFO conference each year to connect with other states and learn best practices. This was affected by the COVID pandemic and a significant increase in registration price per participant. In PY22, the SMA and one Outreach Staff were able to attend, bringing information back to the remaining Outreach Staff.

The previous AOP referenced the Agricultural Recruitment System and the 14 job orders that had been created using it. This number increased to 49 from PY19 – PY22. Iowa will increase promotion of this during the coming years to increase that number further.

Outreach workers attend monthly AJC staff meetings as stated in the prior AOP. They present on topics related to MSFWs and agriculture employers. These presentations raise awareness with AJC staff of the needs of MSFWs and agriculture employers.

As mentioned in the last AOP, Outreach workers, AJC managers and local office staff received complaint system training each of the last four years. This training was conducted by the SMA. A designated complaint system specialist was assigned in each AJC at the point of contact for all MSFW complaints. Training will continue to be provided annually, but these trainings will not be provided by the SMA, but rather by a Wagner Peyser Program Coordinator.

IWD mentioned efforts to meet all equity indicator in the last AOP. This was not achieved across the board in the last four program years. IWD recognizes the importance of providing equitable services to MSFWs and will strive to meet all the equity indicators in the future.

## **E. State Monitor Advocate**

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed, provided input to, and approved the Agricultural Outreach Plan in its current form.

The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 the State has ten significant MSFW one-stop centers. Each office has an outreach worker assigned to cover the area to conduct vigorous outreach activities. Each office employs a bilingual Spanish speaking staff member.

## **Wagner-Peyser Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); **Yes**
2. If the state has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the state agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements; **Yes**
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and **Yes**
4. If a state chooses to provide certain ES activities without merit staff, it remains incumbent upon SWA officials to carry out the following activities if they arise: **NA**
  - a. Initiate the discontinuation of services;
  - b. Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;
  - c. Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;
  - d. Approve corrective action plans;
  - e. Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;
  - f. Enter into agreements with state and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWA's behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and
  - g. Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.

5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601). **Yes**

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

### **a. Aligning of Content Standards**

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Iowa adopted and implemented standards-based instruction to promote the quality of adult education and literacy outcomes and to support learner success in adult education, postsecondary education or training, and employment. Providers facilitate participant progress by aligning curriculum and instruction with the standards and by participating in relevant professional development.

In Iowa, all grantees will be required to adopt and align instruction to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCR), the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, Iowa's 21st Century Skills, and Adult Citizenship Standards. These standards provide the foundation for each provider's responsibility to high quality professional development as outlined in Iowa administrative rule 877-32.7 adopted August 23, 2023, including: The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

The state adult education and literacy team support implementation of academic content standards by securing the participation in national training to coach local instructors in the demands of the CCRS, including instruction for individuals at different levels of learning, standards-aligned lesson plans and curriculum, and approaches to implementing the standards. The CCR standards are designed to prepare all adult education participants for postsecondary education and training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. Iowa's English language acquisition programs are designed to support English language learners (ELLs) in becoming skilled in reading, writing, and comprehension of English, obtaining a high school credential, and supporting them as they move toward further education, training, or employment. The ELP standards for adult education ensure that ELLs receive the instruction they need to access Iowa's academic content standards. Program instructors participate in professional



development in the ELP standards to address the need for educational equity, access, and rigor for adult ELL students.

Iowa increased ELL access to core academic content by participating in and supporting AEL providers' attendance in Standards-in Action 2.0 training cohorts. The national professional development opportunity addressed the needs of ELLs in two areas: language and content development. The materials and training aligned with the state-adopted standards and introduced instructors to engaging research-based activities.

Iowa continues to grow and cultivate online courses aligned with CCR, ELP standards, and 21st Century Skills to adapt to the changing educational environment and increase access to high quality standard-aligned content. The courses/modules in reading, writing, math, social studies, science and ESL are designed to incorporate content standards and researched based instructional approaches to engage participants in instructional material that is relative to adult learners. Courses teach skills in civics literacy, employability skills, financial literacy, health literacy, and digital literacy. The state continues to expand its catalog of online offerings by designing career essential courses for all levels of participants.

Local programs will continue to provide standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment focusing on skills that enable learners to participate more fully in their communities as citizens, workers, and family members. The State will continue to deliver technical assistance and professional development related to intentional, standards-based instruction.

## **b. Local Activities**

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

### **Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)**

1. Adult education;
2. Literacy;
3. Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
4. Family literacy activities;
5. English language acquisition activities;
6. Integrated English literacy and civics education;
7. Workforce preparation activities; or
8. Integrated education and training that—
  - Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  - Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

## Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

Pursuant to Senate File 514 signed into law by Governor Reynolds on April 4, 2023, effective July 1, 2024, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) became the State's Eligible Agency (SEA) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. Prior to this change, AEFLA program administration was previously provided by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) Bureau of Community Colleges. In order to ensure continuity of services and maintain the high standards of Adult Education services historically provided in Iowa, IWD and IDE entered into an MOU that outlines responsibilities of both agencies during the transition. IWD is committed to maintaining the standards and services of Adult Education in Iowa and will not make any changes to existing policies and procedures for the remainder of the existing grant cycle.

As the SEA, IWD is responsible for administering the funds and providing program and performance oversight to grantees. Beginning in January 2020, AEL eligible Funded providers competed and were awarded funds beginning July 1, 2020, for a five-year grant cycle. Continued funding during this period will be based on demonstrated effectiveness and fulfillment of grant expectations as measured through an annual status update, financial reports, program performance reports and monitoring. A new competition will occur for funds awarded beginning July 1, 2025.

All grant applications from eligible providers as defined in Sec. 203(5) will be reviewed based on the considerations specified in Sec. 231 (e) of WIOA. with additional state priorities, standards, and context. All grants are processed through the state online grant management system. The platform manages and streamlines the grant process including application submission, review, scoring and awards, and claim submission and approval, report scheduling and approval, and maintains a historical record of grant activity.

Applicants are required to describe planned activities to support adult education and literacy in the proposed service delivery area and local workforce development area. Applicants are also asked to discuss (1) outreach efforts for participants with low literacy skills; (2) program design accommodations focused on participant needs (i.e., childcare, class times, locations, curriculum content, and materials); and (3) linkages with education, workforce and community partners to facilitate the integration of services for participants. IWD continues an equitable and inclusive approach for services, including reaching out to community, faith-based and local education agencies to share program information and discuss potential partnerships or collaborations in addressing literacy and basic skill needs.

The grant application includes the requirements of subpart C for both sections 225 activities and 243 funds and awards are monitored for federal compliance and adherence to Iowa's AEL

Program Standards. The six standards, which are aligned with WIOA and support continuous program improvement, address learner success and organizational capacity.

- Learner Success: Standard 1. Learner Progress; Standard 2. Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development; and Standard 3. Program Design and Leadership.
- Organizational Capacity: Standard 4. Accountability; Standard 5. Community Interaction and Outreach; and Standard 6. One-Stop System Integration.

Eligible providers are required to be a full-service adult education program in providing instruction for all educational functioning levels (EFL) based on identified needs of the learners and the region. The EFLs include five Adult Basic Education (ABE) levels and six English as a Second Language (ESL) levels, Funded providers are also charged with preparing adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

Eligible providers are required to offer these activities, per the Iowa WIOA Unified State Plan

- Adult education;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Literacy; and
- Workforce preparation activities.

Eligible providers may also offer any of the following, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463.30, Subpart D:

- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

Eligible providers may also be able to offer up to twenty percent (20%) of the state's allocation on the following, as needed for the purpose of serving Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals, per subpart C, 34 CFR Part 463, and Subpart F: Eligible programming for corrections education includes adult basic education, literacy, English language acquisition, adult secondary school completion and high school equivalency preparation, college transition, integrated education and training, and workforce preparation. Efforts should focus on increasing support and attention to reentry activities, enhancing access to College and Career Readiness educational opportunities and workforce preparation activities, and expanding access to support services that enable eligible individuals to transition to full, productive members of their communities.

### **Outreach Efforts**

Each provider sets an enrollment target annually that will be measured and used for performance monitoring. Enrollment is also reviewed for co-enrollment as well as percentage of participants with multiple barriers to employment. With realignment of the AEFLA program into IWD, there

will be greater focus on coordinating services to participants among core and required partners, with a focus on increasing access to AEFLA programming, as well as increasing co-enrollment among core partner programs. These enrollment goals are part of a strategic effort to increase the skill set for adults in becoming future ready and connecting to the talent pipeline for employers in high demand industries.

### **Program Design**

Eligible local providers meet learners' needs and learning style with curriculum that is embedded in real-life contexts and anchored in Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy standards (College and Career Readiness Standards, 21st Century Skills and English Language Proficiency Standards) too.

The standards are incorporated in instruction, shared best practices and ongoing professional development and training for instructors, data specialists and coordinators of programs. Local programs measure educational levels and progress using standardized assessment tools and by following the assessment policy guidelines disseminated to programs annually. All funded providers will be required to record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

The state benchmarks for each educational functioning level (EFL) remains the focus for all funded providers with performance-based funding and a targeted post-test rate established annually and posted in Iowa's Assessment Policy Guidelines. This performance data is reviewed bi-monthly during webinar meetings with all funded providers. In addition, training from the state data specialist and publicly posted benchmark progression has made it possible for each provider to review local and statewide data.

A significant investment in distance education through a statewide common learning management system with standardized curriculum for adult learners aligned to CCRS standards has been under development for the past few years with pilots launched in 2022. These efforts to broaden access to instructional services that are instructor driven have been supported by the use of Governor Emergency Education Relief Funds (GEER) used to purchase technology and access devices.

IWD Adult Education continues to place value on blending synchronous and asynchronous learning by offering more opportunities for instructors to design curriculum sequentially using LMS specifically structured and resourced by instructors to meet student needs.

### **Adult Education and Literacy**

The goal of Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities is to improve participants' basic skills in language arts and mathematics. ABE activities are performance oriented and deliver instruction through processes that facilitate, measure, and certify learning outcomes.

Adult education activities include literacy (reading and writing) and computational skills necessary for functioning at levels comparable to the skills needed to complete a high school equivalency diploma. Courses may be remedial for students, or they may provide educational opportunities for students who speak, but do not read, English. These activities are standards-based and are designed to teach the academic skills necessary for success, and to help participants acquire family sustaining employment.

## **Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities**

Workplace AEL Activities are provided by adult education and literacy providers in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location and are designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. In Workplace AEL programs, providers should understand and respond to the demands that drive business needs, employee safety, productivity, and advancement. Activities may be documented for potential measurable skill gains under the newly approved state and federal guidelines.

## **Family Literacy**

IWD will continue to offer family literacy programs to provide parents and family members with foundational skills that boost their knowledge and confidence to support the educational development of, and to become educational advocates for, their children. Parents and family members are able to improve their skills to achieve readiness for postsecondary education or training, job advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. Programs are designed to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and to better enable the family to support their children's learning needs.

## **English Language Acquisition**

As part of required core services, English language acquisition activities assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and assist adults in completing a secondary school education.

In order to prepare the English Language Learner (ELL) population for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and integrate them into the workforce system, IWD will support extending the existing ELA activities with employability skills and integrating digital literacy skills. The ELA activities are required to align to the English Language Proficiency Standards.

## **Workforce Preparation and Literacy**

With the increased awareness of the need for a workforce to be able to function in a highly technical environment, more emphasis is being placed on education. The adult education and literacy program has responded to this focus by supplying their services either in business and industry or in the classroom. Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation have been the mainstays of the services offered by AEFLA funded providers from the beginning including effective referrals, comprehensive assessment, tracking participant goals and progress, and data-informed decisions driving planned services for the participant. Providers collaborate with federal employment training programs to help adults prepare for the workforce and become self-sufficient. Adult education and literacy programs, in their local communities, seek out working agreements with Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Workforce Development, adult and juvenile court officials, and other service agencies.

## **Integrated Education and Training (IET)**

The integrated education and training activity as defined by WIOA Sec. 203 is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement targeted industry recognized credentials that aligns with Iowa's sector partnership efforts. Ongoing technical assistance and professional development has been offered to share promising and best practices for program design.

IWD promotes the engagement of all core partners to blend adult education content, workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Exploration of regional labor market needs and career pathway sectors; engagements with core partners; and workforce training with industry recognized credentials, such as in nursing, truck driving and welding, will ensure that providers have the required technical assistance to offer this service approach to participants. All workforce training services referenced in WIOA Section 134 (c) (3) (D), must be anchored on industry standards.

Beginning with the next grant cycle for July 1, 2025, Iowa will focus effort to increase IETs for Adult Education as this service approach is consistent with Governor Reynolds focus on work-based learning experiences.

### **c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals**

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of IDOC's major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to incarcerated youth and adults, to ensure a smooth transition for



returning citizens and a reduction in the state's recidivism rate. The Iowa Workforce Development will continue to work collaboratively with the IDOC in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state administered AEL services.

Eligible providers may provide corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals when such facilities are located within their service area. Priority shall be given to eligible individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program (WIOA§225). IWD will ensure that only up to twenty percent of the 82.5 percent of the local grants and contracts under Section 231 of WIOA is used for corrections education and the education of other institutionalized individuals, per federal regulations 34 CFR 463.61(a).

Recidivism definitions and terms used in Iowa's reporting of recidivism were developed by The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) to establish standard performance measures. The recidivism rate for 2022 is 37% and the rate for 2023 is 34.3- 2.7% lower than the recidivism rate observed in 2022. The releases tracked are parole; discharges due to end of sentence; and sex offender releases to special sentence supervision.

Iowa's AEFLA funded providers enroll participants at state correctional institutions and through local correctional and institutionalized facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required WIOA performance except when excluded and are subject to Iowa's assessment policies. In PY 2022, data shows that 13 percent (1,819) of total periods of participation in adult education were corrections and institutionalized individuals. Of those, 55.9 percent achieved a measurable skill gain during their participation.

The IDOC's contract with educational providers, in partnership with the community colleges and the Iowa Workforce Development work to establish the level of staff, curriculum and program standards to be offered in each of the nine state facilities. With additional focus on transition services and reducing recidivism, the use of Section 231 funds and 225 corrections funding is being applied to support and extend the state funded academic programs to assist participants in acquiring the basic skills and competencies necessary to move from an institutional setting into the workforce and community.

The IDOC reports several implementation efforts, which include but are not limited to:

- Prioritizing institutional and community-based treatment for high-risk individuals.
- Utilizing evidence-based programs.
- Improved and aligned reentry practices.
- Increased access to education and educational opportunities.
- Building capacity within apprenticeship programs.
- Training staff in core correctional practices (CCP).
- Enhanced case management training.

Programs will provide adult education instruction at all levels of basic academic skills, for students who meet the eligibility requirements for enrollment. Participants in correctional

settings must qualify for adult education and literacy activities by lacking sufficient mastery of basic educational skills or have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent. The use of funds will include all allowable activities detailed in Sec. 225(b)(1-8). Emphasis will be in developing programs that integrate the basic skills instruction with life skills, employability skills (which includes digital literacy) to help participants acquire necessary abilities to become and remain self-sufficient after leaving prison. Transition focused activities include pre-apprenticeship efforts as well as integrated education and training activities that are in partnership with the apprenticeship efforts. Corrections will continue to be a partner in the career pathway efforts to ensure that instructional activities are aligned with regional needs at each correctional location. Iowa's adult education and literacy program gives priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave correctional institutions within five years of participation in adult education programs.

#### **d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program**

**Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.**

Iowa Adult Education programs continue to leverage bridge programs with integrated instruction of English language and technical skills offers immigrants the opportunity to improve language skills while obtaining useful career and technical skills and accessing job-readiness supports. This type of interdisciplinary approach to adult education for immigrants and English Learners currently occurs with the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program under WIOA Title II. These programs assist immigrants with preparation for citizenship and full participation in the civic life of their community. Through partnerships with community colleges and employers, we can apply this interdisciplinary instructional model to workforce development. We want to encourage more of our AE providers to offer this type of instructional approach for English Learners, immigrants, and refugees to allow these individuals to acquire English, learn our culture, and gain employable skills.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will continue to leverage past experiences with providing English literacy and civics education in meeting the new requirements for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) under WIOA. Programs will be established through an application for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IECLE) and will follow subpart C and Section 243 to require applicants to provide a narrative describing plans to provide

English language acquisition (ELA) that is aligned with the English Proficiency Standards and civics education along with program access to integrated education and training services. In addition, each program will ensure access to career advising for each participant while engaging in occupationally relevant education and training that is aligned to a regionally developed career pathway and Iowa's 21st Century Skills. The application will be reviewed and scored by the department to ensure compliance and quality of services. The review will take into account the following factors: selection committee's scoring and recommendations (scoring rubrics will be published on the AEL program website here); alignment of proposed applicant activities with needs for services in the intended service area; evaluation of cost of service relative to need and cost efficiency; evaluation of historic program data provided by the applicant; and evaluation of financial internal controls provided by applicant. During the grant year 2020-21, the department implemented a multi-year competitive application process for IELCE funding. Funding will continue based on annual performance and may be adjusted. IELCE awards will be based on the number of participants grantees are serving.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.**

Programs are asked to describe the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation instruction that will be offered in their IELCE program. Programs are also asked to provide the strategy or design for preparing ELL participants for, and placing them in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency?

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.**

The application process requires programs to fully provide narratives outlining all IET activities including language and civics acquisition for regionally recognized in-demand industry including industry recognized certifications along with OJT's, incumbent worker and employer customized trainings.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.**

IWD Adult Education programs must describe how the applicant plans to continually align its services with Core Partners and Community Based Organizations. Especially important is the relationship with the one-stop partners in the communities where it is applying for funding and

how the applicant organization intends to work with one-stop partners to ensure the efficient delivery of adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals must be addressed. This includes plans for co-enrollment, referral services, and infrastructure costs.

Section 243, IELCE, funds can be expended during the program year on personnel, contracts, software, travel, professional development, and supplies necessary, allocable and allowable to implement the IELCE program under the Uniform Guidance. These expenditures are to be reported on the quarterly expenditure claim reports in Iowa Grants. The Iowa Workforce Development encourages providers to seek out partnerships that leverage workforce services for participants of the IELCE program. For example, a provider might collaborate with local WIOA partners to fund the training component of the IET activities.

The department plans to issue continual guidance and technical assistance to eligible providers on how to co-enroll participants in occupational training, and how Section 243 funds may be used to provide occupational training as part of an integrated education and training program, as appropriate.

Entities must provide annual status updates to demonstrate their effectiveness and how they have met their grant considerations along with alignment with their local workforce development plans. To determine if a provider continues to receive funding providers will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement. Based on labor market information, IELCE providers will update their scope of activities annually which allows current details reflective of the newly approved workforce areas and their plans to direct the work with sector partnerships in developing career pathways for in-demand industries. These career pathways form the basis for integrated education and training (IET) activities for IELCE programs.

### **e. State Leadership**

#### **Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.**

Iowa's adult education and literacy team is committed to the required state leadership activities and has identified a number of areas in which services are being provided through technical assistance or through targeted training. Funds under section 222(a)(2) will not exceed more than 12.5 percent of the AEFLA funds. Activities that support the required leadership activities include:

1. Funds will be used to build the capacity of local programs to coordinate and align services which will include cross-training core partner staff on intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and a common referral process. Additional efforts to align services include working toward a common distance education platform that integrates education and training of basic skills, employability skills and career and technical education.
2. In addition, the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development will continue to be a priority with a focus on aligning services as a participant transition from adult education through integrated education and training to further their education and employment opportunities. A state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development

of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness.

3. The state adult education and literacy program supports high quality professional development as demonstrated in the adopted Iowa Administrative Code 281:23.7 which defines the responsibility of the programs for providing professional development opportunities for professional and volunteer staff, including:
  - Proper procedures for administration and reporting;
  - The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and
  - Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

Professional development standards incorporated in the administrative code outline the minimum annual hours of instructor training, individual professional development plans, and monitoring of staff qualification and high-quality professional development. A professional development management system is used to report professional development activities in adult education and literacy programs. The system tracks instructor professional development plans, hours of professional development attended (including required pre-service), and catalogs of state and local training.

State leadership funds are targeted to support high quality professional development activities. A data-driven planning process that includes monitoring, individual and local plans, and classroom observation, is used to identify professional development needs and to set priorities for each program year. Professional development activities include content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, integration of the skills that matter, research-based instructional methodologies and approaches, effective program management (universal design), integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to post-secondary education, use of technology, distance education, serving students with disabilities, and tutor training and recruitment. Recent professional development related to research-based training and technical assistance include Student Achievement in Reading (STAR); Teaching Skills that Matter (TSTM); Standards in Action 2.0; online instruction, and IET Design Camps. The adult education and literacy team will develop a statewide professional development system that includes the Professional Development Facilitator project concentrated on local program needs, state dissemination of products and information, and leadership development. Local adult education instructors from around the state will assist in the development of local professional development plans by identifying the greatest areas of opportunities for improvement.

4. Technical assistance will be provided to local programs to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established program, instructor and performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus include:



- a. Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:
    - STAR training in alphabetics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension;
    - Providing programs access and training on course development and instruction in Canvas, learning management system;
    - Hosting an adult education and literacy virtual conference to showcase best practices and resources in areas such as: Educating Adult Refugees and Immigrants, Explore Google for Education Free Applied Digital Skills, Iowa Online Adult Education and Literacy courses; Developing Workflow and Process for IELCE Programs, and Canvas tutorials.
    - Annual Adult Education and Literacy Summer Conference to equip AEL educators with the skills and knowledge participants need to be successful in the 21st century. Topics of note at the conference are leadership, career essentials for adult learners, teaching skills that matter, innovative classroom strategies, and Iowa's Distance Education Adult Learning (IDEAL) project. The conference engages adult education instructors, administrators, staff and advocates to strengthen leadership skills, build understanding of state initiatives, online teaching, integrated education and training, and community.
  - b. Enabling local programs to establish, strengthen, and maintain effective relationships with their regional core partners with common training on a system orientation, referral process, data sharing/reporting, and integration of education with occupational training, and sector partnership and career pathway development.
  - c. Using technology to improve program effectiveness through a professional development management system, developing standard aligned blended learning courses for reading, writing, math and language acquisition, online instructor and volunteer training through customized modules, and technical assistance focused on identifying and utilizing technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education.
5. Iowa's adult education and literacy team use a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to local programs, practitioners and participants. These methods will include activities such as:
- Local program site visits to assess programs and to highlight core partners' areas related to partnerships, shared governance and collaboration;
  - Sessions at state and local conferences showcase promising practices and models in areas such as creating a virtual classroom, distance education in Adult Education and Literacy, online educational resources aligned to the standards, using CASAS data to inform practice, integrating technology into the Adult Education classroom, and blended classrooms;
  - Technical assistance showcasing promising practices and models;
  - Monthly online coordinator meetings and data specialist trainings throughout the year to provide technical assistance on topics such as enrollments; reviewing the



- AEFLA applications, forms, and submission guidelines; assessment policies; financial reporting; fiscal reporting; developing budgets, and claims; retention of students; strategic planning; and [Iowagrants.gov](http://Iowagrants.gov);
- Biannual, leadership staff orientations to include training on topics such as program targets, financial claims, data management, and program monitoring and continuation of WIOA activities;
- Job descriptions which detail professional development activities based on the adopted Iowa administrative code;
- Dissemination of standards and annually updated handbooks; and
- A Statewide Professional Development Facilitator project that will establish professional development priorities and disseminate information.

Local programs are evaluated for effectiveness by the department through their status updates, oversight of data integrity, fiscal accountability as well as desktop and site monitoring. For programs with reported findings associated with the administration of their grant, a corrective action plan is developed and approved by the state to track continuous improvement in identified areas of concern.

**Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.**

Iowa's adult education and literacy team uses funds made available under section 222 (a)(2) to provide activities such as the operation of professional development programs; the provision of technology assistance; development of curriculum implementing the essential components of reading instruction; program improvement and support; alignment studies with standards and competencies, incorporating 21st century skills; and promoting workplace adult education and literacy activities. Additional supported activities include coordination with other agencies to increase enrollment and successful completion in adult education programs and linkages with post-secondary institutions.

Online professional development offered through video conferencing, on-demand webinar recordings, or the learning management system make it possible for Iowa's adult education and literacy team to disseminate best practices in areas such as new instructor training, aligning academic standards with course content, developing models of integrated education and training, and accessibility to career pathways without disrupting local programs' services for adults. Online professional development improves consistency of instruction while reducing travel costs for trainers and participants. The state team, with the assistance of community partners, local AEL providers, and professional development facilitators will continue to develop online training opportunities that can be accessed at the convenience of the educator. These interactive professional development courses will include, learning management systems 101, teaching skills that matter, motivating the adult learner, blended learning models, integration of English language instruction with workplace education, and a continued focus on alignment of adult education activities with academic standards of reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition.

Iowa Distance Education Adult Literacy (IDEAL) initiative provides a single learning management system, Canvas, adopted for all providers through a partnership with the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO). High-quality, standards-driven, state master courses are developed and can be delivered entirely online and customized to add area specific content to address regional demands and the needs of the participants. Local providers will continue to offer face to face classes as usual and will use IDEAL to expand services while providing accessibility for participants that may struggle with attending in person classes. This system will assist in the implementation of technology applications and support the use of instructional technology in the adult education classroom.

Iowa has established professional development standards that detail professional development expectations and effective teaching strategies. Professional Development standards will assist programs in providing state approved targeted training that is aimed at improving quality instruction to adult learners. In support of the professional development and instructor standards, the Professional Development Facilitator project is being implemented to concentrate on local program and statewide needs, state dissemination of products and leadership development. The professional development facilitators will consist of local adult education and literacy instructors who will collaborate with local providers to develop local PD plans and coordinate state level staff development activities. Adult education and literacy leadership activities will also include:

- Develop and disseminate guidance, documents, and models to align state policy with the qualification of staff and implement instructional standards for classroom management and high-quality instructional practices;
- Expand Teaching Skills that Matter to all local programs;
- Increase the use of the STAR reading program with each funded program implementing the evidence-based strategies in reading instruction; and
- Diversify the online professional development services

Activities supported by state leadership funds are evaluated by the following criteria:

- Statewide implementation, adoption, and diffusion into adult literacy instructional strategies, methodologies and curriculum infusion;
- Programs' alignment of professional development to Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy Professional Development Standards
- Alignment with Iowa Administrative Code (IAC):281.23;
- Implementation of standards-based instruction: lead standards approach; designing coherent units of instruction; conducting lesson studies; participating in peer groups; and engaging in classroom observations for continuous quality improvement;
- Long-term improvement in program outcomes measured by the state and local program's ability to continually meet the state negotiated benchmark levels; and
- Adult learner assistance to effectively meet personal and program literacy goals.

Surveys were conducted to establish a baseline of current practices and levels of integration for the one-stop centers. Based on this information, guiding documents were developed and disseminated to assist eligible funded programs in their roles and responsibilities associated with partnering with the one-stop centers. Training was developed to accompany these documents to assist with implementation and to help address barriers to ensure seamless delivery for the participant. The Department will continue to assess current practices and integration with the one-stop centers to maximize the impact of the adult education activities.

## **f. Assessing Quality**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) assesses the quality of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded providers on an annual and ongoing basis, including: professional development evaluations and reports; on site and desktop monitoring; program status updates; monthly performance reviews; and quarterly financial reviews. The results of these assessments provide the basis for program improvement actions and plans.

### **Professional Development Evaluation.**

Iowa administrative code delineates the professional development standards for adult education and literacy providers. These standards drive the state's evaluation and continuous improvement process for staff development, including decisions informed by local program personnel. IWD identifies priorities, analyzes effectiveness, and sustains continuous improvement of professional learning with data collected through participant surveys following all workshops, conference presentations, and other activities. The department conducts these surveys, manages event registration and evaluations, tracks participant hours of engagement, and monitors individual professional development plans through an online professional development accountability platform. Local program personnel likewise document self-assessments and classroom observations in the platform, thereby providing a full cycle of data from self-appraisal to the eventual impact of staff learning on instruction.

The annual state training plan includes priorities derived from surveys and training requests submitted through the professional development platform. Survey results and requests are reviewed to identify local technical assistance needs, define objectives, and determine the best delivery method. Annual priority areas include:

- **New Coordinator Training.** Provides new coordinators with information such as federal and state guidelines, data collection and National Reporting System (NRS) requirements, and resources needed to administer programs.
- **Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training.** Provides coordinators and data personnel with training on the fundamentals of the NRS, including monitoring, data analysis and collection, types of data and measures, assessments, data quality, and related information.
- **Instructor Training.** Provides information and resources to support instruction in the areas of high school equivalency preparation, evidence-based reading instruction, math, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, career pathways instructional strategies, and such standards as the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards.
- **Fiscal Accountability Training.** Provides information and resources on financial management policies and practices for compliance with state and federal financial rules and regulations, including federal Uniform Cost Principles, factors affecting allowability of costs, documentation of expenditures, time and effort reports, cost sharing, and maintenance of effort. The IWD requires AEFLA-funded providers to offer local personnel opportunities for professional development and it allocates state leadership funds to support efforts that focus on established priorities.

