

IOWA PLAINS COMMITTEE

Date: October 9, 2026

Time: 8:30 AM

Facilitator: Kent Heronimus – Interstates

IN ATTENDANCE

Amy Markham – Iowa Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation

Andrea Pohlsander – Life Skills Connections

Andrea Mann – Iowa Workforce Development

Andrew Sheffield - CJ Bio America

Brittney Gutzmann – Iowa Workforce Development

Chris Wurth – Siouxland Human Investment Partnership

Dara Svendsen – Essentia Protein Solutions

Faith Miller – Iowa Workforce Development

Gloria Graves – DAC

Jamie Wubben – K.C. Nielsen

Jason Landess – Parker Hannifin

Kathy Leggett – Iowa Workforce Development

Kent Heronimus – Interstates

Kevin Grell – Iowa Workforce Development

Kirstin Burrows – Iowa Workforce Development

Linda Rouse - Iowa Workforce Development

Luke Hugghins – McClure Engineering

Melissa Haukap – Iowa Lakes Community College

Michelle Nicoson – Moveero

Maggie Vogt – Iowa Workforce Development Rehab Career Planner

Nicolas “Omar” Valentine – Iowa Workforce Development

Ofelia Rumbo – Merrill Manufacturing

Randall McQueeney – Iowa Workforce Development

Sara Blair – Country Maid

Steve Gilbert – Gilbert Home Comfort

Teresa Larson-White – Iowa Workforce Development

Wayne Pantini – Southwestern Community College

AGENDA

Vocational Rehabilitation Overview - Britteny Guzman & Amy Markham

- Title IV – IVRS and Iowa Department for the Blind are the Iowa's two Title IV agencies
- Dual customer approach – people wanting to find meaningful employment and companies looking for employees
- Must have a documented disability of any type that is creating a barrier for employment. The disability must be creating a barrier not just documented
- Help businesses with meeting workforce needs and increasing retention
- No cost business services-disability workforce manager that can bring in a variety of different types of training
- Able to support businesses with working on the job listing to better reflect what is needed for skills for the position
- 42 counties have a little over 2000 job candidates working with them

**See attached documentation

Disability Access Committee - Gloria Graves

- DAC strive to create equitable work environment
- Support and empower individuals with disabilities
- What does it look like to hire someone with disabilities and what they need to do to make sure the employee is supported, also supporting the employers to best help their employees
- Welcome business to come and participate – once they know what they are looking for might already have people that are available for their openings
- Quarterly meetings
- Resources available to business

Comment: Linda Rouse - Iowa Plains has about \$600K sitting in the ticket to work – want to use to support employees to be able to be employable. They could also hire a TTW employee with the funds that are available – Workforce Committee oversee DAC and can decide what to use the funding for

Rehabilitation Career Planner - Maggie Vogt

- Assisting getting the resume ready, interviewing, job searching assistance, career exploration with what is available in their area, connecting with different business for job leads, job referrals to businesses
- Focusing on with people with disabilities and how to work with those barriers to employment. Does not need to be documented disabilities which is a difference from VR.
- Career exploration with what they can and can't do with their limitations, when and how to disclose their limitations, what does it look like to get assistance for their disability
- Stabilization and support through the job search process and have someone to turn to during the search process
- What does work look like with disability benefits to get sustainable employment that can meet financial needs
- Connect a lot with community originations
- Expanding workforce participation for people with disabilities

Stories

- "James" job injury that lead to serious health problems. Once felt ready to return to work needed extra support and to figure out what he could do. Started with VR to determine work path, once he was job ready was referred to RCP and BEC. Fine tuned the resume, practiced interviewing. Within a few weeks was regularly 4/13 applies 4/17 & 4/20 interview and then offered position in sales in a position in something that he used to be very successful.
- "Chad" – dairy production factories and was laid off. Tried job searching on his own. SNAP employment and training program. Carrer planning and resume. Addressed transportation. Struggles with reading and computer work was very difficult for him. Which connected him to Maggie. Worked with him on weekly requirements and programs that could help him with assistance in the areas that he struggles with. Worked with other career planners. Got offered an interview for driving, got a offer pending a background check he did have a record and got assistance with explaining the background. He was then offered the position and accepted it after being off work for a year. He was so grateful.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month - Amy Markham

