

REGION 07 PY18 ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

PY18 was an interesting year for WIOA service delivery. We expanded services throughout our service delivery area, assisted employers to reduce turnover, increased access to registered apprenticeship programs, and worked with job seekers with multiple barriers to find and maintain employment. We achieved this success during a year in which local workforce development realignment has created increased pressure to on local partnerships and staff due to the high level of uncertainty within the system.

Regional Snapshot

Region 7 covers the counties of Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler and Grundy. This region has only one American Job Center, the IowaWorks Office is located at 3420 University Ave., Waterloo, IA. The IowaWorks office is open Monday through Friday 8:30am -4:30pm and Wednesday 9:00am – 4:30pm.

The Waterloo location currently consists of the following co-located partners:

Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth)

- Two full time (Adult & Dislocated Worker) staff member
- Two full time (Youth) staff members
- Two full time (Ticket to Work) staff members
- Four full time (Gap\Pace) staff members
- One Director
- One Associate Director

Title III (Wagner Peyser)

- Eight full PROMISE JOBS staff members
- One full time Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program staff member
- Ten full time Wagner Peyser staff members that support in several areas such as: Home Base Iowa (HBI), Trade, Career Planning, Unemployment Insurance Claims support, Registered Apprenticeship, Ticket to Work and Business Services.
- Two Workforce Managers

Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation)

- Two and 2/5 full time Rehabilitation Assistants
- One full time Typist Advanced
- One Secretary II
- One Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor

Regional Initiatives and Partnerships

Our local area is actively involved in the implementation and facilitation of local Sector Partnerships. We currently have three operating partnerships focused on Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, and Transportation sectors. These partnerships include LWDB members, elected officials, and engaged community members from sector businesses. Our Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (AMP) meets every other month. The Cedar Valley Healthcare Partnership has held trainings on how to retain employees, keep moral up in long-term care facilities and tour organizations that have been doing innovative things in hopes to spread the knowledge gained from start-up. 31 new healthcare organizations have been engaged since the Sector Board Specialist began outreach. In June, we were excited to create a new Transportation and Construction Equipment Operator Sector Board. This group is in the very initial stages, but there is a lot of excitement in regards to the potential that the group has.

Hawkeye Community College, the local area's Title 1b service provider, was awarded funds from the Iowa Department of Transportation under Urban Youth Corps. Through this grant, 3 young adults and one Team Leader were tasked with completing six major projects primarily focused on safety and accessibility improvements at the Cedar Valley Arboretum and Botanicals. The three interns built a footbridge to provide access over a swale and nearly all of the walking trails were improved to increase accessibility of the entire 40 acre Arboretum. Participating young people were also able to participate in a combined total of 160 hours of career and workforce training, as well as earning industry-recognized credentials such as OSHA 10 certification, folk-lift operation, etc.

Employer Services and Business Engagement

IowaWorks Business Engagement Team in 2018 continued to build community collaborations with the Region 7 business community. We continued to work with the Waterloo School District during the school year having one advisor spend 8 hours per week in each of the three high schools in Waterloo (Expo, East, West and the Waterloo Career Center). During the summer we partnered with the Boys and Girls Club, providing soft skills workshops to students four hour per week. We had great success as we transition back into the 2019 school year.

Lacie Westendorf and Debra Hodges-Harmon were on the team assisting and helping to plan two major events with Grow Cedar Valley and UNI for the Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2018. Both were asked to represent IWD on the Cedar Valley Regional Summit held on Oct 2018. Both of these events drew over 300 attendees and both brought in National speakers for the events to discuss the 5 strategies for our statewide initiative for Future Ready Iowa. Currently Lacie and Debra continue to represent IowaWorks on the working groups and Debra is part of the Cedar Valley Leadership committee. The opportunity has allowed IowaWorks to be a major player in our community events for Future Ready Iowa and working on Initiatives after the 24/7 report, which depicted Waterloo and Cedar Falls as one of the worst places for African American to live in the country.

The team played a major part in planning the 3 days Urban Alliance return visit in April 2019. Five sessions were held in three days to address and have community conversations regarding Barriers to employment.

IowaWorks has housed employers in the center daily for open interviews. We have held three larger hiring events for the Simply Essentials employers, Ocwen employees and several larger retail stores that closed in the year 2018 and 2019.

The team has provided training to the Congolese Community for train the trainer, they requested we train them on application, job search and interviewing so they as leaders could back and teach their community. Because of the working relationship, we were instrumental in providing center services when over 253 individuals from Congolese and Burma lost permanent employment due to the closing of Simply Essentials in Charles City, Ia.

Members of the business engagement team have been invited to sit on local boards such as LCAN, Homeless Board of the Cedar Valley, Project Safe with Department of Justice and Sector Board for Manufacturing, IT, Health and Construction. IowaWorks has representation on the Community Partner Board with all of our local non-profits and representatives attending the State Business Marketing Specialist meetings that are held bi-monthly. The Business Engagement team has continued to provide needed service and marketing for employment opportunities to all of our counties on various events with Economic Developers.

Lastly, weekly meetings are held and attended by core partners such as IowaWorks staff, Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Basic Education when staff is available to attend. Also, we hold monthly meets for job development as a team.

Promising Practices and Success Stories

1. Rapid Response

Rapid Response plays an important role in providing customer-focused services to both dislocated workers and employers, ensuring immediate access to affected workers to help them quickly re-enter the workforce. In Region 7 we have worked with over 1000 workers affected by layoffs or closings this year. One promising practice that was very beneficial for all involved was when a company allowed us on-site access to meet with individuals losing their employment. This company announced a closing affecting its 165 employees which would happen in monthly layoffs in each of the next 6 months. We were able to have our rapid response, worker information and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) meetings all on site. Also, the company allowed our staff to be onsite weekly to meet and answer questions individually or in groups. It was extremely helpful and we were able to assist many in completion of applications for Trade benefits even before they were laid off.