Actions to Improve Quality: IWD uses participant survey data, attendance hours, individual professional development plans and classroom observations, to make data-driven decisions about state-sponsored professional development, including revisions to future trainings. This allows the department to establish priorities based on issues in common among local providers. Challenges that are isolated to a local area must be addressed in the annual status update and, if persistent, require an improvement plan.

#### Monitoring.

The Iowa adult education and literacy monitoring process examines the alignment of program policies, processes, and capacity with program standards and WIOA. IWD also uses a risk-based quality assurance system to ensure student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and compliance with federal laws and regulations. While local providers are encouraged to use the risk assessment tool for internal review, the IWD completes an assessment annually to determine the appropriate monitoring strategy (virtual or on site) for each local entity.

The outcome of the annual risk analysis identifies programs at high, moderate, or low risk of noncompliance and determines the strategy appropriate for each provider, including virtual monitoring, improvement plans, or participating in the dissemination of noteworthy practices. The department also conducts an on-site monitoring visit to each provider during the five-year federal grant cycle (PY21-25). While virtual monitoring involves a targeted review of select standards, the on-site reviews address all program standards. Six principles of program quality guide the annual monitoring of adult education programs.

Benchmarks for each principle, described below, provide a framework for continuous program improvement and progress.

- Learner Progress
  - The program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented in a manner that is based on principles of adult learning and is accessible to all learners.
  - Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress, guide instruction, advising and other services that support a successful transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.
- Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development
  - Curriculum is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards.
  - Instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles.
  - The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development to improve instructional practice with support for integrating new evidence-based strategies in instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation.
- Program Design and Leadership
  - The program addresses access and equity and is responsive to the regional needs identified by key stakeholders, including learners most in need of services.

- The program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation, and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult education and literacy.
- The continuous improvement planning process is purposeful, ongoing, and systematic and is focused on the program's effectiveness in supporting learners.
- **Accountability**
  - The program maintains a stable financial condition operating in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner.
  - The program has a system for collecting and reporting data that ensures integrity and demonstrates achievement towards the state's negotiated benchmarks for enrollment and performance.
  - The program ensures accuracy in reports, reliability, privacy, and security of records.
- **Community Interaction and Outreach**
  - The program builds a collaborative system of support services that promote learner achievement and program goals.
  - The program's collaborations result in increased options for learners in postsecondary education, training, and employment aligned with regional needs and identified in the application and local plan.
  - The program successfully recruits learners from the community identified in WIOA as needing literacy services, including those with barriers to employment and hardest to serve.
- **One-Stop System Integration**
  - The program has in good faith participated in the development and implementation of the local plan, infrastructure funding agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with core and required partners, as regionally applicable.
  - The program is actively engaged in the coordination of services and resources that support the one-stop system as a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services accessible to all job seekers, workers, and businesses.
  - The program shares in the performance measures of the regional one-stop comprehensive system.

This monitoring framework assures a continuous improvement process whereby AEL programs develop education, training, and career services that address and promote equity in recruitment, service design, implementation, and support services that aim to provide equitable access and outcomes to individuals seeking access to AEL services.

Actions to Improve Quality: When the state monitoring team identifies findings of noncompliance, programs must implement corrective action based on a program improvement plan submitted within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report. The corrective action plan must identify specific strategies the local entity will implement to ensure that findings have been resolved. The monitoring team also encourages providers to implement their recommendations during the upcoming program year.



#### Program Status Update.

For each continuing year of the grant, local AEFLA-funded providers report strategies implemented during the program year to address goal and performance areas requiring continuous improvement. Specific targets that must be updated can include enrollment, post-testing rates, educational functioning level gains, transition services, and integrated education and training participation. Programs must also provide evidence of implementation for the previous year, which may be qualitative or quantitative, as well as improvement plans that address unmet performance targets that detail actions to improve quality in the upcoming year. Programs create status update forms and upload related documentation to evidence implementation of strategies in the state grant management system. The IWD can generate ad hoc reports to compare applications with updates within and across local providers. The Department uses this information to track continuous quality improvement of programs across the state.

Actions to Improve Quality: Status updates are reviewed by a panel of department personnel. Updates that lack sufficient documentation or continuous improvement are negotiated back to providers through the online grant management system with a request for additional information. Technical assistance is provided to those local entities and may include goal setting strategies, examples of documentation, or clarifying definitions.

#### Monthly Performance Review.

Iowa's AEL Assessment Policy requires programs to conduct monthly reporting on data integrity and student records. This data is pulled from an online data management system and reviewed for validity. The following data elements are reviewed: participant educational levels; attendance; number of participants exiting services after 90 days and with no scheduled services; and a unique identification number. Key data elements are posted on the department's website for tracking local AEFLA-funded providers' progress toward targets, including NRS enrollment and High School Equivalency Diplomas awarded. Each funded provider is also assessed for post-test percentage and progress toward the state negotiated educational functioning level benchmarks among participants served. While this data is available to each provider at any time through the data management system, the state's review is conducted at least monthly.

Actions to Improve Quality: The IWD allocates funds to providers based on performance. In addition, the department ties program performance reports to continuous improvement plans with required actions for data elements that are not updated on a monthly basis. Providers that do not report data on a monthly basis are out of compliance with Iowa's Assessment Policy and they limit the department's ability to make data-driven decisions. In order to assist programs in developing improvement plans, the department provides technical assistance on data reporting, NRS guidelines, implementation of Iowa's Assessment Policy Guidelines, best practices, and recommendations.

#### Quarterly Financial Reviews.

The IWD adult education and literacy team examines quarterly claims submitted by local programs to confirm the allowable and allocable use of AEFLA funds. The financial review



takes place in the state's online grant management system where providers upload requests for reimbursement and documentation of expenditures. The team also uses this as an opportunity to track the use of state leadership funds for required professional development activities that local entities have described in their application and subsequent status updates. Three levels of approval within the IWD ensures that the review of claims is complete and accurate.

Actions to Improve Quality: Financial reviews that are out of compliance with state and federal financial rules and regulations are negotiated back to providers for correction. These negotiations include outreach for technical assistance to both the program coordinator and fiscal agent, if necessary. Clarification on expectations is offered along with corrective actions. Due to the layers of approval needed, each level has the ability to negotiate back, if necessary, for correction or additional documentation. Amendments to the budget can be requested in alignment with budget caps for correction and administrative percentages. The IWD reviews and approves amendments based on the rationale provided by the local entity. Each amendment creates a new budget; however, each previous version of the budget is retained in the grant management system for tracking purposes. Changes in the budget and submission of claims are time stamped to ensure timely response and processing.

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is required for any assessment that does not meet the required standard or demonstrate improvement for each negotiated target during the competition and in the continuing program years. Providers develop these plans in partnership with the IWD to ensure clarity in the actionable elements. With funding tied to performance, programs are incentivized to meet state negotiated benchmarks.

## **Certifications and Assurances**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. **Yes**
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. **Yes**
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. **Yes**
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. **Yes**
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. **Yes**
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. **Yes**

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. **Yes**
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. **Yes**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement); **Yes**
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA; **Yes**
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under Title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; **Yes**
4. Using funds made available under Title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. **Yes**
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303). **Yes**

## **Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)**

*Instructions: In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions.*

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 04/30/2020)

### **NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS**

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about the following provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant

awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

### **To Whom Does This Provision Apply?**

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

### **What Does This Provision Require?**

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

### **What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?**

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

1. An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.
2. An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.
3. An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.
4. An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

### **Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.

### **SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA) FOR TITLE II**

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to or participation in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of WIOA, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. IWD works in partnership with Iowa's Department of Human Rights and other key stakeholders to ensure equitable access specific to AEFLA at the state and local level, described below and pledges to adhere and devote ongoing attention to each of these areas.

- Gender: IWD ensures that all genders will be equitably recruited and served through AEFLA. IWD will work with providers to ensure strategies are implemented to recruit and serve participants to achieve a proportional representation of male and female participants according to the service area demographics.

- National origin/race/color: IWD requires eligible providers to detail their experience in serving participants from diverse cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Applications and annual status updates from eligible providers ensure a continued commitment to recruit and serve eligible individuals from diverse populations (national origin, race, color) and that all activities, program components and published materials will remain free of bias of national origin, race, and color. Additionally, IWD will ensure at the state and local level that staff, and volunteers are representative of the target population of the participants being served. Guidance and examples of written material that is culturally sensitive and provided in other languages to recruit and serve participants, if needed, to eliminate language barriers that may exist, has been provided by IWD.
- Disability: IWD ensures that eligible providers will ensure equitable access to all AEFLA activities and facilities as detailed by the application process with specific state standards and are reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in services. Each eligible provider agrees to assurances to serve participants, regardless of disability. Additionally, IWD will provide professional development to assist providers and staff in developing strategies to ensure that all activities and published materials will be free of bias regarding disabilities. To further ensure equitable access to the program, all eligible providers agree to assurances to make any reasonable accommodation needed to ensure the full and equitable participation for all individuals in AEFLA activities. In addition to this and in compliance with the GEPA and WIOA Section 188, IWD in partnership with one-stop partners, where applicable, ensures that all physical spaces are designed, constructed and maintained to be compliant with the American Disability Act requirements, and are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities in order to ensure their equal access in AEFLA activities.
- Age: IWD ensures that all participants of eligible age will be served and have equitable access to participate in all AEFLA activities based on need while ensuring that all programs and published materials will be free of bias regarding age. Additionally, the providers will offer age-appropriate activities and materials, including but not limited to reading materials, for participants.

IWD pledges to operate the AEFLA, Title II, WIOA activities as described above, to ensure equitable access and participation in regards to gender, race, national origin, color, and disability.

Furthermore, IWD will ensure that providers will address recruitment, intake, participation, and hiring practices, in compliance with GEPA, in the following manner:

- Recruitment: Funded providers will ensure that AEFLA staff will recruit ALL eligible participants and not discriminate on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The local administrator will ensure any promotional material is not bias and is available in alternative format, including languages, as regionally necessary and available to all individuals. Providers of AEFLA services will ensure that their social media accounts are produced and maintained by their respective organization's policy and while IWD does not regularly review content posted, it shall have the right to request the removal of any content that is not aligned with these GEPA standards, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, off-topic, commercial or promotion of organizations or programs not related to or affiliated with WIOA services. Staff outreach to participants with barriers to employment that includes presentations, providing program material and one-on-one meetings should ensure a supportive climate and barrier-free environment. If

individuals are in need of assistance to complete an application, staff will provide assistance and if needed, make arrangements for accommodations.

- **Intake:** The eligible provider will involve staff personnel in the intake process for eligible individuals to provide a human-centered design process. Interviews, advising and assessments will be conducted with all eligible individuals to discuss and assess the educational needs and goals while addressing any questions about the services provided. The eligible provider will use information gained during the intake process to place eligible individuals in appropriate AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (in compliance with GEPA).
- **Participation:** All eligible providers will ensure that the physical facilities are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities to ensure their equal access to the program. All individuals will be able to participate in all AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
- **Hiring Process of Eligible Provider Staff:** IWD promotes equal employment opportunities and the fair treatment of employees without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, or sexual preference in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. All eligible providers are required to be an equal opportunity employer. In adhering to this, providers will ensure equal opportunity hiring guidelines to ensure equal access in employment to all who apply for a position using AEFLA funds.

IWD is committed to adhering to and monitoring these standards and practices and will make all provisions necessary to ensure that this plan is in compliance with the General Education and Provisions Act (GEPA).

#### SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA) FOR TITLE IV IVRS

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) serves a culturally, academically, racially, and socio-economically diverse population of individuals with disabilities. The agency is firmly committed to equal access and treatment for all individuals we serve as well as our employees. With respect to this commitment, the following non-discrimination clause guides and governs IVRS decision-making at all levels: It is the IVRS policy to serve all qualified individuals with a disability without discrimination based on their protected status, including physical or mental disability, age, sex, color, ethnic group, race, national origin, ancestry, religion, medical condition, sexual orientation, or marital status. This is in alignment with the IVRS mission and vision.

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

IVRS ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to, or participation in, services, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age. IVRS follows the



Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors guidance, including that IVRS staff will actively attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the individuals served. Additionally, IVRS staff do not discriminate in the provision of rehabilitation counseling services, nor condone or engage in any prejudicial treatment of an individual or a group based on their actual or perceived membership in a particular group, class or category.

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

IVRS ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to, or participation in, services, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age. IVRS leadership monitors, coordinates and recommends action to ensure compliance with the above policies. IVRS also maintains grievance procedures related to equal access for individuals served and their families. IVRS maintains a Cultural Diversity Team focused on addressing engagement with diverse job candidates to improve the minority rate, the rehabilitation rate, and employment outcomes through addressing improved service interactions as well as assisting the agency in affirmative action plans through advice, recommendations, and feedback for improved engagement and strategy implementation for staff retention and development.

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

IVRS ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to, or participation in, services, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age.

IVRS maintains a [Hearings and Appeals](#) policy that outlines the policy and procedure for grievances. An appeal/grievance must be filed within 90 calendar days of the date of action being appealed. From the initiation of any appeal by a job candidate, a hearing must be held within 60 calendar days before an Impartial Hearing Officer. The time allowance is considered to begin on the date the appeal form is received from the recipient, or completed by the Supervisor of the IVRS office, or on the date the individual orally appealed. The time may be extended by mutual agreement or the showing of good cause for the extension by one of the parties.

*Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.*

IVRS ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to, or participation in, services, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age.

IVRS and its partners are committed to implementing specific strategies for ensuring equal access to and participation in IVRS services. The following steps will be carried out with the intent to reduce and eliminate access barriers based on economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation:

- All program-related activities will be held in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and compliant facilities. Should a participant require special access needs, IVRS staff will further develop and implement a plan of action to address those specific needs that comply with the ADA.
- IVRS provides cultural sensitivity and ADA training for employees and provides similar opportunities for contracted staff.
- In the hiring and recruitment of IVRS staff, IVRS and partners will assure fair and equal hiring and recruitment practices so that all qualified individuals will have an opportunity for consideration.
- All materials developed by IVRS will be Section 508 compliant to assure equal access. Additionally, IVRS staff will work with partners to assure that all participants have access to computers or other necessary devices to ensure access.
- Both IVRS and partners will work together to ensure all participants have access to assistive technology staff who will work diligently to provide recommendations and availability of assistive technology options for participants.
- IVRS and partners will collaborate to ensure that the barriers of participants (i.e. transportation) are addressed and met, as allowable within IVRS participant regulations.
- IVRS works with business partners to ensure sites are accessible with appropriate assistive technology needs addressed.

The provisions and strategies listed above will help to ensure that the best services are provided for the individuals and families who will be served through IVRS.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

### **a. State Rehabilitation Council**

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

(A) is an independent State commission.

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

<b>Council Representative</b>	<b>Current Term Number/ Vacant</b>	<b>Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.</b>
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1	07/2023
Parent Training and Information Center	2	06/2021
Client Assistance Program	2	06/2021
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1	06/2021
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	2	06/2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	07/2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	07/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	07/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	Vacant
Disability Advocacy Groups	1	06/2022
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Vacant	Vacant
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	N/A	N/A
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Vacant	Vacant
State Workforce Development Board	Vacant	Vacant
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Vacant	Vacant

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The SRC is a governor-appointed advisory council that meets quarterly. The SRC reviews, evaluates, and advises the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of IWD (IVRS), in accordance with 34 CFR 361.16, 361.17, and 361.29, regarding its programming and effectiveness in the delivery of services and the effect of service provision on the achievement of employment outcomes by individuals with disabilities. While the SRC provides outreach to recruit members according to the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, the SRC does not currently meet those composition requirements. This is due to the process outlined by the State of Iowa for interested applicants to become appointed members.

Members are appointed by the Governor to the SRC each July 1<sup>st</sup> to serve three-year terms (or to fill the remaining term of a vacant position). This creates barriers if a required council representative leaves their term early, as another member cannot be appointed in a timely

manner. To ease the delays and ensure all interested parties have access to information readily, IVRS has a website page designated specifically towards the SRC. The website provides information for interested parties, including the following:

- Meeting Dates & Agendas
- Meeting Minutes/Handouts
- Legislative Newsletters
- Members List
- Committees and Assignments
- SRC Annual Reports
- Member Resources
- A link to a customer satisfaction survey for job candidates

The website also includes a link to the Iowa Talent Bank, a website utilized by the State of Iowa for enrollment on various Boards and Commissions. Applicants interested in becoming a member of the SRC can register and set up an account, which allows them to easily apply online. Applicants are also able to manually complete forms and then fax them to the Governor's office for consideration.

During SRC meetings, the Outreach subcommittee has a focus on providing outreach for new members as well. Conversations are held regularly during large group meetings, to ensure all Council Representatives encourage outreach to fill open positions. All SRC members are tasked with sharing information about SRC membership and encouraging applications. IVRS also shares SRC information with job candidates to encourage application and membership.

The SRC co-chair has contacted the Governor's Director of Boards and Commissions and provided information on the federal requirements for the SRC, and the struggles the SRC is experiencing with appointment of members, which impacts quorum. The Governor's Director has shared with the SRC chairs and IVRS Administrator the list of applicants from 2022 and 2023. The SRC chairs and the IVRS Administrator have utilized this list to ensure all are aware of applicants. Additionally, member recommendations have been sent to the Governor's Director who agreed to share these with the Advisor. A follow-up email has been sent to obtain updates on these recommendations. The efforts mentioned in this section will be continued into the future.

In conjunction with the SRC, IVRS will also communicate with the Director of IVRS' Designated State Agency, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), to continue conversations about ways to improve membership in the SRC, as outlined in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The SRC has a standing agenda for the following topics:

- Administrator's Report
- Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report

- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)/State Plan Discussion
- Financial Overview
- Legal
- Outreach Subcommittee Report
- Policy
- Rehabilitation Services Bureau (RSB) Report
- State Independent Living Committee Report
- VR Service Delivery Subcommittee

IVRS designates time during each SRC meeting for discussion on the CSNA and the State Plan. The Council's input from these discussions is captured in meeting minutes and integrated into the development of the State Plan, including necessary revisions.

The SRC includes two standing subcommittees:

**Outreach Committee:** responsible for planning and hosting the SRC Legislative Reception in coordination with IVRS staff; reviewing and submitting the SRC Annual Report; reviewing customer satisfaction survey data to ensure integration into the State Plan; and member recruitment. These areas are reported back to the larger SRC for discussion. The SRC Outreach Subcommittee also develops the SRC Annual Report.

**VR Service Delivery Committee:** responsible for review and discussion of the CSNA; review and recommendations surrounding IVRS policies and procedures; review of the State Plan; and providing guidance on identified areas of interest related to priorities.

Additionally, the SRC is in the process of piloting a parent focus group. Based on this focus group, it will be determined whether an additional subcommittee should be developed.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations. List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response.

In July of 2023, SRC members reviewed the OMB Approved State Plan ICR, the prior Vocational Rehabilitation portion of the Unified State Plan, and the most current Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Based on this information, the SRC identified areas they would like IVRS to focus on over the next several years. SRC members shared the following updated focus areas for IVRS moving forward. Included within each focus area/suggestion is the VR agency response:

**Focus Area 1:** Increase efforts to move individuals from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment, including involvement of the individual's support network (e.g., family, guardian, case manager, CRP representative, etc.) and addressing barriers that arise. Include education, training, and opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**VR Agency Response:** IVRS has worked with contractors to develop a series of career counseling, information, and referral sources webinars that provide information to attendees currently working in subminimum wage in the following topic areas:



- Introduction to Community Employment: Let's Talk About Work! (A session that is shorter and more basic in the information it conveys; intended for individuals who may not benefit from longer sessions.)
- Community Employment: Let's Talk About Work! (A "101" session that is a starting point for individuals who require career counseling and information and referral.)
- Community Employment: Let's Talk About Work Again! (A "102" session that provides expanded information from the "101" session, and includes information on career exploration and discovery).

The series is proctored to ensure attendance is recorded. Proctor instructions are provided to ensure strict guidelines are followed. Parents/guardians, case managers/care coordinators, and others are encouraged to attend the sessions with the attendee. The importance of adequate support for the attendee is stressed, to ensure that questions and comments are captured and all of an attendee's support team can engage in the follow-up discussion to identify appropriate next steps. All webinars are available to the public on the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services website to ensure they can be watched as frequently as necessary.

Following the Community Employment: Let's Talk Work webinar sessions, a form is completed with individual attendees to assist with processing the information provided in the presentation, and aid in the identification of the attendee's interest and next steps towards competitive integrated employment. A copy of the form is shared with the attendee's case manager/care coordinator to utilize for discussion and service planning. The form is designed as a guide to shape employment services for an individual. The form is maintained in the IVRS file, along with a copy of an attendance certificate. After the sessions are complete, discussions are held regarding appropriate referrals for services and other information needed.

IVRS was awarded a Disability Innovation Fund (DIF): Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) grant that began on October 1, 2022. The intent of the grant is to assist states in supporting innovative activities aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities. Titled the Iowa Blueprint for Change (IBC), the IVRS DIF-SWTCIE grant will advance and improve statewide systems so that Iowans with disabilities have access to competitive integrated employment opportunities that lead to economic security. The project will accomplish this goal by focusing on systems-level interventions to promote state policies, funding, and practices that support competitive integrated employment within the state as the first and preferred outcome for all Iowans with disabilities. The IBC team will utilize participant-level interventions to increase individual readiness for, and access to, competitive integrated employment. The IBC grant includes the following six objectives, all aimed at eliminating subminimum wage employment:

- Establish and engage a coalition of diverse stakeholders to develop, pilot, refine, and implement collaborative systems change models that support Iowans with disabilities;
- Utilize the U.S. Department of Labor's recognized Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs as a model to recruit, train, and retain interested Iowans into competitive integrated employment;
- Increase the ongoing delivery of services that begin in early high school and result in uninterrupted transition to competitive integrated employment for youth with disabilities;



- Facilitate an increase in Iowans with disabilities with obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment that leads to economic security;
- Increase expectation and demand for competitive integrated employment for all Iowans with disabilities; and
- Align public policies, funding, and practices that support competitive integrated employment as the first and preferred outcome for all Iowans with disabilities.

The IBC project will utilize a Collective Impact framework for project implementation, and will include all interested stakeholders to ensure systems-level work will occur throughout the state. It will include the assistance of Iowa 14(c) certificate holders to build or enhance competitive integrated employment models of service and provide technical assistance related to provider transformation. By the end of the five-year project, IVRS hopes to move the State of Iowa towards the elimination of subminimum wage employment while providing the resources and support to ensure individuals with disabilities have the resources and information necessary to make informed decisions regarding competitive integrated employment. All of the objectives and activities within the IBC grant are focused on the population identified by the SRC focus area.

Focus Area 2: Increase visibility of services for individuals with disabilities and the public regarding available IVRS services, including appropriate times to make contact with IVRS. Increase collaboration with partners (e.g. CRPs, etc.) to cross train and ensure seamless services for individuals with disabilities and co-enrollment opportunities.

VR Agency Response: As a result of the statewide realignment, IVRS is supported by the IWD Communications team. The intent of this team is to increase the visibility of all divisions, including IVRS, with the public through various social media outlets. In addition, IVRS maintains a website which contains the guiding statements of the mission and vision of the agency; the services IVRS provides (including the agency brochure); as well as other agency initiatives and pertinent information for individuals with disabilities and the public. IVRS maintains a Job Candidate Handbook that is available on the website. This handbook includes information to assist in determining the appropriate time to make contact with IVRS and how to do so. Contact information is included on the website as well. The IVRS application is available online and is also available to download. Paper copies are available as well at core partner sites. IVRS will focus on reviewing the website and the Job Candidate Handbook with the SRC in future meetings, to ensure they meet the needs of the public. The SRC will also be encouraged to work with IVRS to identify additional resources or information that should be developed.

The Integrated Resource Team is a multifaceted and collaborative methodology to service delivery, co-enrollment and case management. Initially identified as a promising practice under the U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Program Navigator initiative (DPN) and ultimately formalized under the latter-Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The Integrated Resource Team (IRT) involves the coordination of diversified service systems and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual job seeker with a disability. IRTs provide the opportunity for comprehensive, wrap-around services for individuals with significant barriers to employment (such as experiencing a disability, homelessness, etc.,) by bringing together a variety of programs and services that meet the needs of a particular job candidate. The strategic and customer-centered approach of the IRT model aligns ideally with the Workforce Innovation

and Opportunity Act (WIOA). IVRS is a key stakeholder in this integrated practice. The deeper integration of the IRT collaborative approach creates cross-training, knowledge and sharing and a seamless and holistic service delivery for program participants across all partners.

Focus Area 3: IVRS should encourage partners to utilize the IVRS online referral system to ensure there is a common process for receiving referrals in a timely manner. Ensure all applicants receive information and referral to other resources, as needed.

VR Agency Response: IVRS will share the link to the online application on the IVRS website with community partners. IVRS also provides paper applications to core partner programs. Per the Federal regulations, IVRS staff provide information and referral throughout the service delivery process.

Focus Area 4: Focus on staff turnover and create an employee retention program to address issues. Review data available to help support decision making. Consider “stay interviews” and other innovative practices to address retention.

VR Agency Response: IVRS is aware of the need to develop an employee retention program. The IVRS Bureau Leadership Team will discuss and develop a plan of action to address staff turnover and retention. The efforts of this plan will be shared with the SRC during scheduled meetings.

Focus Area 5: Focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for job candidates of IVRS and employees working for IVRS.

VR Agency Response: IVRS has developed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team. This committee will address engagement with diverse job candidates and businesses to improve the agency’s minority rate, rehabilitation rate, and employment outcomes through improved service interactions. Additionally, the committee will assist the agency with advice, recommendations, and feedback for improved engagement and strategy implementation for staff retention and development.

IVRS has accepted all suggestions from the SRC in these areas, and no recommendations were rejected. IVRS also regularly consults with the SRC regarding the development, implementation, and revision of the RSB policies and procedures. Input and recommendations on policy are accepted unless they are out of compliance with federal or state regulatory guidance. If this situation occurs, an explanation of that guidance is provided to the SRC.

## **b. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

### **1. The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:**

## **A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;**

IVRS contracted with the University of Iowa to complete the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The results of the CSNA will be used for this Unified State Plan and are outlined below.

The needs among individuals with the most significant disabilities in Iowa were identified as different from those of the general disability population. Customized employment was identified as one of the least commonly used services from IVRS and was identified as an area that could be improved specifically for consumers with the most significant disabilities in feedback from IVRS stakeholders. Specific services such as Customized Discovery and Individual Placement and Support were identified as beneficial but limited to certain regions and thus not available to as many Iowans as possible.

Additionally, improved training for working with consumers with more complex needs was also identified as an area for improvement for Iowa rehabilitation service providers. This includes job coaches and other service providers who may not work directly for IVRS but may operate as a contractor. A salient comment made by a stakeholder is that individuals may be deemed eligible for VR services and subsequently denied by a provider based on their specific needs or diagnosis.

Most of those surveyed agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities were different from the overall population of people with disabilities (yes – 18; 60%). Figure 20 represents the reported top perceived barriers for IVRS consumers with the most significant disabilities compared to barriers experienced by all consumers with disabilities.

Most partners did not believe that consumers with the most significant disabilities had significantly different barriers to accessing IVRS services as compared with all consumers with disabilities. The top barrier noted among those who indicated that barriers were different (n = 11) was Limited accessibility of IVRS via public transportation services.

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding employment barriers for IVRS consumers. These questions were asked relating to four groups, persons with the most significant disabilities, transitional age youth, racial and ethnically diverse populations, and consumers living in rural communities.

Over 90% of participants agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers living in rural communities were different from the overall population (137 - “Yes”; 92.5%). Many of all participants (123; 81%) agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities were different from the overall population.

## **B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

The demographics of the consumers served by IVRS mirror the demographics of the state of Iowa. That is, there is little racial diversity among IVRS consumers, with the majority of consumers being identified as white, with additional racial groups such as Black/African American, Asian, and Multiracial far behind. The proportion of people with disabilities within these racial groups remains around the 10% mark, however the proportion of the American Indian and Alaskan Native population with disabilities is higher, at 16%.

When asked about specific minority and underrepresented groups including consumers from racial or ethnically diverse backgrounds, those who are in the LGBTQ+ community, and those living in rural communities, IVRS staff and partners indicated that those in rural communities had the most unmet needs and needs that were distinctly unique from those of general consumers. Over half of all participants (91; 61%) agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers from racial or ethnically diverse groups were different from the overall population.

When asked to report on barriers faced by racial or ethnically diverse groups or members of the LGBTQ+ community, most reported no significant differences in achieving employment goals. Of those who agreed that differences among people with disabilities from racial or ethnically diverse groups exist (n = 8), almost all indicated that language barrier was a top barrier to achieving employment goals among this group, with the second most prevalent barrier listed as lack of training or education. No partner indicated that accessing IVRS services was different for consumers from racial or ethnically diverse groups.