- Covers the whole state and can assistant with all of the 99 counties
- Works with the BEC's but focuses on disability
- When partner with businesses with VR they are wanting to learn everything they can about a business so that they are able to refer the correct employees to the companies
- Events all over the state
 - Ford Dodge event coming up in person (October 29th)
 - ADA and accommodations

- Answering questions
- Webinar series throughout the month on Wednesday
 - Navigation accommodations
 - 21st neurodiversity in the workplace

Data Points: 400,000 lowans with disability (12.5% of population) these are only reported number there are actually a lot more, those with a disabilities is the largest minority in the world, something that we will all join every if for a short time

A Cornell University Study – companies were surveyed on benefits they saw from hiring individuals with disabilities:

- Direct Benefits
 - 86% of companies reported an increase in retention of qualified employees
 - 72% reported increase in employee production
- Indirect Benefits
 - 61% reported increased over company morale (positive)
 - 59% reported increase overall company productivity

Retention rates among people with disabilities on average are longer and reduce training costs. One company in Iowa reports moving from 22% turn over to 4% turn over after implementing On the Job Trainings, then moving to hiring with IVRS

People with disabilities in the US alone control \$645 billion of disposable income and they are more willing to spend it with companies that utilize inclusive hiring practices and focus on accessibility (disabilityin.org)

Companies that are inclusive are:

- 2x more likely to increase profit share
- 28% increased revenue
- 30% increase in profit sharing that their industry peers (disabilityin.org)

Questions: Kent -Interstates started a neurodivergent ERG-would like someone from the team to come and work with. Would this be something they can do? Amy would like to do and will connect with this new program.

Employer Spotlight: Essentia Protein Solutions - Dara Svendsen

4 Independent plants - Headquartered and based out of Ankeny

- They make protein-beef bones processed into a broth then dried and packs
- Pork chicken and turkey skins become finished powdered broth
- They are in most of the food in the store but won't see the company name on

Need skilled maintenance techs – last year worked with a 3rd party company to figure out skills techs needed, tested them, found what skills needed, “260 funding”, send maintenance workers through program to gain the skills needed, now paying based on what skills they have-this is a training pathway within the company they did not receive certification

Retention-have a high turnover- they promoted a production tech and turned him into a trainer that stays with the new employees and works with them from day one. Check in on them at the one, two and four weeks. Having this dedicated trainer has greatly improved their retention

No background check to work for the company, just must pass drug screening. They hire all walks of life.

Want to grow and support their employees

One-Stop (OSO) Updates - Andrea Pohlsander

- 1st Quarterly report on the new format July through September
- Customer satisfaction is above the goal of 85%
- Increasing the surveys by 16%
- Partner referrals 560 in the quarter holding about the same every month
- 278 Title I/DW
- Moved to monthly local meetings
- Quarterly all partner meetings starting on 10/20
- 13 sessions that were offered
- 268 contacts made – 30 events held across the 5 centers

Negotiated Performance Rates - Linda Rouse & Kent Heronimus

Every two years local areas must evaluate their performance DOL to IWD work with local areas to negotiated rates, rates are higher going into PY27.

Had a few areas that they did not meet for PY25, but they are working through them with assistance

Kent: very eye opening being a part of the meetings as to how the numbers are gotten and how we can better serve the people within the group. Gave a great background going through the evaluation

A special thanks from Linda Rouse: Thank you to all the committee meetings for all they do. This is her last meeting, 10/29 is her last day with IWD she has given in retirement papers

ACTION PLAN

Next meeting – November 13th, 2026 / 8:30am – 9:30am

Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

Who We Are

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) are Iowa's two Title IV agencies under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As core partners in the statewide workforce system, we collaborate to support both job seekers and employers.

IVRS and IDB operate with a dual-customer approach:

- Job candidates seeking meaningful and competitive employment
- Businesses seeking solutions for workforce needs, training, and inclusive hiring

What We Do

We provide individualized, employment-focused services that help Iowans with disabilities prepare for, secure, and maintain employment.

All services are guided by an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and aligned with WIOA Title IV priorities for serving both job seekers and employers.

Who We Serve

We assist individuals with any documented physical, mental, cognitive, sensory, or visual disability that creates a barrier to employment and who want to work.

IDB is the state's primary agency serving individuals with vision impairments, offering specialized expertise in blindness skills, accessibility, and employment readiness.

