

Annual Report P.Y. 2015
Region 1- Dubuque/Decorah

Program Year 2015 included many challenges in terms of the economy and employment opportunities it also included some very exciting developments in the areas of workforce system development and grant opportunities. The local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) service providers, along with our partners in the workforce system, experienced many successes in helping our job seekers to prepare for and obtain employment. Specific examples of the programs and initiatives designed to help meet these challenges in Region 1, as well as the effects of these efforts, are highlighted in the following report.

A. Waivers – N/A

B. Use of Discretionary Funds

We had one State Emergency Grant (SEG) that assisted us in serving 18 people from the business closure at Soy Basics. This was a TAA certified closure, so SEG funds allow staff to provide rapid response and wrap around services to distraught individuals who are unfamiliar with next steps and need guidance through the process. All enrollments are co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program. Of those enrolled, we had 13 exits with a 93% employment rate. Four are still in school and one was tragically killed in a car accident.

Along with all regions in the state, Region 1 is participating in the Iowa's Job Driven Registered Apprenticeship National Emergency Grant (NEG) and the Sector Partnership NEG. We currently have 17 participants enrolled in the Registered Apprenticeship NEG for intensive services and 1 for training. Region 1 currently has 6 participants enrolled in the Sector Partnership NEG. In addition, we have hosted two U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship employer events educating local employers on Apprenticeships.

C. Veteran Services

Region 1 IowaWORKS held "Employers Optimizing Veteran Talent: A Business Leader's Guide to Tapping into the Veteran Talent Pool" events in the Dubuque and Cresco during the past year which educated over 60 employers on the benefits of hiring Veterans. This event was lauded by local employers, who asked for a follow-up event that goes more in-depth into topics like military resumes and PTSD in the workplace.

IowaWORKS staff participated in the "All the Way Home" Veteran's Conference in Dubuque on May 7th and met with approximately 65 Veterans to hand out job seeker guides and workshop schedules, as well as, answer questions and provide job search assistance.

As part of the Home Base Iowa Initiative, Veterans interested in possibly relocating to the Dubuque area are given tours of the community by Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (GDDC) in order to give them a warm welcome and address specific family needs. The following two success stories document the collaborative effort that yielded positive results in Region 1:

- D. C., a 7 year Veteran recently discharged from the U.S. Army in Fort Riley, Kansas, was successfully recruited to Iowa and assisted to obtain a position as Network Administrator at Flexsteel Industries in Dubuque starting 8/24/15.

- T.E., a 30 year enlisted Veteran with the Air Force , has now relocated to Bellevue, IA and is currently interviewing for production management or safety positions in a radius from Dubuque to the Quad Cities.

D. Employer Services

In the last year, Employers Council of NE Iowa (ECI) has offered trainings for businesses on employment law hot topics for businesses, including OSHA, Workers Compensation, ALICE Active Shooter Training, Wage and Hour Update, Social Media training. Quarterly ECI newsletters are completed as well. Staff made 1,236 business contacts in Region 1 during the year.

One of the focuses this past year has been to encourage businesses to host career fairs and walk-in interviews at our workforce offices, both in Dubuque and Decorah. During the 12 month period of this report, 38 Job Fairs were held at our IowaWORKS offices. Job Fairs were held for the following businesses: Focus Services, Clayton County Wellness Fair, Labor Ready, Flagger Pros USA, Sedona Staffing, Frontier Group, Mediacom, All the Way Home (Veteran), Professional Building Services, Millwright, Humach, Galaxy 1, TH Media, Family Dollar, Farmtek, SunOpta, Featherlite, Lime Springs Beef, Employment for Everyone, and Congressmen Rod Blum Veteran Fairs.

E. Service Delivery

For PY15, Region 1 served 6,676 new members through Integrated Service Delivery System. 1,953 of those were served in Decorah and 4,723 were served in the Dubuque. This was increase of number served in both Decorah and Dubuque from, last program year. This does not include repeating customers. As well, we expanded services to Manchester, Oelwein, Waukon, New Hampton and West Union to provide additional employment services. An additional 197 job seekers/customers and 170 businesses sought services through the expanded outreach.