When asked to report on barriers faced by racial or ethnically diverse groups or members of the LGBTQ+ community, most reported no significant differences in achieving employment goals. Of those who agreed that differences among members of the LGBTQ community exist (n = 4), almost all indicated that employer perceptions about hiring people with disabilities was a prevalent barrier, with not having disability-related accommodations as second most prevalent. Partners indicated that accessing IVRS services was not different for consumers in the LGBTQ+ community.

Those surveyed agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for people who are living in rural communities differed from other disability populations (19; 70.3%). The most reported barriers included Disability-related transportation issues (11; 18.3%), Not enough jobs available (13; 21.6%), and other transportation issues (14; 23.2%). However, most partners did not indicate that the accessibility of IVRS services was markedly different for consumers in rural communities as compared to consumers generally.

### **C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and**

Majority of staff surveyed did not believe that Iowa One-Stop Centers effectively served the needs of people with disabilities in the state. Most consumer respondents also indicated that they had not used the Iowa *WORKS* one-stop centers, and many were unsure whether they had. Among those consumers who had experience with the One-Stop Centers, the open-ended feedback provided indicated that they experienced inaccessibility while at the center (e.g., no

interpreters, screen-reading technology, disability-trained staff), as well as within the job listings provided (i.e., jobs or employers that would be accommodation-friendly not listed). Consumer perceptions align with staff recommendations that One-Stop employees receive training for working with people with disabilities, and to partner more effectively with IVRS.

Participants were asked to report how frequently do they work with the Iowa Job Centers also known as One-Stops or Career Centers). 30 respondents reported working “very frequently” with these centers (23.3%), 51 reported working “somewhat frequently” with these centers (39.5%), 34 (26.4%) reported “infrequently”, and the remaining 14 participants reported not working at all with these centers (10.8%). Among the IVRS staff surveyed, over half reported that Iowa Job Centers do not effectively serve individuals with disabilities (71; 55%).

When asked to suggest changes to the Iowa Job Centers to improve services to people with disabilities participants selected answers including train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities (75;32%), Partner more effectively with IVRS (62;26.5%).

IVRS staff were asked to share changes that vendors and service providers could make to support consumers in Iowa. Overwhelmingly, staff mentioned changes to or increases in hiring practices to improve services overall (i.e., hire more staff so services can be provided more quickly; hire better trained staff to provide improved services to consumers). Many also mentioned that staff who are hired should be paid better in order to improve retention. Coverage of rural areas in the state was also a primary concern, and finally, effective collaboration with IVRS and understanding IVRS’ policies and procedures came across strongly in the responses.

Most consumers reported not having used the IowaWORKS/one-stop centers (48.93%), while some indicated they had (36.6%), and a smaller proportion reported being unsure about whether they had or not (14.47%).

Most consumers reported that they did not experience difficulties with the accessibility of the building, but of those who did, some reported issues with location(s), parking, an emphasis on having to navigate the technology independently, and limited options for seating.

About a third (32%) of those who reported that they had used the Centers reported going to a Center for training. Most (81%) indicated they went to the Center to find a job, and approximately 60% of those consumers reported that the Center did help them to find a job.

Most consumers, overall, indicated that they had no opinion about how effective the Centers were at providing services to consumers with disabilities (32.2%). Many did indicate they believed the centers to be effective, with 31% indicating they believed the Centers were highly effective at serving consumers with disabilities.

**D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.**



The available data demonstrate that IVRS is providing robust transition services. Primary areas of need identified by the data include improving relationships between VR and schools and by extension, training for VR staff to develop partnerships between schools and other community partners. Stakeholders in transition-age youth indicated that more information about IVRS services, processes, etc. should be better provided to parents and students. Partners also indicated that schools themselves often create barriers by way of funding or lack thereof.

The partners agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for transition-aged youth differed from other disability populations (16; 59%). The most reported barriers included Little or no work experience (12; 26%), poor social skills (8; 17.39%), or limited work skills (6; 13%). No partners indicated that mental health issues, childcare, housing, or language barriers were barriers to employment among this population. Partners overwhelmingly did not believe that transition-aged youth had different needs in accessing IVRS services as compared to consumers from all groups.

Most of those surveyed agreed that barriers to achieving employment goals for transition-age youth differed from the general populations (107; 71.3%). The most reported barriers included Poor social skills (49; 13.7%), Not enough jobs available (60; 16.8%), and Little or no work experience (74; 20.7%).

## **2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

Across all stakeholder groups there was a consistent concern about services and community rehabilitation programs available to people with disabilities in rural and less populated areas. Staffing issues were prevalent in the findings, ranging from lack of personnel to shortcomings in actual personnel hired in terms of their services and skills.

These concerns were greater than any concerns about other communities and sub-populations. However, based on the increased prevalence among people from Native American and Alaskan Native communities in Iowa, additional considerations should be made regarding community rehabilitation programs that are accessible to the Indigenous tribes in the state.

### **c. Goals, Priorities, and Strategies**

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

#### **1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and**



IVRS worked jointly with the SRC to discuss the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. From these conversations, the SRC Developed five focus areas that were identified previously within the VR portion of this Unified State Plan. IVRS has also presented to the SRC on the previous 107 monitoring visit results, IVRS data and the performance accountability measures, all of which were utilized to narrow the focus of efforts on two goals, each with separate strategies listed below.

**2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—**

**GOAL I:**

Increase engagement in the workforce system to facilitate appropriate referrals and increase co-enrollment in workforce programs throughout the VR process.

**STRATEGY I:** Compare referral source and co-enrollment information to determine correlations to successful outcomes.

- Identify process improvement activities that result in workforce partners and job candidates referred to VR being better informed and aware of expectations for competitive integrated employment.
- Staff engage job candidates from application through closure by addressing their needs and proactively work to motivate the job candidate through the process and make referral to appropriate workforce partners to meet the individualized service needs of the job candidate.
- Quality services are delivered and demonstrated in case reviews. Participate in the QA research/review processes consistently utilizing data in a decision-making model.

**STRATEGY II:** Engage Workforce staff in training opportunities to learn more about Workforce programs and services available within each program and to develop mutually beneficial relationships.

- Leverage existing training opportunities to educate staff from all four core programs to gain a better understanding of the services and supports available under each program.
- Collaborate and share strategies across systems, demonstrating effective partnership, alignment of roles and responsibilities and efforts to increase capacity through reduced duplication.
- Engage professional development and training, identifying activities to address local needs/barriers, and develop local solutions addressing problem areas.
- Actively participate in the local workforce development areas including the Local Workforce Development Board and committees, identifying key actions to improve capacity and ensure alignment of services with core partners in areas of Outreach and Intake, Assessments, Career Services, Case Management, Follow- Along Services, and

## Business Engagement.

STRATEGY III: Utilize the Core 4 pilot project to expand co-enrollment to provide job search, job seeking skills, and job placement services to VR job-ready job candidates.

- Identify IVRS job candidates who are employment ready and have been in status 20-0 more than 90 days for referral to the Iowa Workforce Development Core 4 team.
- Identify barriers to employment and accommodation needs to identify additional support needed and referral opportunities.
- Participate in cross-collaborative teams to maximize resources and improve employment outcomes for job candidates who are job-ready.

STRATEGY IV: Leverage funding opportunities across core partner programs to maximize training opportunities for VR job candidates.

- Leverage existing training opportunities to educate staff from all four core programs on the services and funding opportunities that exist under the core programs.
- Collaborate and share strategies across systems, demonstrating effective partnership, to maximize funding sources to support post-secondary and employment related training opportunities for job candidates.

GOAL II: Educate, train, and provide technical assistance to business partners on the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including accessible and adaptive technology, assistive technology, reasonable accommodation, reasonable modification, program access, and universal design.

STRATEGY I: Utilize Core 4 pilot project to increase employer partnerships.

The purpose of this project is to build a collaborative approach among core partners to move Iowa job seekers to meaningful employment quickly; resulting in long-term employment. This innovative approach benefits both job seekers and business and industry in Iowa by utilizing the expertise of the workforce career planner and vocational rehabilitation counselor in an Integrated Resource Team to engage business partners to look to the state's workforce program to attract qualified applicants, provide services to assure the job candidate is job ready, engage job candidates in job search activities resulting in job placement, identify appropriate accommodations, and utilize appropriate follow up to assure successful outcomes meeting the needs of business partners and job candidates alike.

STRATEGY II: Utilize the Windmills training to promote inclusive work settings and increase placements.

IVRS has partnered with the Iowa Workforce Business Engagement and Training team to develop a train-the-trainer of Windmills to all interested staff. The intent is for staff to become competent trainers for business and industry across the state. This service will increase the ability of businesses to offer a welcoming environment to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the goal is to see an increase in placement and retention at the businesses that have gone through the training.

STRATEGY III: Offer ADA training and certification to VR staff to ensure competency in ADA for purposes of physical and programmatic accessibility to employers.

IVRS currently has five staff certified as ADA trainers, with three additional staff awaiting certification. Future plans include adding an additional cohort of ADA certified trainers. These individuals work with business and industry to ensure a safe and accessible (programmatic and physical) environment. As part of services to businesses, staff are also conducting ADA safety analyses to increase participation and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

STRATEGY IV: Expand the capacity of business engagement through effective use of National Employment Team (NET), business services team, individual staff and collaborative efforts across teams.

IVRS has a business director who is a member of the National Employment Team. IVRS also has three part-time business engagement counselors. The business director works with the NET to deliver services to national customers with a footprint in Iowa. Progress is reported to the NET. The plan to grow the business engagement team with IVRS will allow increased capacity to deliver services to the business customer. This team will work with businesses to ensure that they are equipped to hire and retain individuals with disabilities by addressing barriers within the workplace. This team will also provide guidance and training to IVRS staff on the dual customer approach.

#### **A. Support innovation and expansion activities;**

The goals and strategies identified above are based on innovative approaches that assist in the expansion and improvement of the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities. Goal I focuses on increased collaboration and integration of services within the Workforce system. The Governor's Realignment bill has moved IVRS' designated State agency to Iowa Workforce Development Services. This realignment has provided IVRS with the opportunity to take advantage of all innovative and expansive services available within the entire system. Goal II focuses the training and information necessary for business partners. The Workforce system specializes in services for businesses. IVRS is an integral part of the business services within the system. As a result, both goals are innovative and expand activities for all Iowans with disabilities.

IVRS is also the recipient of the Iowa Blueprint for Change project, funded under the Disability Innovation Fund-Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment grant. The intent of the DIF grant is to support innovative activities aimed at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. The DIF grant supports the efforts of the VR program by providing contract staff and a tiered internal level of support within VR to provide technical assistance and training to businesses and VR staff to support the efforts of the grant and of services in general, especially for the most significantly disabled population.

#### **B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;**

A barrier identified by IVRS, the SRC and the CSNA was increased staff turnover and the impact of this on service delivery and job candidate engagement in services throughout the process. By educating partners, all staff will be better informed to make quality referrals and increased understanding of partner programs and services will lead to increased engagement, co-enrollments, and integration of services. IVRS staff capacity is increased and job candidates will have access to more resources and support that can address multiple barriers to employment and will be engaged in a holistic system of services. IVRS will have increased visibility and ability to connect with employers through integration with partner business engagement teams.

Lack of CRP availability has also been identified as a barrier to job candidates accessing supported employment services. The Iowa Blueprint for Change grant will assist in identifying innovative practices that assist with capacity building for CRPs, such as developing apprenticeships to create a pipeline into careers in the field and incorporating practices to meet the needs of the MSD population.

**C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**

The strategies identified under Goal I will assist IVRS in exploring and identifying opportunities to collaborate with WIOA core programs to coordinate and expand services to students with disabilities. A map of resources/programs is being developed to assist with identifying a streamlined approach to service delivery between the core programs. The Local School Plan also assists with identifying gaps in service delivery in order to improve transition services for students with disabilities across the state. As gaps are identified for each school district, discussions will occur on how to meet these needs so students with disabilities are receiving the support and services needed to be successful. These discussions include representatives from WIOA core programs.

**D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes. (List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority.)**

When job candidates, including those with the most significant disabilities, receive comprehensive services and support delivered by an integrated team that address their individual needs, successful outcomes are likely to increase. By utilizing a team approach, IVRS staff are able to focus on providing quality vocational rehabilitation services and increase performance. Through increased awareness of program services and funding options, partners will be able to leverage funding for post-secondary and employment training. This will reduce economic barriers that many job candidates face and provide more support services to assist them in successfully completing the training and lead to better outcomes and earnings.

Strategies identified under Goal 2, will increase IVRS staff expertise in providing quality services to employers focused on addressing disability issues within the recruiting, hiring and

retention of employees with disabilities. When these issues are addressed, employees with disabilities, including those who receive Supported Employment services are more successful in maintaining employment.

Innovative services, such as Customized Employment and Individual Placement and Supports currently offered through the Iowa Blueprint for Change project will allow sustainable options for individuals with disabilities that lead to quality employment outcomes. These innovative practices are evidence-based and/or evolving as evidence-based practices; and ensure that services are provided to fidelity. Working with employers that offer services to individuals with disabilities ties back to both Goal I and Goal II and the strategies IVRS will utilize.

#### **d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

##### **1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs; (List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies.)**

The goals and strategies from the prior 2022 Unified State Plan modification included the following:

**Goal I:** IVRS will contribute to Future Ready Iowa goals for in-demand industries by ensuring at least 59.8% of program participants attain a recognized post-secondary credential, or a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) and employment, prior to exit.

**Strategy I:** All field staff have a performance plan goal highlighting the Governor's goal of training Iowans for the jobs of tomorrow.

**Strategy II:** Increase training opportunities for all individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

**Strategy III:** Through strategic planning, IVRS will identify ways to work with partners and develop new opportunities for career pathways that can lead to credentials for all individuals with disabilities.

**Strategy IV:** IVRS management will meet quarterly to review IVRS and quality assurance data and make recommendations and RSA Data Dashboard information to ensure the agency is in alignment with the targeted percentage.

**Progress:** For the most recently completed program year, IVRS achieved a credential attainment rate of 53.3%. Although IVRS did not meet the 59.8% goal, IVRS increased the credential attainment rate by 7.4% from the previous program year. Governor Kim Reynolds has determined that Future Ready Iowa is no longer an initiative of the Executive Branch, therefore,



this is no longer a goal for Iowa under the State Plan.

**Goal II:** By high school graduation, at least 90% of potentially eligible and IVRS eligible students who need Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) will have received those services.

**Strategy I:** IVRS will place a heightened emphasis on the provision of Pre-ETS for students to ensure they have meaningful opportunities to receive training and other services they need to eventually achieve employment outcomes in CIE.

**Strategy II:** IVRS will review program year data, identifying all individuals who have graduated within the program year. If the individual's case closure date occurred prior to the start of the program year, the individual will not be incorporated into this measure. Those individuals still participating in services up to graduation will be considered. IVRS will utilize the current rate of 90% of services received as the baseline, with the goal of increasing this percentage in the upcoming two years.

**Strategy III:** The IRSS case management system will continue to be an area of focus as there is currently no mechanism built into the IRSS interface system to allow some transition contracted programs to enter Pre-ETS.

**Progress:** For the most recently completed program year, 87.1% of the PE/IVRS eligible students identified as needing Pre-ETS received these services prior to high school graduation. Even though IVRS did not obtain 90% and this goal will not continue, a heightened emphasis on the provision of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities will continue throughout the state. The strategic plan for IVRS has strategies identified for continued focus on Pre-ETS. Individual Performance Plan and Evaluations (IPPEs) for staff serving transition aged youth will also contain performance goals for providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

**Goal III:** IVRS will collaborate within the workforce and education system to achieve high quality employment outcomes for participants resulting in at least 56.9% of participants maintaining competitive integrated employment in the 2nd quarter after exit and at least 54.3% of participants maintaining competitive integrated employment in the 4th quarter after exit.

**Strategy I:** IVRS commits to working with core partners as well as within the IVRS agency to focus on the services necessary to equip job candidates with the skills to obtain and maintain quality employment.

**Strategy II:** IVRS will combine this training with targeted Quality Assurance (QA) reviews at the individual and area office level. Results of these QA reviews will be reviewed by the management team. Individuals and/or offices who are not demonstrating quality and compliance will receive focused training on these areas.

**Strategy III:** IVRS will review 2nd and 4th quarter data, median earnings, and other performance measure data to assess progress on this goal. LMI information provided by core partners will be reviewed to review economic trends industries with positive projected growth. A lack of SWIS data will indicate the job candidate is no longer working and can be used as a measurement of post-exit employment status.



**Strategy IV:** Employee performance plans will be reviewed and the management team will consider PPE goals and strategies to support this state goal.

**Progress:** Reviewing 2nd and 4th quarter after exit data, IVRS achieved 59.6% at 2nd quarter and 58.3% at 4th quarter. As a result of this data, the goal has been achieved. While this specific goal will not continue for the upcoming Unified State Plan, IVRS will continue to review this data to ensure continued progress.

**2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and**

The primary performance indicators include combined data from IVRS and Iowa Department for the Blind:

**Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit:** the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

PY22 Number: 2,262

PY22 Rate: 59.6%

Negotiated Qtr 2 Employment Rate: 57.0%

No discrepancies; negotiated rate achieved

**Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit:** the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

PY22 Number: 2,049

PY22 Rate: 58.3%

Negotiated Qtr 4 Rate: 54.3%

No discrepancies; negotiated rate achieved

**Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter after Exit:** The median earnings of those participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Median is the number that is in the middle of a series of numbers and is not the same as the mean or the average of all numbers in the data set.

PY22 Median Earnings: \$4,541

PY 22 Negotiated Median Earnings: \$4,256

No discrepancies; negotiated rate achieved

**Credential Attainment (CA) Rate:** a credential is a secondary school diploma or the equivalent, a recognized post-secondary credential, an industry recognized certificate/certification, an apprenticeship, a State or Federal-recognized licensure, or an associate, baccalaureate, or postgraduate degree. A credential does not include work readiness certificates, workforce development board certificates, or health/safety certificates.

PY22 Number: 898

PY22 Rate: 53.3%

Negotiated Credential Rate: 60.0%

IVRS did not obtain the negotiated rate by 6.7%. Further analysis is needed to determine the causes of failing to meet this negotiated rate.

**Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Rate:** the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skills gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Included in the indicator are VR participants with education or a training program that leads to a recognized secondary or post-secondary credential on the individual's IPE. Depending on the type of educational or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

PY22 Number: 3,011

PY22 Rate: 51.8%

Negotiated MSG Rate: 40.0%

No discrepancies; negotiated rate achieved

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** This performance indicator is measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within the State of Iowa and is designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers is currently a pilot measure, and states were not required to submit an expected level of performance for PY 2022. However, the Iowa Workforce system achieved an Employer Penetration Rate of 6% (6,561/109,653) and a Repeat Business Customer Rate of 19.4% (2,601/13,396).

### **3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).**

IVRS is currently undergoing a comprehensive review and redesign of the agency organizational structure and functions to maximize collaboration with other WIOA Core partners and ensure the agency is providing the highest quality services to job candidates.

IVRS supports the focus areas identified by the SRC. The SRC regularly suggests innovative approaches to service delivery in collaboration with IVRS, to improve services for individuals

with disabilities.

IVRS will work with the Iowa Blueprint for Change Disability Innovation Fund team to ensure the innovative practices identified are sustainable and integrated within the IVRS system.

IVRS will continue to work on identifying additional opportunities for innovation and expansion activities.

**e. Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.**

**1. Acceptance of Title VI funds:**

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

(B) VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

**2. If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.**

IVRS funded supported employment services for 1,274 individuals in PY2021 and PY2022, using both Part B Title VI funds and Part B Title I funds. Total Supported Employment expenditures were \$2,361,924 of which \$551,883 came from Part B Title VI funds. IVRS estimates that it will serve approximately 1,300 job candidates in Supported Employment during PY2023 and PY2024.

Funds are used in accordance with federal regulations. IVRS has established a Menu of Services (MOS) Manual that outlines the fee schedule and rates for employment services, including Supported Employment Services (SES). The MOS Manual also outlines responsibilities of all responsible parties, including Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)/entities providing the services; IVRS; and the job candidate. To address workforce shortages in many parts of the state, IVRS expanded partnerships with independent providers for specific employment services, including consumer choice options. Agency standards for services must be met for entities to be approved to provide services under the MOS, including SES. The job candidate's needs drive the planning and service delivery process.

**3. Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.**

SES are services provided only to the most significantly disabled (MSD) individual who requires on-going support and extended services to achieve competitive integrated employment (CIE). SES may include customized employment, and be provided for up to 24 months, unless a longer period of time is necessary based upon the individual's needs.

The process of SES begins with a team meeting to discuss plans for the provision of these services. The IVRS counselor must also identify funding for long-term support(s) required to maintain employment after the IVRS case file is closed.

SES may begin in high school when a student who requires intensive supports has identified their career goal and requires SES to achieve this goal. For high school students, job coaching support for supported employment services are funded by IVRS once a student's career goal is specified on their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and the student has been placed in their long-term career goal. A student may be stabilized on the job prior to graduation, at which time the long-term supports are provided for the case to close no sooner than 90 days after graduation. Individuals on a Waiver who are not students but under age 24 may be funded for SES by IVRS. If a SES outcome is not achieved by the time a job candidate turns 24, any remaining IVRS authorizations are canceled in order for Waiver funds to be utilized. Extending IVRS funding for a brief time during the transition is acceptable, as long as IVRS staff document the plan for a seamless transition.

SES for individuals age 24 or above who receive services only from IVRS and not Waiver are funded by IVRS. Long-term supports must be identified in all SES cases so a job candidate will receive ongoing support through Regional (county) funds, Social Security Work Incentives, self-pay or natural supports.

An individual under age 25 who requires SES may not be receiving services from a Waiver, or may be on a waiting list for Waiver at the time they become eligible for IVRS. In these cases, IVRS staff request an exception to provide the long-term supported job coaching once the individual reaches stabilization on the job. This may be funded for up to 8 units (2 hours) per month of Supported Employment Job Coaching services for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual reaches age 25, or is approved for Waiver services. If additional hours of coaching are needed beyond the 8 units, an exception is required.

**4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities**

**in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) have been written by IVRS with the Department of Education (DE) and another MOA with Iowa Health and Human Services (HHS) to outline roles and responsibilities of each entity and to complement service provision. IVRS provides funding for SES through a shared arrangement with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (ME) System under HHS. When the individual being served is an adult and supported employment is a required service, the agreement with the HHS is implemented for funding. If the individual being served is a student, then IVRS supports the student in supported employment in accordance with the MOA with the DE. IVRS does not allow a delay in services, so if the services are unavailable to the individual through HHS, IVRS makes the services available per policy guidelines. Additional programs IVRS partners with through HHS include: Mental Health Regions, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), Money Follows the Person (MFP), and Independent Home Health (IHH)/Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs).

A youth with the most significant disability who requires extended supports after achievement of a supported employment goal in a competitive integrated environment may require IVRS to fund those services when they are on the waiting list for a waiver. After the youth graduates from high school, if the job is stable and consistent with the IPE and the youth is on the waiver waiting list, IVRS can fund the extended supports on a time-limited basis. These services are provided at a rate developed in collaboration with ME. Extended supports to youth cannot be funded for more than four years, or when the youth reach age 25.

**f. Annual Estimates**

**1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—**

**A. VR Program; and**

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
MSD	2,095	6,555	\$4,891,531	290
SD	2,128	4,715	\$5,198,526	275
OE	113	230	\$149,616	20

**B. Supported Employment Program**

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
MSD	2,095	1,040	Title IV-Basic \$1,538,316; Title IV SE - \$267,839	290

**g. Order of Selection**

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

**1. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—**

**A. The justification for the order;**

On a monthly basis, IVRS reviews the Order of Selection and makes a decision based upon input from the IVRS Executive Team. As of July 31, 2023, there were no job candidates on the waiting list. This is zero less than June 30, 2023, and 0 less than a year ago, July 31, 2022. Individuals are placed on the waiting list at eligibility determination based upon their application date. Individuals are removed from the waiting list based upon eligibility priority with those who are Most Significantly Disabled receiving priority, then those who are Significantly Disabled and the Others Eligible. State Rehabilitation Council members are provided updates on the IVRS waiting list information at quarterly SRC meetings. IVRS staff are updated on waiting list information weekly.

Prior to November 6, 2023, IVRS was serving all categories on the waiting list, however the decision was made by IVRS leadership to temporarily hold all names on the waiting list for 3-6 months to allow time to triage and serve a backlog of cases across the state caused by sudden staff vacancies and a surge in applications. After this time period, IVRS will resume its policy of releasing all names, in all categories, on a weekly basis. Staff and applicants have been notified of the change and its temporary nature.



The order of selection allows IVRS to become more efficient in caseload management techniques and anticipate service provision. The Executive Team meets on the goals for release on a weekly basis, and the Resource Manager Data reviews this weekly taking into consideration the Financial Sustainability Model and the Rehabilitation Services Bureau field capacity, which is gathered through discussions occurring at the Executive Team. Decisions are based upon staff capacity and the financial sustainability of the agency.

**B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is an eligibility program based on the nature and function of the individual's disability as it pertains to preparing for, obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in employment. Only a qualified rehabilitation counselor or a supervisor has the authority to determine if a person is eligible for services and the priority category to which they are assigned. In order to make an accurate decision on eligibility, IVRS requires receipt of medical, psychological, or psychiatric records, and statements from the individual with the disability concerning the disability impact, to provide verification of the disability and the nature and extent of the disability on the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment.

According to the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title I - The Rehabilitation Act, if a state vocational rehabilitation program cannot serve all eligible individuals who apply it must develop a waiting list for services based on the significance of the disability. The following provides definitions of the waiting list categories:

“Individual with a disability” means an individual (i) Who has a physical or mental impairment; (ii) Whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and (iii) Who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.” (34 CFR 361.5(c)(27))

- An individual who meets this definition and who requires only one service for a duration of six months or less is considered as meeting the priority for services as "Other's Eligible" (OE);
- Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 2 or fewer functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services as "Significantly Disabled" (SD);
- Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 3 or more functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services as “Most Significantly Disabled” (MSD).
- Services over an extended period of time is defined as by nature and extent of the service, not due to lack of action or time delay by the VR agency or staff.

The agency's case management system manages the waiting list release. The Data Resource Manager identifies the number of cases to be released in each category in waiting status and releases the cases on a weekly basis. Currently, all categories are in order of selection and on the

waitlist. The Most Significantly Disabled will begin to be released when the Executive Team determines as such and will be released into service first. Individuals in the Significantly Disabled and Others Eligible waiting lists will be released after the Most Significant Disabled individuals have been cleared; with Significantly Disabled individuals released in higher priority than individuals who are determined to be in the Others Eligible category.

**C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.**

For the Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) priority category, IVRS plans to serve 7,600 individuals. It is estimated that 930 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 1,130 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be \$4,891,534.

For the Significantly Disabled (SD) priority category, IVRS anticipates that 5,500 individuals will be serviced, with 940 exiting with employment after receiving services. IVRS estimates that 740 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$5,198,526.

For the Others Eligible (OE) priority category, IVRS anticipates 220 individuals will be serviced and 60 will exit with employment after receiving services. IVRS estimates that 50 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$149,616.

The number of closures for each priority category is based on actual numbers from the prior year. The number of individuals IVRS is planning to serve is based on the size of the caseload and the percentage of job candidates within each priority category. The costs of services are based on the projected year case expenditures based on the prior year's actual expenditures. The IVRS Executive Team meets on a weekly basis to discuss case flow projections, budget expenditures, and initiatives influencing service delivery flow.

The time within which goals are to be achieved include:

- MSD priority category: 43.9 months;
- SD priority category: 46.1 months; and
- OE priority category: 26.8 months.

Based on current projections, IVRS believes that approximately 11,500 individuals will receive services from IVRS in the coming year. These numbers are based on the representation in the current caseload. Actual outcomes may vary, as we continue to see change in the way the caseload breaks out in the waiting list categories.

**2. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?**

Yes

No

IVRS has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment. The process is identified in policy for job retention services. Through analysis of the situation, if it is determined that an individual with a disability is gainfully employed, but at immediate risk of losing their position, then IVRS can provide the agreed upon services in an effort to save the job. If additional services are later identified or requested, then the Order of Selection criteria would be followed.

## **h. Waiver of Statewideness**

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”

Not applicable. IVRS has a discretionary grant which does not require a waiver and it serves diverse geographic regions.

## **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

### **1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—**

**A. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;**

**B. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**

**C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Rehabilitation Supervisor	13	0	2
Rehabilitation Counselor Specialist	10	1	0
Rehabilitation Counselor	91	15	7
Rehabilitation Associate	15	0	3
Rehabilitation Assistant	39	4	6
Secretary 2	11	2	3
Typist Advanced	4	0	3

**D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

IVRS currently has 112 qualified VR counselors. The ratio of qualified VR counselors to job candidates is 100:1.

**E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

The projected number of individuals to be served in five years is 11,500.

