

REGION 5 PY18 ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

Region 5 IowaWORKS has made a concerted effort toward making connections in the area communities and providing them with knowledge of what our center and partners offer. This year we held several events to meet this goal, such as: Future Ready Iowa (FRI) Summit, the LINK program, Iowa Central Part-time Employment Job Fair, Fort Dodge Correctional Facility Resource Fair, Registered Apprenticeship Summit, National Librarian's Day Open House, and several employer presentations. With the National unemployment rate at the lowest it had been in the past 50 years, Region 5 of Iowa fell even lower at 3.25% at its highest average in fiscal year 2018. This low unemployment rate made it difficult for the regions employers to find qualified candidates for their open positions and had made it pertinent to form stronger connections within the community to address our employment shortages.

Regional Snapshot

Region 5 covers the counties of Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright. Within this region are two American Job Centers, an IowaWorks Office at 3 Triton Circle, Fort Dodge, Iowa and an IowaWORKS Expansion Office housed within Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (UDMO) at 1610 Collins St, Webster City, IA. Fort Dodge is open Monday through Friday while Webster City is open on Thursdays.

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

- Title I (Adult & Dislocated Worker)
 - One full time staff member
 - Title I (Youth) is located offsite, however a representative is available to come to the Fort Dodge center whenever needed and has been in the office on a regular basis on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Title III (Wagner Peyser)
 - Two full time and one part time PROMISE JOBS staff members
 - One part time Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program staff member
 - Five 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.
 - One staff member off-site at the North Central Correctional Facility providing re-entry services
- Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation)
 - Six full time staff members
- SCSEP (Elderbridge & National Able)
 - Elderbridge - One staff person comes to the center on a part-time basis
 - National Able - One full time and one part time staff person

The Webster City location is within the UDMO office and does not consist of co-located partners. One staff member from the Fort Dodge Office provides services at this location one day a week (Thursdays) and provides referrals and information about partner services.

Region 5 served 3,322 individuals and provided 537 business services. Unemployment was at an average low in November 2018 at 1.85% and an average high in January 2019 at 3.25%.

Regional Initiatives and Partnerships

- For National Manufacturing Day, the partners worked with four local businesses and the intermediary from Iowa Central Community College, who works with the high schools, and lined up tours. There were over 50 students that attended tours either in the Fort Dodge area or Laurens. With this opportunity, many students learned about local industries that were in their backyard and had never heard of or toured.
- A Reverse Job Fair was held at Fort Dodge High School in partnership with the Workforce Committee of Fort Dodge which consists of members from Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge Growth Alliance, St Edmond High School, Fort Dodge Community School, Iowa State University, IVRS and several local businesses. The Reverse Job Fair was held to target groups with significant barriers to employment from Juniors and Seniors at Fort Dodge Senior High and St Edmond Catholic School. The 17 students set up their table displays with pictures of them learning new skills, words to describe their character and printed resumes to hand to the businesses.
- IowaWORKs has collaborated with Fort Dodge Correctional Facility & Residential Correctional Facility where staff teach Life Skills classes to prepare offenders for finding employment upon their release. Resumes are critiqued and referrals are made to partner services to aid in their career paths.
- Region 5 participated in The Link program which is a partnership with the Fort Dodge Middle School and local businesses. Team members went into the 5th grade classrooms four times a year to explain programs that are available and high demand occupations. The goal was to engage student thinking and increase awareness of careers and what their educational journey may look like when they get into high school.
- Actively attend Human Service Provider meetings in Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, and Wright counties to share information about IowaWorks programs and services and gain knowledge of community resources that can be utilized by the clientele we serve.
- Continued partnership with the USERRA and local Military organizations in the region such as County Veterans Affairs and local Military bases.

Employer Services and Business Engagement

Region 5 has been driven this year to connect with new employers and renew our presence and knowledge of our services with existing employers that we have served. The Business Services Team set a goal to extend our outreach to by meeting a minimum of 20 employers per week and provide information and extend our services. Below is a summary of activities that were performed in this program year.

- Future Ready Iowa Summit - Events were held around the state with Region 5's taking place on October 1st in Fort Dodge. The goal was to initiate discussion and networking within the region that would begin the foundation for creating a Future Ready Iowa by upskilling Iowans to fill the job gaps that employers are experiencing. Approximately 100 employers, educators, community agencies and community members were present.
- Registered Apprenticeship Summit - Employers were invited to the IowaWORKS Office on April 15th to learn the in's and out's of Registered Apprenticeships and were able to meet with Business Marketing Specialists one-on-one to discuss their unique employment needs and how this could be applied.
- National Librarian's Day Open House - invited librarians from all Region 5 counties to learn about the services that would encompass the needs that they see from the
- Employer Meet & Greets - the IowaWORKS office held regular events to introduce job seekers to employers that provide them with an open interview opportunity and provided the employers with a new way to find skilled labor. Several employers have taken advantage of this option and in turn has driven many individuals in the community to utilize center services.
- The Re-Entry program presented on the benefits of Registered Apprenticeships for Incarcerated Individuals and ways those employers can utilize this untapped candidate pool to the North Central Correctional Facility Director of Corrections, Board of Parole in Des Moines, National Industries Correctional Association Conference.