Rapid Response efforts are made by Region 1 IowaWORKS staff for workers impacted by lay-offs and business closures no matter how many workers are impacted. Multiple Worker Information Meetings were held for the following 16 businesses: Donaldson's, Tom's Pharmacy, Spillville Locker, Telegraph Herald, IBM, Commercial Vehicle Group (CVG) of Edgewood and Monona, Carlisle, Hillcrest Family Services, All American Homes, Country Manor of Cresco, John Deere, Lime Springs Beef, and Blumenthal's. Workshops were taken out to these affected workers as well as group unemployment insurance application assistance. We live and work in the communities in which we serve. These impacted workers are our friends, family and neighbors.

In addition we have participated Career Fair's for Upper Iowa University, Luther College, and Reality 101. We have hosted class size high school and college students at the center to learn about our services as well as employers coming in to educate staff on their business.

Region 1 IowaWORKS staff regularly attends economic development meetings with Northeast Iowa Business Network, Prosperity Eastern Iowa, and Dubuque Works to coordinate economic and workforce development strategies. Several short term training certificates have been developed by a collaborative partnership including economic developers, community college staff, workforce professionals, and employers to address workforce shortages in our local areas.

Re-engage Dubuque is a partnership between the Dubuque Community School District, Northeast Iowa Community College, and Project HOPE which includes IowaWORKS staff. This community initiative aims to connect students who have recently dropped out of high school to alternative educational options, post-secondary education, and employment.

E. WIOA Implementation

WIOA Transition Planning - Region 1 local leadership team consists of WIOA Director, WIOA Manager, IWD Operations Manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor, Department for the Blind, and the NICC Adult Education and Literacy Director. We have jointly written our Region 1 Local Service Plan (LSP), as well as, the Memorandum of Understanding. Region 1 WIOA Core Partner Leadership will continue meeting monthly to discuss strategies for improvement. Core Partner staff are provided training every Wednesday morning, as well as, Presidents' Day and Columbus Day. In addition, Region 1 WIOA MOU Partners have developed a Referral Form and Process to enhance service delivery.

Early Implementation Efforts – Region 1 RWDB and CEO boards were grandfathered under the WIA board structure, but recently received training and discussed transitioning to the new WIOA board structure within the next year. RWDB and CEO members received training from Mary Ann Lawrence at locations in our region on December 4th. Board members also attended training in Des Moines on October 29th. In addition, WIOA staff received training from Greg Newton on January 14th.

Transition Strategy for the Youth Program – Region 1 RWDB and CEO approved transitioning from the Youth Advisory Council under WIA to the new Youth Standing Committee under WIOA. Due to the changes in the WIOA Youth Program emphasizing experiential learning, Service Providers have identified a need to have dedicated staff assigned to these activities. We are fortunate to have the only rural Youth Career Connect Grant in the nation implemented in our region. This grant serves in-school youth with career education, job shadows and mentoring.

Success Stories:

James, 33 is a convicted felon without a driver's license. Enrolled in the adult program, his goal was employment. James had a great support system from his mother and girlfriend who were able to provide transportation to and from campus for him to attend class. With assistance from Title I services, he attended Northeast Iowa Community College for the Electrician Diploma program. He graduated August of 2016 and is employed as an electrician.

21 year old single parent youth with two children, received classroom training assistance and support services while she attended NICC. She graduated with an AA Degree in Health Information Technology and is working at Medical Associates.

46 year old married dislocated worker with two children, affected by the Quad Graphics closure in Dubuque, received classroom training assistance through TAA to attend Southwest Wisconsin Technical College for the Associate Electro-Mechanical Technology program. He was co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker Program and Quad Graphics SEG. He graduated from training and is working at Cardinal Glass.

19 year old single parent youth with two children, received classroom training assistance and support services while she attended NICC Continuing Education. She completed the Certified Nurse Aide training, attained her state license, and is working at Oak Park Place.

47 year old married dislocated worker with two children, affected by the Quad Graphics closure in Dubuque, received classroom training assistance through TAA to attend NICC for the Computer Analyst program. She was co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker Program and Quad Graphics SEG. She graduated from training and is working at Sedgwick.