**2. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:**

**A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
University of Iowa	Rehabilitation Counseling MA	21	6
Drake University	Rehabilitation Counseling MA	18	3

**B. The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are**

**qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

The agency actively works with the two Rehabilitation Counseling programs in Iowa and recruits from graduate programs in Minnesota, Illinois, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. IVRS has increased the number of interns and practicum students with an average of 10 students every semester. Internships are offered as a paid experience to recruit students to IVRS for their internship experience. IVRS field staff work closely with interns and practicum students to provide them with exposure to IVRS. IVRS staff present to students at both the University of Iowa and Drake annually to introduce them to the VR agency and employment opportunities. A process has been developed to allow students who intern with IVRS to apply for permanent job openings prior to being publicly posted for easier transition into employment.

IWD reviews Affirmative Action data to determine goals and strategies to improve deficiencies in state employment for individuals from minority backgrounds. IVRS attempts to recruit from a wide variety of sources including the State of Iowa hiring system, Iowa Workforce Development, employee referral and various community newspapers. The screening process is equitable to all applicants. Screening is done on a numeric basis and the top scoring applicants are interviewed. Interviews are offered to applicants with veteran status. IVRS Workforce Composition data remains stable and does not show significant discrepancies in changes in workforce minority populations. IVRS Affirmative Action goals encourage IVRS to continue reviewing hiring practices to aid in diversifying IVRS agency staff.

IVRS has a Cultural Diversity Committee to focus on obtaining staff from diverse backgrounds. The committee also focuses on building knowledge and understanding of staff from diverse backgrounds to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

In order to retain staff, IVRS has begun providing additional onboarding and training through mentorships. IVRS continuously looks for ways to achieve work life balance for staff through telework, flexible schedules and adjusted schedules as needed. Staff are surveyed periodically to provide feedback on job satisfaction and employee engagement. IVRS is also reviewing standardization of performance measures and accountability to enhance equity amongst staff expectations.

**C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:**

**i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**

IVRS provides and supports ongoing, professional career development training which may be provided either internal or external to the agency. IVRS is certified through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification to provide approved continuing education hours for applicable coursework. Training activities focus on knowledge or understanding of rehabilitation topics; customer service, development and demonstration of new levels of skills; ethics, and

organizational change projects that enhance the achievement of employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. IVRS staff have the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars and concentrated training activities to improve skills in working with specific groups of individuals with disabilities, as well as individual or group staff development activities designed to enable staff to acquire special skills.

All staff participated in autism training in 2022. IVRS has become an “Autism Friendly Destination” agency.

New employees go through an onboarding process that includes mandatory trainings and training specific to their job classification. This training is done at the state level as well as locally. Each employee is also assigned a mentor to assist them as they are learning their new role. There is a wide variety of courses available through the statewide learning management system that are assigned and/or available to staff according to their classification. There are on demand training modules that are in the process of being developed to allow for training at the convenience of all staff.

IVRS holds a statewide conference for all contracted and internal staff each year. This conference provides training on areas recommended by staff in the field and the management team. External and internal experts provide evidence-based methods and practices to staff who work directly with job candidates, transition students, and businesses.

All staff are invited to a monthly meeting for continued training and agency updates. This meeting is held with all agency staff to ensure that communication is consistent across the state. A staff training is held every month with representatives from all four titles for continued education and partnership.

IVRS collaborates with Easterseals Iowa, who provides services under the Assistive Technology Act, and training was provided to area offices in 2022. A full time Assistive Technology Counselor Specialist was hired in November 2023 and will coordinate additional trainings with Easterseals based on identified needs. Trainings will be recorded and available for IVRS staff.

**ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

The agency routinely uses the latest research and pilot projects to update training programs. IVRS is the lead agency with the Employment First Initiative and both internal staff and IVRS partners have access to a myriad of customized employment training webinars. Through the Iowa Blueprint for Change Disability Innovation Fund Grant, the policy subcommittee is tasked with working with the Governor’s office to acquire an executive order related to Employment First making employment the first opportunity and focus for individuals with the most significant disabilities. IVRS has initiated customized discovery and IPS projects across the state to align with use of evidence-based practices. As IVRS learns from these projects, these practices will expand across the state to enhance service delivery. IVRS is also in the process of implementing



training on the evidence-based practice of Motivational Interviewing. IVRS has sent one staff member to training who has become MINT certified to assist the agency with growing this initiative.

Agency committees exist to help disseminate information on a regular basis in the identified areas. These committees help to keep field staff informed of best practices and preferred methods for service delivery.

IVRS is actively involved in a yearly Data Summit focusing on internal controls, performance measures, and data validation. These practices will be shared with the IVRS leadership team, with promising practices incorporated into the VR service delivery processes. IVRS will utilize the quarterly RSA Data Dashboards and Other Measures That Matter to identify areas of need for targeted staff training. IVRS actively seeks national conferences that lead to the development of innovative practices for the agency. IVRS also participates in CSAVR conferences and regional meetings to discuss best practices with other VR agencies.

**3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**

**A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

**B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

IVRS established personnel standards that are consistent according to state guidelines and are reviewed by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. The academic degree standard for VR Counselors remains a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related major.

In the review of applicants, the agency looks not only at academic degrees held, but the individual's ability to perform the job duties in a specific job opening. IVRS has a priority of continued education for all staff which includes understanding the current labor market and needs of individuals with disabilities. IVRS also provides certified continuing education credits for these ongoing trainings for CRC staff.

The recent reorganization of state government within the State provides an opportunity to combine the knowledge and expertise of the workforce program in relation to evolving labor force trends and a 21st century understanding of the labor needs of the State with the knowledge and expertise of the vocational rehabilitation professionals to improve service delivery for individuals with disabilities. Blending and braiding services under this collaborative approach

will improve the quality of service delivery overall while improving staff capacity across the State's workforce system.

IVRS has a strategic plan emphasizing business involvement with collaborative and unified efforts at integrating a continuum of services with State Core Partners. This is a key part of the WIOA Unified Plan efforts. These strategies help enhance IVRS' ability to have personnel understanding the 21st century employment needs.

**4. Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

IVRS contracts with interpreters to provide communication for individuals who are Deaf. IVRS staff also contract with language interpreters when an individual speaks a language other than English. This may be done through a state agency, through a private agency, as well as the use of CTS Language Link and other interpreting service providers that hold Master Agreements with the State. IVRS has made many agency forms, brochures and handouts available to the public in Spanish, which is the second most common language in the State. The State has Master Agreements with two transcription vendors that can transcribe documents within 24 hours upon request. IVRS maintains an agreement with the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) to convert training materials into large print or Braille format for trainees with visual impairments and learning disabilities. All materials are made accessible for all staff based on ADA compliance standards.

**5. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

IVRS and the Iowa Department of Education have an agreement to provide joint training for staff to receive common information and skill development pertinent to students with disabilities. IVRS staff/management and education agencies (SEA, LEAs and AEAs) engage in conversations on how to collaborate in order to support students with disabilities in transition. In these discussions, planning occurs on how to develop the core competencies of staff, how to expand on staff capacities, and what actions will achieve student outcomes. As a result, joint statewide training and resources have been developed/provided.

IVRS staff also discuss training and personnel development needs during Local School Plan meetings on at least a yearly basis. As part of the development of the Local School Plan, the local school team discusses gaps and training needs which are then identified on the plan. The IVRS Area Office Supervisor reviews this plan and discussions occur on how this joint training will be provided.

A Local School Plan survey has been implemented that allows for LEA staff, AEA staff, IVRS staff and other partners to provide feedback on additional training that is needed across the state

so that personnel development can be provided specific to the identified school district or statewide.

IVRS has hired eight Counselor Specialists specializing in transition to provide training and technical assistance to internal staff and external partners. This team meets biweekly to discuss training needs and guidance received from the Iowa Department of Education to align service delivery. The Counselor Specialists meet at least monthly with assigned area offices/staff to train and provide a consistent message regarding transition and service delivery to students with disabilities.

## **j. Coordination with Education Officials**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

### **1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.**

IVRS staff collaborates with school staff, AEA staff, IVRS contracted programs and partners to assist students with disabilities by providing services to explore career opportunities, post-secondary training programs available, and to identify supports needed to be successful in the post-secondary setting and in competitive integrated employment. IVRS has developed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Iowa Department of Education, Local School Plans, as well as policies, procedures and internal controls surrounding the provision of Pre-ETS and VR service delivery to students with disabilities.

IVRS collaborates with every public school district in Iowa to develop a Local School Plan each year that addresses the following information: the services the school district will provide to students with disabilities, the new and/or expanded services IVRS will provide within the district, services provided by community partners and/or IVRS contracted programs, and any gaps in service delivery. Local School Plans are also developed with private accredited high schools across the state along with some identified alternative educational settings. IVRS staff are assigned to all public and private accredited school districts in Iowa to provide services, including Pre-ETS, as outlined in the Local School Plan. As gaps in services are identified on the Local School Plans, programs will be developed and/or changes in service delivery will be determined collaboratively with school districts and other community partners across the state.

A "Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS" form is needed for the LEA/AEA to release education records to IVRS. This form is used for determining whether a student may be considered for participation in IVRS programs, identifying IVRS services from which the student may benefit, or both. This consent pertains to all records related to the student, regardless

of how they are stored or in what format they exist, including:

- Special education records (IEPs, special education evaluation reports and other eligibility information);
- Section 504 records (504 Plans, 504 evaluation reports and other eligibility information);
- Special education and general education progress measurement data, transcripts, statewide and districtwide assessment results; and
- Any other education record contained within the student's permanent record or cumulative record.

The consent form also allows IVRS to release information related to services received, including Pre-ETS and the student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), to the LEA/AEA.

**2. Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**

**A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**

IVRS staff will provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Area Education Agencies (AEAs). These services are intended to benefit students or youth with disabilities as they transition from school to post-secondary life related to an employment outcome. These services are to assist school personnel in developing a seamless system of transition for all students. A vocational rehabilitation counselor or other staff member will work in concert with educational agencies designated by the DE to provide services for students who are receiving special education services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or services provided according to Section 504, to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students who are Potentially Eligible (PE) for IVRS. Services may include, but are not limited to, job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities, self-advocacy instruction and other general services applicable to groups of students with disabilities and youth with disabilities. All of the above described services will be outlined in a Local School Plan with each LEA annually. The Local School Plan will be individualized to meet the needs of each LEA. LEA staff, IVRS staff and other community partners shall be included in the development of each Local School Plan.

Educators will request consultation and technical assistance services from IVRS when needed to plan for individual transition needs, including development of the student's course of study. Educators will consult with IVRS regarding the student's impediments to employment and provide all information available for all whom consent has been given. Alternative means for

meeting participation (e.g., video conferences and conference calls) may be used to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities.

**B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;**

Transition planning in the state of Iowa must be in place no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 14, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Consideration for eligibility for special education services continues through the year that a student turns 21 years of age, or to the maximum age allowed by Iowa Code section 256B.8.

A Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS form is needed for the LEA/AEA to release education records to IVRS for the purpose of determining whether a student may be considered for participation in IVRS programs, identifying IVRS services from which the student may benefit, or both.

IVRS counselors and educators are both responsible for transition planning. IVRS involvement in the IEP development and completion will be determined by individual student need, not student age or grade. IEP teams and IVRS counselors will consider four factors to determine when employment preparation should start and the intensity of the services that should be provided:

- Student knowledge and skills;
- Student learning characteristics, including student response to ease of accessibility and accommodations;
- Complexity of support needs; and,
- Number of environments impacted.

The more intense the need for services, the earlier preparation should start and the more people who have specialized knowledge (e.g.; work experience counselors, IVRS counselors) should be involved. This involvement may be provided by IVRS as part of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) provided. These services can be conducted in a group setting and will require collaboration to determine the Pre-ETS activities that are needed by that specific LEA and will suit the students in that setting.

Those students who require more intensive services in order to learn, understand and apply the information from Pre-ETS activities will be encouraged to submit an application for IVRS. Intense services may not be provided without the student having been determined eligible and served under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

IVRS staff will review information for students who submit an application for services and AEAs/LEAs will share existing information which will assist IVRS in determining a student's eligibility. If needed, students will participate in additional assessment(s) to determine eligibility services. The scheduling of these assessment(s) will require collaboration between IVRS, LEA

and AEA staff members.

Once an eligibility determination has been made by IVRS, the decision will be shared with the LEA and AEA staff for all whom consent has been given. This information will be considered as part of the student's transition plan within the IEP.

IVRS counselors will develop an IPE for each student determined to be eligible for IVRS within 90 days of being removed from the IVRS waiting list. The student, parents, educators and IVRS counselors will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with one another.

**C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;**

IVRS and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. A MoA has been developed that will be reviewed every two years that defines the responsibilities of both divisions in order to minimize duplication, provide efficient and effective utilization of resources, and delineate a basis for effective working relationships between the two entities. This MoA will assist in facilitating the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post-secondary education and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are potentially eligible (PE) or eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services.

The roles, responsibilities and financial obligations outlined in the MoA for IVRS includes the following:

- Develop the Local School Plan in collaboration with LEA staff, AEA staff and community partners.
- Obtain a signed *Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS* form for each student identified for services through IVRS.
- Obtain PE documentation and a completed Pre-ETS Agreement.
- Provide Pre-ETS in collaboration and coordination with the LEA, ensure that services (including individualized services under an IPE) are not duplicative nor do they supplant existing LEA services.
- Use assessment information provided by education to determine eligibility and services. Secure additional assessment only when necessary and assume financial responsibility for the cost of the additional information.
- Provide consultation and technical assistance to educators.
- Participate in the development of the employment and related components of the IEP, based on individual need.
- Develop an IPE for students within 90 days of being removed from the waiting list, unless an extension is approved.
- Ensure the IPE goals are consistent with IEP employment goals.
- Provide or arrange for services required by the IPE goal, including assistive technology devices, when the individual has been determined eligible for IVRS services and has an



individual employment plan where the services are needed for the student's specific employment outcome. Provide assistance in the purchase of tools, supplies and other job related personal expenses for IVRS eligible students who have demonstrated success in a 4+ career and technical program as it relates to the IPE goal.

- Arrange and pay for the development of a supported short-term paid work experience for the most significantly disabled (MSD) students who require this service.
- Arrange and pay for job development and job coaching needed to serve the MSD students who require supported employment services. If long-term supports are needed after high school, IVRS will assist the LEA in coordinating these services for their final career.
- For students with disabilities seeking subminimum wage, career counseling and information and referral services to federal and state programs to help the individual discover, experience and attain competitive integrated employment will be provided within 30 calendar days.
- Collaborate with DE to provide joint training as needed to ensure AEAs and LEAs understand their responsibilities under the MoA.

The roles, responsibilities and financial obligations outlined in the MoA for DE includes the following:

- Participate in the development of the Local School Plan with IVRS and partners.
- Assist with identifying students for services through IVRS.
- Obtain a signed *Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS* form for each student identified for services through IVRS.
- Assist IVRS in obtaining PE documentation and a completed Pre-ETS Agreement.
- Provide all existing educational assessment and performance information relevant for the determination of IVRS eligibility and services.
- Request consultation and technical assistance from IVRS counselors when needed for planning and implementing transition services.
- Consult with IVRS staff for identification of student's vocational needs and services.
- Develop and complete the employment component of the IEP, based on individual need.
- Ensure IEP employment goals are consistent with IPE goals.
- Work with IVRS staff to identify whether IVRS referral is appropriate and the supports needed to complete the application.
- Pay for all services listed on the IEP, including assistive technology, unless another agency or entity agrees to provide such services.
- Provide and/or pay for job coaching, when needed, as part of the instructional component of the IEP. LEA will provide the instructional training when it is for the student to learn job skills, learn about the world of work, and explore occupations to make an informed decision about a future work goal.
- Provide and/or pay for extended school year supports, as needed
- The DE will encourage each LEA to provide IVRS documentation that the student has completed transition services or received Pre-ETS when seeking subminimum wage employment. Documentation should be provided by the LEA to the IVRS staff assigned to the LEA no later than 30 calendar days after the determination of sub minimum wage has been made.

- The DE and LEAs will not enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.
- Collaborate with IVRS to provide joint training as needed to ensure AEA and LEAs understand their responsibilities under the MoA.

**D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;**

Outreach efforts are identified in the Local School Plan for each LEA. Some of these activities could include but are not limited to attending an IEP meeting, participating in transition fairs or back to school nights, and other transition planning meetings. Additional outreach efforts include meeting and becoming known to LEA/AEA staff (teachers, school nurse, school counselor, administration, etc.) so LEA/AEA staff can identify students who need services through IVRS, as appropriate.

For Potentially Eligible (PE) students in need of Pre-ETS, PE documentation and a completed Pre-ETS Agreement are needed for participation in these activities. For students with more intensive needs, who would benefit from individualized VR services, an application for IVRS would be completed to determine eligibility for services. In order for information to be shared between IVRS and the LEA/AEA regarding these services, a signed Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS form must be obtained for each student identified for services.

The determination of eligibility requires that a qualified Rehabilitation Counselor employed by IVRS perform a comprehensive analysis of the disabling conditions, impediments to employment and justification of why the student requires services from IVRS to be successfully employed. For students who have a signed Consent to Release Information to and from IVRS form, IVRS will inform LEA/AEA staff on eligibility determination.

Services are provided to students who have a priority rating consistent with the category (Most Significantly Disabled, Significantly Disabled, Others Eligible) being served. Students on the waiting list may continue to participate in Pre-ETS as long as the student participated in these activities prior to being placed on the waiting list.

As appropriate to the vocational needs of each student and consistent with each students' informed choice, IVRS must ensure that the appropriate rehabilitation services are available to assist the student with the disability to prepare for, secure, retain, regain or advance employment. These services should be identified on the IPE and consistent with the student's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choices.

**E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and**

Coordination between LEAs, AEAs, DE and IVRS is needed to meet documentation requirements under section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act for students and youth with disabilities

seeking subminimum wage employment. These entities must document the completion of the following activities:

1. Pre-ETS that are available to a student with a disability or transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
2. Apply for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual was determined
  - a. Ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, or
  - b. Eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, and
    - i. The youth with a disability had an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
    - ii. The youth with a disability was unable to achieve the employment outcome specified in the IPE
    - iii. The youth with a disability's case record is closed.
3. Career counseling and information and referral services to federal and state programs to help the individual discover, experience and attain competitive integrated employment. The counseling and information cannot be for employment at sub-minimum wage and should be provided within 30 calendar days.

The DE will encourage each LEA to obtain consent and provide IVRS documentation that the student has completed transition services or received Pre-ETS when seeking subminimum wage employment. Documentation can include the student's IEP, transition assessment results, work-based learning data, summary of performance and any other specific data/documentation around transition experiences, assessment and instruction. Documentation should be provided by the LEA to the IVRS staff assigned to the LEA no later than 30 calendar days after the determination of sub minimum wage has been made.

These sub-minimum wage requirements and documentation requirements should be shared by IVRS and DE with LEA, AEA, parents/guardians and students. IVRS will maintain the documentation and provide a copy to the student within 45 days after the completion of services. Any of the services identified above that the LEA provided must be documented by the LEA and provided to IVRS and the student.

**F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

The DE and LEAs will not enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

### **k. Coordination with Employers**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is committed to the dual customer approach. IVRS employs one full-time and three part-time staff designated to serve the business customer. IVRS also works very closely with the National Employment Team (NET) through the Council of State Administrators Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and utilizes these resources to develop relationships with employers across the state. The following services to employers have been provided, in order to identify CIE and career exploration opportunities and transition services for youth and students:

- Disability sensitivity training, including Windmills;
- ADA and accommodation training and accessibility;
- Inclusion and retention training;
- Job/task and safety analyses;
- Partnerships to create pipelines into specific career areas;
- Employer policy and procedure changes/recommendations;
- Assistive technology options;
- Customer Service Academies;
- Pre-screening checklists; and
- Progressive employment options

To prepare job candidates with their employment journey, IVRS created the Ready, Set, Hire curriculum. This curriculum assists job seekers in developing resumes and a newsletter specifically tailored to the individual to highlight their skills to employers.

IVRS has also created a customer service academy to prepare job seekers for employment and develop a pipeline of job ready candidates. IVRS provides this academy virtually twice a year to Iowa job seekers with disabilities as well as during the summer to youth and students with disabilities.

IVRS presents at the local, state, and national level to a variety of entities on these efforts. Additionally, IVRS was invited to the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to develop a toolkit to assist small businesses with inclusivity in hiring practices.

In an effort to create staff capacity with Iowa business and job seekers with disabilities, IVRS is collaborating with Iowa Workforce Business Engagement Consultants (BEC), to utilize their expertise with business engagement/placements of job seekers with disabilities. The BECs are trained on how to work with business and industry on disability initiatives and are assisting with building capacity in IVRS area offices by connecting businesses to job-ready individuals. In addition, IVRS is part of the Core Four pilot partnership. This group includes the Wagner-Peyser career planner, the Iowa Workforce BEC and IVRS staff. The goal of this pilot project is to place job seekers in qualified jobs in a timely manner, while also improving performance measure data.

## **I. Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

**1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

IVRS has a Joint Statement of Cooperation agreement with Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Center, which is the implementing agency, and with University of Iowa Center for Disabilities and Development, which is the lead agency, for the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 activities in Iowa. Easterseals Iowa provides assistive technology and assistive technology services, including, but not limited to demonstration and trial loans of devices through a lending library and training and resources to support awareness and education of assistive technology. IVRS and Easterseals Iowa collaborate to exchange information, collaborate on referrals and coordinate services.

**2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;**

In Iowa, Easterseals Iowa Rural Solutions Program provides education, assistance and support to farmers with disabilities and individuals with disabilities residing in rural communities. IVRS, Easterseals Assistive Technology Center and Easterseals Rural Solutions program collaborate to provide assistive technology solutions for farmers with disabilities and meet the needs of the rural population. IVRS does not currently have a formal agreement with programs carried out through the USDA.

**3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Division of Strategic Operations, Human Rights and Equity, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning oversees the Juvenile Re-entry Task Force (JRTF) for the development and implementation of the Juvenile Re-entry System (JReS). The goal of JReS is to reduce recidivism rates and to improve other youth outcomes through the implementation of comprehensive system-wide changes to juvenile reentry policies and processes. IVRS will collaborate with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Division of Strategic Operations, Human Rights and Equity, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning to provide services to youth with disabilities (both in-school and out-of-school) involved in the juvenile justice system at identified sites in Iowa. JReS Navigators have been hired at the identified sites to develop and deliver Pre-ETS specifically designed for this population. Other expectations for the JReS Navigators includes: improving transition and community integration as youth with disabilities exit and return to the community; connecting youth with disabilities to career pathways and support systems in the community; and reduce recidivism of youth with disabilities by expanding access in obtaining financial independence



through CIE.

IVRS has Customized Employment/Customized Discovery (CE/CD), multiple CRP Project SEARCH and Occupational Skills Training (OST) programs that out-of-school youth can participate in across the state. These programs are not specifically designed for out-of-school youth; however, these individuals still have access to this programming.

#### **4. State use contracting programs;**

IVRS maintains compliance with state contracting programs and follows the Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) rules for financial bidding and contracting.

#### **5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);**

IVRS and HHS continue to maintain a MOA outlining collaborative partnering efforts. The MOA established a statewide system of coordinated, cost-efficient vocational/employment services for people with developmental disabilities to maximize utilization of resources and avoid duplication between IVRS and HHS. This MOA includes the following provisions:

- A description of the financial responsibility of the State Medicaid program to provide such services;
- Information identifying the terms, conditions, and procedures under which mutual job candidates will be served by IVRS and HHS;
- Information describing procedures for resolving interagency disputes under the agreement; and
- Information describing the policies and procedures for each public entity to determine and identify the interagency coordination responsibilities for purposes of promoting the coordination and timely delivery of employment-related services.

The MOA also clarifies roles and responsibilities of IVRS and HHS in regard to common consumers. Collaborative planning efforts are in place between IVRS and IME to implement Employment First principles. Monthly meetings including IVRS, IME and other stakeholders occur to facilitate competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes.

#### **6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

The IVRS Bureau Chief represents IVRS on the Iowa Developmental Disability Council (DD Council) funded through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The IVRS Bureau Chief shares information regarding initiatives like Customized Employment/Customized Discovery (CE/CD) service for individuals with developmental disabilities and brings back legislative information and feedback from the DD Council to help shape IVRS services for job candidates with DD/ID and the autism spectrum. The Executive Director of the DD Council is assigned to the leadership team of Employment First which is



coordinated through IVRS. Collaborative efforts continue between IVRS and the DD Council that include the following:

- Make Your Mark Conference to support individuals with disabilities lead a statewide conference to educate the state on employment and life skills needs of people with developmental disabilities
- Take Your Legislature to Work to support ongoing work surrounding policies on Employment First
- Other Employment First initiatives to increase competitive integrated employment (CIE)

## **7. State agency responsible for mental health services;**

The IVRS CRP Resource Manager (RM) represents IVRS by serving on the Iowa Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council (MHPAC) run by the HHS MHDS. This representation ensures that IVRS and HHS collaborate in providing services for mutual individuals with barriers to mental illness. This RM also serves on the Membership Committee to help ensure the diverse representation of this group.

## **8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and**

The IVRS CRP Resource Manager (RM) serves on the Iowa Transportation Coordination Council to ensure that the transportation needs of the IVRS job candidates are considered when state and local transportation boards are planning, developing and implementing public transportation systems and programs in Iowa.

## **9. Other private nonprofit organizations.**

Other private nonprofit organizations and programs that IVRS works with are:

- Iowa Association of People Supporting Employment 1st (IA APSE)
- Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP)
- Able UP Iowa
- Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE)
- ASK Resources

Through the Iowa Blueprint for Change (DIF-SWTCIE) grant, IVRS partners with over 135 individuals/entities, including a variety of nonprofit organizations.

## **Certifications**

Name of designated State agency: **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Dr. James Williams, CRC, ACAS**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2. In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit) agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4. The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

## ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

### **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. **Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
2. **Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140. **Yes**
3. **Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
  - a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). **Yes**
  - e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

- h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). **Yes**
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

**4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

- a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

- i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. **Yes**
- j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,
  - i. has developed and will implement, **Yes**
    - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
    - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and **Yes**
  - ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113). **Yes**

**5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

**6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

**7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:**

- a. Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

- b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

### **a. State Rehabilitation Council**

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

(A) is an independent State commission.

The Iowa Department for the Blind is an independent consumer-controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council.

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative’s term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)		
Parent Training and Information Center		
Client Assistance Program		
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)		
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		



Disability Advocacy Groups		
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services		
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)		
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)		
State Workforce Development Board		
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)		

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council’s input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council’s annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

Provide the VR agency’s response to the Council’s input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations. List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response.

**b. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

**1. The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:**

**A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;**

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) works cooperatively with the Iowa Commission for the Blind to review and assess the vocational rehabilitation needs of Iowans who are blind, DeafBlind, or have low vision. IDB contracted with the Interwork Institute, San Diego State University to complete the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment. The data collected in the assessment covers the period of PY 2018-PY 2020. The conclusions and recommendations from the most recent assessment are included in IDB’s goals and priorities.

The assessment indicates that individuals who are blind continue to be the largest percentage, of individuals who are applying for and receiving services through IDB. Approximately two thirds of IDB’s clients are blind as compared to individuals who have low vision (approximately 33%) or are DeafBlind (1-1.5%). The percent of all clients served by disability type remained relatively steady for each group from 2018 to 2020. The employment rate at exit for individuals who are blind exceeded the employment rate for individuals who have low vision by more than 13% in PY 2020; during this year, individuals who are blind had higher median wages and

higher employment rates in the second quarter after exit as compared to individuals with low vision.

The needs assessment identified that there continues to be a need to provide education to employers regarding the abilities of individuals who are blind. Employers in Iowa are hesitant to hire blind Iowans due to fear, lack of belief in their ability to do the job and lack of awareness about accommodations. Strong advocates are needed to ensure that employers are educated and made aware of the abilities and capabilities of blind Iowans and to help dispel any myths and misconceptions about the ability of blind people to work independently.

Individuals who are blind, DeafBlind or have low vision require a variety of rehabilitation services including, independent living skills training, assistive technology training and transportation services. Transportation has been a common theme for individuals with disabilities throughout Iowa, specifically in more rural areas where there are limited options. In addition, blind Iowans need access to technology, including the necessary equipment and training to be able to function in the digital world. IDB needs to have qualified staff able to train clients in the use of rehabilitation technology and nonvisual skills to be able to fully access education, training and employment opportunities.

IDB staff and partners reported that a significant number of clients have secondary disabilities, most common include mental health impairments, followed by autism and complications related to disabilities. IDB identified that there needs to be improved coordination with mental health service providers, increased capacity of IDB counselors to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities, a need for more community resources to serve individuals with mental health impairments, especially those in crisis; the development of service providers that are able to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities; and the need to develop customized employment as a service option for IDB clients. Multiple clients have indicated that there is a long waiting list for Medicaid waiver services in Iowa which significantly impacts the ability of IDB to identify an extended services providers for individuals that need supported employment services.

