

Annual Report P.Y. 2016
Region 1- Dubuque/Decorah

Program Year 2016 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

Along with all of the other regions in the state, Region 1 participated in the Iowa’s Job Driven (JD) National Emergency Grant (NEG) and the Sector Partnership (SP) NEG which both ended on 6/30/17. For the JD NEG, 54 participants were enrolled and received intensive services, training assistance, and support services. For the SP NEG, 45 participants were enrolled and received intensive services, training assistance, and support services. In addition, we have 5 participants that transitioned from the JD NEG and SP NEG to the Rapid Response SP NEG and began receiving services under that grant effective 7/1/17..

We had Early Intervention Grants for Commercial Vehicle Group (CVG) for both Edgewood and Monona and Blumenthal’s of Lansing. All of these closures were approved for TAA. We enrolled 34 individuals with the CVG group and only one from the Blumenthals of Lansing. We provided on-site staffing at the plant as a means of recruitment and assistance for all the affected workers, as well as Job Fairs for both Blumenthal group and a Clayton County Job Fair.

C. Veteran Services

Under the priority of service provisions of the Jobs for Veterans Act, a veteran who is eligible or spouse of an eligible veteran who is entitled to receive Priority of Service is a person who has served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from service under any condition other than a dishonorable discharge. This definition includes Reserve united and National Guard units activated for Federal Service. Veterans and eligible spouses have the right to take precedence in obtaining all employment and training services. Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, taking precedence may mean: the covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or 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.

Programs Providing Priority of Service to Veterans:

- Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange Program
- Registered Apprenticeship
- National Emergency Grants
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Indian and Native Americans Programs
- The President’s Community-Based Job Training Grants

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.

Employers Services Team partnered with ECIA, University of Dubuque Veteran Center, and Home Base Iowa staff and met monthly to plan the Employers Optimizing Veteran Talent event in November of 2016. Breakfast and lunch were provided and the event specifically targeted employers. We had 30+ employers attend. We had guest speakers provide updates from ESGR, Home Base Iowa, and a panel of distinguished veterans, three breakouts, and lunch with a veteran.

On February 11, 2017, The Tri-States Veterans Employment Task Force, a collaborative effort of Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, University of Dubuque and IowaWORKS, spearheaded an employment information workshop for the Iowa National Guard 1/133 drill weekend, in Dubuque, which consisted of:

- 1) Labor Market Information – what are fastest growing occupations in the area.
- 2) “Opportunity Dubuque” and other related opportunities for those who may be unfamiliar with the greater Dubuqueland.
- 3) Iowajobs.org – How to access, create a profile and navigate over 45,000 jobs.
- 4) Home Base Iowa – Upload resume, find jobs with Veteran-friendly employers.
- 5) AccessDubuqueJobs.com - How to use the site, upload resume and access veteran portal.

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.. Dubuque County and Howard County in Region 1 have been designated as Home Base Iowa communities by the State of Iowa. Veteran staff personally contact each Veteran that submits a resume on the Home Base Iowa website.

D. Employer Services

The Employers Council of NE Iowa (ECI) continues to offer trainings for businesses on relevant topics including: OSHA, Worker’s Compensation, Unemployment Insurance appeals, Active Shooter Training, and Ergonomics to name a few. A bi-monthly full-color digital newsletter, the Business Insight is sent in partnership with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) and has a steadily growing membership. Business Workforce Alliance events are hosted twice a year in the northern and southern part of the region (usually Dubuque and Calmar). Staff made 2,290 business contacts and hosted 43 job fairs in Region 1 during the year.

IowaWORKS has also increased their partnership with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. They are included in all of our training days, integrated in our business services and employer services meetings. Recently we have also started partnering on business visits in person and conference call, visiting area employers together and sharing our services, and conducting joint planning for outreach including employer tours.

A major emphasis has been growing our ECI membership and expanding our content. We have also expanded our outreach to businesses and streamlined our business folders to focused content and developed a brochure to identify key resources and contacts. Our team is actively involved with 11 sector

boards connecting with businesses, educational institutions and partners to move our region towards tangible goals addressing workforce needs including cultivating soft skills, increasing retention, developing further partnerships and awareness of careers and community offerings for both parents and students. Another major focus for the last year has been supporting several closings as well as expansions and providing support for businesses in the forms of career fairs, workshops, walk-in interviews, NCRC testing and in-office job fairs. Businesses supported extensively include East Penn, CVG, Blumenthal, and All-American Homes workers.

