

# REGION 16 PY18 ANNUAL REPORT

## Executive Summary

PY18 was a year of major advancement and meaningful change with significant staff changes, new initiatives and overall expansion in our community. We continue to work together with our core and required partners as well as several other local entities in order to educate and build our existing and future workforce. We rounded out the program year with the transition to IowaWORKS and adapting to new policy and procedures. Fortunately, registration numbers now more accurately reflect the growing number of customers we serve on a daily basis.

## Regional Snapshot

Region 16 includes Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties, with the One-Stop America's Job Center being located in Burlington (Des Moines county). Region 16 is in the process of relocating the AJC to the Westland Mall, which would put it in West Burlington approximately 2.5 miles west of the current location. The Burlington AJC houses Title I, Title III (including Promise Jobs) and Title IV full time, and has a representative from Title II on site four days a week. Title I case managers also visit the AEL (Title II) classroom weekly in order to perform outreach. With Southeastern Community College being the Title I Service Provider, all core partners are also able to serve customers in the outlying counties by utilizing the SCC campuses in Mt. Pleasant and Keokuk. SCC is also remodeling a location in Fort Madison which will be able to house AJC services in the near future; however, we currently utilize two temporary locations for provision of AJC services. Louisa county does not currently have a designated spot for services to be offered, so we meet with individuals on a referral and appointment basis.

Region 16 has ten full time and two-part time Title I employees. One Adult/DW and one Youth Career Planner are based out of Lee county. One Adult/DW and one Youth Career Planner are based out of Henry county. One Adult and two Youth Career Planners are based out of Des Moines county and a Youth Career Planner also covers Louisa county schools and youth referrals. One of the part time employees works only with customers utilizing the center computers as a Greeter or in Exploratory. The other part time employee serves as a liaison between our AJC and the Burlington Residential Correctional Facility.

The region is also served by 28 state employees. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has ten counselors and three support staff who assist persons with disabilities on their journey to employment. Iowa Department for the Blind has one counselor who assists visually impaired persons in the region with their employment needs. The remaining 14 full-time staff are from Iowa Workforce Development. Five are with the PROMISE JOBS program, which assists individuals receiving TANF benefits as they transition to self-sufficiency. The region has one

DVOP Career Planner, who works with disabled veterans and veterans who have significant barriers to employment. The region also has one Re-Entry Career Planner who is housed full-time inside the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility. He provides group and individualized pre-employment services to incarcerated persons who are within six months of release. Region 16 is fortunate to have one dedicated Business Marketing Specialist. She helps to maintain the connection between IowaWORKS and area businesses, so they are aware of all the things IowaWORKS has to offer them. The last six Career Planners provide Wagner Peyser and Unemployment assistance to persons residing in Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa Counties.

Region 16 staff from all of the Core Partners work extremely well together to provide the highest level of services to the customers.

## Regional Initiatives and Partnerships

The Region 16 Core Partners have been working hard to strengthen our existing partnerships in order to meet our local and state initiatives and to better serve our customer base. One area in which this has been demonstrated is increased partnerships and activities in the local community school districts. We partnered with Lee County's 12+ Program in order to expose students to high demand career pathways, introduce them to local industry leaders and have them solve real world problems.

Title I and III have also partnered to provide several work readiness classes and career pathway information in the local high schools. Some of the classes taught are: True Colors, Bring Your A Game to Work, Effective Elevator Speeches, Sole Survivor, How Much Will My Life Cost, Applications, Resumes and Cover Letters.

Region 16 Youth Team worked with Burlington Community School District to build a transition team for students in the process of dropping out. The purpose is to re-engage the student immediately to get them into an educational program that fits their needs and/or assisting them with employment. Along with that, we also worked with Bridges Out of Poverty and West Burlington High School to assist with two additional alternative high school programs.

Furthermore, Region 16 partnered with the Iowa Army National Guard and local organized labor to host a Trade Expo at the Middletown Armory in February of 2019. IowaWORKS staff were part of a shared presentation with the Iowa Army National Guard regarding labor market information, careers in trades and registered apprenticeships.

Region 16 also partnered with the Iowa Army National Guard on their annual Fitness Camp. The ING hosts hundreds of high school students from area schools for one week each June. The students are challenged physically and mentally during this week. In addition, students have the opportunity to learn from an IowaWORKS representative what services can be provided to them. Region 16 continues to partner with the ING and Southeastern Community College on the E3 program (Enlist, Educate, Employ). The ING enlists, Southeastern Community College educates and IowaWORKS assists with employment.

