WIOA STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE OF IOWA

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
    - State Strategy Implementation,
    - State Operating Systems and Policies,
    - Assurances, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

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* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

As part of the planning efforts several special committees have been established to review and make recommendations regarding serving populations with barriers to employment and the infusion of accessibility throughout the entire workforce delivery system to better support ALL Iowans in their career advancement. WIOA defines a number of populations which may experience significant barriers to employment. Iowa is no different than any other state in recognizing that many of its residents may experience difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. The State Plan outlines many of the ways that these individuals will be assisted.

Among the individuals with significant barriers to employment, the following are most notable:

Displaced Homemakers

There are 88,508 potential displaced homemakers as defined as non-wage earners living in a family setting (2014 American Community Survey).

Low-income Individuals

There are 124,355 individuals that are considered low-income, as defined by earning less than 125% of the federal poverty level wage (2014 American Community Survey). In 2014, Iowa ranked 15th among states for the percentage of people who had incomes below the poverty line, 12.2 percent or $23,834 for a family of four, and 14.0 percent of working women, ages 18-64, had incomes below the poverty line. During the same period 14.9 percent of Iowa's children under age 18 in related families had incomes below the poverty line, ranking Iowa 10th in the nation for child poverty. Creating real opportunities for Iowa's low-income earners to advance within the workforce system remains a priority of the workforce delivery system partners.

American Indians or Alaska Natives

There are 15,619 American Indians or Alaska Natives in the state (2014 American Community Survey).

Youth with Significant Disabilities

There are 27,352 youth that have significant disabilities (2014 American Community Survey).

Homeless Persons

There are approximately 2,314 homeless individuals,

Foster-care OOS Youth

675 youth aged out of foster care in Iowa in 2014, of this, more than 2% percent lacked a formal transition plan (IA Dept. of Children and Families)

Populations that Speak English as a Second Language

213,227 or 7.4 percent of all individuals in the state speak a language other than English at home, which may indicate limited English proficiency (2014) American Community Survey).

Working Individuals with Disability

There are 76,576 working age people with a recognized disability in Iowa and 46.5% of them are employed. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation, behind South Dakota and North Dakota. 52.5% of the 13,600 Iowans who are blind or have vision loss are employed as are 58.5% of the 22,900 with hearing differences. Iowa must continue to focus on how to best empower more individuals with disabilities through the independence that employment provides.

Veterans

There are more than 219,006 veterans of working age (between 18 and 64) in Iowa, representing a vital, yet seriously under-utilized, workforce resource. The state's veteran population has a labor force participation rate that is on average 5 percentage points lower than the state as a whole. Twenty-six percent of veteran's experience some type of disability, a rate that is nearly twice that of

the non-veteran population. The State of Iowa is committed to programs that recognize and reward veterans for the valuable skills they have to offer.

Iowa's Aging Population

The 2014 Iowa Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data reported 80,569 individuals over the age of 64 working throughout the state. Almost all (94.2 percent) of this population meet the current skill requirements of the positions they occupy. Iowans over the age of 65 make up about 16 percent of the state's population — outpacing the national average of 14 percent — according to a report published by the Administration on Aging, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In the next five years, there will be a significant number of workers eligible for retirement from the manufacturing; healthcare and social services; wholesale and retail trade; education; and public administration industries. Plans for increasing opportunities for meaningful connection to the workforce and continued career advancement for this population is essential to Iowa's improved workforce delivery system.

Ex-Offenders (Returning Citizens)

Over 8,200 inmates were under the custody of the Iowa Department of Corrections in Iowa prisons as of December 31, 2015. An additional 28,924 are on probation/parole and 1,517 are housed in community-based residential facilities (halfway houses). Ninety-one percent of this population is male. The incarcerated population has a larger share of minority inmates than the general population and a significantly lower level of educational attainment. Programs such as the Offender Re-entry Project, Registered Apprenticeship programs and other partnerships between the Department of Corrections and the workforce development community are aimed at acquiring workforce skills which is also crucial to reducing recidivism for these individuals.

Iowa's key policy makers, Core Partners and employers recognize the value in supporting the integration of these populations into the workforce. Success will be based on how well these and other populations with barriers to employment are able to enter into and maintain permanent, family-sustaining employment. The use of career pathways, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and a variety of other methods discussed throughout the plan will be integral in providing the necessary supports and services not only to the job-seekers, but also to employers and service providers.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Yes

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. No

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) No

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))) No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) No

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))] No

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

II. EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

With the nation in a recession, Iowa's unemployment rate rose to 6.3 percent in 2010. Since taking office in 2011, Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds have worked with the Iowa legislature to make growing Iowa's economy a top priority. Iowa's unemployment rate fell to 3.5 percent in December, 2015 due to Iowa's strong economic growth.

With the Iowa economy once again on sound footing, Iowa's policymakers have focused on immediate and long-term economic growth that builds of Iowa's systemic economic strengths and meets current and future labor needs of Iowa employers. To that end, the Branstad-Reynolds administration commissioned comprehensive studies on Iowa's economy to help policymakers plan for the next decade.