Our Goals

- Help Iowans with disabilities achieve meaningful, competitive integrated employment
- Support businesses in meeting workforce needs, increasing retention, and building inclusive workplaces
- Provide leadership and expertise at the intersection of disability services and business needs

How We Partner With Businesses

IVRS and IDB offer no-cost business services, including:

- Candidate connection and talent pipeline development
- Job analysis, workplace accessibility, and accommodation guidance
- Training on disability awareness and ADA-related topics
- On-the-Job Training (OJT), internships, and customized training partnerships
- Retention support, including job coaching and problem-solving for workplace barriers

These services help businesses strengthen inclusive hiring strategies, reduce turnover, and expand access to qualified talent.



Iowa Workforce
Development

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Our team is committed to transforming your company into a disability-friendly workplace. We offer a diverse range of services aimed at fostering a more inclusive environment.

By working closely with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselors, we ensure that you have access to the best talent available.

Get in touch with us today to learn more.



Our Service:

- ✓ ADA Consultation
- ✓ Job Postings to our Disability Talent Site
- ✓ Disability Employment Training
- ✓ Internal Structure Assistance
- ✓ Access to Pre-Screened Candidates
- ✓ Financial Incentives
- ✓ Assistance with Accommodations
- ✓ Job Retention Services
- ✓ Job and Task Analysis
- ✓ Continued Support



1-833-469-2967



workforce.iowa.gov



iaworks@iwd.iowa.gov

IowaWORKS is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Our Services:



ADA CONSULTATION

We have certified ADA coordinators who can assist with full or partial assessments, including setting up ergonomically correct workstations.



JOB POSTINGS TO OUR DISABILITY TALENT SITE

We can work with your staff to get your jobs posted to our Disabilities Talent job board on IowaWORKS.



DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

We offer various training programs with certified Windmills trainers. The training will be tailored to fit your needs.



INTERNAL STRUCTURE ASSISTANCE

Our team can provide recommendations for your policies, applications, and job postings to ensure they are inclusive for persons with disabilities.



ACCESS TO PRE-SCREENED CANDIDATES

Our team will create a personalized checklist for Vocational Rehabilitation to use in identifying suitable candidates.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Our staff can help you understand the benefits available for hiring people with disabilities, such as accommodations and modifications in the workplace.



ASSISTANCE WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

We can discuss how to provide necessary support for hiring and keeping employees through reasonable accommodations and assistive technology.



JOB RETENTION SERVICES

We can help retain employees with disabilities and connect them with a counselor for tailored services.



JOB AND TASK ANALYSIS

Our team will observe and interview employees to understand their essential job functions and tasks.



CONTINUED SUPPORT

We are here to support all of your disability employment initiatives and can customize our services to meet your needs



1-833-469-2967



workforce.iowa.gov



iaworks@iwd.iowa.gov

SAVE THE DATE!



 **October 29th**



IowaWORKS - 330 1st Ave. North Ste. G | Ft. Dodge, IA | 515.576.3131

Celebrating Value and Talent

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

**SHRM PDC (professional development credit) available to eligible attendees*



8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Event Agenda & Speakers

8:00 – 8:15 a.m.

Sign in & light refreshments will be available

8:15 – 9:00 a.m.

Amy Markham - IWD Workforce Disability Manager: ADA & Accommodations.

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Local Area Employers & Job Candidates: How IVRS services have benefited them through their vocational journey.

Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting

Celebrating the Grand Opening of the new IowaWORKS location in Fort Dodge, Iowa



10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Open to the public with tours of the facility and light refreshments available

Pathways & Possibilities Hiring Expo

Hiring event for area employers and job-seekers in celebration of Workforce Development Month



12:00 – 2:00 p.m.



Register for the events you will be attending by scanning the QR Code or visit the following link
<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/XzgpcSz484>



Visit us at IowaWORKS
330 1st Ave. North Ste. G
Ft. Dodge, IA | 515.576.3131



Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available
upon request to individuals with disabilities.
For deaf or hard of hearing, use Relay 711.



National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Webinar Series

SESSION 1

Disability Etiquette

Sept 30, 2026 11:30 AM CT

- Explore practical, respectful approaches to disability etiquette in the workplace and strengthen awareness across your organization.

SESSION 2

Accessibility in Recruitment and Retention

Oct 7, 2026 11:30 AM CT

- Learn how employers are successfully creating accessible recruitment and retention strategies that support individuals with disabilities.

SESSION 3

Navigating Accommodations

Oct 14, 2026 11:30 AM CT

- Explore practical ADA guidance, effective accommodations, and affordable, high-impact solutions that strengthen your workplace.