Another area of growth in PY18 was staff development. Team members in Region 16 took part in many program specific trainings as well as several Geo Solutions trainings in order to make the transition as smooth as possible. The region focused on Disability Awareness trainings as well. The October 2018 staff in-service was heavily focused on this topic. Team members at this event took part in a “Hearing Voices” simulation where they were able to gain a better understanding of what a person who hears voices or has other psychological disabilities might go through.

Finally, Employers Council of Iowa Events were held in three of the four counties in Region 16. Topics covered included Labor Market Information, Registered Apprenticeships, and Recruitment and Retention Strategies.

## Employer Services and Business Engagement

IowaWORKS continues to focus on providing excellent Business Services, as evident by the on-going efforts of the Integrated Business Services Team (IBST). The primary focus of the IBST continues to be the comprehensive service delivery to our internal and external business customers. Region 16 hosted 72 targeted career fairs held at the Burlington IowaWORKS Center. On May 30th, 2019 Region 16 Core Partners coordinated with the Iowa National Guard to plan and execute the 2019 Southeast Iowa Regional Job Fair, featuring over 40 businesses and over 20 Service Agencies from varying industry sectors. In attendance were 200+ job seekers, including current incarcerated individuals from the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility. Additionally, Region 16 assisted with the planning and coordination of the following events:

- Fall & Spring Career Fairs at the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility for Returning Citizens

- Spring Jobs Tour in Mt. Pleasant

- 1 Future Ready Iowa Summits; 100 + Stakeholders in attendance

- Provided Rapid Response Services to 5 area businesses & affected employees

Documented business outreach conducted by the Business Marketing Specialist was made to 399 business partners with an additional 428 new job order contacts, averaging over 15.9 business contacts per week, not including contacts made by other non-business services staff.

Business outreach in PY18 has been centered around the development of registered apprenticeship programs, the recruitment of veterans to Iowa through the Home Base Iowa program; and assistance of skills development within the Region 16 school districts. All of these initiatives have focused on addressing Iowa’s skills gaps and the recruitment/retention of current and future employees.

## Promising Practices and Success Stories

### 1. Rapid Response

Region 16 had some business closures in PY18 and provided Rapid Response services, coordinated with the State Trade staff to provide TAA services when applicable, and many effected individuals were enrolled in AJC programs. We held 12 different Rapid Response sessions with 5 different employers including: Shopko, Lamont, Siemen's Dresser Rand and Younkers.

### 2. Registered Apprenticeship

PY18 was an exciting year for registered apprenticeships in the region. We saw the development of our first quality pre-apprenticeship at Keokuk Community High School. The development of this program was a collaborative effort between Keokuk High School, IowaWORKS and Lee County Economic Development. During this same year, Region 16 had our first Registered Apprenticeship developed, as well. IowaWORKS assisted Jabil Packaging Solutions in creating a Plastics Process Technician registered apprenticeship and then filling the apprentice opening with a current Jabil employee. Additionally, Region 16 assisted with filling 2 other regional apprentice openings during PY18.

On June 20, 2019, IowaWORKS held a Future Ready Iowa/Registered Apprenticeship event at the Iowa National Guard Armory in Mt. Pleasant. Local businesses were invited to send one to two job descriptions to IowaWORKS prior to attending the event so sample registered apprenticeship work processes could be drafted. At the event, businesses attended 3 breakout sessions. One was an individual session between an IowaWORKS staff member and a business to discuss the specific work processes prepared for their company, along with a detailed description of the next steps needed to develop a registered apprenticeship for their business. Another session focused on funding streams available to assist employers with Related Training Instruction needed for a registered apprenticeship. The final session provided information on recruitment services provided by IowaWORKS. It gave businesses information on how IowaWORKS could be utilized to find apprentices to fill open positions. Four local businesses attended the event. After attending, 3 businesses expressed their desire to move forward with creating a program. At the present time, 2 of these businesses are heavily involved in moving that effort forward. Both businesses attribute the June 20<sup>th</sup> event as their motivation for moving forward and have expressed their appreciation for the information received that day.

### 3. Offender Re-Entry

Region 16 strives to meet the needs of the hardest to serve populations and has seen a lot of success in this area. One of those populations is the re-entry citizens in our community. Region 16 houses the Iowa State Penitentiary, Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility, the Burlington Residential Facility, county jails and ADDS, a residential substance abuse treatment facility. In PY18, the Region 16 Career Planners have been providing work readiness programming, NCRC testing, job fairs and other services within all of these facilities.