BATTELLE TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE

The Battelle Technology Partnership Practice report, Iowa's Re-Envisioned Economic Development Roadmap. Over an 18 month period, researchers from Battelle worked with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and regional economic development organizations around the state to conduct a comprehensive study. Battelle is the world's largest nonprofit independent research and development organization. The Technology Partnership Practice (TPP) assists local, state, and regional organizations, universities, nonprofit technology organizations, and others in designing, implementing, and assessing technology-based economic development programs. The 2014 report provides a full-scale review of Iowa's industry drivers and potential growth opportunities. It also examines how the state has fared in advancing innovation, job attraction and retention since the last roadmap was developed in 2004-2005. This third-party analysis of the state's resources, assets and existing gaps, has provided both the qualitative and quantitative foundation on which to base

strategy development. The executive summary and full report can be downloaded at Iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/battelle.

GEORGETOWN REPORT

The Georgetown Center on Education and Workforce: “Iowa: Education and Workforce Trends Through 2025” (Georgetown Report). The Georgetown Center on Education and Workforce collaborated with the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) in support of the Branstad-Reynolds administration’s objective to develop projections for long-term education goals. As part of the Iowa’s talent PIPEline initiative, the Georgetown Report uses “information on industry and occupational trends to identify long-term education goals and workforce development needs that will be necessary to achieve the state’s economic development goals.” The full report can be downloaded at: cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Iowa_Wrkfrce2025.pdf.

The Battelle and Georgetown reports, along with the most current labor market data available, form the basis of this plan’s needs assessment. The Battelle and Georgetown reports reflect that Iowa’s strengthening economy presents new challenges requiring swift and innovative solutions. Most prominently, Iowa faces a skills gap. There is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs in the state. Substantial disparities exist between the number of workers able to compete for middle-skill jobs and those struggling to find low-skill jobs. This skills gap is projected to grow over the next decade. The Georgetown Report forecasts that Iowa will add more than 600,000 jobs by 2025, with approximately 225,000-about 37% of all job openings in the state through 2025-in the middle-skill variety.

A consensus is developing among Iowa policymakers around the need to up-skill Iowa jobseekers and workers in order to meet employers’ need to fill middle-skill jobs. In 2015, the Branstad-Reynolds administration launched Future Ready Iowa, an initiative which calls for 70% of Iowans to have education or training beyond high school by 2025, to help meet the demand for middle-skill employment opportunities. This initiative brings together Iowa Workforce Development, the IDOE, and the IEDA in an endeavor that goes hand-in-hand with the state’s implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

IOWA’S KEY INDUSTRIES

Economic progress in Iowa is determined by the performance of key industries throughout the state. The industries that drive economic growth include those with global reach serving customers and markets that extend beyond local communities producing income from sources outside of Iowa. These industries can also serve to substitute for products and services that would otherwise have to be imported into the state. Industry clusters are groups of similar and related firms in a defined geographic area that share common markets, technologies, worker skill needs, and which are often linked by buyer-seller relationships.

In order to fully realize the far-reaching economic impacts of sectors and sub-sectors within regional or local economies, states must map their industry clusters and sub-sectors as well as primary sectors. Mapping should include information about occupations, worker skills, commuting patterns, and other relevant data in order to develop a focused and robust strategy for growth. Industry clusters serve as a catalyst for economic growth and include a mix of local and far-reaching goods and products which are inter-related and represent the entire supply chain and associated parts. The Battelle Report identifies twelve distinct industry clusters as driving Iowa’s economy. From the

Battelle Report, **Table 1** summarizes the major industry components of these clusters and typical activities.

INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Table 1: Iowa's Top 12 Industry Clusters & Associated Activities, Alphabetical

Industry Cluster	Activities
Agriculture and Food Production	Agricultural Production, Food Processing & Products Packaging
Automation & Industrial Machinery	Industrial Machinery, Metalworking Machinery & Tools, Electrical Equipment
Avionics & Communications Electronics	Search, Detection, & Navigation Instruments, Other Aerospace-related Industries
Biosciences	Agricultural Feedstock & Chemicals, "Agbiosciences", Bioscience-related Distribution, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices & Equipment, Research, Testing, & Medical Labs
Building & Construction Products	Windows and doors (both wood and fabricated metals), Kitchen cabinets Furniture; Nonmetallic mineral products including concrete, glass, stone; plastic pipes
Heavy Machinery	Primary Ag & Construction Machinery, Manufacturing, Vehicular Parts & Components, Mobile Homes
Healthcare Services	Outpatient Care Centers, Home Healthcare, Hospitals, Nursing Care
Information Services, Digital Media & Technology	Software & Computer Services, Internet Services & E-Commerce, Multimedia Publishing
Insurance & Finance	Insurance, Commercial Banking, Securities, Commodities, & Other Financial Investments
Primary Metals Manufacturing	Iron, Steel, Aluminum, Nonferrous and Foundries
Renewable Energy	Wind Turbines, Energy Storage, Ethanol & Biofuels
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Wholesale, Transportation, Warehousing & Storage

Source: Battelle Technology Partnership Practice, Iowa's Re-Envisioned Economic Development Roadmap (2014).

