

REGION 10 PY18 ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

Region 10, covering the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metropolitan areas, continues to strive for increased levels of integration between the four core partners, with enhanced outcomes for both job seekers and businesses. The business team has continued to refine some of its signature services, including the work ready referral process, which focuses on providing intensive job search assistance to those candidates deemed work ready and highly motivated to be re-employed. This program has resulted in several successful placements over the course of the year, with referrals coming from a variety of sources to include core partners. The workshop called Re-Connect, featuring an employer panel and job seekers (over 30 on average) learning about opportunities within the six active sector boards (Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Finance/Customer Service, IT, Transportation, and Architecture/Construction/Engineering), has been very popular.

A key highlight from this past year is the coordination of training, referrals and co-enrollments between the four core WIOA programs in the region. Our team makes an effort to get to know each other, coordinates professional development, builds relationships at a case manager level and works to connect customers with all needed services.

Regional Snapshot

Region 10 covers seven counties, including Linn, Jones, Benton, Iowa, Cedar, Johnson, and Washington. Region 10 has two IowaWORKS offices, with the one-stop office located at 4444 1st Ave NE (Lindale Mall) and satellite office located at 1700 S 1st Ave within Eastdale Plaza. The Cedar Rapids IowaWORKS office is represented by all four core partners, with HiSET and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS) being co-located. In addition, AARP and Job Corp is also offered within the center. Both centers have on-site PROMISE JOBS staff. In Iowa City, (IVRS) is next door to the IowaWORKS office.

In both locations, Titles 1,3, and 4 meet on Wednesdays for all staff meetings, covering topics that are applicable to all. In addition, core partner leadership meets monthly to plan events, review and develop policy, and strategize ways to increase collaboration. All four core partners participate in two in-service training days throughout the year, planned by the WIOA leadership.

The region has six sector board covering Transportation, Advanced Manufacturing, Business & IT, Customer Service & Financial Services, Architecture, Construction & Engineering and Health Care. WIOA partners participate in board meetings and events to meet the needs of employers and connect workers with in demand careers.

Some of the largest industries in the Region 10 area includes government, manufacturing, healthcare & social assistance, retail, transportation & warehouse, construction and finance & insurance. The largest employers in the region include: Collins Aerospace, University of Iowa, Transamerica, Whirlpool, Nordstrom Direct, ACT, Pearson, Proctor & Gamble, Quaker Oats and General Mills.

Unemployment rates have been steady to declining throughout the region. Below shows the September 2018 rates as compared to the September 2019 rates. We continue to hear from employers that they struggle to find workers and qualified workers to apply for positions. The unemployment rate has remained stable, and very low over the past year. It is in line with the state of Iowa rate, and 1.2 points lower than then the national unemployment rate.

Iowa Region 10 Unemployment Trend		
County	September 2018	September 2019
United States	3.6	3.3
Iowa	2.1	2.2
Region 10	2.1	2.1

Regional Initiatives and Partnerships

The Opportunity Center at Ladd Library officially opened in February 2019. This center is located on the southwest side of Cedar Rapids, where there is a desert of social service providers, and where the majority of low income families reside. The IowaWORKS office in Cedar Rapids is on the northeast side of town. Spring of 2019 IowaWORKS staff began providing itinerant services to individuals ½ day per week at the Opportunity Center. Workshops were also offered at the center. Beginning in August 2019, the team added an additional full day and is scheduling more workshops on soft skill development at the center. By having staff available 1 ½ days per week on the other side of town we are more accessible to job seekers in the Cedar Rapids area who may have difficulty with transportation.

With technical assistance from Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), Region 10 IowaWORKS and Iowa Department for the Blind is creating a pilot project regarding registered apprenticeships for the blind. Representatives from Title 1, title 3, and title 4 participate in monthly Google hangouts to develop a road map for the pilot. The road map lays out the candidate referral process and engagement of businesses whether a current registered apprenticeship exists or one needs to be developed. Region 10 was selected due to the close relationship between IowaWORKS and IDB, with the plan for this to be replicated and expanded

throughout the state. This pilot is still in the development stage, with a few candidates identified, however no hires have occurred yet.