IDB has identified that over the last several years, there has been a decrease in the number of providers able to provide employment related services. In addition, there are a number of community rehabilitation providers who are experiencing turnover of job placement specialists and job coaches. Also identified is a need for community rehabilitation providers to better understand the needs of individuals who are blind or have low vision. In addition, IDB has identified a need for community rehabilitation providers to understand assistive technology, nonvisual skills and transportation options for individuals who are blind or have low vision, including individuals who have additional disabilities. IDB has continued to recognize the need for disability related skills in the area of nonvisual techniques and assistive technology and the need for self-advocacy skills for individuals with the most significant disabilities. IDB has been able to partner with community providers to ensure that these providers are also provided training to support clients in residential and employment settings.

IDB is partnering with the VR Technical Assistance Center - Quality Employment to provide training to both IDB staff and community partners in efforts to address the needs identified above, in addition to joint trainings in the areas of customized training, customized employment and supported employment services to IDB clients.

**B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

During the most recent assessment, the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities identified several areas. Individuals who are DeafBlind were the most commonly identified underserved group. Individuals in rural areas of Iowa were also identified as an underserved group due to the lack of services available in these areas and limited number of available qualified rehabilitation teachers. Overall, the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities did not differ from the needs of other individuals with blindness and low vision except for language interpreter needs. There were participants in the most recent needs assessment who indicated that it may be difficult to find culturally competent staff to serve individuals who are blind or have low vision in Iowa. The Department continues to review its processes and materials to more effectively reach persons with diverse backgrounds who might be eligible for services. The efforts to date have been focused on increasing outcomes to all Iowans who are blind or have vision loss. These efforts will continue, along with a continued review of barriers that inhibit participation in services.

**C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and**

The most recent statewide needs assessment identified themes related to the services of individuals who are blind or have low vision being served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. Currently, stakeholders indicated that the IowaWORKS Centers are not effectively meeting the service needs of individuals with blindness and low vision throughout the state. There is limited availability of assistive technology that would allow the programs and services to be accessible. Often, the assistive technology that may be provided is not functional or does not meet the needs of an individual client. The relationship between IDB and the IowaWORKS Centers remains primarily one of referral rather than one of joint planning and braided funding. While the use of Integrated Resource Teams has been identified as a strategy, there continues to be a need for the development and use of the IRTs to serve IDB clients that are co-enrolled at the AJCs. IDB staff have worked with partners at the state and local level and are involved in disability access committees across the state to address this need. IDB staff have provided assistive technology training to partner program staff and meet regularly with workforce partners to identify accessibility issues, potential solutions and identify additional training needs. Partner programs continue to request information and training on how to most effectively serve individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB will continue working with partner programs to develop and implement programs that will assist in meeting the needs of blind Iowans.

**D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.**

Increasing and expanding outreach and services to students and youth who are blind or have low vision was identified as one of the areas of need. All of the five pre-employment transition services were also identified as a need for students with disabilities in Iowa. Work-based learning experiences were cited as the most beneficial activity but is least frequently provided. There is a significant need to increase work-based learning opportunities to ensure that students with disabilities can develop hard and soft skills, and to ensure that they are aware of their workplace technology needs and accommodations that are required to be successful at work. The most frequently provided pre-employment transition services are work readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy; a majority of these services are provided directly by IDB staff or through a limited number of contracted vendors.

The rehabilitation needs of youth in transition are similar to the general population of IDB clients. Transportation, assistive technology, overcoming employer perceptions about the abilities of blind individuals, and independent living skills are rehabilitation needs for blind and low vision youth and students with disabilities in Iowa. IDB offers the LEAP summer program and youth weekend retreats that help prepare students and youth who are blind or have low vision to learn independent living and soft skills that directly impact their ability to have high expectations for their future. In addition, the IDB also offers the Young Adult Transition Program to provide intensive training in pre-employment transition skills, including independent living and self-advocacy training for students in high school as part of a schoolyear-based program for high school students who have met their academic requirements. Transition-age youth who are blind need to have high expectations for their future. These young people need to have a support system that believes in their ability and encourages them to become independent and self-supporting. Youth who are blind or have low vision often have additional or multiple disabilities. These individuals need to have additional support in order to maximize their chance to be successful in employment once they transition out of the secondary school system.

**2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

As was identified at the last assessment, there is a need to develop the number and capacity of community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) to be able to work effectively with Iowans who are blind or have low vision in all service areas. IDB provides a majority of services through in-house staff, however there are a limited number of positions in critical service need areas that could be provided by CRPs if they had the experience and skill. There is a need to develop supported employment vendors for all areas of the state. There is also a need to develop CRPs that have the capacity to provide customized employment to individuals who are blind or have low vision in Iowa.

## **c. Goals, Priorities, and Strategies**

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

### **1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and**

Through participation in workgroups related to the development of the Unified State Plan, the Iowa Department for the Blind has collaborated with other core partners to jointly develop the State's vision and goals. Iowa's Unified State Plan Vision is to be an aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce. This vision was jointly developed by Iowa's WIOA core partners and approved by the State Workforce Board. The goals developed by Iowa's core partners and approved by the State Workforce Board are as follows: Goal I: Increase the engagement and awareness of Iowa's current, potential, and future workforce to the continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities in Iowa. Goal II – Increase employer engagement and awareness of the IowaWORKS system as the premier provider of business services for a skilled and diverse workforce.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is an independent consumer-controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council. A Board of Commissioners governs IDB and works together with the agency Director to develop and agree to annual goals and priorities based on the work of the agency, feedback from clients and stakeholders and the results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. The mission of IDB is to empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently. The Department recognizes the need to improve services to Iowans who are blind and have low vision across all agencies and organizations in the state. The responsibility of the Department's vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals who are blind or have low vision, including those with the most significant disabilities, to achieve high quality, competitive integrated employment.

### **2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—**

#### **A. Support innovation and expansion activities;**



The Department will use the following strategies in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve VR services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. The Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent nonprofit corporation whose Council Members are appointed by the Governor, and a majority of whom are persons with disabilities. Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the SILC has the responsibility to plan for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in Iowa, and to promote the development of a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living and the Department work in collaboration in many ways to include heading up system change; that is help to organize people with disabilities to demand their civil rights, and fight against discrimination. Many of the freedoms and physical accommodations that people with and without disabilities enjoy today would not otherwise exist such as curb cuts, lifts on buses, elevators at metro transit stations, the passage of 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. At the Department, they work in collaboration with us to get information out regarding our Community-Based Trainings and they refer individuals with severe vision loss or who are blind. Overall, we collaborate to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability.

The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department. The Iowa Self-Employment program exists to provide quality, expert, client-centered services to Iowans with disabilities that embrace diversity, promote successful business ownership and result in self-sufficiency and economic development. This program partners with the Iowa Department for the Blind and its clients to offer entrepreneurial assessment, market feasibility assessment, business plan development, business financial and technical consultation as well as business augmentation support. While self-employment is not for everyone, for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, ability to analyze markets and make good decisions, and where needed financial stability in order to access financing if that is necessary, this program is one to consider as a source to facilitating an individual from under or unemployment to gainful employment.

IDB supports innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to improve the supported employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB staff is working with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center on Quality Employment to develop new ideas and strategies to create innovative ways in serving blind Iowans who require supported employment services. In addition, the team is working to identify ways to build capacity within Iowa's CRPs to provide quality training to blind individuals. IDB is exploring training opportunities and assistive technology supports for these providers as they work with IDB clients.

IDB is also utilizing innovation and expansion funds to explore activities to support self-advocacy skills training, including peer mentoring for students with disabilities. IDB also supports innovation and expansion by providing training to local workforce and education



providers by providing information, training on universal design and technical assistance to meet the needs of these students.

Over the next two years, innovation and expansion funds will be used on the integration of a new case management system and to provide training on a new data management system. Data management collected will assist IDB to analyze the effectiveness of our programs, services and progress toward achieving goals, while also assisting in identifying potential barriers and challenges so that we can overcome them as we work to provide quality services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision.

**B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;**

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to increase the number and percentage of clients achieving competitive integrated employment outcomes; build awareness of IDB services; and to improve the quality assurance system. IDB maintains one state office and uses telework methods, allowing counseling staff to work in regions across the state. Vocational Rehabilitation staff work in teams and travel their assigned regions to meet with referrals and clients, to educate the general public, including employers, and to reach out to individuals who may need services.

IDB is implementing a new case management system which is scheduled to go live in 2024. With this new case management system, IDB plans to incorporate the ability to add signatures in an effort to allow applications and other documents to be processed more efficiently. IDB also plans to implement an online application process for individuals to be able to submit applications electronically.

IDB continues to advocate for accessibility of programs provided by our partners. IDB provides blindness awareness training to stakeholders, has provided accessibility training to partners, educators and employers. IDB has also provided consultation and technical assistance to programs and employers regarding document and website accessibility in efforts to improve access for individuals participating in vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services. IDB plans to continue providing these services to stakeholders to assist in overcoming barriers blind Iowans have in accessing services.

**C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**

The Iowa Department for the Blind continues to work with school districts and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI) to increase and expand services for students. The Department is working with the IESBVI to increase referrals of students at the age of 14. Ninety days prior to the transition IEP (no later than age 14) students are informed about Vocational Rehabilitation services available through the IDB by an IESBVI representative. Releases to share information are also gathered. The Department receives the referral and begins attempting to contact the family and student to assist them in the application process. The emphasis to serve youth and students with disabilities increases the need to

collaborate with community rehabilitation providers in the provision of pre-employment transition services in order to increase the competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and program administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or have low vision. One area of need often identified with students is a lack of understanding and ability to use assistive technologies. In effort to meet this need, the IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of assistive technology services to students with disabilities and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one-on-one assistive technology training at school or at home. IDB staff attend IEP meetings and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers.

The Department continues to work to build relationships within communities across the state in efforts to connect students in high school with VR services. IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for the transition students in integrated settings. IDB has developed several programs to expand the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services, to students who are blind or have low vision.

Over the next four years, IDB will continue to grow the Young Adult Transition Program to serve Iowa's secondary students. Through provision of pre-employment transition services and other services, this program will work with local school districts to assist students with disabilities to develop skills needed for post-secondary environments. IDB plans to improve and expand this service by creating a welcoming space for students and adding additional training spaces to allow students to develop independent living, personal management, and others skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education and employment.

IDB plans to continue expanding opportunities for work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness activities, including group trainings and opportunities provided throughout the year to students who are blind or have low vision. These programs will be offered by our in-house staff and through partner agencies.

**D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes. (List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority.)**

Goal: Promote awareness of IDB programs and services for blind Iowans.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a marketing plan to promote awareness of IDB services, including the services of the Iowa Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center. Include a review and development of materials in additional languages and formats.
2. Provide training to partner agencies, including workforce development partners and education agencies about the increased services to students and youth with disabilities.

3. Expand employer engagement activities to increase employer awareness of IDB services, including assistance with recruiting, hiring, retaining and promoting individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Goal: Improve employment outcomes to enhance economic self-sufficiency for clients exiting the VR program.

Strategies:

1. Monitor closed cases in competitive integrated employment for one year after closure.
2. Expand partnerships with IowaWORKS offices in addition to other core partners to increase access to services needed by IDB clients.
3. Support and promote the modernization of the Business Enterprise Program in order to increase employment opportunities for blind Iowans.
4. Counselor employment team identified with goal of exploring strategies to increase successful employment outcomes. The team is encouraged to share information, improve performance, consult on cases that appear “stuck” and to move employment strategies forward. This group will be led by VR counselors; the VR counselor lead worker and VR program administrator are available for feedback and consultation.

Goal: Increase the total number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services.

Strategies:

1. Expand the use of work-based learning experiences to students with disabilities.
2. Expand outreach to families and students who are blind or have low vision, especially in areas that are rural and have smaller populations. .
3. Explore the development and implementation of a youth council to provide guidance and feedback to IDB staff regarding program development and implementation of services.

Goal: IDB clients move quickly through rehabilitation process.

1. Develop an internal team to review current processes and procedures and minimize time between referrals and service delivery.
2. Continue employee continuing education activities to ensure IDB staff continue expanding and keeping up with changes in technology, service delivery models and the needs of blind Iowans.
3. Explore the use of connectivity assessments for clients engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. Ensure clients participating in programs have the necessary equipment and services to participate in training activities.
4. Expand IDB’s online presence and develop online forms; including the ability to use electronic signatures.

#### **d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

**1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs; (List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies.)**

The goals and progress in achieving the goals from the 2022 Unified State Plan modification are listed below:

Goal 1: Iowa employers will become more aware of the Iowa Department for the Blind and the pool of advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers the department can provide access to.

Progress: IDB worked to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with Iowa businesses by participating in business services teams, providing trainings to employers and engaging with WIOA partners to provide technical assistance and consultation to employers. IDB also hired a careers instruction for the Iowa Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center to engage in career development activities with IDB clients, which includes the development of employer engagement with local, state and federal businesses. IDB also hired a Supported Employment Specialist to provide training and support to employers and community providers hiring Iowans who are blind or have low vision.

Goal 2: All Iowans who are blind or have vision loss and require VR services to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment receive them.

Progress: IDB conducts marketing and outreach to increase awareness of and referrals to the Department. The Iowa Department for the Blind hosts events that provide information about services offered by the Department. These events included the annual Braille Challenge, the legislative open house, and technology fairs, and community-based training events. The Department emphasized the vocational rehabilitation program and the youth transition programs at these events, ensuring individuals are aware of the importance of early involvement in vocational rehabilitation services and the programs offered through the Department. At these events, feedback was sought from attendees for follow-up and possible referrals. Department staff continued to welcome potential clients, interested professionals, and the general public to the IDB for tours that highlight available services. IDB also completed outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. IDB participates in Vision Discipline Teams with staff from Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in which referrals are reviewed and followed up on; this has assisted IDB counselors in getting in front of parents of students who are blind or have low vision to discuss IDB services. IDB has also worked to ensure eligible individuals have well-developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education & training plans needed to achieve their career goal. IDB staff advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible students have well-developed individualized education plans that aligned with their career goals. IDB staff provide pre-employment transition services including paid work experience to students in high school. IDB provided work-based learning experiences and job seeking seminars designed specifically for clients attending post-secondary school. The Department has had and exceeded a goal to have 75% of clients participate in work experiences prior to graduation. The Department firmly believes that access to work-based

learning experiences increases an individual's likelihood of success in reaching his or her employment goals.

IDB Goal 3: All individuals who are successfully closed employed will have found employment that aligns with their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and places them on their desired career pathway.

Progress: IDB worked to ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and that the activities they engaged in align with a career pathway. IDB promotes participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. IDB has seen an increase in the number of individuals achieving measurable skills gains and continues to work with staff to address this goal. IDB also partnered with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. IDB provided a longer period for job stabilization before closure in cases where a client is working toward achieving more hours, and requires additional documentation for cases closing in employment at less than twenty hours per week. IDB worked with clients who are in employment to increase knowledge and skills so that they can pursue careers along their chose career paths.

IDB Goal 4: The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Progress: IDB worked with core partners to collect surveys and conduct focus groups to measure satisfaction in receiving services through Iowa's workforce delivery system as part of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment. IDB partnered with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. IDB continues to use the "Hello. Is Anybody Here?" training series to engage service professionals in discussions that support improving customer service to individuals who are blind. This training continues to be used in regions across the state in an effort to increase the comfort and ability of our colleagues in fully including individuals who are blind in the career services and career pathway models of American Job Centers. In practice, each of the four vignettes have been presented "live" in staff training sessions with a Department for the Blind staff member facilitator. IDB also developed a Facilitator's Guide to use with the videos so that others could host similar discussions at their own offices. The objectives of the discussions and videos are as follows: 1. Recognize the customer service experiences in American Job Centers for blind customers; 2. Promote service design that achieves full inclusion; 3. Increase understanding of what "program access" really means; 4. Build the comfort level of American Job Center staff in working with blind consumers; and 5. Increase staff understanding of some of the particular challenges faced by blind job seekers. IDB continues to get requests for this training. IDB also collaborated to provide training on Integrated Resource Teams to core partners. IDB has found success in using this strategy to identify and provide and services to clients. IDB and core partners continue to work together to address system, programmatic and physical barriers to individuals who are blind and have low vision.



IDB Goal 5: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision.

Progress: IDB conducted outreach to community rehabilitation providers and provided trainings to these providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB has used the "Hello. Is Anybody Here?" series, in addition to providing hands-on training with individual providers, based on the needs of clients. IDB continues to look for way to increase capacity of community providers to provide services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision.

IDB's goals are being revised to reflect information gathered through the most current comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

## **2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and**

The performance accountability indicators on PY-2022. The information combines both IVRS and IDB data.

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit:

- PY22 Rate: 59.6%
- Negotiated Rate: 57.0%

Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit:

- PY22 Rate: 58.3%
- Negotiated Rate: 54.3%

Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter after Exit:

- PY22 Median Earnings: \$4,541
- PY 22 Negotiated Median Earnings: \$4,256

Credential Attainment (CA) Rate:

- PY22 Rate: 53.3%
- Negotiated Credential Rate: 60.0%
- IDB did not meet the negotiated credential rate. We are reviewing internal reporting processes to identify the reason for not meeting this performance indicator.

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Rate:

- PY22 Rate: 51.8%
- Negotiated MSG Rate: 40.0%

Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

- This measure was not required, however the Iowa Workforce system achieved an Employer Penetration Rate of 6% and a Repeat Business Customer Rate of 19.4%.

## **3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).**

In PY-2022, IDB supported innovation and expansion activities by providing funding to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). This funding was necessary to assist the Council



to carry out its functions. The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. Overall, we collaborated to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability, including individuals who are blind or have low vision.

**e. Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.**

**1. Acceptance of Title VI funds:**

- (A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.  
 (B) VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

**2. If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.**

The Department's goal is that all Iowans who are blind or have low vision and require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive employment receive them. Individuals the IDB closed who were receiving supported employment IDB is collaborating with the VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Employment to review current supported employment policies and to develop strategies to improve services to individuals requiring supported employment services.

**3. Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.**

Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are given full opportunity to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or re-enter competitive integrated employment, including supported employment. IDB provides supported employment services following job placement to individuals and youth who require supported

employment services, for a period of time that will not exceed twenty-four (24) months, except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment. Vocational rehabilitation counselors closely monitor the quality of services throughout the duration of their provision to insure that services are appropriate, timely, cost-effective, and of the same quality as those services provided under Title I. IDB provides ongoing support services using funds under the Supported Employment program and/or the VR program from the time of job placement until the transition to extended services. When a client is ready to transition to extended services, IDB partners with clients, community rehabilitation providers, and in most cases, the Medicaid Waiver program for a seamless transfer. IDB continues to work with partners to improve this transition through trainings and discussions in efforts to improve this process. IDB may provide extended services to youth with a most significant disability for a period not to exceed four years, or at such time that a youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first. IDB is not able to provide extended services to an individual with a most significant disability who is not a youth with a most significant disability. IDB will work with the individual to identify other sources of extended services to ensure that there is no interruption of services.

**4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

Because the number of blind and low vision Iowans who use services from Community Rehabilitation Programs is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define supported employment services, outcomes, and costs. The Department enters into agreements with providers of supported employment when specific clients are identified as needing those services. When appropriate, supported employment services and extended services are paid for through county services under the Medicaid Waiver programs. The Department may also make arrangements with other private entities to provide supported employment and extended services as the need arises. Other private entities may include employers, family members, and individuals contracted to provide these services. Natural supports and county services are the most often used services for extended support services.

The Department's service delivery system is to allocate 50 percent of the supported employment grant allotment for the provision of pre-employment transition services to youth with the most significant disabilities. In addition, these funds may be used to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years.

IDB is partnering with the VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) to review supported employment services policies and processes. IDB is also working the the VRTAC-QE to develop new partnerships with CRPs and to provide training to CRP staff in the provision of supported employment services, including the provision of these services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Through this partnership, IDB is also exploring other partners and will explore the need for formal cooperative agreements.

**f. Annual Estimates**

**1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—**

**A. VR Program; and**

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	450	475	4,147,225	

**B. Supported Employment Program**

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	37	45	392,895	

**g. Order of Selection**

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

**1. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—**

**A. The justification for the order;**

The Iowa Department for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection.

**B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

The Iowa Department for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection.

**C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.**

The Iowa Department for the Blind is not implementing an order of Selection.

**2. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?**

No – The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) does not anticipate the need to implement an order of selection. IDB continues to serve eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

#### **h. Waiver of Statewideness**

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”

Not applicable.

#### **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

##### **1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—**

**A. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;**

**B. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**

**C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Director	1	0	1
Executive Secretary	1	0	0
Accountant Supervisor	1	0	1
Program Administrators	5	0	1
Chief Information Officer	1	0	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	10	0	3
Supported Employment Specialist	1	0	0
Counselor Lead Worker / Quality Assurance	1	0	0
VR Counselor / Careers Instructor	1	0	0
DeafBlind Specialist	0	1	0
Secretary 2	1	0	1
Secretary 1	4		2
Executive Officer 1 (BEP)	1	0	0
BEP Business Counselors	2	0	1
Rehabilitation Technology Specialist	1	3	0
Center Instructors	4	1	0
Center Generalist	1	0	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers	4	2	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers – 4 Plus (YATP)	2	0	0
Independent Living Skills Coordinator (YATP)	1	0	0
Youth Service Workers	1	4	0

Temporary Youth Workers (summer)	3	13	0
Senior Independent Living Teachers	1	0	1
Independent Living Teachers	5	1	0
Resource Specialist	1	0	1
Access Services Librarian	1	0	0
Special Services Librarian	1	0	0
Youth Services Librarian	1	0	1
Accessible Media Specialist	1	0	0
Digital Recording Specialist/Studio Manager	1	0	1
Audio Production Librarian	1	0	0
Technical Services Librarian	0	1	0
Braille Coordinator	1	0	0
Instructional Materials Center Librarian	1	0	0
Instructional Materials Center Service Specialist	1	0	0
Braille Transcriber	0	1	0
Accounting Tech 3	2	0	0
Accounting Tech 2	0	1	0
Accounting Clerk 1	1	0	0
Technology Specialist	1	0	0
Data Analyst	1	0	0
Facilities Engineer	1	0	1
Maintenance Repairer	1	0	0
Custodians	1	1	1

**D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

IDB endeavors to maintain caseload sizes of between 50 and 65 cases per counselor. To ensure the ratio of one counselor to 50 – 65 clients, the Department employs 10 vocational rehabilitation counselors.



**E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

IDB projects to serve 550 individuals in the next five years. Projections of staff needs in five years based upon current client trends would require the continued employment of ten vocational rehabilitation counselors to maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 65 clients. IDB will maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 65 cases to assure optimum services to clients. IDB serves all clients that are referred for services, and it is not anticipated that there will be significant increases in the number of clients receiving services.

**2. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:**

**A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Drake University	Rehabilitation Counseling MA	18	3
University of Iowa	Rehabilitation Counseling MA	21	6

**B. The VR agency’s plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

The Department’s plan for recruitment and training of qualified personnel is based on the highest standards in the state for VR counselors serving individuals who are blind or have low vision. The Department actively recruits individuals who are blind or have a disability, and persons from minority backgrounds. Recruitment efforts include employment announcements posted on Iowa’s state employment opportunities web site; promotion of experienced and qualified personnel from within the agency, including personnel who are blind; and participation in internship opportunities for students of rehabilitation counseling and placement.

IDB identified a critical need in hiring rehabilitation technology specialists, rehabilitation instructors and a DeafBlind specialist. These positions. IDB plans to explore the apprenticeship model as a strategy to address the critical hiring need of rehabilitation technology specialists, rehabilitation instructors, counselors and other key positions. Through this strategy, IDB will explore opportunities with state postsecondary programs to develop the necessary training and curriculum to prepare individuals to work in key IDB positions. IDB will also explore a “Grow

our Own” strategy. Through this strategy, we plan to encourage and support existing clients to pursue a master’s degree in Rehabilitation Teaching, Rehabilitation Counseling, Assistive Technology Instruction and other key areas with an intent to be able to fill critical positions at IDB.

The Department’s plan for retention of qualified personnel includes ongoing training opportunities for all staff; provision and support of assistive technology for staff who are blind or have disabilities; encouragement and support for personnel desiring advanced degrees; and opportunities for advancement within the department. The Department does not discriminate in any way in its recruitment and hiring practices or in its administration and supervision practices against individuals who are from minority backgrounds or who have disabilities.

**C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:**

**i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**

**ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

The Department for the Blind has defined and implemented personnel standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors based on state approved and recognized certification requirements promulgated under the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act. The following standards for VR counselors are based on the highest entry-level degree needed under the existing state certification requirements codified in subrule 111-2.1, Iowa Administrative Code: 2.1(2) service specialist for the blind 2 and senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor). Certification shall be required of all vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Department:

a. At the time of hire into the position, an individual holding at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university and one year of work experience shall be granted provisional certification. Exceptions regarding education and experience can only be made by the Commission for the Blind upon the recommendation of the director. Provisional certification shall be recognized for a maximum period of 18 months.

b. An individual may obtain full certification as a vocational rehabilitation counselor by demonstrating competency in the following areas: 1. Knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the Department’s positive philosophy of blindness. 2. Knowledge of the Department’s programs. 3. Skills in career planning and development. 4. Knowledge of placement techniques and practices. 5. Knowledge of occupational information, job site evaluation, and job analysis. 6. Knowledge and development of alternative techniques of

blindness. 7. Knowledge of rehabilitation technology services. 8. Knowledge of disability and related issues. 9. Advocacy. 10. Case management. 11. Adjustment to blindness counseling. 12. Assessment of consumer needs. 13. Public education and outreach. 14. Teamwork and problem solving.

c. An individual holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, who has been employed by the Department as a service specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) for a minimum of six months on the date this rule is finalized, shall be considered to be a fully certified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as long as the individual maintains unbroken employment with the Department in that classification.

These standards, ensure that the professional personnel needed within the Department to carry out the vocational rehabilitation program are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Professional staff at the Department meet, or are working toward meeting, these standards. To maintain standards, personnel must participate in ongoing training through the Department.

Evaluation of recruitment practices is based on the Department's ability to hire and train qualified personnel. These practices will continue to be evaluated as additional hiring becomes necessary. As a general practice, the Department does not hire individuals who do not meet the established personnel standards for the services specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) positions. In the event an individual is hired who does not meet the Department's personnel standards that individual would be expected to meet those standards within an established timeframe. The Department would devise a schedule by which the individual must report on progress and by which time he or she must meet the standards. Failure to meet the standards within the established timeframe would result in termination or reassignment.

**3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**

**A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

**B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Because providing quality services to blind Iowans is a priority of the Iowa Department for the Blind, provide several trainings to staff. IDB provides staff with additional education and training opportunities to ensure that they can work effectively with individuals who are blind and

to assist them in their goals to achieve competitive integrated employment. All IDB staff participate in an immersion training through the Iowa Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center in which staff can learn alternative skills of blindness in addition to developing an awareness and confidence in the nonvisual skills and assistive technology available to clients. In addition to nonvisual skills training, staff participate in philosophy training to assist them in understanding the needs of individuals who are blind or have low vision. This training assists staff in understanding the functional limitations of clients who are blind, have low vision, are DeafBlind, in addition to clients who experience additional functional limitations due to additional disabilities. These trainings assist counselors to understand the implications of the functional limitations on employment for clients we serve. IDB also participates in additional collaborations such as the Brain Injury Advisory Council, the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment, and the DeafBlind Advisory Team to further understand the functional limitations and vocational implications of the functional limitations on employment. In addition, all IDB staff participate in a new staff seminar and complete observations of staff in different work units to understand the roles and responsibilities of each unit. In addition, staff are expected to participate in continuing education requirements annually. Counselors attend the Iowa Workforce Development business engagement meetings at least monthly to learn about employer needs in that specific territory. IDB began an apprenticeship pilot project with Iowa Workforce; IDB continues to receive updates regarding apprenticeship opportunities across the state. Additionally, counselors can attend the introduction to apprenticeship class offered at IWD for job seekers. Counselors have received ongoing training regarding where to find labor market information such as The Career Index Plus, Onet, and Future Ready Iowa. They have had the opportunity to try out various LMI platforms and identify which one works best for them when working with clients. Counselors maintain a professional relationship with their local partners such as IVRS and IWD which has resulted in learning about employer needs and labor market in their area as well. Two IDB staff are participating in the Innovative Guided Rehabilitation Employer Engagement Training to further knowledge related to employer engagement, including a better understanding of effective strategies to build and maintain relationships with employers. IDB continues to be committed to providing staff with training opportunities to support the Department's mission and goals to assist clients with achieving successful competitive integrated employment. To continue to offer these opportunities and in effort to increase the knowledge and skills of our IDB staff, IDB has committed to partner with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment. Through this partnership, counselors and other IDB staff and community rehabilitation partners receive training and technical assistance for a variety of areas to include employer outreach, employer support, serving Veterans, work-based learning and on-the-job training, customized training, customized employment, self-employment and supported employment services. IDB began this partnership in 2022.