Success Story:

James was notified of the plant closing and layoff a few minutes before the end of the shift. He and his coworkers were given 10 minutes to gather their personal items and leave the plant. They were all in shock, many had worked at the plant for more than 20 years. Worker informational meetings were held relaying lots of information to the group of almost 200. Thankfully, a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) was approved quickly and the workers were invited to another meeting to discuss the benefits available to them through the federal program.

James was 54 at the time and had worked in manufacturing his entire life. He was unsure what direction to go or what benefit to utilize. After a few discussions with a career counselor he decided to make a career change and go back to school. James put his life into this new training because it really was something he had wanted to do a long time ago. It took two and a half years, including clinical, but he completed his radiography degree and passed his state licensure. He was offered 2 different positions as soon as he passed and was thankful to accept a full time position with a local hospital.

A thank you in his own words:

“Good morning to all! As graduation draws closer, (May 10th!!), I wanted to reach out and say thank you to all that have had the privilege of working with over the last 2 1/2 years. Stephan, Emily, Dustin and Susan; you always greeted me with a smile and a genuine desire to help me through the process and answer my many, many questions!

To Janae, William, Antonina and the many people in Des Moines whose desks that my paperwork has crossed, in lieu of being able to meet you and shake your hand-Thank you- your work is greatly appreciated!”

2. Registered Apprenticeship

Lacie Westendorf, the Business Marketing Specialist (BMS) and the business engagement team has worked diligently in establishing Registered Apprenticeships in Region 7. Over the past year Region 7 has worked hard to meet the goals set and has established Registered Apprenticeships with the following businesses, Christie Door Company, GMT, Hawkeye Community College CNA, Hawkeye Community College CDL, and Geater Machining and Manufacturing starting two occupations.

There were 11 placements in the Registered Apprenticeship programs and many collaborations as listed below that have assisted in Region 7 working to meet the RA goals.

The Waterloo Career Center started a Registered Apprenticeship program however when it's a high school program the Office of Apprenticeship takes the lead on these programs. The School district partnered with 6 companies in the Cedar Valley to start their CNC apprenticeship. Lacie W. (BMS) is a member of the Advanced Manufacturing Partnership and she assisted in preparing a power point presentation to go into high schools for the businesses to be able to talk about careers at the companies and showcase advanced manufacturing. The partnership presented to three high schools in Region 7 in the past year. Also as a member of the

Transportation Sector Board, a partnership was established to work on a high school presentation similar to the Advanced Manufacturing presentation and Lacie presented about registered apprenticeships to the board.

The IowaWorks Business Marketing Specialist and the Bremer County School and Business Board partnered together to put on the Manufacturing Parent Night where students and parents toured manufacturing businesses in Waverly to learn about the opportunities for registered apprenticeships and other careers. The businesses who provided tours also give out three scholarships to high school seniors going into manufacturing careers.

3. Offender Re-Entry

IowaWorks Business Engagement Advisor Douglas Marshall was selected to complete the OWDS training in New Castle, Indiana. The new OWDS graduates purpose is to assist ex-offenders with a successful re-entry using IowaWorks as the main resource and job search portal. Douglas over the past year has been stationed for 16 hours in the Waterloo Women's Center for Change, Men's Residential facility, and the Probation/Parole Office assisting with resume writing, interviewing skills and providing workshops onsite. Douglas along with the Business Engagement team held a Second Chance hiring event within the Women's Center for Changes last year and it was very well attended by both employers and customers. The employers reported that 3 returning citizens successfully were offered opportunities with their businesses.

4. Serving Customers with Disabilities

Hawkeye Community College (HCC), Title 1 service provider, implemented the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) funding between October 2015 and March 2019. This initiative focused solely on assisting individuals with disabilities connect to a career pathway, obtain industry recognized credentials, and find sustainable employment. Today, our American Job Center (AJC) staff are well training and well equipped to serve individuals with disabilities.

The American Job Center, through HCC's Hawkeye Employment Network, continues to provide individualized career services to individuals in our local area through the Ticket to Work program. The Hawkeye Employment Network is authorized to serve Ticket customers by the Region 7 LWDB and Social Security Administration (SSA.)

5. Veteran Services

During PY18 Region 7 IowaWorks was without a DVOP and was supported by Jeff Fischer, DVOP of Cedar Rapids, IA and the Region 7 Business Engagement Team. The Business Engagement Team discussed Veteran Services and Home Base Iowa to 191 employers over the past year and Jeff assisted with enrolling and case managing over 20 veterans in Region 7. Also, there were 4 jobs developed for specific veterans and 2 who subsequently entered employment.

Also, the IowaWorks business marketing specialist worked with Jeff Kolb who is the Butler/Grundy Economic Developer to become Home Base Iowa Communities. Grundy County

is a Home Base Iowa Community. Butler County is still working on getting approved. Bremer County is still working on incentive package.

6. Priority of Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) established a priority requirement for some funding sources, particularly WIOA Title 1b Adult, to provide individualized career services or training services. Within Title 1b, local areas must give priority regardless of the amount of funding available. Within Region 7, we have increased our priority of service outreach and as a result our program enrollment numbers with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries have increased. In PY18 alone, our LWDB area served 81 individuals who met this priority status. These individuals received individualized career and training services.

Completed By

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