ICR Iowa, the regional economic development organization serving the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids (ICR) metro, has led efforts in the area of diversity and inclusion by creating Inclusive ICR. This group offers a forum for Diversity and Inclusion professionals in the area, and replaced the Employer Resource Group Consortium (ERGC). ICR Iowa has also created ICR Future, focusing on the next generation of workforce. This group is a coalition of schools, organizations, and employers working together to develop the future workforce in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. IowaWORKS participates in both groups, resulting in a variety of networking opportunities in the community.

ICR Iowa has also partnered with Kirkwood Community College and IowaWORKS to address the needs of employers in the region through the creation of ICR Solutions. This group developed a Workforce Solutions team that meets with employers facing a variety of workforce issues and develop strategic solutions in a collaborative way. The intent of this strategy is to reduce duplication of services and meetings with employers while leveraging resources to address the problems identified.

A Future Ready Iowa Summit was held in Cedar Rapids on 11/13/18 with over 160 businesses, community providers, and educators in attendance. The summit promoted the Governor's initiative, addressing the middle skill gap that Iowa faces. The initiative set a goal of 70% of Iowans to obtain a post secondary credential beyond a high school diploma by 2025. The summit reviewed the legislation and proposed funding to support the initiative, included small group discussions, and workforce panels promoting hiring underutilized populations.

Region 10 is a leader in the state of Iowa in the area of business led sector boards. Currently, there are active sector boards in Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, IT, Transportation, Customer Service/Finance, and Architecture/Construction/Technology (ACE). As stated above, these sector boards are business led, with chairs and co-chairs selected through a voting process. Each sector board has an assigned facilitator that helps organize the board's goals, meeting dates, agendas, etc. While each sector board has their own specific goals developed based on business feedback, boards share common goals of attracting the available workforce and educating the future workforce on career pathway opportunities. The four core partners (title 1-4) have representatives that participate in each of the six sector boards.

Employer Services and Business Engagement

The business engagement team is comprised of staff from title 3 and title 4, with plans to integrate title 1 and title 2 in early 2020. The business team meets bi-weekly to coordinate small and large scale recruitment events, business seminars, plan co-business visits, etc. This integrated approach to solving business needs has reduced duplication, enhanced outcomes,

and created a strong partnership with shared vision of service delivery. When co-visits are not possible, the business engagement team is able to share program information for each other when visiting with a business.

Region 10 has been a leader in the state of Iowa regarding placement of work ready customers through its work ready referral process. The business engagement team developed a Google form that is used by all four core partners when working with a customer deemed work ready. This Google form gathers the necessary information, including a resume, for the recruitment and placement staff (within the business engagement team) to reach out to the customer. With this program, work ready customers are assisted individually with an expectation to be highly engaged. The recruitment and placement staff collaborate with the customer to identify businesses that have openings they would be interested in, then contact the business on their behalf. The intent is to help job seekers overcome their barriers to employment by identifying their needs on an individual basis and help them obtain employment to regain self sufficiency. This approach to assisting work ready customers has been very successful, resulting in many placements over the past programmatic year.

The Business Engagement team coordinates a monthly business panel called Re-Connect: Careers and Conversations, which represents all 6 active sector boards in the region. These sectors include Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, Information Technology, Customer Service/Finance, Transportation, and Architecture/Construction/Technology (ACE). Participating businesses share employment opportunities both within their company as well as within the industry sector as a whole. During the 2nd half of the event, job seekers are able to visit individually with each business to learn more.

Four Oaks' TotalChild has worked with over 1200 children ages 3-18 since 2011, to hurdle all obstacles to success; making stronger families and placing them in safer homes and neighborhoods. Four Oaks, Kirkwood Community College, Iowa Workforce Development and Cedar Rapids Community School District came together and determined that we must now go further. Employers in the community are facing significant workforce shortages, and the TotalChild youth program could be part of the solution to those employment gaps. This led to the formation of TotalChild 2.0. TotalChild 2.0 can help these youth make a successful transition to adulthood, by supporting them to achieve their high school graduation and post-high school education/training goals, with the objective to reach employment with a livable wage by age 26. This team developed job shadows for 37 youths, expanding their knowledge of local in-demand careers.

Promising Practices and Success Stories

1. Rapid Response

In February 2018, Proctor and Gamble (P&G) announced the closing of their hair care/beauty care portion of their operations and relocating it to West Virginia sometime in 2020. Since the announcement, IowaWORKS has worked closely with P&G leadership to offer initial mini rapid response worker information meetings to help assure impacted workers that there will be on-going support as their layoff approached. In addition, IowaWORKS has provided on-site re-employment workshops, coordinated internal tours for businesses interested in eventually hiring the impacted workers, and planning a job fair as the closure date becomes more known. P&G has expressed their appreciation for the assistance they have been given to help their workers during this long transition, since a 2 year notice was given.