SESSION 4

Neurodiversity at Work

Oct 21, 2026 11:30 AM CT

- Understand the strengths neurodiverse individuals bring to the workplace and learn approaches that support a more inclusive culture.

SESSION 5

Iowa Success Stories/Employer Panel

Oct 28, 2026 11:00 AM CT

- Learn from Iowa businesses who will share real-world insights on how valuing the talents of people with disabilities strengthens retention, enhances workplace culture, and benefits businesses across the state.

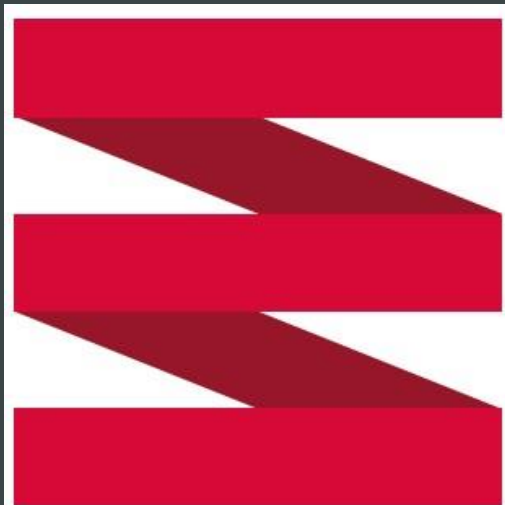
Opportunities for continuing education credits may be available.

Please speak to IowaWORKS staff for more details.

Register in advance for these meetings:

https://iowaworks.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sZUVHhWFQHif4Kncsy7qVQ

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.
Individuals with disabilities may request accommodations by emailing access@iwd.iowa.gov.
Request must be received two weeks prior to event dates.



Essentia

Protein Solutions



THE LAURIDSEN
GROUP, INC



OUR VISION

Driven to fulfill customer needs, we **help improve food products** across the world

In business for **40+** years

OUR MISSION

Through committed service and sustainable protein solutions, we are dedicated to **building a better business** for our customers



Essentia NA
HQ in Ankeny, IA
USA

Essentia Intl
HQ in Graasten
DK

4 Innovation centers
USA // Spain // Germany // Denmark

Factories

11

Ingredient brands

20

Employees

>500

Revenue (2023)



+300M
USD

WHAT WE DO

Animal-derived protein ingredients, made for the products people and pets use every day.