BATTELLE ANALYSIS

Due to the impacts of these particular industry clusters on Iowa's economy, Battelle conducted a comprehensive analysis employing several economic performance measures including:

- Relative concentration of the industry cluster
- Job generation
- Relative growth of the industry cluster
- Productivity
- High-skilled jobs compared to the national average
- Average wages of the industry cluster compared to the national average
- Impacts to the local supply chain for each industry cluster

BATTELLE REPORT

Key Battelle Report Findings Impacting Iowa's Workforce Delivery System

- Nine of the 12 industry clusters represent industry specializations in Iowa based on having a significantly higher concentration of employment relative to the national average. This reflects the competitive advantages that Iowa offers these industry clusters relative to the nation and their well-established presence in Iowa.
- Eight of the 12 industry clusters have a higher level of productivity compared to that same industry cluster nationally. This suggests that it is not simply Iowa's central location that stands out for many industries and drives the strong level of industry specialization found in Iowa, but that Iowa offers a higher value-added location. Competing on high productivity is critical in today's innovation-driven, global economy. What is particularly special about the industry clusters driving Iowa's economic growth is how extensively they outpace the nation, while the average productivity across all private sector industries in Iowa is 90 percent of the nation.
- Eight of the 12 industry clusters generated economic multipliers of more than $500,000 for every additional $1 million in output they generate. Led by agriculture and food production, which has an extensive footprint across Iowa and deep supply chain, there are many industry clusters in Iowa that have substantial economic multiplier impacts on the state's economy. Interestingly, the importance of high wages comes through, as the avionics and communications electronics industry cluster, with the highest average annual wages for the industry clusters in Iowa, is also among the leaders in economic impact for the state.
- Nine of the 12 industry clusters performed better in job changes than the U.S. average for that industry cluster. This is another sign that Iowa's industry clusters are more competitive than the nation. A sobering reality is that only five of the nine industry clusters performing better than the U.S. gained jobs above the 2007 pre-recession level. The other four industries outpacing the U.S. job growth from 2007-2012, declined less than in Iowa.

Table 2: Output & Employment, Iowa Top Industries, 2014

	Share of GDP	Share of Employment
Manufacturing	18	16
Healthcare & Social Assistance	7	14
Finance & Insurance	11	7
Retail Trade	6	11
Government	11	3
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	11	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting	7	4

Source: https://www.educateIowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2015-12-14%20%20Future%20Ready%20Iowa2.pdf

Iowa currently leads the nation in only one industry cluster, Building and Construction Products. Several industry clusters in Iowa are considerably behind the U.S. average and the remaining industry clusters in Iowa are within one to two percentage points of the national average. In general, the report concluded that the industry clusters driving Iowa's economy are healthy and have positioned the state to continue its upward track toward economic improvement through strategic job growth.

EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRIES

The Battelle Report provides a full-scale review of Iowa's industry drivers and potential growth opportunities. It also examined how the state has fared in advancing innovation, job attraction and

retention since the last roadmap was developed in 2004-2005. It identifies the state's resources, assets and existing gaps, has provided both the qualitative and quantitative foundation on which to base strategy development. Some key findings identified in the report are below:

The Battelle Report takes a look at Iowa's current position, as compared to the nation and benchmarked states. Due in part to the focused work over the past several years, Iowa is faring well. Some identified successes include:

- Restructuring of IEDA and streamlining of funding programs
- Creating better private/public partnerships
- Better collaboration of stakeholders
- Improved marketing of Iowa and its assets

Iowa has made substantial economic progress over the last decade, resulting in positive trends in Iowa's top-line measures of success:

- Productivity is high -- As of 2013, Iowa's economic output, in real, inflation-adjusted terms, was 5.9% higher than the pre-recession levels of 2007, outpacing the national growth of 4.7% during the same period.
- Job growth and workforce are strong -- Iowa outperformed the nation in the growth of both middle and high-skilled jobs. At the same time, the number of low-skill jobs has actually declined as both employers and employees transition to a more skilled workforce.
- Wages are rising -- Iowa substantially outpaced national gains in private sector average wages. This is consistent with the rising workforce skill levels in Iowa and an increase in the number of higher quality jobs.
- Per capita income is growing -- While record farm incomes have driven a substantial increase in per capita income during the last decade, from 2007 to 2013, Iowa's nonfarm personal income also grew 20%, eclipsing national growth of 14% over the same period.

