

# REGION IX PY18 ANNUAL REPORT

## Executive Summary

PY18 was a year of change for Region IX. In addition to a new office location, the region began its transition from the I-Works system to the new IowaWORK system.

Staff have continued to expand partnership with customers and business/industry. One partnership resulted in the recognition of Hahn, a local employer who hired an ex-offender who received training and services through the IowaWORKS office.

## Regional Snapshot

Region IX serves Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine, and Scott Counties. In PY18, the IowaWORKS One Stop office relocated to better accommodate the needs of customers in the region. The new site in Davenport provides ample space for customer services, workshops, meeting space, and additional space to accommodate in incorporation of Vocational Rehabilitation Services partners in the future.

Region 9 is a border region that aligns with Rock Island, Whiteside, Mercer, and Henry Counties in Illinois. Local workforce services in the Illinois Counties are very limited, resulting in a bi-state customer base.

The IowaWORKS office houses Wagner Peyser, Title I, and Promise Jobs partners. Vocational Rehabilitation staff provide face-to-face services in the IowaWORKS office one day each week. Other partners at the Center include AARP, National Able Network, Job Corp, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

## Regional Initiatives and Partnerships

Sector Boards have been developed in the region representing allied health, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and transportation. The sector boards are all focused primarily on workforce development, and meeting the need for a skilled workforce. IowaWORKS leadership are active participants in the industry-led boards. In PY18, the advanced manufacturing and allied health boards coordinated hands-on student expos in order to increase knowledge and interest in their respective industries. Over 1,000 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attended the expos.

The Eastern Iowa/Western Illinois Workforce Consortium was formed by the region's Title I Director and the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce. The Consortium provides a quarterly forum for discussion of workforce issues, and an opportunity to share information about programs and services available throughout the bi-state region.

County Workforce Teams help IowaWORKS respond to workforce needs in Clinton, Jackson, and Muscatine Counties. The teams are comprised of representatives from core partner agencies, many of whom work primarily in the outer counties. County teams collaborate to ensure that services are accessible in the counties. They also work with employers to identify workforce needs. In PY18, the Muscatine County Team provided workshops to assist employers who are interested in employing individuals with criminal records. The Jackson County Team collaborates to offer a Job and Career Fair for high school students. The Clinton County Team partners with the community college to offer a career day for high school students.

The Region IX Title I Director is a member of the Regional Planning Partnership. This Partnership, comprised of superintendents from all area schools, and representatives of the community college, works to create a strong pipeline into career and technical education in order to meet local industry needs. The Partnership is creating regional career academies using concurrent enrollment coursework, and aligning the academies with post-secondary training, credentials, and apprenticeship options.

## Employer Services and Engagement

Region 9 provides dedicated business services to employers throughout four counties. The services offered include, but are not limited to recruitment and outreach, registered apprenticeship guidance, labor market information, veteran hiring assistance, testing services, training assistance, Employer Council of Iowa, and information for businesses that may be experiencing layoffs or closure. During the previous 12 months there have been **733 contacts** made with employers by the Business Services team to discuss or assist with employer concerns. There were **290 new business contacts**.

Employer outreach visits included Registered Apprenticeship education. Each business contact includes a determination of needs and as it benefits the employer, a Registered Apprenticeship introduction is provided. Of those, there were 6 referral forms completed and new RA programs were developed.

Business services in Region 9 also included Employers' Council of Iowa (ECI) events that provided educational opportunities on topics such as diversity, drug testing in the workplace, Human Resources marketing trends, mental health, technology in today's hiring trends. There were **20 events** held throughout the region.

Region 9 also increased its partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce, Business Network, Sector Boards, municipalities and Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), organizations in the four counties. Such opportunities include marketing events in newsletters, meeting regularly for opportunities to partner on events and networking in chamber events. There were **70 external events attended** by business services representatives that included presentations on IowaWORKS services.

As part of a growing initiative to increase visibility of employers hiring, the Davenport one-stop center held **60 on-site recruiting events**. The events were promoted through social media, invitation to clients via IowaWORKS.gov and referrals through partner agencies.

Mock interviews were held in the one-stop center for clients seeking experience in interviewing. Employers participated in bi-monthly mock interviews that included working with the ex-offender programs.

## Promising Practices and Success Stories

### 1. Rapid Response

PY18 was a slow year for Rapid Response events in Region 9. A few retail stores closed (Toys R Us, Younkers, Office Max). Staff worked with store management to provide resources for employees, and ensure awareness of IowaWORKS services. Due to the nature of these closings, formal Rapid Response meetings were not desired. Workers impacted by United Healthcare cuts were served individually because they worked remotely.