Below is a success story of a participant who was served through Rapid Response services and then moved into additional services at the American Job Center.

Sylvia originally met with staff at a rapid response event at DB Schenker in West Branch. After the meeting Sylvia discussed being interested in various forms of training. Sylvia was interested in becoming a Medical Assistant. Staff suggested stopping in to go over the requirements of the Medical Assistant program as well as the Adult and Dislocated Worker program. Sylvia met with staff and staff helped Sylvia plan out things she would need to do to get into the Medical Assistant program and a timeline on when she should enroll for Adult services.

Almost a year later Sylvia met with a title one rep in Iowa City to discuss her goals. Sylvia was receiving food assistance and also receiving unemployment benefits. Sylvia completed all of the needed requirements for WIOA and was enrolled in the Adult program. Sylvia was assisted with tuition, book money, fuel reimbursement. Sylvia did very well in her training and when the time came that her unemployment was going to run out her case manager referred her to Training Extension Benefits. She was ultimately approved for additional weeks of unemployment assistance. This benefited her household greatly as Sylvia's spouse was working to support her and five dependent children. Sylvia was able to obtain other grants and scholarships along with WIOA support to go to school with no unmet need. She completed her training in August 2019. Staff assisted Sylvia with her resume and job search strategies. After much work Sylvia began working as a Medical Assistant at the Iowa River Landing, University of Iowa location in November 2019.

2. Registered Apprenticeship

A promising practice regarding registered apprenticeship in region 10 is the collaboration between IowaWORKS and Kirkwood Community College. Kirkwood and IowaWORKS have worked closely together to create new registered apprenticeship programs in in-demand occupations including CNA and Construction Technology. Additional programs are being pursued in Press Brake Operator and Information Technology. When developing new apprenticeship programs, local businesses are invited to participate and influence curriculum to

ensure skills taught are in-line with their needs. In addition, participating businesses commit to hiring students entering into the apprenticeship program. The decision to create a new registered apprenticeship program relies on business interest to participate.

The Business Engagement Team collaborated with an organization called “Build A Life”, to organize their first job fair with the goal of introducing a variety of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to their diverse members who are socio-economically challenged, facing various barriers to employment. The event was held at the African American Museum on October 11, 2018 where participating sponsors included the Laborers Union, the Bricklayers, the Carpenters and the Industrial Welders. One of the job seekers, Martin, was new to the area from California where he worked as a cement finisher supervisor for a number of years. Martin brought his resume and engaged with all the sponsors. The Business Engagement team saw him 2 weeks later at the Laborers Local where he had been hired. Martin had completed his cement finish work at the training center as a demonstration of his craftsmanship. The Labor’s local let us know he was hired by one of the participating sponsors shortly after completing his initial training.

3. Offender Re-Entry

IowaWORKS and the 6th Judicial Department of Corrections collaborated to host a 2nd chance job fair at the Nelson/Hinzman Center on 4/23/19 with 16 businesses and over 70 job seekers attending. This event was very successful with several job seekers offered employment. As a result, there are plans to host a similar event in April 2020.

Leadership attends the quarterly 6th Judicial District partner meetings representing WIOA workforce services. In addition, a presentation was made to probation and parole officers sharing information on all IowaWORKS services.

The IowaWORKS team, in partnership with the 6th Judicial District, completing weekly workshops targeting returning citizens. Attendees develop resumes and get registered within the IowaWORKS system. We have helped over 125 individuals at these workshops this past year and successfully connected participants with other more intensive services.

In partnership with Iowa Legal Aid, Linn County Board of Supervisors, Sixth Judicial, and other regional organizations including IowaWORKS, an Expungement and Employment Barriers Resource Clinic, was hosted this past year. These clinics alleviate individuals of the inextricably linked burdens of incarceration, unemployment, poverty and loss of basic rights. Clients received legal assistance for issues related to expungement and court debt among others. The hope is to provide clients with a comprehensive suite of services and assistance on that day. Approximately 130 individuals were served.