Additionally, Region 16 is fortunate to have a Re-Entry Career Planner working full-time at the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility. During PY18 he was able to provide pre-employment services to 817 different individuals who were leaving incarceration. The Iowa Department of Corrections and IowaWORKS partner together two times per year to hold a Re-Entry Career Fair for incarcerated individuals at the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility who are within six months of release. The Re-Entry Career Planner contacts hundreds of Iowa businesses to invite them to attend. While it can be a challenge to get businesses to attend a career fair at a correctional facility that is sometimes hours from their home office, each event sees higher attendance from businesses. In PY18, the two correctional career fairs were attended by more than 60 business partners and more than 250 incarcerated individuals.

Region 16 Career Planners are also consistently working with our community businesses to expand work experience sites for our re-entry participants. In PY18 a new partnership was formed with Gregory Design and Manufacturing in Fort Madison. Working with HR Director, Bruce Widbin and Burlington Residential Correctional Facility Manager, Patrick Lacy, a program was created to meet the needs of both the individuals and the local business. Gregory Design and Manufacturing agreed to take on several of the residents at the Halfway House as employees or interns and train them to weld in a Manufacturing setting. Bruce even created a mini “welding school” for the individuals with no experience. He would group them with the more experienced Welders who would train the new hires. Title I provided case management, work experiences in some cases, support services, and employability classes to help these clients find success in their new jobs. This partnership has been so successful for Gregory Design and Manufacturing they have invested in a van to provide transportation to workers that are currently residing at the Burlington Residential Correctional Facility.

Christian was one of the first participants in the program created by Gregory, the BRCF and IowaWORKS. He was referred to the WIOA Title I Youth program from the Burlington Halfway House. He had just turned 18 and already had several drug charges and a firearm charge. Christian’s barriers included having an incarcerated parent, he dropped out of high school in 10th grade and he has a child. After meeting with Christian and having him complete some assessments, we decided that pursuing a skilled trade would suit him well. We also referred him to the HiSET program that Title I and II manage at the Halfway House. Title I set Christian up on a Work Experience at Gregory Manufacturing and Design, and assisted with any clothing/tools he needed to begin. Title I also assisted with transportation to and from his WEP. After a few weeks, he showed potential in Welding, and his supervisor had him start training. In addition to working 40 hours a week, Christian also attended the evening HiSET classes at the Halfway House every day they were in session, with a goal of finishing in time for graduation. After less than two months of attending HiSET, Christian passed all of his tests and received his High School Equivalency Diploma in time to walk at HiSET graduation. Christian continued working as a Welder at Gregory Manufacturing and got several glowing reviews from his supervisor.

Another re-entry success story from Region 16 is with the Re-Entry Career Planner and Jerry in June of 2018 at the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility. The two met several times over a period of six months, focusing on career readiness activities such as IowaWORKS employment registration, job searching, resume and interview assistance, email access, and labor market research. In addition, Jerry took advantage of the training opportunities that were provided and successfully completed his CPR / First Aid certification. Jerry is a braille transcriber by trade; a skill he received through employment with Iowa Prison Industries (IPI) while incarcerated. Together, they decided to focus Jerry's employment plan on continuing to work in the braille trade upon release. Jerry was scheduled for release from the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility in January of 2019. He would be releasing to the Residential Facility in Dubuque. A month prior to Jerry's release, the Re-Entry Career Planner reached out to several partner agencies for assistance. Jerry had an employment plan and now it was time to start moving towards his employment goals. Goal # 1- Who was Jerry going to work for? Jerry received great news that he was approved to continue his employment with IPI while at the residential facility. He would retain the same supervisor and was approved to purchase his braille transcribing equipment. Goal # 2: Where was Jerry going to work? He was going to need an office space with internet access and phone capabilities to perform his job. The IowaWORKS office in Dubuque offered a space for Jerry to work from. In his first two weeks of employment, Jerry earned almost \$800.00 for several completed braille projects. He continued to have steady work during his time working at the IowaWORKS office. Within the next few weeks, Jerry applied for and was hired for a position with Iowa Department for the Blind as a Braille Transcriber.

#### 4. Serving Customers with Disabilities

Region 16 has a Title I Adult Career Planner whose main focus is on assisting individuals with disabilities. She is a certified work incentive counselor, our local expert on Ticket to Work and has a wide range of knowledge and experience working with this population. Additionally, she helped manage the Disability Employment Initiative grant for Region 16 and assisted several individuals with disabilities with these funds. DEI funds were also used to purchase several accommodation devices for our AJC.