The Department actively assesses the training needs of all employees. The employee performance evaluation document is used to review an employee's performance and to identify training needs. In addition to annual individual performance reviews, the Department surveys the staff annually to determine the training or resources they require to perform their duties more

efficiently and effectively. Vocational rehabilitation employees have participated in the following training activities: Quarterly in-service training activities focus on improving knowledge and understanding of rehabilitation topics, development and demonstration of new skill levels and organizational change projects that enhance achievement of employment outcomes for blind individuals. Performance and Development Solutions (PDS) courses are provided by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services / Human Resources Enterprise on a wide range of general topics and transferable job skills. In-house training in classroom settings and one-on-one training is made available to all employees depending upon the need. Retention of qualified personnel is addressed through CEU credit for staff training, as well as opportunities for expanding skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. Leadership development and capacity-building opportunities are offered through personnel development seminars available to staff including management certifications and continuous quality improvement certification courses. Some management employees have attended the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. Employees are encouraged to participate in professional organizations such as the National Rehabilitation Association and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind in leadership roles.

Employees acquire information about current research by participating in professional conferences, attending training on a variety of topics, and through professional publications, such as the Journal of Rehabilitation, the Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness, and Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) publications. Employees are asked to submit reports on conference findings to the Department's training grant administrator and their supervisor. These reports include summaries of significant issues or findings, assessments of the conference's information to their work, and an evaluation of the value of conference to other staff. Further, employees who have attended conferences or training sessions provide updates on results of research or new information to others at the in-service meetings.

**4. Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

The Department contracts with qualified interpreters for individuals who are not proficient in English or who use sign language. Employees are routinely counseled on how to locate qualified interpreters. Independent contracts are established as needed to obtain services from individuals who can communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. Contracts have included but are not limited to the following languages: American Sign Language, including Tactile Signing for DeafBlind individuals, Spanish, Vietnamese, Burmese, Swahili and others according to the needs of applicants and eligible individuals. IDB, through the work of our vocational rehabilitation program administrator and the Iowa Client Assistance Program, has made available an orientation video for outreach purposes which is completed in American Sign Language.



The Department's Accessible Media Specialist and Instructional Materials Center staff provide individuals, educators, partners, employers and businesses with information and resources to meet accessibility needs through trainings and accessible materials. Training materials are provided in the eligible individual's preferred means of communication, including Braille, large print, or electronic formats. Braille is an integral part of the training that all IDB's professional personnel receive.

**5. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

The Department pursues the following activities to coordinate the system of personnel development with personnel development activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

Maintains an interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE) which defines the roles and responsibilities of both agencies regarding transition activities. Through this agreement, the agencies provide technical assistance and training for staff providing services to students who are blind or have low vision.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI), and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) work collaboratively under the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to children and youth who are blind or have low vision. Under this system, employees exchange information about their services and approaches to create effective working relationships. A standard referral procedure was developed because of this collaboration. Area education agencies (AEAs) personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing individual education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) provide vision-related IEP services to those students who are blind or have low vision. The TVI must refer all students who are receiving vision-related services to one of two statewide vision system's regional directors prior to the development of the student's transition IEP or no later than age fourteen. Through this collaborative effort and referral system, the Department can effectively coordinate its services with IESBVI and the AEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation. IDB's VR counselors participate in IEP meetings. Pre-Employment Transition Services are made available to potentially eligible students and eligible students with disabilities. IESBVI and IDB collaborate on several programs throughout the year to meet the needs of students who are blind or have low vision.

**j. Coordination with Education Officials**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

**1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services**



**in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.**

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Braille School (Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired — IESBVI), and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) have worked collaboratively through the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to students who are blind, DeafBlind or have low vision, including students with the most significant disabilities. Through this system, staff can exchange information about their services and approaches to create effective working relationships which will enhance educational and transition outcomes.

The IDB collaborates with the DE, local education agencies, and area education agencies, in addition to IESBVI to provide the five pre-employment transition services required activities to students with documented disabilities (ages 14-21) as defined under §361.5(c)(51), based on individual need, once a student requests or is recommended for one or more pre-employment transition services. In the state of Iowa, pre-employment transition services are provided to a student with a disability who meets all of the following criteria: 1) is at least 14 years old but no more than 21 years of age (has not yet reached 22nd birthday); has a disability that would make them eligible or potentially eligible for IDB's vocational rehabilitation services and has submitted the required qualifying medical documentation signed by a medical provider or a copy of an IEP or 504 plan; and has documentation confirming enrollment as a student in an educational program.

IDB collaborates with stakeholders such as educators, parents, and other service providers on an ongoing basis, to assure that students receive high quality education and rehabilitation services. IDB assists stakeholders in the transition process to coordinate and improve transition services and to increase pre-employment transition services throughout Iowa, especially in unserved and underserved areas of the state. IDB collaborates with individuals and entities statewide to provide services that meet the transition needs of students who are blind, DeafBlind, or have low vision with and without additional disabilities. IDB connects with the IESBVI administrators; the Iowa Department of Education; the ASK Family Resource Center; the Special Education Advisory Panel; the DeafBlind Advisory Committee; teachers of the visually impaired (TVI); orientation and mobility specialists (OMS); educators in local school districts and area education agencies; Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and students and their families or guardians. Finally, the IDB plans to work closely with local education agencies throughout Iowa to improve and increase the delivery of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. This will be accomplished primarily through VR counselors who serve the LEAs within their service territories.

The IDB Vocational Rehabilitation program administrator is a member of the State of Iowa's Special Education Advisory Panel and the DeafBlind Advisory Committee which informs Iowa's DeafBlind Project. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers, Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, Instructional Materials Center staff and other

IDB employees reach out to Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), Orientation and Mobility Specialists (OMS), and other teachers and school personnel with a focus of building partnerships and collaboration. IDB staff connect with TVIs and OMS in group settings, present at IESBVI training events, and communicate on an individual basis with educators.

In addition, IDB employees are active team members at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at school districts throughout Iowa. IDB staff attend IEP meetings at the request of the team and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. They provide information about the IDB so that students and their families understand the vocational rehabilitation process and can make informed choices when applying for vocational rehabilitation services and making decisions about training and career options following high school completion. They also provide information about IDB programs and resources that can benefit students' learning both during high school and after. IDB vocational rehabilitation counselors and teachers also support potentially eligible students and eligible students with disabilities and their IEP teams with consultation and training services.

IDB staff participate regularly with Vision Discipline meetings in each area education agency region. At these meetings stakeholders review common caseloads, discuss common potentially eligible and eligible students with disabilities and coordinate services. Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important strengths to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or have low vision.

Referrals. The commitment to collaboration and partnership resulted in the development of a standard statewide referral procedure. In Iowa, Area Education Agencies (AEAs) coordinate services for students with disabilities. AEA personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) provide vision-related IEP services to those students who are blind or low vision. TVIs submit completed statewide referral forms for all students, starting as early as age 14 and who are receiving vision-related services. Upon the receipt of a referral form, the IDB intake specialist will follow up with the student and his/her family to gather additional information and will then assign the student to a VR counselor.

IDB staff encourage transition-age youth and their families to apply for services as early as age 14 as established by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Once an application is complete, eligibility must be determined by the VR Counselor within 60 days. The next step is to partner with the eligible student to determine his/her goals and develop a plan (IPE — Individual Plan for Employment) identifying the services needed to reach those goals. The plan is developed within 90 days of eligibility determination for VR services. The Department coordinates its services with the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI),

AEAs and LEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation.

VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work-based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided.

IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one-on-one and small group assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. VR counselors and teachers consult with families and educators on strategies for helping students increase their independence and take a more active role in their education. VR teachers provide one-on-one and small-group instruction in areas including braille, orientation and mobility and independent living skills. VR counselors and teachers also provide instruction in job readiness skills such as interview techniques and money management.

IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for the transition students in integrated settings.

The Instructional Materials Center (IMC) within the Library serves students in two principal ways. Its primary function is to provide textbooks and educational materials to students from pre-kindergarten through college. Its secondary function is to help students find resources for research projects. Itinerant vision teachers or other school personnel contact the IMC with requests for materials for students in grades Pre-K-12. The IMC will produce the materials in-house or secure a vendor to produce the needed material. The IMC can provide recorded materials and electronic text files to reading disabled students. These requests can be made by students, parents, teachers, or Area Education Agency personnel. College students or vocational trainees may also request course materials from the IMC. Both students and educational staff have access to the library's collection. The library has created a special online portal for teachers, students, and paraprofessionals. This interface makes searching for existing accessible learning materials faster and easier. It also encourages teachers to incorporate universal design principals into lesson planning to better include blind and low vision students in classroom activities. Library staff work with teachers, TVIs, paras and LEA staff to improve access to learning management systems for the students we serve.

Often accessibility is not a consideration when acquiring a system and inability to access a learning management system puts a student at a considerable educational disadvantage. Blind and low vision youth need the same level of access and skill with technology as their sighted peers to become truly job ready. Library staff partner with agencies such as the Governor's STEM Council to create opportunities for blind and low vision youth to actively engage in STEM learning and consider STEM related occupations. Many blind and low vision youth are

passively and/or actively discouraged from considering STEM related professions, however, blind people can and do successfully work in these high demand fields. Exposure to accessible STEM curricula and activities will help blind youth build self-confidence and expand their view of what careers are possible. Because of this, STEM activities have been integrated into the youth library space we have created and are continually refreshed and updated. The youth library encourages braille literacy and inspire a passion for reading and learning. A recent study has shown that daily use of braille is one of the three significant factors that lead to employment success in blind adults. IDB's Youth Services Librarian creates programming that helps blind and low vision youth to build this crucial competency as well as increase access and inclusion of blind and low vision youth in library programming in their local libraries. These programs have included a monthly STEM Makerspace program, Braille Babies for children birth to 4 years, and a books for kids program that makes sure youth have leisure reading books at home and at school.

The IDB library continues to develop a College and Career Commons. The College and Career Commons provides physical and virtual access to career exploration resources and information pertaining to post-secondary enrollment. In addition, accessible materials related to common career pathways identified by our Title II partners will be available. Most importantly, assistance in understanding and using the vast amounts of information available will be provided. Often the sheer volume of information regarding the many career options available leaves clients feeling overwhelmed. Our librarians' talent for curating and navigating the sea of available resources will help clients to move beyond feeling overwhelmed and help them make informed choices that lead to their employment plans. They can feel excited about pursuing activities.

The Library has a contract with the Iowa Department of Education to assist Iowa in meeting the NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards) requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Library provides training to TVIs and other school personnel regarding accessible formats, Braille and use of accessible technology for reading. The Library provides resources and training in braille literacy for educators, parents and students through its in-person and online trainings.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires IDB and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide five Pre-Employment Transition Services. The services include job exploration-counseling, work-based learning and work experiences in competitive integrated employment, counseling on post-secondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. The expected outcome of all IDB sponsored programs is employment in integrated competitive employment.

IDB-Sponsored Programs. The Iowa Department for the Blind LEAP Program provides meaningful and high-quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and low vision transition-age youth from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for blind and low vision Iowa youth to develop the confidence and skills necessary for seamless transitions to life after high school. The focus of LEAP is to motivate and assist youth to learn skills for

independence and workplace readiness; explore careers and educational opportunities; and learn to advocate and take charge of their future.

The Summer LEAP Academy is a nine-week residential program that provides training to blind and low vision youth in independent living skills and non-visual techniques in the areas of technology, cane travel, Braille, home and personal management, career exploration and money management. There is a focus on self-advocacy and other life skills as well as job readiness and career-related topics. In addition to the classes, students participate in fun and challenging activities to develop positive attitudes about blindness and equip them with the confidence to believe in themselves and their abilities.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are held six times per school year. Blind and low vision high school students from across Iowa participate in the theme-based retreats and work on building disability-related skills as well as skills in areas such as job readiness, job interviewing, communication, orientation and mobility, technology, teamwork, time-management, social behavior, advocacy, peer interaction, problem solving, etc. The retreats also provide a means for students to step out of their comfort zones to increase confidence and positive attitudes about blindness.

The Young Adult Transition Program is a schoolyear based residential program for blind and low vision youth ages 17-21. Students in the program are typically high school students who have completed their academic requirements for graduation but have unmet goals on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the areas of living, learning and working needed to continue to future education or employment. Common IEP goal areas include Independent Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Braille, and workplace-readiness behaviors. Students also work on goals related to their Individual Plans for Employment, in particular career exploration, work-based learning experiences, money management and self-advocacy. All five required Pre-ETS activities are available to Pre-ETS eligible students. The program is significantly individualized to meet the needs of each enrolled student, and the combination of education and VR services helps students make the transition from K-12 education to the adult/VR world.

The Braille Challenge is an annual event sponsored by the IDB and IESBVI. It provides opportunities for students in grades 1 to 12+ to test their Braille skills in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. Top finishers in the various age brackets may have the opportunity to advance to a national competition. The Challenge brings students and families together from across the state of Iowa where new connections and friends are made every year. The competition inspires many blind and low vision students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff take this opportunity to provide outreach and training to parents, students, and support systems about the importance of students developing workplace readiness, selfadvocacy and blindness skills.



**2. Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**

**A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**

**B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;**

**C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;**

**D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;**

**E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and**

**F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

The Department has a formal interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE). Both agencies collaborated to develop the interagency agreement and provide training to staff. Within the agreement, IDB outlines the provision of consultation and technical assistance to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities in the following ways:

- Providing consultation and technical assistance to assist local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services, IDB, along with the DE and local school districts assist in planning for the transition of students who are blind or have vision loss from school to post-school employment-related activities, pre-employment transitions services, competitive,



integrated employment. IDB provide consultation and technical assistance to the DE and AEA's to assist in transition planning for students who are blind or have vision loss from school to post-secondary employment or education-related activities, pre-employment transition services, and competitive, integrated employment. The consultations and technical assistance provided by the IDB can be provided through alternative means, such as conference calls, video conferences as well as shared in-person training opportunities. Examples include sharing conference opportunities, being strong partners in delivery of technical assistance through recognized partnerships.

- IDB staff attend and participate in regularly scheduled vision discipline meetings in each of the area education agencies, transition planning meetings, and department meetings when invited and as resources are available. Students, clients and other stakeholders are also encouraged to contact the IDB staff person they are working with to directly request consultation or technical assistance services.
- Upon request from school district staff, and with the parent's, guardian's or adult student's written consent, IDB staff are able to distribute general information related to services, provide consultation and TA, attend transition fairs and other forums to provide information about Pre-ETS and VR services to parents and school personnel, attend IEP meetings, provide pre-employment transition services, and provide referrals to VR services.
- IDB staff provide support for transition planning to LEAs, AEAs, and stakeholders for students with disabilities including the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDB staff work with individuals to develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each IDB eligible individual prior to the individual's graduation. The individual, parents, educators and IDB staff collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with each other. The individual's preferences, interests and skills serve as the basis of employment goals.
- Coordination to ensure that transition services are provided by qualified personnel as defined in Iowa Administrative Code 281-41.8(256B, 34 CFR 300), Iowa Administrative Code 111-2.1(216(B)), and other relevant state requirements.
- IDB provides support for early outreach to an identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. The DE, LEA, IESBVI and other stakeholders all assist in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or have low vision occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process. The Department continues to review and revise agreements with the Iowa Department of Education to develop procedures and mechanisms to meet the needs of students who are blind or have low vision.

All of the Iowa Department for the Blind's programs for students who are blind or have low vision, including students who are DeafBlind and those who have the most significant disabilities, continue to be reviewed in efforts to meet the needs of current clients and potentially eligible individuals. Programs are designed so that all youth who want to attend are able to attend, including providing necessary supports to allow equal opportunity and engagement in activities.

Transition Planning: School personnel make every effort to provide adequate notice to IDB VR counselors regarding upcoming IEP meetings for potentially eligible and eligible students with disabilities. VR counselors make every effort to attend all IEP meetings for their clients and potentially eligible students. At the IEP meetings, VR counselors and school personnel work together to identify necessary services that will both help the student with a disability complete their secondary education goals and also prepare the students for post-secondary work or school. As a result of these coordination efforts, IDB develops, aligns or revises an Individualized Plan for Employment to address the needs of each transition student. VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work-based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided.

Roles and Responsibilities: IDB and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) defines the responsibilities of both departments. This MoA is designed to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post-secondary education and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education, and are eligible or potentially eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services.

Both departments collaborate in providing consultation and technical assistance to local education agencies and area education agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services. The departments collaborate to support transition planning efforts for students with disabilities and ensure that the transition services provided are done by qualified personnel. Both entities are responsible for the costs they occur in carrying out the agreement.

The MoA defines the Roles & Responsibilities of both agencies in the following way: The IDB-VR and the DE agree on the following roles and responsibilities of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition and pre-employment transition services: IDB-VR-Vocational Rehabilitation will serve as the lead agency in Iowa for carrying out Federal and State policies related to the program under the Rehabilitation Act, including:

- Upon request from school district staff, and with the parent's, guardian's or adult student's written consent, distribution of general information related to services, consultation and TA, attend transition fairs and other forums to provide information about pre-employment transition services and VR services to parents and school personnel, attend IEP meetings, provide Pre-employment transition services, provide referrals to VR for services, eligibility determination, IPE development and VR services, pursuant to 34 C.F.R. §300.321(b)(3).
- Accepting referrals of students who are blind or have vision loss during the transition planning process for the provision of pre-employment transition services.
- IDB-VR will consult with school district staff on transition planning to prepare a student who is blind or has vision loss to move from school to work or post-secondary education in accordance with the student's unique needs, strengths, resources, priorities, concerns,

capabilities, interests and abilities and informed choice as determined through the IEP process and provision of pre-employment transition services.

- IDB-VR will provide students who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation with the services necessary and appropriate in order to obtain a successful employment outcome. These services may include assessment, disability related skills training, educational and vocational training, rehabilitation technology, and job seeking skills training and job placement services.
- IDB-VR will use an assessment process to assist a client in developing an individualized plan for employment (IPE) which will prepare the student for competitive integrated employment within 90 days of IDB-VR eligibility determination, unless an appropriate extension is agreed upon by the student, counselor and parent or legal guardian.
- IDB-VR will provide consultation to the LEAs to assist in the identification of eligible and potentially eligible students who are blind or have vision loss and assessment of their individual needs for pre-employment transition services.
- IDB-VR will provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students, and for services required by the IPE goal, when the student has been determined eligible for VR and the services are specific to his/her employment outcome, and are not services customarily provided to the student by the LEA under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- IDB-VR will provide information and outreach to parents and/or guardian(s), student/clients regarding VR eligibility, vocational assessment for employment and postsecondary planning and Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- IDB-VR will obtain written consent for the release of confidential information, pursuant to VR policy and procedures, federal and state laws and regulations regarding confidentiality.
- IDB-VR will provide contact information to the schools of VR staff including counselors, employment specialists, rehabilitation technology specialists and rehabilitation teachers.
- IDB-VR will identify a single point of contact who will coordinate transition services for students. This point of contact will be the IDB-VR counselor assigned to the school district.
- IDB-VR will share information to the DE on referrals and employment outcomes of students who are blind or have vision loss as requested and as the law and IDB-VR policies allow.
- IDB-VR will engage with employers to assist in the development of work-based learning opportunities for students who are blind or have vision loss.
- IDB-VR will participate with the DE on joint training of LEAs and VR staff regarding new federal requirements or state identified initiatives as resources allow and mutually agreed upon by entities involved.
- IDB-VR will participate with the DE to provide joint training regarding the role of VR and new regulations/procedures for students with disabilities exiting school to be referred to VR prior to entering subminimum wage work with a 14c certificate holder as resources allow and mutually agreed upon by entities involved.
- IDB-VR will provide auxiliary aids or services for a student with a disability if the device or service is required for the student to access or participate in any of the pre-employment transition services specified in section 113(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR

361.48(a)(2) of its implementing regulations, if no other public entity is required to provide such aid or service.

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) serves as the lead agency responsible for assuring that eligible students with disabilities, including students who are blind or have vision loss, receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The DE will provide technical assistance, training, training reference materials regarding WIOA to school districts or AEAs and other stakeholders identified by the DE including parents, families, guardians and students relating to the provision of pre-employment transition services and other transition services to address needs as determined by the DE.

- The DE will share this MOU with DE, AEA, and LEA practitioners in secondary special education.
- Through coordination with the FEP, ASK, and AEA contacts, ongoing outreach, training, and communication will be shared with parents about transition services and opportunities.
- The DE collects data related to Secondary Transition on Indicators 1 (graduation rates), 2 (dropout rates), 13 (IEP components) and 14 (outcomes in education/training and employment). These data, along with tools and resources for continuous improvement, are shared with districts through the IDEA Differentiated Accountability process.
- The DE will collaborate with IDB to provide joint training as needed to ensure AEAs and LEAs understand their responsibilities in serving students who are blind or have vision loss.
- The Department of Education will collaborate with IDB to provide joint training to provide all existing educational assessment and performance information relevant for the determination of eligibility for IDB-VR services.
- For purposes related to section 511, neither the DE nor LEAs will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability, including a youth who is blind or has vision loss, is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

**Outreach:** The Department of Education and IDB collaborate to support early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. The DE assists in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or have low vision occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process.

**Cooperative agreements:** The Department does not have long-term cooperative agreements in place with private nonprofit VR service providers. However, the Department has utilized such entities on a case-by-case basis. For instance, BLIND, Inc. in Minneapolis, MN, the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO and the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in New York have provided orientation and adjustment training and job search services to clients. While the Department has its own Orientation Center, the needs of some clients may be better addressed at an alternative center; this decision is based on client informed choice.

Because the number of blind and low vision Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates

with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define potential services, outcomes, and costs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPs receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa. IDB works collaboratively with CRPs when the service is necessary for the client to meet their training and employment goals. Agreements entered into with any organization will require that assessment and career development activities occur in integrated work settings in the community.

In these cases, agreements are developed with the identified CRP to deliver the necessary service. The client and VR Counselor may identify a private provider that best addresses his or her specific VR needs. In these instances, the Counselor issues an authorization for the services. The provider is required to submit periodic reports on progress to the Counselor. The Counselor may continue to authorize for services until the services have been completed, the provider demonstrates progress is not being made, or the client finds that services are not addressing needs.

Supported Employment: Because the number of blind and low vision Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define supported employment services, outcomes, and costs. The Department enters into agreements with providers of supported employment when specific clients are identified as needing those services. When appropriate, supported employment services and extended services are paid for through county services under the Medicaid Waiver programs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPs receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa.

The Department may also make arrangements with other private entities to provide supported employment and extended services as the need arises. Other private entities may include employers, family members, and individuals contracted to provide these services. Natural supports and county services are the most often used services for extended support services.

The Department is adjusting the service delivery system to allocate 50 percent of the supported employment grant allotment for the provision of pre-employment transition services to youth with the most significant disabilities. In addition, these funds may be used to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years.

## **k. Coordination with Employers**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

IDB has established a Business Relations and Services Initiative which focuses on engaging with the business community to enable the development of work-based learning for students and youth with disabilities and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities. As a part of this initiative, IDB policy was created to



ensure that IDB staff engage with business and provide our business partners with services that include but are not limited to: training that communicates the capabilities of individuals who are blind or have low vision; accessibility and accommodation related technical assistance; assistive technology consultation; and quality candidates to meet business hiring needs.

As all IDB staff participate in business engagement, the implementation of this initiative is inclusive of all IDB work units. All IDB staff are expected to use established procedures for documenting business services provided. It is IDB's goal to have an expansive number of employer relationships throughout the state of Iowa in order to increase our ability to provide quality career development, job search and job placement services to our clients. Through the successful development and management of employer relationships, IDB is better able to meet the employment needs of our clients. IDB focuses attention on strategic employer development in order to provide services and benefit to both employers and IDB clients.

IDB recognizes that high quality relationships will increase effectiveness at assisting clients in reaching their employment goals while at the same time meet the needs of employers. IDB VR counselors, rehabilitation technology specialists and other team members develop and deliver services that are based upon the various identified needs of businesses including: applicant screening and assessment, job analyses, job accommodations, on-the-job training plans, and onboarding/training/and follow-up assistance as needed. In addition, delivering diversity awareness trainings and interpreting and explaining policies, rules, regulations, and laws. VR staff are engaged with the WIOA state and local boards, are members of employer groups, and participate in business networking and human resource organizations as available in their area.

The Department Rehabilitation Technology Specialists provide systems accessibility evaluation and equipment setup services for various employers and organizations across the state, such as Nationwide Insurance, Unity Point, State of Iowa agencies, and CenturyLink. We work with clients on the job site and assist during onboarding training sessions. Specialists are able to demonstrate assistive technology, answer questions related to blindness and accommodations, and provide resources and information to assist the employer in meeting their business needs.

The IDB Library provides services to employers by producing accessible materials needed by employers for current staff, onboarding new employees, and the public. Library staff provide employers and businesses with information and resources to assist in meeting their accessibility needs through trainings and accessible materials. Youth and adults have the opportunity for career exploration through the library's programming focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers provides employers and individuals a way to connect and discuss careers in STEM fields. The Library collaborates with the State Library of Iowa to provide training to community public libraries and other stakeholders to assist in serving those within their communities who need accessible materials and information. The Library also provides trainings and self-paced courses on accessible materials, accessible programming, accessible educational materials, and accessible formats to public, educators, school districts and other agencies throughout the state.



IDB connects with employers on a national level through involvement in the National Employment Team (NET). Participation in the NET allows IDB staff to learn about employment opportunities and career development resources, in addition to addressing employer hiring needs, providing information regarding disability awareness, retention assistance, accommodations, and other support services.

Employers and hiring staff are invited to tour the Iowa Department for the Blind; having the opportunity to learn about the resources available, understand the capabilities of persons who are blind, and see demonstrations of potential accommodations and techniques a person who is blind may use in an employment setting. The Iowa Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center provides prevocational, nonvisual adjustment-to-blindness training to vocational rehabilitation clients. Students participating in this training learn nonvisual techniques, develop a positive attitude about blindness, and build self-confidence. Through tours given by center students, employers see the techniques blind people use for traveling with the long, white cane, taking and reading Braille notes, using computers with speech, cooking, and operating power tools, in addition to being able to ask questions about blindness. Students also participate in a jobs class where they work toward their chosen careers, which can include informational interviewing, job shadowing, submitting applications for employment, determining accommodations for a job and networking with employers in the community.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) works with eligible individuals who are interested in self-employment to manage their own businesses--operating vending machines, road-side vending sites, and/or snack bars/catering services. Entrepreneurs are provided with a considerable amount of training before they manage a business. This is supplemented by ongoing training to promote independent entrepreneurship in all business areas including hiring and managing employees, inventory control, ordering, pricing, scheduling, maintaining and repairing equipment, payroll, and business accounting.

IDB provides pre-employment transition services to students and youth with disabilities. In addition to working directly with VR counselors, students are able to access these services through summer programs, the Young Adult Transition Programs, weekend retreats, and contracted programs. VR counselors, staff and contracted individuals work with employers across the state to establish workbased learning opportunities, provide career exploration activities, and assist in providing additional employment skills to youth preparing to transition to postsecondary education or employment. IDB staff work with these employers to provide information, training and technical assistance on assistive technology, accommodations additional supports that the students will need to ensure a successful outcome.

The IDB partners with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) on the Iowa Self Employment program which is available to clients of both agencies. The program assists individuals to explore the option of becoming self-sufficient through the self-employment. Business Development Specialists provide technical assistance to clients to assist them in

reaching this goal if determined appropriate. IDB also partners with Iowa Economic Development, Iowa Small Business Development Centers, Iowa Job Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Iowa Workforce Development to provide clients with additional training or assistance in developing their business plans. The Department encourages and assists clients to develop connections and mentors with other individuals, including individuals who are blind or have low vision, who have established successful businesses.

## **I. Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies**

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

### **1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

IDB has developed a cooperative agreement with state programs carried out under the the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Assistive Technology Act. The University of Iowa's Center for Disabilities and Development is the Lead Agency and Easterseals Iowa is the Implementing Entity which operates the statewide assistive technology program for Iowans. This program provides information, referral, short-term and long term assistive technology loans, assistive technology evaluations, assessments, and demonstrations, along with training and technical assistance for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowan's who are blind or have low vision. IDB will continue to refer individuals to the Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Center when services needed are outside of the scope of services IDB can provide. IDB will also continue to collaborate with Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Center to provide devices for individuals, including students, with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs. IDB will continue to collaborate with these programs to provide assistive technology services to clients.

The Iowa Department for the Blind maintains a team of rehabilitation technology specialists who are trained in blindness and low vision assistive technology and provide training, assessment, and purchasing recommendations. The Iowa Department for the Blind also has a team of vocational rehabilitation teachers who provide training in the use of blindness and low vision rehabilitation technology as well as other types of disability related skills training to vocational rehabilitation clients across the state. In addition, IDB has independent living rehabilitation teachers who are trained in assistive technology to assist and individual to meet their independent living needs. IDB does collaborate to provide trainings and events about assistive technology to Iowans who are blind or have low vision, employers, and to trainers of assistive technology devices. The IDB partners with IVRS to ensure clients being served have access to information and training on assistive technologies.