The Battelle Report makes recommendations for strategic priorities that Iowa must adopt to competitively position the state in a global economy. Recommendations (Strategic Priorities) include:

- Build on the competitiveness and growth of Iowa's industry clusters through innovation, retention and attraction.
- Generate and attract skilled workforce in demand by Iowa's businesses.
- Accelerate the development of Iowa's emerging entrepreneurial eco-system.
- Advance Iowa's physical infrastructure and regional development capacities to realize Iowa's economic potential.

HEALTHCARE

The healthcare industry is essential to the health and welfare of our communities and vital to the nation's economic wellbeing, making it an ideal occupation for job-seekers to gain access to higher paying jobs through innovative programs. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP), work-based learning, and Career Pathway approaches are all well-suited to the healthcare industry. The healthcare industry is also a focus of Enhance Iowa, a statewide consortium of Iowa's 15 community colleges that is led by Hawkeye Community College and funded as part of a four-year, $15 million grant that is part of Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT), a larger federal initiative that has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. The Enhance Iowa initiative will

train Iowans in the skill sets local employers need in healthcare, as well as information technology (IT), utilities, and manufacturing.

Healthcare support and nursing positions are anticipated to remain high-demand occupations, especially as more baby boomers reach retirement age. Healthcare is consistently in the top 3 largest industries in Iowa with an existing demand which is expected to grow disproportionate to the availability of matched-skilled workers available to fill healthcare positions. Healthcare accounts for 7 percent of output and 14 percent of Iowa's employment. The occupation slated to grow the most is nursing, but more than 80% of those jobs will require postsecondary training or certification. Nationally, researchers estimate that as many as 90 million low-skill workers will be at-risk for permanent joblessness by 2022. This will heighten the probability that would-be nurses from low-income and minority backgrounds will be denied access to the field beyond low-skill, low-wage positions.

CONSTRUCTION

The construction sector is comprised of establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings, engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems) or in the construction trades. Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction or primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites are also included in this sector. Construction work done may include new work, additions, alterations or maintenance and repairs. Activities of these establishments generally are managed at a fixed place of business, but they usually perform construction activities at multiple project sites.

In 2014, the construction sector, statewide, comprised 5.0 percent of all employment in Iowa; however, this is an industry that is sensitive to the volatilities of the business cycle, so this percentage is subject to more variation than other industries. This sector had an average annual wage of $51,965 for 2014, which is 22.2 percent higher than the statewide average for all industries (public and private sector). In terms of employment, the construction sector was one of the hardest hit by the most recent recession. The industry shed 3,396 jobs (5.1%) between 2009 and 2010 after hemorrhaging 8,115 jobs (10.9%) between 2008 and 2009. The sector has mostly recovered since then and is nearly up to its 2006, pre-recession peak of 76,002, employing 75,697 Iowans in 2014. Construction has added 12,601 (20.0% growth) jobs since bottoming out in 2010. Wages have increased by 27.7 percent between 2006 to 2014, even though they dipped a bit in 2009. Men make up an overwhelming majority of this industry, holding over 88.6 percent of all jobs in the sector.

In 2014, there were 9,413 construction locations across Iowa, employing 75,697 people averaged throughout the year. Construction work tends to be seasonal. The heavy & civil engineering construction subsector accounts for 16.3 percent of total covered sector employment—making it the smallest and best paid segment with average annual wage of $63,083, construction of buildings represents 21.7 percent, and the largest sub-sector, specialty trade contractors, employs 62.0 percent of all sector employment.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The IT sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: (a) producing and distributing information and cultural products, (b) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications, and (c) processing data. The main components of this sector are the publishing industries, including software publishing, the motion picture and sound

recording industries, the telecommunications industries, and the information services and data processing industries.

In 2014, the IT sector provided 26,110 jobs to Iowans, which represented almost 1.7 percent of all covered employment. This sector reported an average, sector annual wage of $50,600, which is 19.0 percent higher than the average wage across all industries (both public and private sector) of the state, $42,536. Employment in this sector was fairly steady from 2006 through 2008, but since then has dropped precipitously, even as the recession has ended and other industries have regained the jobs they shed during the downturn. The downward trend has not proven true for the average income, which has been steadily rising. Since a recent peak in 2007, employment has decrease by 23.5 percent, while over the same period, wages increased 19.9 percent. This likely reflects the fact that the well-paid data and web industries have actually added employment as the sector as a whole has shrunk. Male workers account for a slight majority of the employees in this sector, holding 50.9 percent of the sector's jobs. Women are actually the majority of workers over the age of 45, perhaps reflecting the growing influence of male-dominated tech careers creating the new jobs in this sector.

FINANCE AND INSURANCE

In 2014, the finance and insurance sector comprised 6.0 percent of all employment in Iowa (private and public sector). This high-wage sector reported an average annual wage of $68,514 for the sector, which was 61.1 percent higher than the statewide average of $42,536 for all industries. Since 2006, this sector has added 4,411 jobs (5.1%) and the average annual wage grew by $14,713 (27.3%). Despite the trend of long-term growth, finance & insurance contracted slightly after the recession and lost 1,780 jobs between 2008 and 2011. However, the sector began growing again in 2012 and has since surpassed its 2008 peak. Despite the high wages relative to other industries in Iowa, wages for finance & insurance are 30 percent lower than the national average of $97,373; however, Iowa's wages are fairly in line with other states in our region. Women make up the majority of employees in this sector holding 63.5 percent of all jobs.