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Hosted 43 Job Fairs/ Walk-in Interviews – Dubuque/Decorah Offices for the following businesses:

American Customer Care, Sedona Staffing, Telegraph Herald Media Health and Wellness Job Fair – Diamond Jo, Crossmark / Sams Club Job Fair, Delaware County Business and Industry Day, Fed Ex Job Fair, Hope Church, Five Guys, Focus Services, Aerotek, DJ, Area Residential Care, Harbor Freight, Veterans Employment Outreach at Iowa National Guard Armory, Luther Spring Career Fair, Clayton County Job Fair, Q Casino, Express Employment, and Culver's Job Fair.

Employer Council of Iowa (ECI)

September 21, 2016 – OSHA Record Keeping – NICC Decorah
September 22, 2016 – Ergonomics – NICC Dubuque
September 22, 2016 – OSHA Record Keeping – NICC Dubuque
Collaborate with NICC for the Business Insight bi-monthly newsletter

ECI Workshops Coordinated and Represented by the Dubuque Office

September 21, 2016 – OSHA Record Keeping – NICC Decorah
September 22, 2016 – Ergonomics – NICC Dubuque
September 22, 2016 – OSHA Record Keeping – NICC Dubuque

E. Service Delivery

- Demand Driven System with a Regional Economic Development and Strengthening Partnerships with Communities

Collaborative efforts in Region 1 have led to the creation of an Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Long-Term Healthcare Sector Boards with representation from employers, education, economic development, and workforce throughout the region to address the specific needs of businesses in these high demand sectors. In addition, Region 1 has established 6 Community Sector Boards for rural areas of the region that bring together the same partners to concentrate on workforce issues that have been identified in those counties.

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.

Currently we are involved in a three state project with Wisconsin and Minnesota called Workforce Innovation for a Strong Economy (WISE) Plan project for a regional economic study on workforce issues and how best to address the fundamental workforce challenges facing the three state region.

- Implement system reform, with streamlined governance and alignment of economic and workforce development regions

Region 1 WIOA Core Partner Leadership has created a referral form to more formally track partner referrals to create a seamless delivery system that better serves our customers and connects them to additional resources throughout the region.

WIOA Core Leadership serves on the Northeast Iowa Regional Career & Technical Education Partnership Board that involves all the school districts superintendents and local community college. The partnership is established to assist school districts in providing an effective, efficient, and economical means of delivering high quality secondary career and technical programs.

- Enhance an integrated service delivery system that focuses on services rather than programs.

For PY16, Region 1 served 6,300 new members through Integrated Service Delivery System. 1,793 of those were served in Decorah and 4,507 were served in the Dubuque. As well, we expanded services to Manchester, Oelwein, Waukon, New Hampton and West Union to provide additional employment services. An additional 543 job seekers/customers and 306 businesses sought services through the expanded outreach.

Rapid Response efforts are made by Region 1 Iowa *WORKS* staff for workers impacted by layoffs and business closures no matter how many workers are impacted. Multiple Worker Information Meetings were held for the following 10 businesses: Fauser Oil, Caterpillar, Commercial Vehicle Group, Luster Heights, Ossian Coop/Pit Shops, ADM of New Hampton, Lime Springs Beef, IBM, Arts Way Vessels, and Premier Linen & Drycleaning.

Workshops occur within both the Dubuque and Decorah center as well as were taken out to these affected workers. Some 3,294 individuals in Region 1 participated in workshops through the year.

The workshop calendar has been shared with a wider group of agency partners as a means of recruitment to reduce duplication and offer a greater effectiveness.

In addition we have participated Career Fairs 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.

- Advance a vision for serving youth most in need

The WIOA Title I Service Providers in Region 1 made the decision to focus their limited funding on youth who are low income, public assistance recipients, and/or basic skills deficient. Efforts are ongoing to seek out program referrals from Promise Jobs, Fountain of Youth Program, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Juvenile Court Services, and other organizations that serve these particular youth. In addition, staff are always looking at ways to co-enroll youth into

various programs to increase collaboration and leverage resources in an effort to eliminate barriers.

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 dropped out of high school to HSED, alternative high school educational options, post-secondary education, and employment.

F. WIOA Implementation

WIOA Implementation

Region 1 RWDB and CEO boards were grandfathered under the WIA board structure, but are now transitioning to the new WIOA board structure. New board members have been recruited and the board is almost full. We are in the process of recruiting two members representing business to complete the requirements. The boards have been guided by IWD's attorney through this process. A Youth Standing Committee and Disability Access Committee have been established. the Youth Standing Committee has met and are in process of expanding membership. The Disability Access Committee has reviewed both the Dubuque and Decorah offices for accessibility and is suggesting improvements.