INDUSTRY

FOOD

BEVERAGE

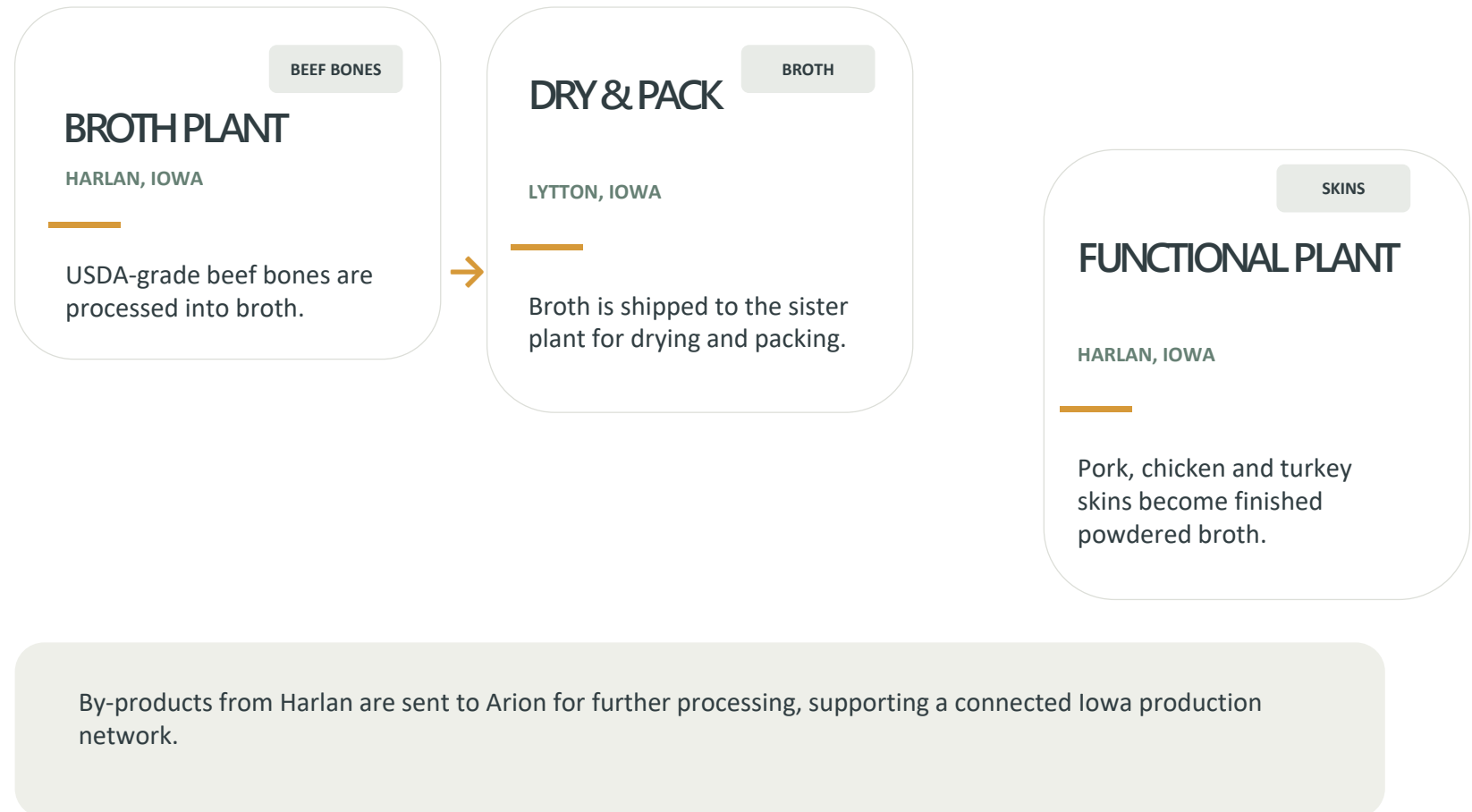
NUTRITION

PET FOOD

4 locations • newest: Dalton, GA (Jan 2025)

From raw materials to finished protein solutions

Essentia Protein Solutions is a global producer of animal-derived protein ingredients.



STRUGGLES

01

Skilled Maintenance Techs

IWCC – CEAM

02

Production Retention

Trainer

IOWA PLAINS LWDA

One Stop Operator Report

Presented Date:

Oct 9,
2026



Presented By:

Andrea
Pohlsander



PY2026-2027

Q1: July –
September



QUARTER AT A GLANCE



89% Customer satisfaction, against an 85% target

560 Partner referrals

13 Training Sessions Offered to Iowa Plains Staff

268 Outreach contacts, across 30 events

10 Local core partner meetings held



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer Satisfaction Rate by Month

MONTH	# OF SURVEYS	SATISFACTION RATE
July	113	89.4%
August	108	88.9%
September	125	88.8%
Quarter	346	89.0%

16%
Increase

Survey responses up 16% from August to September after new collection strategies launched.

Satisfaction is the share of ratings in the top two categories. Responses combine the paper/QR survey and the State survey.