4. Serving Customers with Disabilities

The four WIOA Titles 1-4 congregate all staff together twice a year to network, and learn about each others services. This past year the inservice activities focused on learning more about how to best serve individuals with disabilities. We hosted a session where staff learned about the Iowa Department for the Blind, resources available to the blind or low vision population and what types of visual impairments participants may experience. Another session was focused on learning more about the hearing impaired community as well as the resources available to this group via Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation. Both sessions really increased staff members awareness of partner services, activities and populations served, and started partnerships to increase co-enrollments between partners.

Lucas is a client of IVRS in Iowa City and was referred to the IowaWORKS Business Engagement team to assist him in connecting to businesses. Lucas was a recent Kirkwood graduate looking for a career opportunity in Advanced Manufacturing. IowaWORKS arranged a tour at Centro, which IVRS counselor also attended. While at the meeting, the team discussed Lucas and his situation. Centro agreed to do a "on the job training" which IVRS funded so that Lucas could try out the different positions and Centro could see his abilities as well. After the training was complete Centro was excited to offer Lucas a full time position with benefits which Lucas graciously accepted.

5. Veteran Services

Ron is a Veteran who worked with Jeff Fischer (DVOP) because he suffered an on-the-job medical injury that prevented him to continue his career as a Truck Driving instructor/Truck Driver. Ron wanted to change careers and needed training so Jeff made a referral to Title I WIOA Adult/DW services and began working with Norma. She quickly learned that Ron is one of those clients who has a vision for his future and takes the steps to make it happen. Ron was approved for training assistance to start the "Computer User Support Specialist" program at Kirkwood Community College. He was a successful student with his academia AND he also earned the "Business Information Technology Outstanding Student for the 2018 year" award. After graduation, Ron was hired full-time at GreatAmerica Financial Services (and is still there as of 10/21/19).

6. Priority of Services

Region 10 follows the priority of service for veterans policy with the state and local plan. We have fortunately not had a wait list this past year for tuition assistance. We also have established priority within our adult population ensuring we are serving the most in need. This WIOA priority is established in state policy and our local plan as well. Below are some examples of successes we have had serving low income adults as well as at-risk low income youth participants.

Earnest stopped into Iowa Works after hearing from a friend that he can receive services for training and employment. Earnest met with an advisor to begin the process. During initial

meetings Earnest discussed barriers such as sporadic work history and a felony on his background. Earnest spent time discussing behaviors that led to these issues and changes he has made in his life to overcome them. Earnest was receiving food assistance so he qualified for the WIOA Adult program. He completed navigating your journeys, earned a SILVER National Career Readiness Certificate, obtained his class a cdl permit as well as other program requirements. Title one staff enrolled Earnest in the ADULT program to assist with Kirkwood Community College's Class A CDL training program 6/24/2019-7/19/2019. Earnest received assistance with tuition, the required Department of Transportation drug test and physical, and fuel reimbursement. Earnest excelled in the class and each week reported to his case manager all of the things he was learning. Earnest completed his training program. He met with staff to tailor his resume for the positions he was applying for. He landed a full time position as a tractor-trailer driver at On Track of Illinois earning .40 cents per mile along with full benefits on 8/19/2019. He is employed there to this day.

Jodie enrolled into the WIOA Youth Program in February 2018. She was referred by her boyfriend who was also enrolled in the program. During the past year and a half, she has worked with her case worker on education and employment. She wanted to complete C.N.A. training. Due to some additional needs, worker referred her to and then helped her co-enroll into a state funded job training program called PACE. During her training, WIOA was able to assist her with transportation supports and additional encouragement along the way. She successfully completed her C.N.A. training and is currently working full time! As Jodie continues her employment, she will be starting additional training in healthcare, with the support of her WIOA youth team.

Tonya is a single mother who dropped out of High School to work and raise her son. She struggled with making ends meet to be able to provide for her son. She had been an alcoholic for several years and was determined to change her life. She had stopped drinking and knew she needed to finish High School to be a role model for her son. She enrolled at Kirkwood's High School Completion program (Title 2 program) which is where she actively engaged with the Creating Futures WIOA Youth Program. We were able to assist her and motivate her to finish High School and not give up. She successfully finished her HiSET, obtained new employment where just recently she was promoted to General Manager. She continues to work a lot of hours but loves what she does and is very motivating to others on social media to not allow barriers to prevent you from moving forward.

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