Ongoing Implementation Efforts

Region 1 local leadership team consists of WIOA Director, WIOA Manager, IWD Operations Manager, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Supervisors, Iowa Department for the Blind Counselor, and the NICC Adult Education and Literacy Director. Region 1 WIOA Core Partner Leadership meet monthly to discuss strategies for improvement. WIOA 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. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Department for the Blind staff are scheduling on-site staff hours in the IowaWORKS centers to meet with joint customers as a effort to enhance services.

Implementation Strategy for the Youth Program

The Youth Standing Committee has met and are in the process of expanding membership to any and all youth serving groups/agencies in the region. WIOA Title I staff have identified business throughout the region for work based learning opportunities such as paid work experiences and paid internships.

With the emphasis on out-of-school youth under WIOA, we are very fortunate to have the only rural Youth CareerConnect Grant in the nation implemented in our region. This grant is administered by Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission and partners with Northeast Iowa Community College, East Central Intergovernmental Association, and all of our local high schools. This grant serves in-school youth with career education, job shadows and mentoring. We have served 817 students throughout the region under this grant.

IowaWORKS staff are involved in the planning and implementation of STEM Family Festivals in Decorah, Dubuque, and Oelwein which served over 2,000 individuals during the past year. Students and their families participated in a variety of hands-on experiences in STEM careers that will lead Iowa into the future.

Celebrating Success:

- Staff at the IowaWORKS Center in Dubuque nominated Tonya for the Iowa Job Honor Awards and she was selected as one of this year's honorees. Tonya's story is one of overcoming potential age barriers with her energy, passion, go-getter personality and willingness to learn. In June of 2016, Tonya started applying for jobs while receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Although she had success getting initial interviews and even second interviews, a job offer continued to be elusive. By November, after what seemed like hundreds of applications and interviews, Tonya was starting to get nervous as she only had about four weeks of unemployment insurance benefits remaining. At the time, Tonya was 61-years-young and retirement was not part of her plan. In fact, she drove 45 minutes one way, three days every week, to learn Spanish by using Rosetta Stone at the IowaWORKS Center in Dubuque. Tonya has grandchildren who are Hispanic, and she wanted to learn to speak Spanish for them. Tonya tried avoiding the age issue over and over, in many interviews, but yet she felt it was there, with her, and was probably on her own mind, in each one of them. She called it herself, the “elephant in the room.” IowaWORKS staff encouraged her, “look how energetic you are, and committed you are, to this one extra thing you are doing for your grandchildren...learning a new language, at age 61. This is not what many older people take on at this time in their life. You have so much more to offer. We think she began to believe this, embrace this, and even celebrate this, in her later interviews, saying in her interviews, as she did.....“I am passionate about what I do and I have years left to bring my experience and expertise to the table.” Believing this, and celebrating this, as a person looking to start new work, with a so-called age barrier, can be a game-changer. It was for Tonya. In November, Tonya was invited for a job interview as the Executive Director of Social Services at the Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA. She went into the important interview with confidence. Tonya said, “I had discussed the whole experienced worker dynamic, with IowaWORKS staff, and how to approach this aspect in a face-to-face interview. I had talked their ears off about what to say about my age. Then, it finally came time. I took their suggestion, and, in this really important interview. I just came out with it, telling the interviewers that I am passionate about what I do and I have years left to bring my experience and expertise to the table. I want to thank IowaWORKS for all of your suggestions. I tried this different approach in my interview, and it seemed to help me be successful in landing this job offer.”
- “Jack” came to PROMISE JOBS in December 2015 after a recent layoff. Jack had extensive sales and management experience, but wanted a career change that would allow him to support his family and also be home for them instead of traveling. He indicated an interest in welding or CNC training, and PROMISE JOBS referred him to NICC for more information. Jack was also referred to the apprenticeship program since he was a dislocated worker. On March 2, Jack attended an Advanced Manufacturing orientation for certificate programs at NICC and decided he wanted to pursue CNC training. He completed the necessary assessments and steps so he could be approved for funding. Although he’d met with WIOA staff about apprenticeships, it was determined that he could be funded for training through WIOA. WIOA paid for the CNC training, and PROMISE JOBS provided transportation assistance for the training. Jack began the training in April 2016 and completed it in August, receiving an Entry Level CNC Certificate. From the time he came to PROMISE JOBS, Jack also participated in job readiness activities and earned a NCRC. He was determined from the beginning to succeed in the training, and he excelled! In September, Jack began full-time employment with a small local company earning \$14/hour plus benefits. He really enjoys his job! He’s already looking forward to opportunities to advance in the company. Jack plans to utilize FSSG funds to help with things needed for his new job. He shared that being trained at NICC was a great association for him because NICC is well-known by industries. He said employers know if you went to NICC, you were trained well and are qualified for the job. Jack also said the “seamless process” between NICC and IowaWORKS was easy to deal with and that we work well together.
- Army Veteran Theresa Sherman was referred to me through VA Vocational Rehabilitation