Promising Practices and Success Stories

1. Rapid Response

Region 5 coordinated a Rapid Response events this past year for Shopko that closed in three local towns. With this, regional partners came together to hold meetings for employees that were affected. With information that was presented, the employees were grateful to learn about all the services available to them and did end up stopping into the IowaWORKS center to access the resources that were available to them. Meetings were also held for Misty Harbor, VeroBlue Farms, and K-Mart. Each employer was appreciative of the services and flexibility the partners had when setting up these meetings and effort given to transition existing employees toward new job opportunities. With different shifts in the manufacturing industry, meetings were held at various times during the day to meet the needs of the employees.

2. Registered Apprenticeship

To generate employer awareness of Registered Apprenticeships, a Registered Apprenticeship Summit was held this past April. There were 13 regional employers that attended the event where they learned about what a Registered Apprenticeship are, funding options that could be taken advantage of, training plans, and how IowaWORKS could provide the assistance needed with its development and connection to apprentices. This led to several employers looking to take the next steps to creating a Registered

Apprenticeship of their own. Now that awareness has been created, we are looking toward creating a workshop that employers can attend being their program desires to actualization with the assistance of the Business Marketing Specialist team.

3. Offender Re-Entry

Re-Entry Program focused efforts of connecting employers to returning citizens through individual and virtual job fairs with Hy-Vee, Vermeer, Iowa Lakes Regional Water, Jensen Builders, Iowa Restaurant Assn., Transco Railway, United Way of Central Iowa, and Prestage Foods as a way for employers to utilize untapped labor pools and reduce recidivism.

4. Serving Customers with Disabilities

Region 5 evaluated the requirements and resources needed to operate the Ticket to Work Program and accordingly ended its contract with Goodwill as the fiscal agent as this program was able to be run in house. Due to this change, all incentive funds accumulated for this program was able to be applied back toward the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Resource and informational materials were moved to a more centralized location of the office to provide ease of access. Disability services were better defined for staff and an improved referral process created to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Ticket to Work.

Youth Career Advisors attend IEP meetings with youth participants at the high school. This helps them to partner with parents and connect them with mental health and disability services in the area for their young adult children.

5. Veteran Services

Region 5 has a DVOP (Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist) located within the One Stop office on a part-time basis to provide services to veterans that qualify based upon barriers to employment specifically listed within US Code Title 38 Chapter 21, Sub-Section 4103A.

Each quarter, the region has a Veteran Event and this fiscal year they consisted of:

- Veteran Resource Meeting - Meeting that consisted of One Stop partners, Veteran partner organizations and other Veteran service providers at our IowaWORKS Center. This meeting allowed partner agencies to identify resources within our region and Rincrease the amount of referrals provided to our center and improve the services available to veterans in need.
- Veterans Day Event at Hy-Vee - Table was set up to meet with veterans coming into Hy-Vee for the Veteran's Day Breakfast. Information was provided on specialized veteran services and IowaWORKS center services.
- Happy Holiday Card Mailing - Staff created and signed Happy Holidays cards and sent them to all active veterans in the region that utilized IowaWORKS services. The cards

thanked them for their service and let them know we are here for any of their employment needs. Many veterans re-engaged with the center for additional services.

- Veterans Open House - Veterans were invited to the IowaWORKS office to meet with new DVOP, enjoy treats, door prizes, and learn about specialized services.

Region 5 utilized an integrated resource team of partners that identified at least one veteran who is having difficulties finding employment and collectively determined how to aid the Veteran in a combined effort from a multi-direction standpoint.

Center staff encourage all Veterans to register on the Home Base Iowa (HBI) website and upload a resume within the site. The Region 5 office created an HBI tracking matrix to identify and maintain all HBI personnel seeking employment.

6. Priority of Services

When clients register for services, within the local office or by Internet, they self-disclose on their Veteran status. When at the local office, center staff are asked if they are a veteran or a spouse of veteran, if so they are thanked for their service and/or support and are given a packet of information including both center and Veterans services. All services offered are given priority to veterans/covered persons, which means they are served first before other individuals who are seeking services at that time.

The DVOP serves only those Veterans who are aged 18-24 (as allowed in VPL 04-14/TEGL 20-13) or who have Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) as defined in VPL 03-14/TEGL 19-13 or is the caregiver or family caregiver of an eligible Veteran as defined in VPL 08-14. If a Veteran is assessed to meet the eligibility of working with a DVOP, a referral is made.