### **2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;**

The USDA Rural Development office in Iowa administers business-cooperative, housing, and community programs. These programs provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to rural residents and businesses targeting rural communities. These programs are aimed at creating or preserving jobs; promoting a clean rural environment; improving access to decent housing and community facilities; and ensuring essential community facilities are available to rural residents, such as health care clinics, fire and rescue facilities, and more. As part of their technical assistance efforts, the Iowa Rural Development office provides information to disabled Iowans.

Iowa does partner with Easterseals Iowa's Rural Solutions program to support individuals who are blind or have low vision to access resources, technology consultations, and additional services to allow the individual to continue or return to farming in their communities.

While IDB does not have a cooperative agreement with the USDA Rural Development office or Easterseals Iowa's Rural Solutions program, we will collaborate and provide technical assistance to the Rural Development staff and Easterseals Iowa as necessary to ensure Iowans who are blind or have low vision in rural communities are able to access necessary supports and services to reach their employment goals.

### **3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;**

The Iowa Department for the Blind is working with Iowa's Regional Workforce Development Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in the provision of services to out-of-school youth. The IDB refers individuals to Iowa Workforce Development for information regarding benefits planning, labor market information, assessment information, in addition to trainings, assistance with job search activities and a variety of other services available through the local one-stop centers. IDB is working with each region to provide information, training, and technical assistance to our one-stop partners to become accessible to individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB will continue to partner with each local one-stop to ensure out-of school youth who are blind or have low vision are able to access their services. The IDB is participating in the development and implementation of local and state level agreements with our workforce partners who are serving out-of-school youth.

IDB contracts with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to provide services to out-of-school youth including job development, job search assistance, skills training, and supported employment services. These CRPs also provide work-based learning assistance and job coaching for clients.

### **4. State use contracting programs;**

IDB maintains compliance with state contracting programs and follows the Iowa Department of Administrative rules for financial bidding and contracting.

### **5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);**

The Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment. In addition, the Department works with HHS to identify resources and financial responsibilities, opportunities for collaboration and cross-training, develop procedures for clients served by both programs, as well as identifying additional collaborative efforts in an effort to best meet the needs of the individuals we jointly serve. The Department for the Blind will continue to participate in activities with other partner agencies as well as involve community partners, families and education in implementing an Employment First approach.

#### **6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

The Department collaborates with stakeholders to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities who are described as blind and low vision. While the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement, IDB has taken steps to begin this process to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services and better meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. The Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD) in Iowa is part of the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities network. IDB's VR program administrator represents IDB on the CDD's Community Partnership Advisory Council (UCEDD CPAC). The CPAC is engaged in addressing priority issues affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and identifying opportunities to increase the independence, productivity and community participation for persons with disabilities. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services.

#### **7. State agency responsible for mental health services;**

The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals who are described as blind and low vision and require mental health services. Mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement at this time. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

#### **8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and**

IDB currently maintains five contracts with vendors to provide pre-employment transition services to students who are blind, DeafBlind or have low vision. These contracts provide students access to work-based learning experiences, exploration of employment and college opportunities, training in self-advocacy and independent living skills, leadership development and workplace readiness training. These services allow students the opportunity to develop independence skills and raise expectations for their future career goals.

IDB contracts with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in New York to provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are DeafBlind. In addition, IDB partners with HKNC staff in Iowa to provide individualized job placement services, job search assistance and other vocational rehabilitation services needed to assist the individual in reaching their employment goal.

IDB partners with the Iowa Self Employment program and Small Business Development programs throughout Iowa to provide technical assistance and support to individuals who are interested in small business development. These programs assist with the development of business plans, assistance with feasibility studies and consultation in the development and implementation of the client's small business or self-employment goals.

## **9. Other private nonprofit organizations.**

IDB also partners with the ASK Family Resource Center, Iowa's Parent Training and Information Center to provide resources and information to families, clients and IDB staff. IDB partners with the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE) to improve state systems so that Iowans with disabilities have access to fully integrated, competitive work opportunities in the community.

## **Certifications**

Name of designated State agency: **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Emily Wharton

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

### **States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

- 1) The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
- 2) In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the

Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit) agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

- 3) As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
- 4) The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
- 5) The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
- 6) All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
- 7) The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
- 8) The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
- 9) The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

## Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or



Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:

- 1) **Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 2) **Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140. **Yes**
- 3) **Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
  - a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). **Yes**
  - e) as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - h) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as

appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

- l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). **Yes**
  - m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 4) **Administration of the Provision of VR Services:** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
- a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. **Yes**
  - j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State,
    - i) has developed and will implement, **Yes**
      - (1) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

- (2) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and **Yes**
  - ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113). **Yes**
  - iii) Shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services. **Yes**
- 5) **Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**
  - a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 6) **Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**
  - a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 7) **Provision of Supported Employment Services:**
  - a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
  - b) The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate

employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

## **GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs.**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Iowa Department for the Blind ensures equitable access and opportunities to all stakeholders, most especially blind Iowans, including blind students. Our commitment is to prepare every client to reach their potential for education and employment. Our mission is to empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently. IDB is committed to furthering the ability of persons who are blind or have low vision to be able to function competently, independently, and successfully not only in their own environments, but also as fully integrated and participating citizens in the broader society. To this end, all staff provide the best possible services which can be offered based upon the most current techniques and training principles available at the time. IDB professional conduct rules state IDB staff will not withhold or limit services to any client or patron based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identification, disability, political affiliation, or consumer group membership.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

IDB strives to remove barriers to ensure clients are provided quality services, access to education and professional learning opportunities, and access to employment opportunities. Potential barriers which may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators and other beneficiaries when participating in vocational rehabilitation services may include economic barriers, transportation, access to assistive technology and accessible programming.

Although economic barriers may exist for IDB clients, IDB works to ensure that financial barriers are removed so that IDB clients are able to participate fully in IDB programs. Additionally, IDB provides access to transportation, including providing training to clients in identifying transportation resources.

IDB has identified that some programs and providers are not fully accessible to IDB clients. To address this concern, IDB provides access to assistive technology and other accommodations for individuals who require this service to access programming. IDB partners with service providers and employers to address accessibility issues and concerns, including providing technical assistance and consultation regarding making materials and programs accessible to persons with disabilities. IDB partners with clients

to identify reasonable accommodations, provide training on advocating for accessibility, and advocating on behalf of clients who are not provided with access to necessary services. IDB ensures that all materials given to IDB clients are provided in the format required for the individual to access the materials. IDB partners with local area workforce offices to address the physical and programmatic barriers in these locations. IDB ensures that when barriers are identified for clients, it is of utmost importance to eliminate the barrier to ensure clients have access to programs and services.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Barriers are identified and removed to provide equity across Iowa to ensure IDB clients receive access to services and programs that will enable them to reach their highest potential. IDB is partnering with the VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Employment to address issues related to transportation, including transportation for individuals in rural areas, accessing transportation throughout the state and assisting blind Iowans to access transportation resources, including the hiring of drivers to access services and employment. IDB is recruiting rehabilitation technology specialists and a deafblind specialist to address accessibility, accommodations and access for clients participating in VR programs. IDB has developed training programs for partner agencies and education entities on the topics of accessibility and universal design in order to assist our partners in being able to provide services blind Iowans need in order to reach their potential.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

IDB is able to provide in-house services to clients once identified. IDB is hiring for rehabilitation technology specialists, rehabilitation teachers and a deafblind specialist to address additional issues related to accessibility, accommodations and transportation. IDB plans to hire these individuals in 2024. IDB provides technical assistance and consultation as capacity allows and provides resources as requested.

## **VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs**

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

Not applicable to Iowa, which has submitted a Unified State Plan.

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## Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

	Title I – Adult Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	75%		75.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70%		71%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,500		\$6,600	
Credential Attainment Rate	70%		71%	
Measurable Skill Gains	50%		52%	

	Title I – Dislocated Worker Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	82%		82.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	82.1%		82.1%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$9,500		\$9,600	
Credential Attainment Rate	71%		73%	
Measurable Skill Gains	52%		54%	

	Title I – Youth Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>11</sup>	74.5%		75%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) <sup>12</sup>	72.1%		72.5%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$3,800		\$3,800	
Credential Attainment Rate	57.5%		58%	
Measurable Skill Gains	45%		46%	

<sup>11</sup> For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

<sup>12</sup> For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

	Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	52%		52.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	49%		50%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,600		\$6,700	
Credential Attainment Rate	65%		68%	
Measurable Skill Gains	47%		48%	

	Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	65%		66%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	68%		68.5%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,800		\$6,900	
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>22</sup>	59.7%		59.8%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) <sup>22</sup>	58.5%		58.7%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>13</sup>	\$4,545		\$4,560	
Credential Attainment Rate	54%		54.2%	
Measurable Skill Gains	52%		55%	

	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.



## Appendix 2. Iowa Department for the Blind Organizational Chart

Updated 12/23

### Iowa Commission for the Blind

Amy Salger (appointed 2/28/23 term ends 4/30/25)  
Michael Hoenig (appointed 5/1/23 term ends 4/30/26)  
vacant position (term ends 4/30/24)

#### Key Responsibilities:

- Approve agency policies
- Approve Gifts & Bequests requests as outlined in [G&B Guidelines](<https://idbpoliciesandprocedures.blot.im/gifts-and-bequests-guidelines>)
- Receive and share stakeholder feedback

Direct Reports: None

### Emily Wharton, Director

Time in Current Position: since 10/16  
[Emily.Wharton@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Emily.Wharton@blind.state.ia.us) (515)802-7313

This position serves at the pleasure of the Governor of the State of Iowa.

#### Functional Responsibilities:

- Appointing authority
- Strategic Planning
- Daily management and operations

#### Key Responsibilities:

- Lead agency to fulfillment of mission and achievement of vision
- Allocate resources in alignment with agency goals and values
- Provide clear communication and promote collaboration with and among staff, partners, and consumers

#### Direct Reports:

- 1 Executive Secretary
- 1 Accountant Supervisor (CFO)
- 5 Program Administrators
- 1 Chief Information Officer

### Sarah Willeford, Library Director, Deputy Director

Time in Current Position: since 2/14

[Sarah.Willeford@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Sarah.Willeford@blind.state.ia.us) (515)494-8439

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Instructional Materials Center
- Library Circulation
- Building Maintenance
- Backup for Director

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Ensure the provision of high quality, timely instructional materials to blind youth
- Ensure the provision of books, newspapers, and magazines in alternative formats to blind lowans as a regional library for the National Library Service for the Blind & Print Disabled
- Promote braille literacy and inspire a love of reading in blind and low vision youth to promote educational and career success
- Serve as building manager and provide supervision to maintenance staff

### **Direct Reports:**

- 1 Access Services Librarian
- 1 Special Services Librarian
- 1 Youth Services Librarian
- 1 Accessible Media Specialist
- 1 Digital Recording Specialist/Studio Manager
- 1 Audio Production Librarian
- 1 Technical Services Librarian
- 1 Braille Coordinator
- 1 Instructional Materials Center Librarian
- 1 Instructional Material Center Service Specialist
- 1 Braille Transcriber
- 1 Facilities Engineer
- 1 Maintenance Repairer
- 2 Custodians

## **Kim Walford, Independent Living Program Administrator**

Time in Current Position: since 9/13

[Kim.walford@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Kim.walford@blind.state.ia.us) (515)250-1184

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Independent Living services

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Provide individual and small group independent living skills training to older lowans that will allow them to remain in their homes and continue to be active in their communities
- Provide assistive devices to enable older individuals who are experiencing extensive vision loss to continue to perform essential life functions
- Provide information and training to service providers to build their capacity to serve blind lowans
- Administer the ACL Part B grant and RSA OIB grant

### **Direct Reports:**

- 2 Senior Independent Living Teachers (SSSB1)
- 5 Independent Living Teachers (SSB2)
- 1 Secretary 1
- 1 Resource Specialist (SSB2)

## **Keri Osterhaus, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator**

Time in Current Position: since 1/14  
[Keri.Osterhaus@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Keri.Osterhaus@blind.state.ia.us) (515)205-8583

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling
- Unified State Plan
- Business Enterprise Program

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Ensure that high quality and timely vocational rehabilitation services are provided to clients which empower them to achieve their employment goals
- Collaborate with core and required partners to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA)
- Help employers breakdown stereotypes regarding the capabilities of blind workers and take advantage of this underutilized source of talent
- Promote self-employment for blind lowans within the Business enterprise Program (BEP) and other programs

### **Direct Reports:**

- 1 Executive Officer 1 (Business Enterprise Program Administrator)
- 9 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (SSSB1)
- 1 Supported Employment Specialist (SSSB1)
- 1 Counselor Lead Worker / Quality Assurance Specialist (SSSB1)
- 1 VR Counselor Careers Instructor (SSSB1)
- 1 Deaf-Blind Specialist (SSSB1)

- 2 BEP Business Counselors (SSB2)
- 2 Secretaries 1
- 1 Secretary 2

## **Ambrose Fowler-Harney, Education & Training Program Administrator**

Time in Current Position: since 11/23

[Ambrose.fowlerharney@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Ambrose.fowlerharney@blind.state.ia.us) (515)829-7411

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Pre-ETS service development and expansion
- Youth Weekend Retreats
- LEAP Summer Youth Program
- Young Adult Transition Program (YATP)

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Oversee Youth Programming YATP, LEAP youth summer camp and weekend retreats
- Expand IDB's youth and Pre-ETS programs and services
- Build partnerships with local education agencies and educators

### **Direct Reports:**

- 1 Secretary 1
- 2 Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers 4 Plus (SSSB1)
- 1 Independent Living Skills Coordinator (SSB2)
- 4 Youth Service Workers
- 15 Temporary Youth Workers (summer)

## **Cheri Myers, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

Time in Current Position: since 5/19

[Cheri.Myers@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Cheri.Myers@blind.state.ia.us) (515)250-2936

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- GAAP package / budget
- Federal financial reporting
- Audits
- All agency accounting

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Oversee all agency financial operations and ensure compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations

- Provide agency director and Commission Board with accurate financial information and sound advice

### **Direct Reports:**

- 2 Accounting Tech 3
- 1 Accounting Tech 2
- 1 Accounting Clerk 1

## **Karly Prinds, Training Center Program Administrator**

Time in Current Position: since 9/3/21

[Karly.Prinds@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:Karly.Prinds@blind.state.ia.us) (515) 802-8162

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Adjustment to Blindness Training Center Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation Field Teaching

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Provide world class adjustment to blindness training to clients attending the Iowa Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center
- Provide training to new staff to facilitate a positive attitude toward blindness
- Ensure the provision of high quality and timely field training services to vocational rehabilitation clients throughout the state

### **Direct Reports:**

- 1 Rehabilitation Technology Specialist
- 4 Center Instructors (SSSB1)
- 8 Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers (SSSB1)
- 1 Center generalist (SSB2)

## **Connie Mendenhall, Chief Information Officer (CIO)**

Time in Current Position: since 9/22

[connie.mendenhall@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:connie.mendenhall@blind.state.ia.us) (515)250-2936

### **Functional Responsibilities:**

- Agency technology and information systems
- Website
- Social media
- Outreach

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Conduct and improve internal and external agency communications

- Track and expand agency outreach
- Organize and improve agency documentation
- Serve as agency CTO/CIO and ensure that agency has secure, efficient, and accessible technology with which to do their jobs
- Improve accessibility and increase awareness of access technology and its use among clients, partners, and employers

**Direct Reports:**

- 1 Technology Specialist
- 1 Data Analyst
- 3 Rehabilitation Technology Specialists

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	Date	Commentor	Comment	Response
1	1/17/24	Central Iowa Local WDB-Eric Kress	<p>Strategy 1: Involve all partners, not just government entities. Encourage use of local boards to support.</p> <p>Strategy 2: We agree with the focus on our future workforce, students. Can this strategy be expanded to develop our potential and current workforce, as well? Incumbent worker strategies should be considered. Encouraging employment of Retirees, stay at home parents, etc.</p> <p>Strategy 3: Providing services to the underserved is central to the mission of WIOA programs. However, could the SWDB become more specific in communicating which populations are most underserved at the state level and warrant intentional outreach? The local area does appreciate the opportunity to further define in their Local Plans, as well.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The three strategies identified in the Plan are the priorities of the SWDB to achieve each goal, however, that does not prevent the development and use of additional strategies. The SWDB supports continued collaboration between state and local partners to implement all strategies that will positively impact Iowa's workforce system.</p>
2	1/17/24	Central Iowa Local WDB-Eric Kress	<p>We would like to ask the state also considers enhancing technology available to local areas to improve core partner communication. The current CRM is not as functional as described in the state plan. It lacks responsiveness and integration for most program partners. An additional platform should be researched to manage client referrals until further consolidation efforts of historical databases occur. Furthermore, the IWD website has recently upgraded and we appreciate that effort. However, the IowaWORKS website is drastically out of date, dysfunctional, and inaccessible to most job seekers. A strong individual/community facing website is critical for accessibility if IowaWORKS is to truly increase awareness as the leading service provider in Iowa for workforce solutions.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The State of Iowa and its agencies continuously evaluate technology solutions to ensure an accessible and effective system. Local workforce areas are encouraged to collaborate with state partners to consider enhanced technology options.</p>
3	1/17/24	Central Iowa Local WDB-Eric Kress	<p>Regarding youth work, the CIWDB appreciates the intention to submit a waiver to increase the Title I Youth and Young Adult in School Youth spending maximum to 50%. We believe that provides more local control for directing Title I investments. However, we would like the measurements to be further considered. We note there is a success measure to increase co-enrollment with IJAG by 10%. We suggest not tying this performance metric to it. There are ways to coordinate with IJAG, and other partners, that do not involve co-enrollment. To support the Governor's effort of work-based learning being accessible to all students, an area may choose to focus on supporting smaller school districts that don't have work-based learning staff or other supportive private programming of that type.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. After reviewing the waiver request and the expected programmatic outcomes, specifically the one related to increased co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%, we agree that specifying one entity may limit success in this outcome. Language has been updated to "Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serve at-risk youth participants by 10%."</p>
4	1/17/24	Central Iowa Local WDB-Eric Kress	<p>The CIWDB has concern about the capacity of Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation meeting the needs of Iowans. The program has not been able to meet the demand for services, and we are working locally to increase the capacity of serving individuals with disabilities. However, we request a study be conducted to determine if adequate funding is being allocated to Central Iowa to IVRS career planners to manage the caseloads. The CIWDB is impressed by the level of detail and demographic analysis within the Title IV IVRS part of the State Plan, and commends that planning.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS and IDB) conducts Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessments that incorporate capacity and hiring needs as a component of the assessment. This information is utilized to request additional funds and positions. Title IV is interested in partnering with local areas to identify innovative ways to collaborate.</p>
5	1/18/24	Carla Andorf	<p>While we agree with the request to increase the cap allowed on spending WIOA Title I Youth funds on in-school youth from 25% to 50%, we have concerns with the requirement to increase iJAG specific enrollments by 10% who would be considered in-school youth. We have a good working relationship with our iJAG partners, and plan to continue/grow this relationship with this change, but we also work with other community-based organizations that serve at risk in-school youth participants. Many of our school districts do not have iJAG services, meaning those areas would not be as well served if we have to focus a larger portion of the WIOA Title I Youth in-school funds on iJAG co-enrollments. In particular, rural areas in our region are less likely to have an iJAG program. We suggest removing this requirement to increase iJAG enrollments to make it easier to serve at risk in-school youth from all school districts, rural areas, and from other organizations serving in-school youth as well.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. After reviewing the waiver request and the expected programmatic outcomes, specifically the one related to increased co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%, we agree that specifying one entity may limit success in this outcome. Language has been updated to "Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serve at-risk youth participants by 10%."</p>
6	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>The MWVDB appreciates the effort to provide Local Workforce Area labor information on pages 13-38. We note the guidance requires "The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. (p. 13). However, if this information is published representing the MWVDB, we would appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of our local area and form conclusions about the workforce in our area of accountability. We would request this area is removed from the state plan, and if information is presented under the heading of "local workforce area" that this information would be provided by the Local Workforce area itself.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The local economic analysis is a requirement within the Unified State Plan which is the requirement of the State team. This information is based on data provided by the Labor Market Information division to address this question. Local areas have the ability to address additional information specific to each area within the local plan.</p>
7	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>The MWVDB too values the need for operational assessment and continuous improvement. The state plan references a "Title I Evaluation effort under assessment" that was conducted May 1 to Dec 31, 2023. The MWVDB is unaware of that existing effort and would like to engage in and/or support that study. When will the results of that December 31 completed assessment be shared?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The assessment is ongoing and will be shared at a later date.</p>

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8	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>"All WIOA policies impacting the core partner programs (Titles I, II, III and IV), are reviewed and approved by the full SWDB, based on information and input from the Policies and Practices Committee."</p> <p>We ask for clarification if this statement is inclusive of all policies found on the IWD e-policy website? We acknowledge the ongoing changes and commend the state's commitment to mandating the approval of all policies by the SWDB, a requirement that we believe may not have been consistently observed in the past.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. This section of the plan is referencing joint statewide policies of the core partners. Separate policies of each Title are submitted in accordance with their regulatory requirements.</p>
9	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>"Looking forward, the state partners of the programs represented in this plan, <b>in consultation with local boards and partner programs</b>, will develop a streamlined customer experience through drafting an updated customer flow and collaborating on a referral process from and to core, required, and program partners to coordinate workforce activities and increase the capacity of each partner by allowing specialized services to function optimally and assist in the elimination of the duplication of services. Local referral systems must then further define how documentation will be completed to show the result of the referral."</p> <p>According to WIOA, local workforce development areas are meant to be locally driven. We express our belief that the planning and development of customer experiences, as proposed to be outlined in the updated customer flow process for the American Job Centers, extend beyond the scope of state partners role. It is our understanding that such processes are intended to be designed at the local level. Per the current One Stop Certification standards Effectiveness standard #3 " The Center has a documented, seamless customer flow process that is integrated and inclusive". This standard is in conflict with state level partners designing the customer flow and should this take place we request this standard be removed from the One Stop Certification standards as local boards cannot be held accountable for factors beyond their control</p> <p>We respectfully request a more precise definition of the term "collaborate" in the context of the referral process. Given the unique characteristics of each local area, we emphasize the importance of locally driven referral processes. If local areas are to be mandated to "further define how documentation will be completed to show the result of the referral," we advocate for the active involvement of local areas in the development of their own referral processes.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We agree that the customer experience is a process that should be informed by both state and local partners; the state partners ensure consistency and continuity of services across the state, while local partners provide valuable input for localized issues that impact the customer experience. The plan has been amended to include ". . . in consultation with local boards and partner programs, . . ." in this section of the plan, to clarify the joint effort of state and local partners to design the customer experience. Customers of Iowa's workforce system should experience the same level of service and basic service delivery style in every workforce center in the state.</p>
10	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>"Goal 2: Increase employer engagement and awareness of the IowaWORKS system as the premier provider of business services for a skilled and diverse workforce.</p> <p>Strategy #1: Support local workforce boards in the development and enhancement of sector partnerships."</p> <p>We appreciate your recognition of the importance of equipping and leveraging the local system. Could a specific timeline be provided for the support mentioned on page 93? The initial objective was to complete the transition of sector partnerships by the end of 2023. However, this goal has not been realized, leading local areas prepared to initiate sector partnerships to proceed independently due to the absence of guidance. It is crucial to note that sector partnerships fall within the purview of local responsibility as per Federal WIOA legislation. We urge that state technical assistance not impede the progress of these partnerships.</p> <p>"Strategy #2: Create and implement a unified and collaborative business engagement model"</p> <p>Can this strategy be further clarified in terms of who is involved in the unified effort? Does this mean a unified model specifically at the state level of WIOA Core partners; or will it include stakeholders outside of IWD administered services? Will there be local feedback or involvement in the creation of this model? IWD Business Division operating in a silo and not incorporating other WIOA required partners that provide business services does not lend to a unified collaborative model that is locally driven through the IowaWORKS system. It is also in conflict with the One Stop Certification standards that are designed to be driven locally.</p> <p>Effectiveness standard #10 - BST shares info across partners to better serve business customers, streamlines outreach to and communications w/businesses, utilizes single point of contact approach with businesses</p> <p>Continuous Improvement Standard 6 - The center has demonstrated high customer satisfaction from business customers as determined by the Local WDB.</p>	<p>Thank your comment. The state has established a tentative timeline which includes Stakeholder interviews with the Center for Workforce International conducted through February, 2024. Stakeholder trainings to be hosted March 6th and 7th, 2024. Available state appropriated sector partnership funds granted to local projects by July 1, 2024. Continuation of technical assistance by video calls available for local sector solutions projects via IWD and the Center for Workforce International with one or two additional visits by consultants for in person technical support to Iowa through June 30th, 2025.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment. As the comment states, each Center's integrated business services team shares information across partner. Strategy #2 reinforces this unified and collaborative model from a statewide perspective. This includes partners from both within and outside of IWD.</p>
11	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	<p>"The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) implements its required functions under section 101(d) of WIOA through its authority granted by Governor Kim Reynolds and codified in Iowa Code Chapter 84A. The Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the designated state workforce agency which provides support to the Iowa SWDB by providing an Executive Director to the SWDB, along with other support staff from the agency."</p> <p>Can "providing an Executive Director" be further defined of how this is accomplished, what other roles this individual has and describe what other firewalls are in place that are required when one entity is conducting two separate roles under WIOA.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The SWDB follows the same staffing model as several other states and satisfies all requirements at 20 CFR 679.160 when identifying staff for the board to assist in effectively carrying out its functions</p>

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12	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	"The Business Engagement Division provides centralized oversight and training for staff of the Workforce system to provide coordinated and effective services to employers across the state" Can "staff of the workforce system" be further clarified as we are not aware at this time of any training that has been provided to any business services staff beyond IWD Business Engagement Consultants.	Thank you for your comment. Business Engagement Division will work collaboratively across all partners of the Workforce system related to employer engagement.
13	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	"The leadership of the Business Engagement Division is responsible for: "Providing a central Point of Contact (POC) within IWD for local economic developers and employer-facing partnerships." Can it further be clarified how this single point of contact integrates with the IowaWORKS required single point of contact approach for businesses as outlined as required in the One Stop Certification Effectiveness standard #10.	Thank you for your comment. The Business Engagement Division is able to function as an entry point for economic developers and employer-facing partners. This is not in conflict with the BST functions under the One Stop Certification. Rather, the Business Engagement Division can assist in the facilitation of those local contacts when needed.
14	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	"Iowa is currently exploring ways to integrate Titles II and IV into the system and/or pursue the development of interface system(s) that integrate data via API tools when applicable. Currently, information is batched into the system and shared with Titles that do not have mainframe access. All core partners utilize a single reporting system for the Employer Services tracking functionality. This allows partners to report Effectiveness in Serving Employer measures jointly. As Iowa continues to develop and refine data management systems, the exchange of information and common data elements will improve and expand." The " All core partners utilize a single reporting system for the Employer Services tracking functionality" is not occurring at the local level as Title II and IV do not have access to IowaWORKS. If this is referring to the state level we request that clarification be provided.	Thank you for your comment. Effectiveness in serving employers is a state level measure, meaning that the state reports one set of data for all core programs together. While data is gathered separately at the local level for Titles II and IV, the data is combined by the state agency and reported as one, state-level measure as required by law.
15	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	We respectfully propose that the state considers augmenting the technological infrastructure available to local areas with the aim of enhancing communication among core partners. The current Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, as outlined in the state plan, falls short of its described functionality. Notably, it lacks responsiveness and integration capabilities for a majority of program partners. While acknowledging the recent upgrade to the IWD website, we would like to draw attention to the substantial deficiencies observed in the IowaWORKS website. It is currently dysfunctional and poses accessibility challenges for a significant portion of job seekers. The imperative of having a robust, user-friendly individual-facing website cannot be overstated if IowaWORKS is to assert itself as the premier service provider for workforce solutions in Iowa. A predominant concern voiced through customer surveys pertains to the websites' accessibility and perceived lack of user-friendliness, impacting both job seekers and businesses alike. Addressing these issues is pivotal to elevating IowaWORKS' profile and ensuring its effectiveness in serving the diverse needs of the workforce.	Thank you for your comment. The State of Iowa and its agencies continuously evaluate technology solutions to ensure an accessible and effective system. Local workforce areas are encouraged to collaborate with state partners to consider enhanced technology options.
16	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	MVWDB acknowledges the intent to submit a waiver seeking an increase in the Title I Youth and Young Adult in School Youth spending maximum to 50%. We appreciate the recognition that this adjustment provides greater local control over directing Title I investments. While recognizing the proposed success measure to augment co-enrollment with IJAG by 10%, we submit that this metric may counteract the intended goal. IJAG already benefits from substantial funding and operates extensively in many of Iowa's larger school districts. To align with the Governor's initiative of ensuring work-based learning accessibility for all students, it might be more prudent to mandate IJAG's focus on serving the schools within their existing purview. This redirection of resources could then be channeled towards supporting smaller school districts lacking work-based learning staff or similar private programming.	Thank you for your comment. After reviewing the waiver request and the expected programmatic outcomes, specifically the one related to increased co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%, we agree that specifying one entity may limit success in this outcome. Language has been updated to "Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serve at-risk youth participants by 10%."
17	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	In our assessment, we find that the draft WIOA state plan appears to prioritize Iowa Workforce Development programs and services, with a notable absence of emphasis on IowaWORKS and other WIOA required partners. The substantive content pertaining to local workforce development boards and their pivotal role at the grassroots level is notably lacking, creating room for improvement and enhancement in this regard.	The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approves the information collection request (ICR) for the Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Per the ICR, the definition of the Unified State Plan is a document that outlines the strategy for the core programs, WIOA Titles I-IV.
18	1/22/24	Mississippi Valley Local WDB-Miranda Swafford	Finally, the MVWDB appreciates the reasoning behind streamlining and consolidation of state departments and the benefits that can be derived from doing so. A concern in doing so, however, is the potential for decision making power also being consolidated into fewer hands with potential of reduced firewalls. Can you clarify in the state plan the efforts the SWDB is making to ensure oversight and accountability is in place?	Thank you for your comment.