Rapid Response events were provided for Met Lab and Davenport Schools. Overall attendance at the events was low. Due to the high volume of employment opportunities, and increasing pay in entry level employment, the number of affected workers interested in training was low.

### Success Story

Jolene was notified in 2016 that her position and most of the plant's positions at IPSCO were being eliminated. She attended Rapid Response meetings and services provided by the IowaWORKS office, and partner agencies. Jolene worked with her IowaWORKS counselor for a month to complete the trade application for training. After it was approved, she began full-time in the Business Management program and was a very strong student. When she was notified that IPSCO would start their operations again in 2017, Jolene went back to work full-time on 12-hour swing shifts while completing her classes part-time. She was able to maintain her strong grades and graduated in May 2019 with her AAS in Business Management and a Small Business Management Certificate. A month prior to graduation Jolene was able to secure a position in the inventory department and is now utilizing the business, accounting and computer skills learned in her program. She stated that she knows that she was a top candidate for that position due to her education at Eastern Iowa Community College and the support from her IowaWORKS counselor.

## 2. Registered Apprenticeship

Through a state expansion grant, 2 dedicated positions of Registered Apprenticeship Career Planners were created with the goal of connecting 200 lowans interested in pursuing an Apprenticeship with companies that have registered programs or willing to create one to meet their specific needs. One of these Career Planner positions is housed in the AJC in Region 9. This goal has been set to be completed by 06/30/2022. With a major skills gap throughout the state of Iowa, it is imperative that we assist lowans that would be excellent candidates for a RA program to have any and all assistance that they may require in order to realize this employment goal. Customers can learn more about Registered Apprenticeships by accessing the Earn and Learn Iowa website or by going in person to the AJC. A Registered Apprenticeship workshop is also available.

The region held its third annual Apprenticeship Event in celebration of National Apprenticeship Week. Over 250 participants visited with representatives from local companies, union locals, and community college apprenticeship programs. The event was held at Scott Community College's Culinary and Hospitality Facility, which houses the Culinary Apprenticeship program. Culinary students provided information and desserts for guests.

## 3. Offender Re-Entry

### Success Story

Anthony Spraggins, Jr. came to the IowaWORKS office in May of 2017, when he expressed interest in getting his Class A Certified Driver's License (CDL). After completing the application for GAP tuition assistance and during his first intake appointment, Anthony shared with his counselor, Jan Dolan, his past work history and barriers he was having to employment, which included a felony charge he received that resulted in five years of incarceration. To his credit, he was landing jobs, most recently as a mixer for a manufacturing company which produced packaged baked goods and before that as a cook at a local restaurant. He earned \$13.18 an hour and \$10.50 an hour respectively at these positions, but wanted to earn a better wage, and wanted a career. His ultimate goal was to gain custody of his daughter again, but he knew he would need a steady career

with a good income for this to happen. Anthony took seriously this opportunity to receive GAP funding. He completed the necessary requirements for the tuition assistance program that included completion of an Interests Assessment that aligned with his personal goal to get his CDL, and completing the National Career Readiness Certificate where he earned a Bronze certificate. Upon approval of tuition funding through the GAP program, Anthony started classes June 26, 2017. His instructor, Ray Hitchcock, of Eastern Iowa Community College (EICC), reported later to Anthony's counselor, Jan Dolan, that "Anthony did a great job in school, receiving high marks on attitude and attendance." Mr. Hitchcock said Anthony worked hard to successfully complete the class. Interested in hiring drivers to drive trucks for their business, Andrea Meier, HR Manager at Hahn Ready Mix Company in Davenport, IA, met with several CDL students taking the class through EICC. Anthony had connected with Andrea prior to beginning classes and was aware that Hahn Ready Mix was an excellent company for employment, and very receptive to offering second chances to people like Anthony who was now ready for a career in trucking. Anthony completed the application process with Hahn Ready Mix, graduated on September 1, and started driving for the company on September 5. Anthony has been a great asset to the Hahn Company. He is currently driving concrete mixers from Davenport, IA to Moline, IL, where he is one of several safe drivers who drive full concrete mixing trucks onto river barges on the Mississippi River. The driving assignment is for only the safest drivers, and requires abundant courage, since three trucks drive forward onto the river barge and three must back onto the barge. From there, the barge is transported to the center of the Mississippi River, where the concrete is unloaded from each truck into a chute that directs the concrete into steel forms that will eventually be the bridge girders and concrete deck for the new I-74 bridge that spans across the Mississippi River. In order to accomplish this, drivers like Anthony have to make continuous routes to and from the bridge site, three and four times a day, following strict safety rules while driving onto the barges. What this has provided to Anthony is an opportunity to make a higher wage (over \$17 an hour), solid full-time employment with benefits and overtime, and the ability to participate in a community project that will create life-long stories to tell his family and friends. Additionally, Anthony's hard work has paid off for him personally, as he has earned back custody of his daughter, which was an important goal for making this career move.