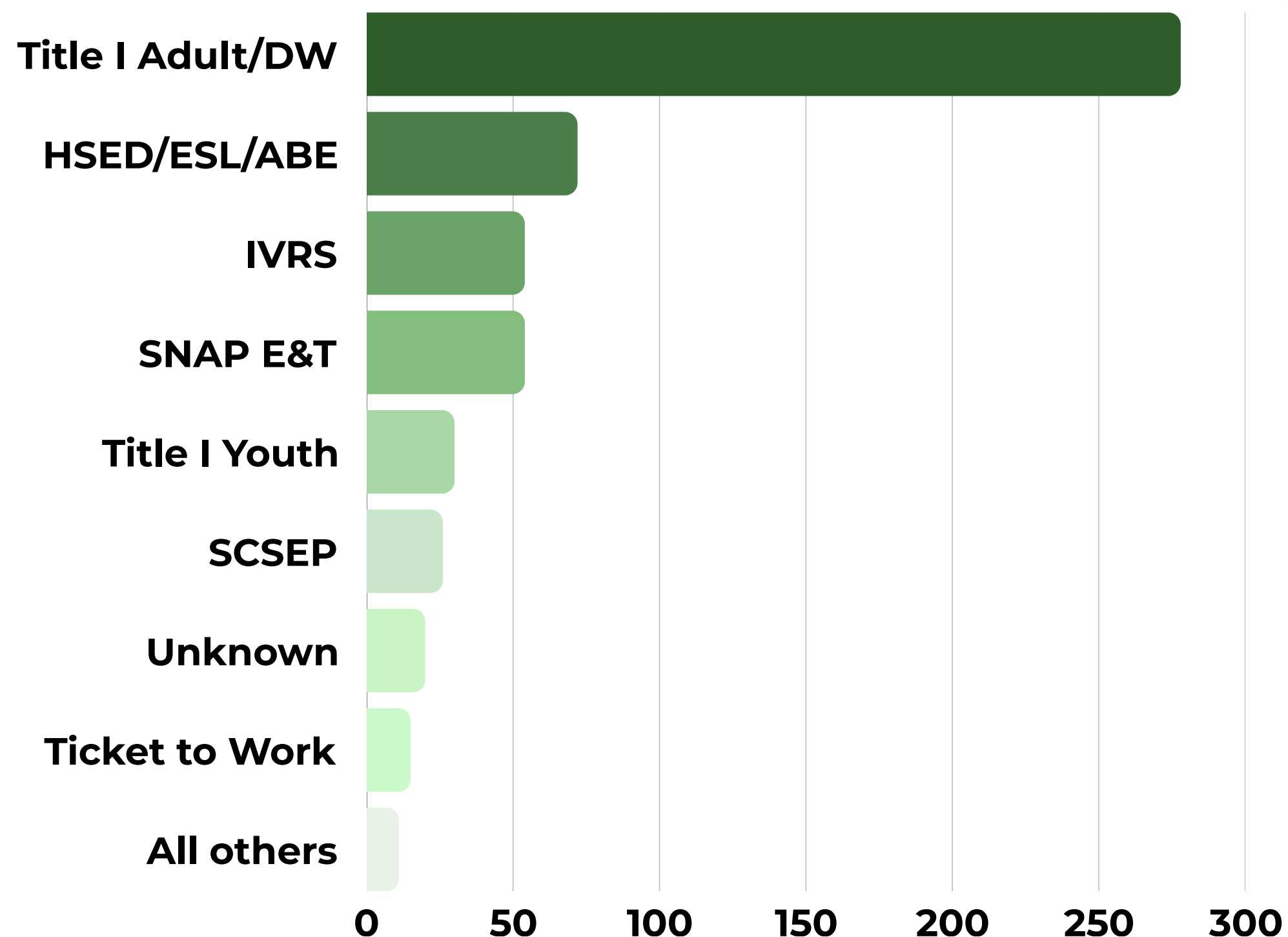
PARTNER REFERRALS

**560 total referrals
this quarter.**

July: 182

August: 181

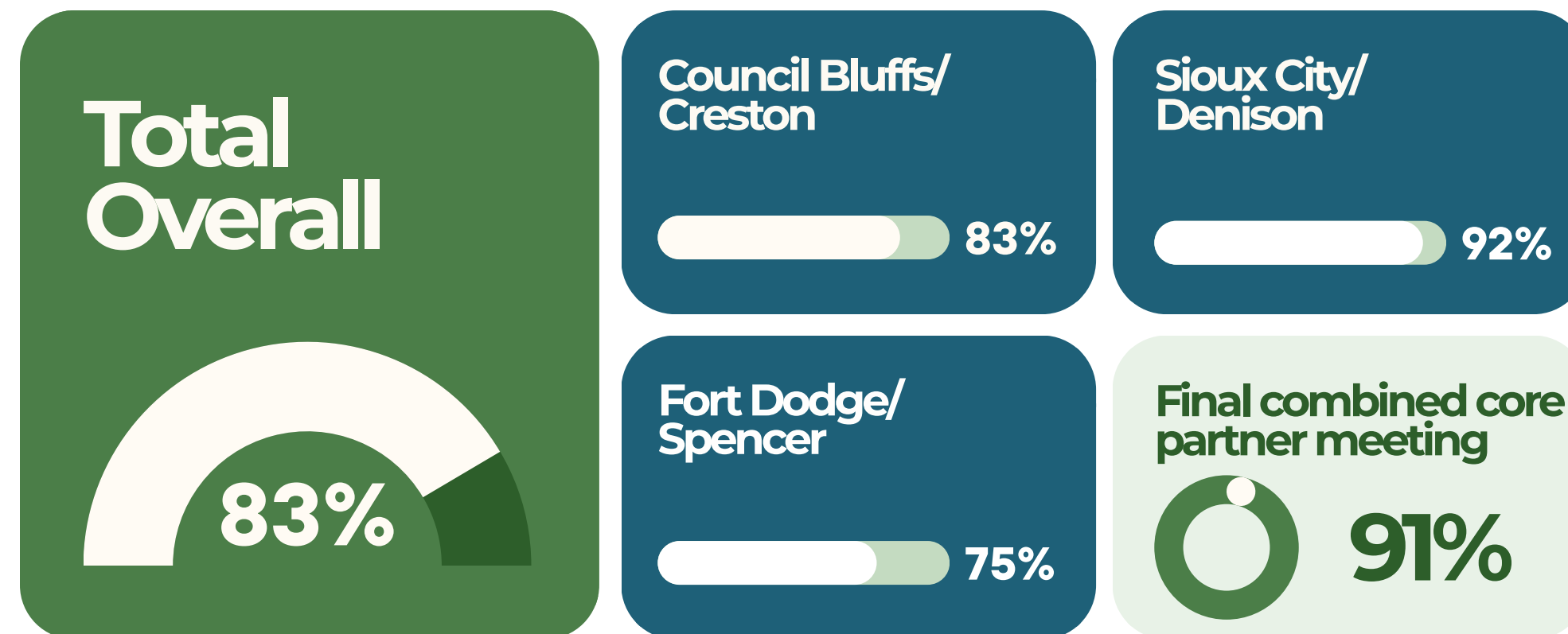
September: 197



*Baseline quarter. Comparisons to prior
quarters begin next report. Counts are
form submissions, not unique customers.*