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19	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	State Goals and Strategies, the South Central Iowa LWDB invites the SWDB to provide more specific details on the Strategy #3 found below. Goal 1: Increase the engagement and awareness of Iowa's current, potential, and future workforce to the continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities in Iowa. Strategy #3: Target services to underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, minorities, returning citizens, women, rural Iowans, new citizens, veterans, etc. Providing services to the underserved is the foundation of WIOA programs. However, could the SWDB provide more specifics in communicating which populations are most underserved and warrant intentional outreach?	Per ICR 1205-0522; all underserved populations are required to be addressed in the unified state plan. Local boards are encouraged to work with the state partners, including the Labor Market Information team at IWD, to refine local area data to identify outreach strategies for underserved populations.
20	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	We would ask the state to consider enhancing technology available to local areas to improve core partner communication. The current CRM is not as functional as described in the state plan. It lacks responsiveness and integration for most program partners. An additional platform should be researched to manage client referrals to support integration of programs. Furthermore, the IWD website has recently upgraded, and we appreciate that effort. However, the IowaWORKS website is drastically out of date, dysfunctional, and inaccessible to most job seekers. A strong individual facing website is critical for accessibility if IowaWORKS is to truly increase awareness as the leading service provider in Iowa for workforce solutions. If we are to increase business engagement, we must show our business customers the service we provide to job seekers is at the level they would expect. At a minimum, match technology UX they work with at their own business. Feedback from customer surveys overwhelmingly highlight issues the job seeker experiences with the technology.	Thank you for your comment. The State of Iowa and its agencies continuously evaluate technology solutions to ensure an accessible and effective system. Local workforce areas are encouraged to collaborate with state partners to consider enhanced technology options.
21	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	Regarding youth work, the South Central Iowa LWDB appreciates and supports the intention to submit a waiver to increase the Title I Youth and Young Adult in School Youth spending maximum to 50%. We believe that provides more local control for directing Title I investments. However, we would like the measurements to be further considered. We note there is a success measure to increase co-enrollment with IJAG by 10%. We suggest not tying this performance metric to it. There are ways to coordinate with IJAG that do not involve co-enrollment. To support the Governors effort of work-based learning being accessible to all students, an area may choose to focus on supporting smaller school districts, which makes up over 90% of the South Central Iowa LWDB area, most do not have work-based learning staff, IJAG partners or other supportive private programming of that type.	Thank you for your comment. After reviewing the waiver request and the expected programmatic outcomes, specifically the one related to increased co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%, we agree that specifying one entity may limit success in this outcome. Language has been updated to "Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serve at-risk youth participants by 10%."
22	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	The South Central Iowa LWDB would encourage the SWDB to seek more guidance and partner from the local areas. A representative for Local Boards to provide a voice on implementation in local areas for decisions and foster two-way communication between Local Boards and the State Board could be considered. Another example that could be considered would be scheduling The IowaWORKS Mobile Unit mentioned on page 72. The South Central Iowa LWDB would encourage the SWDB to partner with the Local Boards on setting up priority of service for this needed resource.	Thank you for your comment. The suggestions submitted will be taken into consideration as the activities of the plan are implemented.
23	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	The state plan mentions on page 92 the IOWA has an MOU in place with Iowa State University and Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) to assist with WIOA Title I Evaluation in accordance with 20 CFR & 682.220. The project will begin with a pilot and planning effort to evaluate Iowa's WIOA Title I program between May 1, 2023, through December 21, 2023. The South Central Iowa LWDB supports compliance of regulations and evaluation, we would like the state plan to indicate when the results will be published.	Thank you for your comment. The assessment is ongoing and will be shared at a later date.
24	1/25/2024	South Central Iowa Local WDB-Teri Bockting	We encourage more communication on projects that involve entire state programs. This same section found on the bottom of page 92 going into page 93 points to goals of implementation of the data dashboards will include: Triple the number of PROMISE JOBS (TANF) and Title I co-enrollments by December 31, 2025. The South Central Iowa LWDB would like the SWDB to provide more explanation on this data point as to what data and date will be used for the base number and how was the action of triple the number determined as the desired outcome. The local area is questioning if we are to expect population to increase for those that qualify for TANF and Title I programs to triple.	Thank you for your comment. The methodologies used continue to be developed and the suggestions submitted will be taken into consideration as the activities of the plan are implemented.
25	1/26/2024	Central Iowa Local WDB-Abigail Miller	I currently serve on the Central Iowa Workforce Development Board. The importance of local control and involvement in workforce cannot be overstated; local boards ensure that workforce partners are engaged and aligned with a common and specific goal for the area. As a registered Republican, I am in support of streamlining and consolidating state departments, however I do believe that local accountability and control is of utmost importance for our State.	Thank you for your comment.

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26	1/25/2024	East Central Iowa Local WDB & CEOs- Elizabeth Rodriguez	<p>The minimization and omission of the role and relationship with Local Workforce Boards play as a convener of local elected officials, businesses both big and small, economic development entities, and Core and Required Partners is a gap throughout this document.</p> <p>a. Give Local Workforce Boards a chance to be successful as the bodies funded to convene and operationalize WIOA and State Level workforce initiatives at a local level - and we will be. It is well known that consolidation of local boards has been a primary driver of effort for Iowa Workforce Development, and that effort has resulted in a consolidation of 40 or so counties on the western half of the state into a large, single local workforce area; Iowa Plains. To that end, we implore IWD to create formalized structures that allow the ECWDB, along with Central Iowa Workforce Development Board, Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board and Iowa Plains to function as is outlined in WIOA legislation, making a demonstrable shift from the strictly centralized model of operation.</p> <p>i. Include in the Unified State Plan language to this effect: pg.97, pg. 127 IWD provides this Unified State Plan as a roadmap for Local Workforce Boards to use as they develop Local Plans, policies, processes and standards operating procedure. IWD cannot create a "one-size-fits-all" approach to improving the workforce system and depends on Local Boards to support State Strategy and Goals. To that end, their important role as conveners of local workforce leaders/practitioners supports an integrated and collaborative approach to effective operationalization of IWD policies, processes, goals and initiatives. Their progress is measured and guided by way of inclusion in State Workforce Development Board and committee meetings and annual local monitoring efforts, both facilitated by IWD. All of which feeds into development of improvement efforts, approved by the Executive Director of IWD and then facilitated through our WIOA Core Program change management processes facilitated by the WIOA IWD Core Partner Working Group.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. State and locals both have important roles to play in the workforce system and must work together to ensure effective services are provided to Iowans. The state plan is focused on state level responsibilities, but that does not diminish the role of the local boards. We encourage the local boards to use their local plan to reinforce the necessary collaboration between state and local partners and how it will be implemented in your local area.</p>
27	1/25/2024	East Central Iowa Local WDB & CEOs- Elizabeth Rodriguez	<p>The approach to developing and implementing changes to policy, programs and process to WIOA programs is unclear and is a gap in this document.</p> <p>Thoughtful planning and deliberate phasing in of changes, "change management" is an approach IWD must use to "increase employee engagement and awareness of the IowaWORKS System as the premier provider of business services for a skilled and diverse workforce." Current implementation of changes unintentionally creates conflict, impedes and/or dilutes quality work effort that COULD be directed towards serving local jobseekers and businesses to the best of our ability. This issue is not unique to IWD. Continuous change occurring in any organization without appropriate change management practices, tracking of success and accountability mechanisms in place deteriorates and organization's reputation and inhibits the ability to serve clients.</p> <p>i. Include in the Unified State Plan language to this effect: pg. 95, 98 and 138. The Governor's efforts to restructure and better align IWDs resources continuously evolves the way we approach implementing changes to policy, programs and processes related to WIOA programs. As we continue to align and integrate programs at the state level to support better service delivery across the state our IWD WIOA Core Partner Team receives ideas for local and State level improvements from the State Workforce Development Board, their committees as well through formal requests from Local Workforce Boards. The IWD WIOA Core Partner team is charged with ensuring appropriate change management processes (See Attachment 1) are built into the process of ensuring policy, process and programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include defined objectives and measurable goals/timelines that have been approved by the State Workforce Development Board and/or the Executive Director of IWD.</li> <li>2. Have buy in from those directly involved in implementing the policy, process and programs by way of collecting appropriate signatures for formal approval by the Executive Director of IWD or their designee.</li> <li>3. Executive Director of IWD or their designee appoint Change Management Process Champions or "Change Champions" to coordinate activities and help smooth out areas of conflict at the state and local level(s).</li> <li>4. Change Champions identify roadblocks and address them - in honest and constructive ways.</li> <li>5. Agree on small milestones and check in sessions.</li> <li>6. Begin implementing the policy, process or program change.</li> <li>7. Progress will be measured and guided by way of including Change Champions' progress in State Workforce Development Board.</li> </ol>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Assessment of provision of workforce services is an ongoing task assumed by WIOA core partner program leadership and the SWDB. Consultation with relevant stakeholders will continue as policies, programs and processes are implemented.</p>

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28	1/25/2024	East Central Iowa Local WDB & CEOs-Elizabeth Rodriguez	<p>Each initiative in the Unified Local Plan should be listed and inculcated into the appropriate State Workforce Development Board Committee immediately to ensure change management processes are used to ensure integration with appropriate partners and increase their chances of great success. This may also require a re-look at the current committee structure.</p> <p>a. Include in Unified State Plan revisions to this effect: pg 97.</p> <p>i. State Workforce Development System Committee and Policies and Practices Committee share a similar goal and are combined. Operational issues are brought to this committee and policy and practice ideas are generated for submission to the State Workforce Development Board for approval and submitted to the WIOA Core Partner Team to execute the change management process.</p> <p>ii. Youth Services Committee ensures the following initiatives are measured and guided by way of including Change Champions' progress during regularly scheduled meetings so successes can be shared and changes can be made through the change management process.</p> <p>1. Work-Based Learning initiatives – apprenticeship program development and outcomes from each local workforce area                  2. Policies, procedures and measurement of state plan waiver impacts, co-enrollments and overall 1) skill gain, 2) employment rate, 3) 2nd and 4th quarter earnings for each local workforce area</p> <p>iii. Disability Services Committee evaluates the number of job candidates enrolled in each local workforce area, number of job placements including industry sectors and income as well as number of active and successful participants in Transition Programs by local workforce area. An evaluation of requests for reasonable accommodations also occurs quarterly to determine resource needs for assistive technology and/or interpretive services at job fairs or other AJC events (for example).</p> <p>iv. Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee evaluates enrollment in Title II English as a Second Language as well as number and type of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs being administered successfully in each local workforce area to evaluate needs for more resources as well as share best practices across the state. Additionally, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker information related to number of support services and/or complaints of discrimination by farm owners are also a standing item on this committee's agenda to ensure services are being offered in a way that is compliant with EEOC guidelines.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The SWDB committees will continue to be utilized to inform and impact the work of the SWDB as required by Iowa code.</p>
29	1/26/2024	Central Iowa Local WDB-Paula A. Martinez	<p>Youth Waiver: I believe that the local area can best determine the needs for youth. The waiver will allow for more flexibility in directing Title I investments. However, we discourage statewide success measures tied to one partner or strategy, such as "increasing co-enrollment with IJAG by 10%." There are ways to coordinate with programs like IJAG that do not involve co-enrollment. Furthermore, to support the Governors' focus of work-based learning being accessible to all students, a local area may choose to focus on supporting smaller school districts that don't have work-based learning staff or programs, or out of school youth 18-24 with barriers who are not currently served by existing programs.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. After reviewing the waiver request and the expected programmatic outcomes, specifically the one related to increased co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%, we agree that specifying one entity may limit success in this outcome. Language has been updated to "Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and organizations that serve at-risk youth participants by 10%."</p>
30	1/26/2024	Central Iowa Local WDB-Paula A. Martinez	<p>State Administration and Alignment of Services: I appreciate the benefits of streamlining and consolidation of state departments. However, a concern in doing so is the potential for decision making power also being consolidated into fewer hands with reduced firewalls and less accountability to those we serve at the community level. Please commit to fully developing the State Board as the leader of the workforce system and federal WIOA compliance best practices, to ensure oversight and accountability is in place for workforce system strategy and performance.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>



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31	1/26/2024	Clinton County Supervisor-Jim Irwin	As a representative on our Local Workforce Development Board I appreciate the opportunity to address a few of my concerns. IWD and the LWDBs should be and are collaborating on issues and conditions from around the State. If the IWD website and or a publication they are presenting to or reporting the information about a specific areas economic conditions, the LWDB should be the one presenting or data minimum supplying the information to back up the data. This roll is specific to the LWDBs. According to the standards that WIOA has in their federal standards, the LWDBs are to remain locally driven in our oversight and accountability. The LWDBs should be driven to the planning and development of better customer outcomes. IWD has consistently overstepped in the realm of the work of the LWDBs, thus the falling out from 42 counties in Iowa forcing the takeover of the LWDBs work in these counties. The work is to be accomplished at the local level. The customer flow process through the American Jobs Centers are again an action that should be controlled by the LWDBs, not the State IWD. I do not know how to make this any more clear to IWD and the State of Iowa that a portion of IWDs work is to and should be controlled and dealt with by the LWDB Boards. In my opinion, the collaboration projection that is being put out needs to include the LWDBs from the beginning of the process instead of treated as an after thought by IWD. Again, thank you for the opportunity to give feedback, Jim	Thank you for your comment. We agree that the customer experience is a process that should be informed by both state and local partners; the state partners ensure consistency and continuity of services across the state, while local partners provide valuable input for localized issues that impact the customer experience. The plan has been amended to include " . . . in consultation with local boards and partner programs, . . ." in this section of the plan, to clarify the joint effort of state and local partners to design the customer experience. Customers of Iowa's workforce system should experience the same level of service and basic service delivery style in every workforce center in the state.
32	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	The plan provides many words about the difference between a combined plan and unified plan, however, I am unsure whose plan this is, how it became a unified plan versus a combined plan. This plan seems to include unnecessary DOL information when it does not intend to use that information in the plan, i.e. words that pertain to a combined plan. Who is driving and who has input to this plan? Who are the intended customers of the plan?	Thank you for the comment. Iowa follows the ICR 1205-0522 to determine whether the plan is a Unified or Combined plan. As such, this current plan is a Unified plan.
33	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	Throughout the plan there are some references to local areas, but few. It is unclear what the vision is to ensure that the partnerships and agencies listed in this plan are in alignment, not overlapping accountabilities and responsibilities, and collaboratively working to ensure not only their success as an organization but success of each other and the local areas. Thus this seems that it would be more of a unified state plan. Clearly this would more ensure success for Iowa.	Thank you for your comment. Changes: None.
34	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	It is unclear what the measurable goals and priorities are in this plan. Does not the state expect the local areas to have visions and missions with measurable goals that align with the state's plan? There is nothing in this state's plan that aligns the SWDB with the LWDBs. Several questions arise, "Is the state working with or against the local areas?" What is the state doing to recognize and advance best practices among the local areas? What is the state doing to optimize marketing dollars that could economically, efficiently, and effectively better advance awareness and execution of programs for employers and job seekers?	Thank you for your comment. Measurable goals are included throughout the plan.
35	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	On page 93, the plan states, "Iowa Workforce Development is working toward transitioning sector board work to Local Workforce Development Boards [LWDBs] in regions with capacity and to build capacity in areas where it is needed." "To do this in the most effective way possible, IWD is working with a national consulting organization, The Center for Workforce Excellence, to accomplish the following outcomes..." While the Center for Workforce Excellence might be a credible organization, is that the most effective way to accomplish this? How is IWD working with the LWDBs on this? Nothing is stated in the plan about having the LWDBs have input to the plan, measures, and goals. Again, for whom is IWD, SWDB, LWDBs, and the State working? Should they not be working together? How is this a unified plan?	Thank your comment. The state has established a tentative timeline which includes Stakeholder interviews with the Center for Workforce International conducted through February, 2024. Stakeholder trainings to be hosted March 6th and 7th, 2024. Available state appropriated sector partnership funds granted to local projects by July 1, 2024. Continuation of technical assistance by video calls available for local sector solutions projects via IWD and the Center for Workforce International with one or two additional visits by consultants for in person technical support to Iowa through June 30th, 2025.
36	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	On page 114 of this 330 page tome (albeit not a scholarly tome), the plan states: "The two-year strategic plan of the SWDB sets a vision, mission, and goals for the SWDB to ensure Iowa develops and maintains a robust workforce." However, mission and vision statements seem to be missing. There are other mission and / or vision statements and at least one statement has purpose. Several examples are:	Thank you for the comment. Iowa follows the required ICR 1205-0522 template to develop the plan. As such, the plan is outlined in the same manner. The vision and goals of the state plan, developed by the SWDB, are listed beginning on page 90 of the unified state plan.
			1. Page: 8 "The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system." Why is this statement in the plan? It appears to take up the reader's time and space.	No response required--part of comment 36 above

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			2. Page 71: "Iowa's previous vision and goals focused on ensuring Iowa's workforce partners collaborate to build a talent pipeline of skilled workers." This plan provides many anecdotal statements about the new vision without providing how it will build on and learn from the past and how this previous vision and goals informed the authors and customers to change its vision and goals. Were all customers and stakeholders part of this change? Albeit the term "skilled" is only one variable of a competent workforce. The other two variable are knowledge and personal characteristics.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			3. Page 71: "Iowa's workforce delivery system contributed to this and will continue to build off these successes with the new vision and goals outlined in this plan." It is unclear what "these successes" are and how the new vision and goals will actually accomplish "these successes".	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			4. Page 82: "Home Base Plan: Vision: Iowa is the "State of Choice" for veterans and transitioning service members for employment, education, and/or continued service; and service members are valued in communities which are welcoming, affordable, safe, and family-friendly." With only anecdotal evidence it is unclear what the strategy and measured goals are for this area. How would anyone know this is the "State of Choice"? How would anyone know which communities are "which are welcoming, affordable, safe, and family-friendly"? How is the state preparing or working with communities that are not?	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			5. State of Iowa's Vision (page 90): "Iowa's Vision: An aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce." There is no mission statement, although in the requirements it states there should be. There are some strategic goals, which might be for the state but not SWDB, or IWD, or whomever else this plan is intended to serve. Again, Iowa's vision seems unbalanced without the two other key variables for a competent workforce: knowledge and personal characteristics.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			6. If this is a unified plan under the WIOA, there are no vision or mission or goals for Iowa Workforce Development as an organization.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			7. Page 106: "...IEDAs mission is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business, which directly ties in to the State Plan vision by ensuring we are providing an aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce." Clearly stated, again, there is no vision (although the plan states it is aligned with the state's vision. It is unclear what the measurable goals are and what or if there is a tie between the local areas and the IEDA besides having at least one person representing IEDA on its board. What are the intended measurable goals and results?	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			8. Page 106: "...Labor Market Information Division: It is the mission of this division to produce and deliver information in a reliable and timely manner in order to inform data-driven decisions for business, career, educational programming and economic development." While there appears to be great information available, the document provides neither a vision or measurable goals or how it will work with the LWDBs.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			9. Page 164: Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care (IA BoS CoC). IA BoS CoC's mission "... Although they were not awarded additional youth funding from this opportunity, it did ignite a partnership with the CoC and Title I Youth Programming. With this, Title I will be a party to conversations on a coordinated community plan specific to ending youth homelessness." There are several organizations whose mission is to end homelessness. Three examples are 1) Iowa Homeless Youth Centers (IHYC), a YSS organization, that works to eliminate homelessness among children, youth, and young families in Central Iowa; 2) Homeward (Polk County only); and 3) JOPPA whose mission is "To create communities of unconditional love, support and hope for the homeless, as we work together to prevent and ultimately end homelessness." A measure of success for Joppa is: "Since our founding, Joppa has helped more than 450 homeless individuals off the streets, 80% of whom remain in housing today." It would seem that a broader strategy and collaborative measurable goals for this stated focused area might be beneficial to a LWDB's plan, and the homeless.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			10. Page 190: "Practical Farmers of Iowa's mission ...". There is no vision, some goals, and no measures provided, only anecdotes of assurances.	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			11. Page 190: I assume the mission of the Employer's Council of Iowa's is stated as a purpose. Are they the same here? No vision or metrics are included nor are there either goals or metrics on how this organization supports each local area	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			12. Page 316, the plan states for IVRS: "... Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity." "...IVRS maintains a website which contains the guiding statements of the mission and vision of the agency, however there is no source provided, nor is there one provided in the plan only an anecdotal reference to it.	No response required--part of comment 36 above

		<p>13. Page 316: "Our [IDB] mission is to empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently. There are no vision, goals, and metrics provided only anecdotes of assurances that this is being done.</p>	<p>No response required--part of comment 36 above</p>
		<p>The document indicates many goals but few metrics of success, which a strategy typically has. On page 92 there are measurable goals. On page 191, the following seems to be a reasonable goal, although without any metrics of success. How would anyone in the public know that the money spent and work to deliver these videos was worth what paid for?</p> <p><b>Marketing Videos</b> The IWD Communications division, along with the SMA and outreach workers, are creating marketing videos with testimony from an employer that utilized the ARS. This video will be shared on all IWD social media platforms to encourage employers to utilize this system. This video also will be shareable via email. An additional video will be created to attract individuals to Iowa to work on these contracts. It will share, from the workers' perspective, the benefits of working on an ARS contract. This video will be used in the recruiting process for employers.</p> <p>There is no mention of the organization, Empower Rural Iowa Committee that has 66 appointed committee members. How does "Unified State Plan" intend to coordinate or collaborate with the local area boards' work or IWD, even though there is a representative on the State Workforce Board?</p> <p>There are only anecdotal statements or not completed statements of goals. Three examples are:  <input type="checkbox"/> Page 275- States: "2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—". Although the following paragraphs   pages list what the organization does in detail, it does not list measurable goals, and it's unclear what the priorities are.  <input type="checkbox"/> Page 276: states: "The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department". The Iowa Self-Employment program seems like a wonderful organization, however, again the program has not listed measurable goals nor priorities.  <input type="checkbox"/> Page 282 states: "Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and". The indicators reflect only the actual and negotiated levels of performance but not an explanation of the differences.</p>	<p>No response required--part of comment 36 above</p>
		<p><b>Process and Systems:</b> Iowa's vision is, "An aligned, flexible, and streamlined workforce delivery system that meets the needs of employers and all Iowans for a skilled and diverse workforce." However, the workforce delivery technology system is broken. So it's unclear how this vision will ever be advanced.</p> <p>From experience and listening to employers at career fairs or job fairs, most of them do not use the state system to find employees because it doesn't work to identify qualified candidates or any candidates. I talked to several employers and state workers and local government officials who stated, "Don't open that can of worms". CIWDB used the state's system to find a candidate for its Executive Director and the results were unacceptable. I received only candidates who had no experience or competencies that aligned with the requirements. When I spoke or tried to contact the potential candidates, many of whom were unreachable, most said, "I have to look like I am trying to find a job". There is nothing that I found in the plan that includes having a client-user panel that would improve this data and system. The challenges are having a system that is user friendly; user centric; has data integrity, and clear measures of success.</p> <p>While there is anecdotal evidence that the systems are being addressed, there seems to be only an excuse of limited funding and no clear vision, mission, strategy, or measurable goals to improve the state's data systems for workforce development delivery that really advances the success of either employers or job seekers.</p>	<p>No response required--part of comment 36 above</p>

			<p>Sources of Data:                  Many or most of the displays in the document are without any references. While the displays look good, it seems LWDBs and the public cannot go back and look at the data to ensure the correct use of it nor be able to use this or find this data. Additionally, those who "review" the local plans would state of this plan, "there are no listed sources for the displays", for example, pages 9, 11, 13-58, and beyond. Many of the displays are unreadable too. There seems to be only two displays figures tables with sources: Page 58 "Iowa Population and Percent Change" and page 59 "Iowa County Population and Numeric Change".</p>	No response required--part of comment 36 above
			<p>Consideration for Follow-up or Areas for Improvement and Discussion:                  I am curious as for whom the intended customer of this plan is. It seems this plan is written for the DOL and not its customers who are the employers and job seekers as stated in the plan. What percentage of customers and others replied to the request for input or attended the public forums? Was the approach to seek input successful and how will the input be used or addressed? Is this plan really useful for anyone other than intended writers and getting the money from the DOL to keep spending the money for the unmeasurable goals?</p> <p>I do see that employees are surveyed but are the customers? If so, what percentage of customers are sought and what were / are the intended results? Do the partners of this plan, such as all those listed in the aforementioned Vision and Mission section, obtain surveys or participate in a facilitated evaluation process to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of effectiveness and efficiency? What have been the results of such surveys and evaluations to inform improvement of performance?</p> <p>What if IWD considered being an applicant of The Iowa Quality Center (IQC) Performance Excellence application? The IQC and volunteers serve individuals and organizations who want to use an integrated performance excellence approach to improve. IQC facilitates organizational, individual and community excellence using the Baldrige framework and Iowa has been a part of this since 2005. How might using this approach actually result in intended and focused improvement and save resources of time, energy, and money?</p> <p>One wonders about partnerships, collaboration, and coordination with the local area boards, which should be essential to have every LWDA align with the state's vision as the LWDBs are the organizations closest to the customers to execute a plan. Who really is accountable and responsible for executing this plan and are all plans aligned in writing and executed with intentional collaboration so that the agencies and boards and committees are all working toward intentional aligned results. It appears that there might be competition among the partners, areas, boards, and state agencies. However the only real competition should be within each local area and department to ensure that local area or department remains competitively excellent. One wonders if the state intends to consolidate all the LWDA's into two large areas as verbally indicated during discussions of reorganization of the areas (then called regions) that occurred several years ago.</p>	No response required--part of comment 36 above
37	1/26/2024	T. Waldmann-Williams	<p>There seems to be different styles of writing, which may indicate many writers, yet not an overall editor or coordinator for consistency. Additionally, punctuation and sentence structure seems to need an editor. This makes the document difficult to understand and follow. Four examples are provided. Some areas to be changed are in red.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Grammar, punctuation, and what does "an estimated one-half (0.5) of an unemployed person's per job opening" mean? Page 9: "Iowa is facing one of the tighter labor markets in the nation with an estimated one-half (0.5) of an unemployed person's per job opening."</li> <li>□ Difference between Its and It's: Page190: "It's purpose is to guide Iowa Workforce Development's business focus. ECI addresses topics of concern to employer by sponsoring training initiatives. Additionally, ECI advises not only IWD, but also legislators, and other officials concerning it's products, services and policies that affect employers, and provides opportunities for employers to exchange information and develop education programs. Iowa would like to focus on increasing agricultural employer participation in this group and it's training initiatives, to ensure agricultural employers have a voice in this organization. Increased agricultural employer participation would be beneficial to highlight needs that overlap between agricultural employers and other employers throughout Iowa."</li> <li>□ Sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation: Page 196: "Iowa's outreach workers Still did housing inspections during 2022 and 2023, But they are no longer doing it as of September 2023 allowing them to devote their time solely to outreach."</li> <li>□ Throughout the document there seems to be an unclear and inconsistent use of terms for "area" and "region". What is the difference and why is there a difference? For example, page 106: "Reports are available by region and local area ..."</li> <li>□ The table for the State Rehabilitation Council's composition on pages 270-271 is blank. Is that intentional or missed?</li> </ul>	Thank you for your comment. A Unified State Plan is developed with the intention of bringing partners together to write and develop information within the plan. As such, readers should anticipate differences in writing style.

**WIOA State Plan PY2024-PY2027 Public Comments and Responses**

38	1/22/2024	Rachel Pettigrew	After reading through the WIOA Unified State Plan, I would like to request a copy of the signed and enacted MOU between IWD and the Iowa Migratory Education Program (MEP). As the MEP contact for the Iowa Department of Education, I have not seen an MOU between our two agencies and want to make sure I am not missing anything as referred to on page 188.	The reference to the MOU between IWD and the Migrant Education Program at Iowa Department of Education has been removed from the plan. An MOU was collaborated on in the past but was not executed.
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