This sector comprises firms primarily engaged in financial transactions (transactions involving the creation, liquidation, or change in ownership of financial assets) and/or in facilitating financial transactions. Three principal types of activities are identified: raising funds by taking deposits and/or issuing securities, pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities, and providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance and employee benefit programs. In 2014, there was an average of 6,410 locations employing 90,499 people in the finance & insurance industries across Iowa. The majority of finance & insurance employment (94.6 percent) is represented by only two sub-sectors: insurance carriers and related activities report 46.3 percent, credit intermediation or related activities accounts for 48.3 percent of sector employees. Insurance carriers and related activities boast a significantly higher average wage than Credit Intermediation or Related Activities, $73,078 and $43,756 respectively.

AGRICULTURE

The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats. The sector distinguishes two basic activities: agricultural production and agricultural support activities. Agricultural production includes establishments performing the complete farm or ranch operation, such as farm owner-operators, tenant farm operators, and sharecroppers. Agricultural support activities include establishments that perform one or more

activities associated with farm operation, such as soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and management, on a contract or fee basis.

In 2014 the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector comprised 1.3 percent of all covered employment (public and private sector) in Iowa. This sector reported an average annual wage of $37,161 for 2014, which was 12.6 percent lower than the statewide average of $42,536 for all industries. Employment increased every year over the period in question, even throughout the recession period. Animal production, the largest segment of this sector, employed 10,547 or 55.2 percent of all sector employment. Iowa leads the nation in the production of corn, soybeans, pork, eggs, ethanol and biodiesel. Crop production segments of this industry employed 4,871 workers in 2014; a substantial portion of sector employment in an industry that has become more reliant on machinery than labor. However, this sector still employs a large number of seasonal workers. The employment in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector does not include self-employed farmers and operations that have less than 10 workers or that have a payroll of less than $20,000 per quarter. With over 80 percent of its land dedicated to farms, agriculture remains a vital industry in Iowa, but the long-term outlook for Iowa's ag-economy is changing. In 2014 the Iowa Ag Contribution Study was conducted to evaluate the economic significance of Iowa agriculture on the state's overall economy. The study confirmed that Iowa agriculture is directly linked to a number of industries and ag-support activities. Based on the study, reduction or removal of any one of them would likely negatively impact the others not only locally, but across the region and state. Agriculture and ag-related industries support more than 400,000 jobs across the state, which are approximately 1 in 5 workers.

According to Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey (December 31, 2015), 2015 was a record year for production of corn and soybeans in Iowa due to a near ideal growing season in much of the state. While farmers produced record corn and soybean crops, prices have continued to fall as a result of uncertainty regarding the federal Renewable Fuel Standard and large crop production worldwide. Average statewide corn prices fell from $3.76 to $3.48 from December2014 to December 2015 and statewide average soybean prices fell from $9.89 to $8.17 over the same period. During this period there has also been a substantial drop in livestock prices. The livestock industry faced challenges as well. Fed cattle have seen the price drop from $161 per hundred weights down to $116. Hogs are down from $76 to $49 per hundred weights. Iowa's poultry producers were at the center of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreak which resulted in the euthanizing of more than 30 million birds in Iowa during 2015. The USDA described the outbreak of 2015 as the largest animal health emergency in U.S. history.

The tighter margins seen on the farm are starting to ripple through the economy. Land prices are down 3.9 percent. There have been several announcements of layoffs at manufacturers, machinery providers, seed companies, and other businesses that serve the agriculture industry. Coupled with a softening global demand and a strong dollar there have been overall significant impacts on Iowa's economy.

TOWARD THE FUTURE

Iowa will support the broadening of career pathways available to job-seekers which result in attainment of industry recognized credentials and sustainable employment. Registered Apprenticeship programs result in increased chances for upward mobility, increased pay, and job stability. Iowa's vision for the future of workforce services includes increasing the number of partner-employers that employ apprentices in the healthcare and other leading industries.