Based on the customers' needs, Region 16 Core Partners will co-enroll in two or more Titles in order to more effectively serve the customer. One example of how this was done is with Kristen: Kristen was a referral to IowaWORKS as she recently dropped out of high school. She came looking for guidance because she didn't know where to turn next, so she was connected with a Youth Career Planner. She was co-enrolled in the Youth program and DEI due to her disability status. With a new team of support behind her Kristen began crossing goals off her list left and right. She completed her HiSET program in one month while on a full time work experience at Community Action of Southeast Iowa. She went on to take CNA and has since completed this program and is working full time at a local nursing home. She is currently enrolled at Southeastern Community College as a full time Nursing student.

## 5. Veteran Services

In PY18 26 Veterans were enrolled in case management and received services from the local DVOP. During that same time frame, 31 veterans exited DVOP case management. Of those 31, 19 entered employment or had increased wages, six achieved another successful outcome such as disability or other compensation sufficient to be a sole source of income, and the last six were exited without a successful outcome as they no longer wished to receive services.

In addition to what is listed above there were two additional veterans who were case managed under Title I that gained employment. Also, two other veterans began to attend post-secondary training under the Trade Act and are case managed by Title I. One veteran enrolled in the PROMISE JOBS program obtained employment, as well.

Region 16 utilizes a special process for veterans registered on the Home Base Iowa website who are looking for work in the local area. These veterans are assigned to a particular Career Planner for services. She makes contact with each veteran and assesses them individually. This career planner then provides pre-employment services such as resume writing assistance, interview assistance and job referrals and development.

Veterans who are not eligible for JVSG case management or do not wish to register with Home Base Iowa are provided pre-employment services by other Career Planners within the region.

One success story from PY18 is that of Veteran Shores. Shores first met with DVOP Snyder in February of 2018 for Labor Market Information (referred by VA Voc-Rehab) on Human Resources, Project Management, or related fields. DVOP Snyder provided Shores with information on these fields in this geographical area. Around this same time DVOP Snyder also received a referral from Home Base Iowa on Shores.

DVOP Snyder enrolled Shores into service management to begin providing services to her. Shores was a 16 year U.S. Air Force Veteran that was medically discharged. DVOP Snyder and Shores were in agreement that she brought a lot of experience, education, and skills to the table so they believed she should apply for nearly any position she was interested in. Shores was able to obtain temporary employment with the Iowa Fertilizer Company. She was hired into their HR department which allowed her to gain great experience in the corporate HR world while job seeking for a permanent position. DVOP Snyder continued to work with Shores on her resume and job search. Over the seven to eight months Shores was in Service Management, DVOP Snyder referred dozens of jobs to her. DVOP Snyder and Business Marketing Specialist Deb Fox also met with veteran Shores on several occasions for mock interview sessions. BMS Fox reached out to several specific employers on Shores behalf as well. Veteran Shores was offered the HR Generalist position at Pinnacle Foods and started there on October 1, 2018 with a starting wage of \$63,500.00 annually.

Another success in Region 16 involved BSR Fox, DVOP Snyder, and Home Base Iowa Rep. Orth. They worked collaboratively to assist veteran, Lt. Colonel Jonathan Zimmer in relocating to Southeast Iowa. The Region 16 team provided numerous job referrals and made several outreach efforts on Zimmer's behalf. Lt. Colonel Zimmer notified the team on February 6, 2019, "Just wanted to send you a quick note that I accepted a Program Manager position at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. Thank you for all of your help!" This lead was generated by the Region 16 team.

## 6. Priority of Services

Priority populations are initially identified in the Greeting and Registration process when customers enter the Region 16 AJC. All veterans and eligible spouses accessing the center are pre-screened for eligibility by non-DVOP staff as part of the welcome process. Other priority populations such as low income individuals, individuals on public assistance and individuals with barriers are self-identified in the registration process as well.

Region 16 Career Planners use triage questions to determine if these priority individuals would benefit from any of the AJC programs and make referrals accordingly. Title I Adult follows the Priority of Service policy and procedure when providing any individualized career services.

Veteran Priority of Service is demonstrated in Region 16 by the following: Veterans and covered persons accessing services in Region 16 are made aware of their entitlement to priority of service by the use of brochures and signage. The Burlington office also displays resources at the entry of the office and gives a specifically made information folder to veterans once self-disclosing their veteran status. When Veterans complete basic registration in IowaWORKS, a team member helps the customer determine eligibility based on their answers. Additionally, the IowaWORKS system makes recommendations for programs that customers might be eligible for.

Region 16 offers priority parking for veteran customers as well as special designated veteran computers. In the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility, priority of service is implemented for all IowaWORKS workshops. The Re-Entry Career Planner receives a list of incarcerated individuals who are interested in workshops. Priority of service is given to veterans before others are added to these workshops.

## Completed By

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