In program year PY 18, Region 9 IowaWORKS worked in collaboration with a number of entities to assist with providing employment and training services for individuals

with criminal background related issues. Region 9 has a Career Planner who facilitates monthly workshops for individuals residing in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Residential Facility. Customers are served at the facility, followed by scheduled appointments with the career planner at the AJC for resume assistance, job search assistance, and job development/placement assistance. During this program year, the Career Planner and AJC leadership met with staff at the Scott County Jail to establish a plan for providing similar services to the individuals residing at their facility. The AJC Career Planner now provides workshops in the county jail monthly. The goal of this outreach is to re connect these individuals back to the AJC upon release. Similar efforts have been discussed with other county jails in the region. Clinton County recently opened a new facility and they have reached out to the AJC staff about providing employment related training at the new facility in the future. In addition, the AJC continues to provide training at the facility for individuals who are not being served by any of the above mentioned entities by providing a P.O.E.T.S workshop for interested individuals.

## Success Stories

Earl was recently released from prison after serving ten years. He was living at 605 Main, a halfway facility. He later moved to a shelter in Davenport Iowa. Earl wanted to use the little money he had wisely to get a fresh start life. He was unable to pay for CDL classes. Earl is also a veteran, but was unable to receive all benefits since he was a felon. When Earl came to IowaWORKS, he had just been released from Prison. He was referred to IowaWorks by the Safer Foundation and 605 Main. Earl was eligible for the Adult Program. He was interested in the CDL program because he had worked as a CDL driver for about twenty years before going to prison. While in prison, Earl learned HVAC and helped with maintenance projects. He practiced for and passed the classroom part of his CDL while incarcerated. During his first appointment Earl and his counselor discussed his assessments and Earl's plans for the future. Earl's assessment results were a perfect match for truck driving. When asked about HVAC, Earl indicated that he thought that industry might not be as open to him since he was just released. He said he always have enjoyed driving and he was good at it. Earl and his counselor discussed the requirements of the CDL and what is needed to be employed in the industry. The counselor explained that he must be able to maintain a good driving record and pass the DOT physical and drug screen in order to get and keep a CDL job. After he passed his DOT physical and drug screen, Earl and his counselor talked about approved training providers. While

Earl was waiting for his results, he talked to both Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, and 160 Driving Academy. He said that when he talked to 160 driving academy they told him that since he had his permit he could move directly into the driving part of the training after a quick review. Earl started his CDL Training 2/18/19. Once employed, Earl needed to have steel toed boots before he started working which Title I purchased. Earl finished the CDL program and graduated with his Commercial Driver's License on 3/15/19. One day a local employer came into the school to talk to the instructor about a local CDL position he had open at his company. Earl approached the employer while everyone was at lunch. They ended up talking for a while about the job and Earl told him he would be interested in interviewing for it. The next day Earl interviewed and was offered the truck driving position. The company he works for specializes in customized pallets. They hired Earl to make three daily deliveries to Arconic Steel plant to drop off and pick up special pallets designed for them. During the interview, Earl mentioned that he worked and took classes in HVAC while in prison. Since he had that experience, the company is going to also have him help with maintenance projects when he is done with his deliveries. Earl's hours are from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. He will start off making \$16.00 hour. Earl said that "this program helped him with a new start and now can make enough money to move from the shelter soon."

Adam Sutcliffe was referred to IowaWORKS by his Parole Officer because he has been struggling in finding employment. A staff member met with Adam on 10/22/19 and helped him create a resume and completed online applications for Kraft Heinz and QPS Employment. On 10/24/19 Adam called and stated that he got a phone call from QPS Employment and was scheduled for an interview on 10/28/19 at 10am. They told him if he does well on his interview they will schedule him for a welding test. He did great on his interview and was sent to take a welding test. The starting pay for the job he is testing for is \$15.00 per hour. On 10/30/19 Adam called and stated that he got the job thru QPS Employment. Because he had done so well on his welding test, he would be starting at \$16 per hr. He said the lady from QPS Employment told him he got the interview because of the great resume he turned in. She told him they don't get good resumes very often and his was great. Adam thanked the staff member for helping him get the job. He was also grateful for assistance with answering interview questions, and stated that he wouldn't have known what to answer on some questions he was asked without the assistance he received.