Table 3: Occupations with the most job growth, 2014-2024, Projected; Numbers in Thousands

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Change 2014-24	Number	Percent	Median annual wage, 2014
Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	$35,540
Personal care aides	39-9021	1,768.4	2,226.5	458.1	25.9	$20,440
Registered nurses	29-1141	2,751.0	3,190.3	439.3	16.0	$66,640
Home health aides	31-1011	913.5	1,261.9	348.4	38.1	$21,380
Food preparation and serving workers	35-3021	3,159.7	3,503.2	343.5	10.9	$18,410
Retail salespersons	41-2031	4,624.9	4,939.1	314.2	6.8	$21,390
Nursing assistants	31-1014	1,492.1	1,754.1	262.0	17.6	$25,100
Customer service representatives	43-4051	2,581.8	2,834.8	252.9	9.8	$31,200
Cooks, restaurant	35-2014	1,109.7	1,268.7	158.9	14.3	$22,490
General and operations managers	11-1021	2,124.1	2,275.2	151.1	7.1	$97,270
Construction laborers	47-2061	1,159.1	1,306.5	147.4	12.7	$31,090
Accountants and auditors	13-2011	1,332.7	1,475.1	142.4	10.7	$65,940
Medical assistants	31-9092	591.3	730.2	138.9	23.5	$29,960
Janitors and cleaners, excluding maids/housekeepers	37-2011	2,360.6	2,496.9	136.3	5.8	$22,840
Software developers, applications	15-1132	718.4	853.7	135.3	18.8	$95,510
Laborers and freight, stock, hand-movers	53-7062	2,441.3	2,566.4	125.1	5.1	$24,430
First-line supervisors of office and admin workers	43-1011	1,466.1	1,587.3	121.2	8.3	$50,780
Computer systems analysts	15-1121	567.8	686.3	118.6	20.9	$82,710
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	29-2061	719.9	837.2	117.3	16.3	$42,490
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	37-2012	1,457.7	1,569.4	111.7	7.7	$20,120
Medical secretaries	43-6013	527.6	635.8	108.2	20.5	$32,240
Management analysts	13-1111	758.0	861.4	103.4	13.6	$80,880
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	53-3032	1,797.7	1,896.4	98.8	5.5	$39,520
Receptionists and information clerks	43-4171	1,028.6	1,126.3	97.8	9.5	$26,760
Office clerks, general	43-9061	3,062.5	3,158.2	95.8	3.1	$28,670
Sales representatives, wholesale	41-	1,453.1	1,546.5	93.4	6.4	$55,020

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Change 2014-24	Number	Percent	Median annual wage, 2014
and manufacturing	4012					
Stock clerks and order fillers	43-5081	1,878.1	1,971.1	92.9	4.9	$22,850
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	13-1161	495.5	587.8	92.3	18.6	$61,290
First-line supervisors of food prep/serving workers	35-1012	890.1	978.6	88.5	9.9	$29,560
Electricians	47-2111	628.8	714.7	85.9	13.7	$51,110
Maintenance and repair workers, general	49-9071	1,374.7	1,458.1	83.5	6.1	$36,170

Data obtained from the Occupational Employment Statistics program, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

IOWA'S EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRIES

Iowa continues to expand on its long tradition of agricultural and manufacturing excellence. Both of these industries have served as a springboard for continued industry development in a broad range of areas. Today, Iowa continues to lead the way in advanced manufacturing, value-added agriculture and food production; and is also in the forefront of innovation in renewable energy and fuels; information and communications technology; and distribution and warehousing. Iowa's emerging industry sectors and occupations are addressed individually in the following section.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Iowa is tops in the country in producing pork, soybeans, corn and eggs, according to the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG). Iowa farmers also are leaders in the turkey and dairy industries as well as the bio-based products sector. This sector is comprised of firms engaged in mechanical, physical or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. Firms are often described as plants, factories, or mills and typically use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment. However, firms that transform materials or substances into new products by hand and those engaged in selling to the general public such as bakeries, candy stores, and custom tailors. In all, Iowa is responsible for more than seven percent of America's food supply.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Located between the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers, Iowa has few fossil energy resources but has significant renewable energy potential. Iowa's climate, with rainfall in the growing season and dry air at harvest, together with the state's rich soils produce abundant grain crops. The state leads the nation in the production of both corn and ethanol made from corn. Iowa's open fields give the state an unobstructed wind resource that is ranked seventh in the nation. With its many days of sunshine each year, Iowa has the potential to increase solar energy as an untapped renewable energy resource.

Iowa is the 30th most densely populated state in the nation but, because of its energy-intensive economy, the state ranks 5th in total energy use per person. Industry, which includes agriculture and biofuels production in addition to manufacturing, is Iowa's major energy-consuming sector. Transportation is the state's second largest energy-consuming sector. The residential sector, where

the majority of households heat with natural gas, consumes less energy than all but the commercial sector. Following the release of the Battelle Report, the State of Iowa began investigation into traded clusters to find the emerging opportunities. The renewable chemical industry is one of those emerging sectors due to Iowa's natural and available resources.

"Iowa owns the bio-fuels space. We are first in ethanol production and second in biodiesel, but that is a commodity," Debbie Durham says. "Iowa needed to think like a petroleum company. We needed to look at our existing industry and discover a way to harvest high-value chemicals from it."

To that end, Iowa officials brought together industry experts and researchers from Iowa State University, tested the idea, and drafted the legislation to provide a production tax credit for renewable chemicals. As a result, Iowa will be the first state to market with a fully refundable bio-production tax credit for 30-plus bio-chemicals that can be harvested from the rich fuel stream in Iowa.