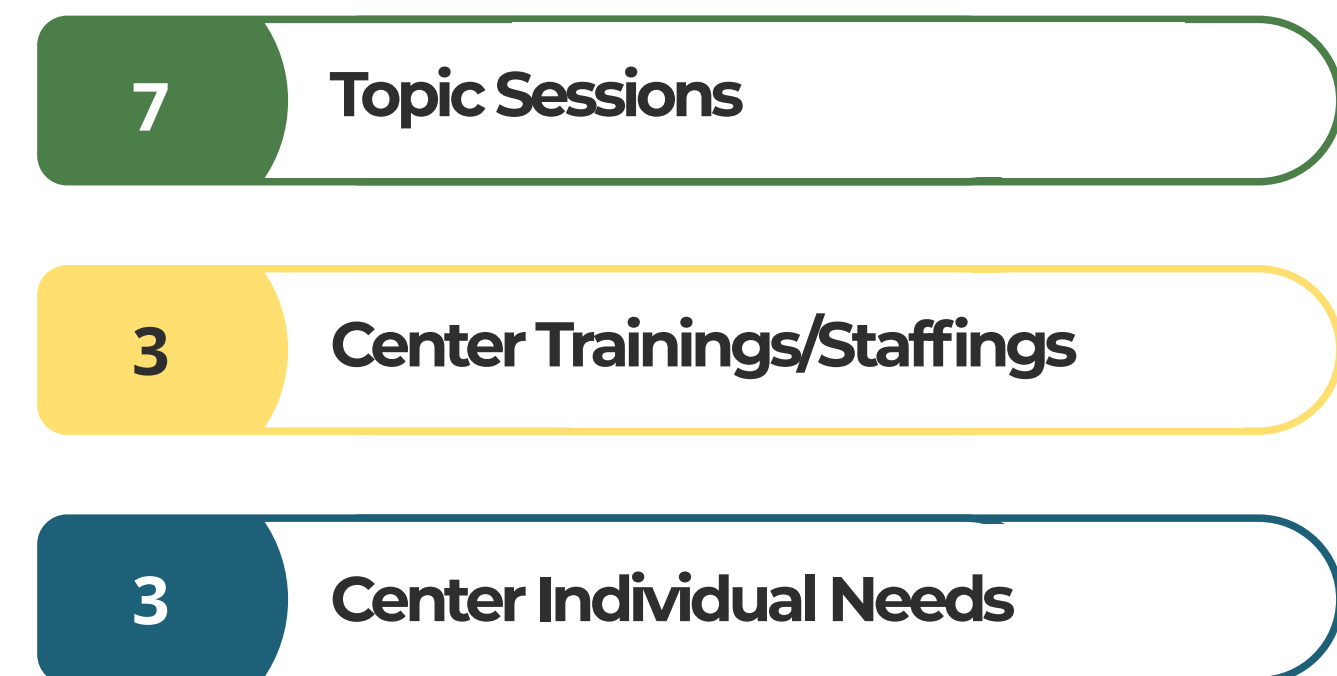
PARTNER COORDINATION AND TRAINING

The partner meeting structure changed this quarter: monthly local core partner meetings, plus quarterly all-partner meetings. Below shows the partner representation percentage by area across 10 meetings.