Counselor (VRC) Cheyanne Irving, after she had completed her BS in Psychology at Upper Iowa University. Theresa had struggled for over five years with finding work due to her disabilities and life struggles, in general, had become disorganized. Alaris Counselor Denise Steim was also contracted through the VA to assist Theresa with setting goals, organizing her home and following up on job leads. Decorah IowaWORKS staff was also instrumental in providing support for Theresa by assisting her with her resume and job applications. Denise Steim was able to get Theresa to volunteer at the Fayette County Historical Society and two months later she was hired as a Community Trainer with Goodwill Industries. Brian Patnaude made contact with the America's Job Center in Dubuque (Region 1) while he was still employed with Ricoh Copiers as a field sales agent. With significant barriers to employment, he was referred to Region 1 Veteran Representative. He expressed to the Vet Rep he was failing miserably at selling copiers and needed to find different employment because his supervisor had already informed him that if he didn't improve his sales numbers his employment would be terminated. The Vet Rep and office staff assisted Brian with his resume as well as other value-added intensive services like introducing Brian to "I Have A Plan Iowa" so he could assess his skills, abilities and aptitude; enrolled him in "Career Ready 101" to study for National Career Readiness test and convinced him to take the National Career Readiness test. The Vet Rep made contact with Aaron Serrano, CEO of Military Cost Cutters (MCC), in reference to a Dubuque-area position Aaron had mentioned on Linked-in. Aaron confirmed he was still looking for a Veteran around Dubuque to recruit businesses for MCC. I told Brian about the position, he was interviewed and hired. Brian commented, "IowaWORKS is by far the best option in searching for employment. I lacked passion for what I was doing and the Vet Rep was able to find employment that fit my skills and interests."

- I am "Bobbi" and I was recently released from The Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville Iowa. While I was there I was able to take a 7 week job training course with Zach Steele from Central IowaWORKS. In the beginning of the class I really did not know what to expect or what I was getting myself into. But I knew I wanted to learn more. And I had hopes of learning of higher paying employment. And a new way of Life. I had to push myself but I did it. As soon as I was released to the community I came to the Dubuque workforce as much as possible and stayed at the computer Jason and Jim helped me everyday until I received several job offers and then I had to choose. The help that I received was amazing . I now have Two jobs, One that pays \$15.06 an Hour and another that pays \$10.00 an Hour. I couldn't ask for anything better. Thanks for taking the time to help someone that really needed it and wanted it. I'm ready to start my life over. Again.
- After 11.5 years in Federal Prisons, where he worked in the bakery 9 years. Ed made it back to Dubuque. He admits that when he came into IowaWORKS for the first time, he brought a very bad attitude with him. IowaWORKS offered him a nudge, and a little advice. "I can see that you are frustrated, . . .perhaps you should call it a day and return when you are less discouraged , and ready to try again." He said that at that time, he was impatient and expecting instant gratification, thinking that he was "entitled". Ed says, the way she spoke to him, showed she really cared, and he knew that, and he knew she was right. Ed says he told Joanne he would be back and he left for home. Ed did return, and when he did he came in with a fresh perspective . . .he was committed to the work it would take, and to being persistent. He worked in the IowaJobs website with his old resume and created a new one. With a new resume in hand, and with his substantial experience as a baker, he applied for a job at BIMBO Bakeries. That same day, in the IowaWORKS office, it suggested he also print a copy of that new resume, walk into the Job Fair held there that day, and interview for a position with them. Emboldened by all he accomplished in those first days there, he did just that. When he left the office that day he was very encouraged, that company wanted him in their new store. In addition to this very good prospect, and within two days of sending out

his application, BIMBO Bakery contacted him. They were very interested in his vast bakery experience, and wanted to interview him. In the interview he shared honestly about how he got his experience, and this did not seem to matter; they were “thrilled” to see such good experience. They saw him and his experience and were able to look beyond the fact that he got that experience while in prison. They wanted him, and he wanted to work there. He quickly passed the pre-employment drug screen and background check, and was promptly hired. He says he’s a big believer in “things happening for a reason.” And, as fluky as losing that first job was, he is now happy it happened. Ed is happily employed at BIMBO Bakeries, and in a few short months has made a great impression on them. Recently the Plant Manager came to him and told him of a lead position that was opening, and said that he should apply. She has seen his work and could see he was ready for more responsibility. This made him feel very blessed and thankful. Ed has this to offer others...