Iowa is among the top three states with the highest percentages of total in-state electricity generation from non-hydroelectric renewable energy resources. Wind is the dominant renewable resource used in Iowa. The state is second only to Texas in electricity generation from wind turbines. Most of Iowa's abundant wind energy is harnessed in the northern and western parts of the state. Hydroelectric power is also used for electricity generation in Iowa. It contributes less than 2% to the state's total net electricity generation. A small amount of electricity is also generated from biomass.

Iowa is the leading ethanol-producing state in the nation and has the second-largest biodiesel production capacity after Texas. Iowa's plentiful cornfields provide the feedstock for the state's more than 40 ethanol plants. Iowa's ethanol plants have a combined productive capacity of about 3.7 billion gallons per year. Iowa also has cellulosic ethanol plants that use agricultural waste including corn stover (the stalk, leaf, cob, and husk left after harvest) or corn kernel fiber. An existing corn ethanol plant is converting to a cellulosic ethanol plant that processes municipal solid waste. Iowa also has about a dozen biodiesel plants with a combined production capacity of about 330 million gallons per year, according to a report published by the US Energy Administration, Iowa Profile. For more information, go to http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=IA.

Iowa's energy policies and regulations promote energy efficiency and renewable resources. In addition to several energy efficiency standards, the Mandatory Utility Green Power Option requires all electric utilities operating in Iowa, including those not rate-regulated by the Iowa Utilities Board, to offer green power options to their customers. State regulations also require Iowa's two investor-owned utilities to own or to contract for a combined total of 105 megawatts of renewable generating capacity and associated production from generating facilities designated by the utilities and approved by the Iowa Utilities Board. Iowa is a natural place for this industry to progress due to its abundant supply of the one raw material most needed by the renewable chemical sector, agricultural sugar.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Advanced manufacturing is Iowa's largest industry, contributing $25 billion annually to the state's economy. With nearly 4,000 manufacturing establishments employing over 210,000 people, Iowa continues to supply cutting-edge, innovative products in a myriad of industry sectors. Iowa's top performing industry divisions hold a pre-eminent position in the United States. Industrial metal processing, automation precision machinery, environment control systems, digital and electronic

devices and power generation equipment are highly specialized, surpassing the national trend. Other key industries include:

- Aerospace and defense
- Industrial chemicals
- Construction components
- Commercial and industrial motor vehicles
- Food and food ingredients
- Printing and packaging
- Medical drugs and devices

In 2014, manufacturing supplied 216,887 jobs to Iowans, which represented 14.3 percent of all employment (both public and private sector). This sector had an average annual wage of $54,401. This is 27.9 percent higher than the statewide average of $42,536 for all industries. The manufacturing sector was hit hard by the most recent recession, shedding 26,621 jobs between 2008 and 2010 (11.7%). Manufacturing has added 16,105 jobs since 2010 (8.0%) but still remains 10,516 jobs below its pre-recession employment level, for net job losses of 4.6 percent between 2008 and 2014. Despite the large drop in employment, wages have continued to rise. Wages have grown every year since 2006, even though the recession. Wages have grown 22.6 percent since 2006, increasing from $44,357 to $54,401 over the same period. Men hold 72.9 percent of all industry jobs in Iowa.

Of Iowa's 99 counties, 32% are classified as manufacturing dependent, and this is especially true in the effected regions. Iowa currently has over 6,000 Advanced Manufacturing careers, with average pay of over $51,000/year. The Advanced Manufacturing industry is Iowa's leading contributor to the state's economy, bringing in more than the agriculture industry, even though Iowa is America's largest producer of corn, soybeans, pigs, and eggs (Source: Iowa Economic Development). With more than $13.3 billion worth of manufactured and value-added goods shipped out of the country, manufacturing accounts for 88 percent of Iowa's total exports. Since 2001, Iowa manufacturing exports have grown by 179 percent - nearly 73 percent more that the nation as a whole.

SERVICES INDUSTRIES

Iowa's services industry is responsible for creating over 33 percent of the Hawkeye State's jobs, according to the IEDA. This workforce includes wholesale and retail trade, insurance and healthcare. With such a diversity of occupations in the general "services" industry, the accommodation and food services and the general services industries are included in this section.

ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES

In 2014, the accommodation and food services sector comprised 7.9 percent of all employment (public and private sector) in Iowa with 120,322 jobs and an annual average wage of $14,418. Although this wage is 66.1 percent lower than the statewide average of $42,536 for all industries, there is a greater ratio of part-time employment in addition to lower hourly rates than other industries. The average wage does not include tips or gratuities earned by wait staff, bell hops, and bartenders that are not reported to their employers. Employment in this sector has recovered well since reaching its recession-low in 2010. Accommodation and food services has grown nearly 8.2 percent since the lowest employment of 111,206 jobs in 2010 and surpassed the pre-recession high of 117,590 employees from 2007. After remaining fairly flat through the recession, wages have also increased in recent years. Also, since 2010, annual wages increased from $12,668 to $14,418 or

13.8 percent. This industry typically employs the most young workers and those who have the greatest barriers to self-sufficiency in Iowa. In 2013, the most recent year available, 30.7 percent of the sector's workers were between the ages of 14 and 21. Females accounted for 57.8 percent of all workers. This sector is comprised of firms that provide customers with lodging and/or prepare meals, snacks and beverages for immediate consumption. The sector includes both accommodation and food services since they are often combined.