Partner representation means at least one partner attended; any staff level counts, and either center's meeting counts for combined groups. Local data covers August–September, since the structure began in August.

Training: 13 sessions offered to Iowa Plains staff



OUTREACH



Center	Contacts	Events
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Council Bluffs	52	11
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Denison	52	6
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Fort Dodge	65	4
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Sioux City	54	2
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Spencer	45	7
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Quarter Total	268	30
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Above: IowaWORKS table at the Adair County Veterans Resource Fair on September 3.

Left: Todd Jacobus, Commandant of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, speaking at the same event.

A contact is one logged entry per organization or person reached. Multi-day fairs count as one event. Council Bluffs includes Creston. Youth outreach is included in center totals.

EFFICIENCIES

Completed or Launched this Quarter

- Partner 1:1s
- Updated Partner Directory
- Self Referral Flyer
- Partner Meeting Restructuring
- Program Desk Aid
- Partner Newsletter Design
- Updated Rapid Response Deck
- Title I Referral Analytics Report
- ADA Assessment - Fort Dodge
- Referral Contact Audit

Ongoing & Coming Up

- Referral review and feedback process development
- Partner referral one-pagers
- Referral training
- 2027 Training Schedule
- Programs as services customer flyer
- Newsletter Implementation
- Referral contact audit implementation



APPENDIX



Referrals by Program and Month

Program	Jul	Aug	Sep	Quarter
American Indian Council	2	0	0	2
GAP/PACE	0	2	4	6
HSED/ESL/ABE	16	24	32	72
Iowa Dept. for the Blind	0	0	1	1
IVRS	25	22	7	54
Job Corps	0	0	2	2
SCSEP	8	9	9	26
SNAP E&T	15	17	22	54
Ticket to Work	4	7	4	15
Title I Adult/DW	97	85	96	278
Title I Youth	7	8	15	30
Title III	0	0	0	0
Unknown	8	7	5	20
Total	182	181	197	560

July restated to match the August and September counting method.
Originally reported as Title I Adult/DW 84 and Unknown 21.

Self-referral form submissions were 15 in July, 9 in August, and 18 in September,
42 for the quarter. These are included in the program counts above.

APPENDIX



Methods and Sources

Measure	Definition	Source
Satisfaction	Google ratings of 4 or 5, and State service ratings of 3 or 4, counted as satisfied. Rate is total satisfied divided by total responses.	Survey dashboard, data through 9/30/2026
Referrals	Counted by form completion date	Iowa Plains partner referral form
Partner meetings	Representation means at least one person from the partner attended	Partner meeting attendance tracker
Training	Sessions offered to Iowa Plains staff, including statewide sessions	Wednesday session schedule
Outreach	One entry per organization or person reached. Multi-day fairs count as one event.	Monthly outreach and events tracker, plus youth outreach logs

Numbers that changed from earlier reporting

July satisfaction was reported as 89% on 100 surveys and August as 87.6% on 97. The dashboard now shows 113 and 108, because Fort Dodge paper surveys from February to September were added later. Survey volume: 346 this quarter, 345 last quarter, 202 in the same quarter last year, and a 96 per month average across PY2025-2026. The year-over-year gain is real; the quarter-over-quarter figure is flat. Two July responses labeled Creston are counted under Council Bluffs throughout.

Iowa Plains WIOA Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY26 and PY27

Adult	PY26	PY27
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	78.0%	79.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	76.0%	76.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,000	\$8,100
Credential Attainment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	75.0%	75.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	69.0%	70.0%

Dislocated Worker	PY26	PY27
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	83.0%	83.5%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	85.0%	85.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,500	\$10,600
Credential Attainment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	74.5%	75.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.0%	71.0%

Youth	PY26	PY27
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	75.5%	76.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	75.5%	76.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,000	\$5,100
Credential Attainment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	57.0%	58.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.0%	53.5%

Wagner Peyser (Not Negotiated with LWDBs)	PY26	PY27
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	71%	71%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	70%	70%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$9,200	\$9,200