Angela

Angela was born with cerebral palsy. She began working with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the WIOA Youth Program during high school. These programs were able to assist her with college exploration, financial planning for school, and provided tools to be a successful student. Shortly after enrolling in classes at Iowa Central Community College, she transitioned from the WIOA Youth Program into the WIOA Adult Program and continued enrollment in IVRS. In collaboration, these programs were able to help Angela with some of the costs of her education and provided extra support during her time as a student. After graduating from Iowa Central Community College with her Associate's Degree, Angela transferred to Buena Vista University's Fort Dodge campus to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. Through it all, WIOA and IVRS were still there to cheer her on. Today, Angela has successfully earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, as well as a teaching license with endorsements in reading and special education. She is currently a substitute teacher for the Fort Dodge Community School District and is hoping to secure a full time teaching position in the near future.

Ricky

Ricky was referred the Youth Employment program in Fort Dodge back in 2016. At the time, Ricky was 15 and attending high school. Ricky was being raised by his mother and had little

motivation to attend school or find employment. Ricky didn't know what he wanted to do once he graduated but he did know that he wanted to get his High School Diploma and graduate with his class. Ricky struggled with his grades in high school and needed reminders to get his work done and turned in. His Youth Career Advisor worked with him on raising his grades and provided tutoring. Ricky continued to be unmotivated and felt that he was too young to work. Ricky was more interested in staying home and playing video games. With encouragement from his Youth Career Advisor, Ricky changed his mind and began to apply to jobs on his own. Due to his lack of job skills Ricky did not get any calls back and did not find employment. In May of 2018, we discussed with Ricky the possibility of a work experience to assist him in learning job skills that he would need to be successful in the workforce. We discussed different places that were willing to give him a work experience and Ricky started his work experience in June of 2018 at The General Store.

Ricky was working about 20 hours a week and overall was gaining the skills he needed to do well but then his grades began to slip. His Youth Career Advisor in cooperation with the employer, had Ricky stop working until he could get his grades back up as his education was our number one priority. Ricky was able to bring all his grades up within a month and was able to start working again. He was very motivated after earning a few paychecks. During this time at The General Store Ricky gained skills and began to improve drastically. He was on time, learned to work with a team and took initiative on the job.

Before his work experience ended, his Youth Career Advisor worked with Ricky to apply to other places in the community for unsubsidized employment. The Youth program helped him obtain appropriate job interview clothes and helped him with mock interviews. At the beginning of March 2019, Ricky completed his work experience and was hopeful that he would locate employment soon. During this time of not working, it was discovered that Ricky had to pass all his current classes in order for him to graduate on time with his class. His Youth Advisor attended a meeting with Ricky and his mother at the school to see what would need to be done. Ricky got an interview with Wendy's that went very well, and he began working at Wendy's on April 17th. Ricky was very excited to locate employment on his own and was excited to start. Ricky continued to work part time and attending school full time.

In June 2019, Ricky was able to pass all of his classes and graduate with his class! Shortly after Ricky got a raise at his job at Wendy's for how well he was doing and was up to working 30 hours per week. Ricky was learning to budget his money and was assisting his mother in paying his bills. Ricky has come a long way since he walked in the door in 2016 and we could not be prouder of him!

Shellie

Shellie was determined to return to the workforce, but was not sure where to start. Feeling low on training and recent work experience, she turned to the Career Navigators to upgrade her skills. After collecting SSDI for almost 3 years, Shellie had finally gotten her health stabilized. Through conversation and assessments, Shellie discovered her passion for truck driving. She was approved for GAP, which sponsored her tuition for the CDL program at Iowa Central Community College. Her Navigator also connected her to the Ticket to Work program, to help guide her transition from being on SSDI to receiving a stable income. After completing her

training, she was hired by New Coop. She is thrilled to return to the workforce in a career she has always dreamt about.

Joshua

Joshua was first brought to the Fort Dodge IowaWORKS center as a referral from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation. Josh first worked on polishing his resume and discussed workshops that would assist him in becoming job ready. Josh was referred to DVOP on his first day at the center due to his service related disabilities and to WIOA due to his interest in returning to school to complete his AA. IowaWORKS staff, discussed the benefits of Home Base Iowa and once his resume was completed, assisted with the registration to HBI.

Josh continued to stay in contact with center staff either by phone, email or in person every day over the following month. On September 12th Josh advised that he had been contacted for an interview with Renewable Energy Group (REG) and was found through the HBI website. Once the interview was completed, he reported back that he felt the interview went very well. A day later Josh was asked for a 2nd interview. Minutes after he sent his thank you's he received a request for a 3rd interview. At the same time Josh was receiving multiple interview requests from REG, he was receiving other interview requests from businesses in Spirit Lake, Algona & Fort Dodge. On September 21st he advised that he had been offered a position at REG along with 4 other offers; all offers were made by employer sponsors of Home Base Iowa! Josh relayed how impressed he was with HBI and how thankful he was for the website, the sponsors and everyone's assistance throughout his job search. Through careful consideration he accepted and was excited to begin his new career with REG in October 2018.

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