“A lot of people are discouraged and depressed and stressed with job searching, and this can affect how you go about it. Rise above the Self-Pity that affects this process. Tell yourself you have more to offer than what you think, and learn to believe it. There are people out there, who believe in you and encourage you, and a Thank You goes a long way. It goes a long way for them, but also in yourself. I’ve made a lot of poor choices...for once in my life, I’m making better choices, but it’s time to give back. IowaWORKS guided me when I needed it most and it feels awesome to give that back.”

- IowaWORKS received a referral letter from the Intensive Services Coordinator for a 90% Service Connected Veteran, T.K. who was enrolled in VA Vocational Rehabilitation. His Employment Plan was "To be determined," so I called the Veteran who loosely explained that he didn't know what he wanted to do. He has just been "seeing what's out there." He also said he has no resume, so he was signed up for Creating A Resume and the Resume Lab workshops.

Veteran came to his resume workshops and Vet Rep also assisted him over time to produce a great resume. Due to his S/C, T.K. felt he was unable to maintain any meaningful employment. After diligently working with the Veteran and fine tuning his resume, he was able to get a job as an auto mechanic at a funeral home, which is meeting his needs.

- David came into the IowaWORKS office as a returning citizen. He had spent the last 12 ½ years in Federal Prison. He wrote the following about his experience with IowaWORKS Dubuque:

“My name is David C. and I spent 12 1/2 years in federal prison. During this time I worked for Unicor in their electronic cable factory from 2010 to 2017. I took advantage of the Certified Production Technician certification as well as the forklift and soldering certifications. When I was released in March 2017 I came back to Dubuque. I didn’t know what to do or how to go about finding work. I was told to go to IowaWORKS and they would help me. When I got there I met Joanne who helped get me started on the process. When talking to Joanne I had mentioned my incarceration and she suggested I talk to Jason about the POETS program. Jason took time to meet with me to discuss my past. I had no idea how to create an email address or a resume. Jason met with me often to help guide me in these steps and helped to build my confidence in my abilities. I thought I was only capable of a position at a fast food restaurant or other lower paying position. Jason assured me that due to my work experience at Unicor and taking advantage of the certifications offered I was capable of much more. I applied to four factories in the Dubuque area and received interviews with three of them. All started at 14 dollars per hour or more. Jason worked with me on interview techniques and how to explain my criminal history in a way that an employer will understand that this is not who I am now. After I had the interviews I met with Jason to figure out what I should do now that I have three positions on the hook. Jason talked

with me about my plans for the future and where I saw myself. This helped me to determine which position was best for me to accept. I'm now working full time at a place that I never knew was possible. I am very grateful to Jason and IowaWORKS for all of the help and encouragement they provided. I now have a career and am never looking back.”

- Wendy was a dislocated worker who was affected by the closure of the Blumenthal company where she had worked for five years. Wendy accessed services with IowaWORKS including career assessments, workshops, and a job fair. In a small town rural area where jobs are limited, Wendy did not know what she was going to do. But Wendy made the effort to stay positive and proactive, and through networking in her community she learned about a possible position at a local company. It was not the type of work Wendy had done before, but she had heard about the OJT (On-the-Job Training) program through IowaWORKS. She decided that when one door closes, another one opens, and she was open to transitioning to a new career. She came into the center multiple times to work on her career planning steps to determine what kinds of work would be a fit for her, and in which career clusters she could try new jobs even if it wasn't exactly what she had done before. Through the process of assessment and discussion, Wendy determined that this new opportunity would fit with her work preferences, abilities, and goals. Wendy interviewed at the company and IowaWORKS approached them about possibly hiring and training Wendy in the new skills that would be needed to do the job. The company decided that even though Wendy didn't have the exact skills they needed yet, she had the right attitude, work ethic, and ability to learn the skills they needed. They hired her through the OJT incentive to train. She was able to stay in the town where she lives, has self sufficient employment and is learning and growing into many new challenges.