## 4. Serving Customers with Disabilities

### Success Story

Christian received his High School Equivalency Diploma through EICC in 2014. He returned to school a year later with the goal of earning his Associates Degree in IT. Christian had to work hard to overcome many obstacles. He had been diagnosed with multiple mental health disorders and ADD. He also struggled with Dyslexia. When Christian became involved with the Title I Youth Program he was working a seasonal job in the Freight Department at Kohl's Department Store. Christian has had a life long struggle with multiple mental health disorders, ADD, and Dyslexia. He also had a medical issue that arose during school that caused him to be absent for classes for a short time. Christian was able to work hard to pull through this and still earn good grades. Christian had a history of being employed at various businesses but he was not earning a livable wage. Christian received his High School Equivalency Diploma through EICC. He also received support through the Title I Youth Program and the PACE Program. These programs all worked together to give Christian the support he needed to complete his degree. Christian received financial assistance with tuition, books, and transportation. He also received encouragement and support when needed throughout. Christian also took advantage of bonuses through our youth program by regularly earning a 2.5 GPA or higher each semester. Christian earned his AAS in IT with a concentration on Programming. He had an overall cumulative GPA of 3.257. Christian is currently working for Cognizant Technology Solutions as a Systems Executive. He is working 40 hours a week and earning 32,000 a year.

The disability access committee was very active for FY19. The WINTAC assessment for the Integration continuum model gave us the opportunity to focus on areas that needed improvement. Region 9 decided to focus on improving services in the area of business engagement and assessments. The team continues to meet quarterly to work on improving the two areas and making sure we are not duplicating services among partners. A team was created for business engagement and a list of assessment created for sharing. Region 9 held a roundtable for the deaf and hard of hearing population to address the needs and concerns with services in the community to a population that is under served statewide. Region 9 held a disability awareness event for businesses which featured a speaker from the Helen Keller organization, an AT specialist and a business partner to share her stories of hiring and working with individuals with disabilities. A staff person from IVRS is now

located at the IowaWorks office once a week to assist with disabilities questions and referrals since we are not co-located to improve services in Region 9 to individuals with disabilities.

## 5. Veteran Services

### Success Story

In PY 2018 veteran Wayne M. gained employment at Hahn Ready Mix with the assistance that he was provided at the Davenport AJC. He was a disabled veteran that had been looking for employment for months. The DVOP worked with him on his resume and made contact with Hahn Ready Mix on his behalf. The company was trying to fill a position for a driver/loader. The veteran needed some additional certifications/training for the position and the DVOP helped to make the connections with Title 1 for him to obtain these. He completed the CDL program and was hired for the position. He was in the office recently and continues to work for Hahn ReadyMix. The Davenport AJC provided exceptional services to veterans in 2018 serving 625 individuals that indicated that they were veterans via the initial intake. There were 49 veterans enrolled in Title 1 services.

In regard to service managed veterans, there were 34 outcomes for veterans exiting DVOP services as a result of gaining employment. Service managed individuals were referred to more than 30 workshops in the center.

The Davenport AJC served 102 customers that were enrolled in the Goodwill Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program in 2018. A monthly orientation is established to work with veterans in the HVRP program and this orientation has been expanded to include on site recruiting for attendees. There were 7 co enrolled veterans in other service managed programs in the center.

In 2018, there were 5 employment and resource fairs that the DVOP as well as other AJC and partner staff participated in to promote hiring veterans. The biggest of these events was an employment and resource fair that was developed by the DVOP and staff at the Davenport AJC which included a partnership with St Ambrose University, The Rock Island Arsenal, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security. This was the first collaborative effort between all of these groups and it was hugely successful. One of the most increased contributions during 2018 was the relationship built with the QC Veteran Outreach Center. This relationship allowed connection to veterans at the centers events. In total these events had more than 800 total veteran attendees.

In 2018, the AJC in Region 9 was a recipient of a Veteran Incentive Award which is provided to offices in Iowa for providing outstanding services for veterans.

## 6. Priority of Services

At the point of entry at the Region 9 AJC, there are brochures and signage that share information related to veteran priority of service. Each customer entering the Davenport IowaWORKS facility is served based on their needs. Should there be a wait for services that are offered, the veteran would be moved to the top of the wait list. This happens rarely as every effort is made to not have any customer waiting for services. Job order referral matching automatically gives veterans first day preference of notifications of position openings. Notifications related to job referral notices to non-veteran customers are sent out 24 hours later.

Veterans and covered persons are identified at the point of entry. A staff member greets customers and then asks if they have served in the United States military. The customer self attests their veteran status at that point or when completing the basic registration process. Veterans and eligible spouses are identified for eligibility by non JVSG staff as part of the initial intake process. The DVOP serves 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 VPL03-14/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 to the DVOP in the district.

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