OTHER SERVICES

The other services (except public administration) sector consists of establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the classification system. Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities such as equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, grant-making, advocacy, and other personal care services.

In March 2014, there were 9,037 locations in Iowa classified in the other services, which employ 44,879 people. This sector consists of many small companies, averaging less than 5 employees per establishment. There are a variety of services represented in this sector, including occupations such as barber shops, auto mechanics, political parties, and nannies. The largest sub-sector is automotive repair and maintenance, representing 35.2 per cent of the employment in this industry. The smallest sub-sector is private households, which represent 9.2 percent of employment.

In 2014, the other services sector comprised 3.0 percent of all employment (both public and private sector) in Iowa, providing the state 44,879 jobs, with an average annual wage of $28,770 that was 32.4 percent lower than the statewide average of $42,536 for all industries. This wage rate is pretty on par for the region, although it is 15.2 percent lower than the national average for this sector. Employment has grown fairly steadily since 2006, even adding jobs during the deepest recession years of 2009 and 2010. Some of the growth was offset between 2012 and 2013 when some establishments providing home health care to individuals was reclassified from private households in this sector to individual and family services sub-sector in the health care and social assistance industries, classified under the health care sector. Since 2006, this sector has added 3,113 jobs, growing by 7.5 percent. Wages have also been steadily increasing, up 24.6 percent over the same period. Keep in mind, however, that these numbers are somewhat distorted by the reclassification outlined above. Women somewhat outnumber men in this sector, especially amongst workers under age 35.

The state is also home to a growing telecommunications sector thanks largely to the Iowa Network Services (INS) statewide fiber-optic network that provides connectivity across the state. These services enable businesses to stay connected from virtually anywhere — even the most remote rural areas. And the numbers are steadily growing. In addition, major industry sectors such as finance, insurance and manufacturing rely on information technology to compete in today's global economy. Nearly 55,000 high-tech workers in all firms support Iowa's economy - across technology and non-technology industries.

Information and Communications Technology

In recent years, Iowa has attracted new investments from IT companies, including IBM, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft data centers. The technology industry employs over 76,000 workers and accounts for $10.696 billion (8.8%) of the state's GDP. In 2014, the information sector provided 26,110 jobs to Iowans, which represented almost 1.7 percent of all covered employment. This sector

reported an average, sector annual wage of $50,600, which is 19.0 percent higher than the average wage across all industries (both public and private sector) of the state, $42,536. Employment in this sector was fairly steady from 2006 through 2008, but since then has dropped precipitously, even as the recession has ended and other industries have regained the jobs they shed during the downturn. The downward trend has not proven true for the average income, which has been steadily rising. Since a recent peak in 2007, employment has decreased by 23.5 percent, while over the same period, wages increased 19.9 percent. This likely reflects the fact that the well-paid data and web industries have actually added employment as the sector as a whole has shrunk. Male workers account for a slight majority of the employees in this sector, holding 50.9 percent of the sector's jobs. Women are the majority of workers over the age of 45, perhaps reflecting the growing influence of male-dominated tech careers creating the new jobs in this sector.

The information sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: (a) producing and distributing information and cultural products, (b) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications, and (c) processing data. The main components of this sector are the publishing industries, including software publishing, the motion picture and sound recording industries, the telecommunications industries, and the information services and data processing industries.

INFORMATION SECTOR

The information sector consists of 1,683 units, employing 26,110 works in 2014. The largest subsector is publishing industries (except internet) with 476 establishments (28.3 percent of the industry's total) and 8,630 employees (33.1 percent of the industry's total). Telecommunications and data processing, hosting, and related services also make up a significant portion of this sector (25.9 and 22.5 percent respectively). After holding steady for a few years, employment in this sector began to contract in 2009, and the sector continued to shed jobs every year since then. At the same time, wages have grown steadily, bolstered by employment growth in the well-paid data processing, hosting, and related services. Note that many other information technology jobs are classified in the Professional & Technical Services sector.

DISTRIBUTION AND WAREHOUSING

Iowa is in the middle of the United States. Sitting in the center of an eight-state market of nearly one million businesses and thirty-five million people, Iowa's Midwest location offers a distinct advantage to businesses with both domestic and international markets and suppliers. There are 4,105 transportation and warehousing establishments in Iowa with $5 billion in sales, employing 56,775 people.

Iowa offers particular geographic and tax advantages for distribution and warehousing. With three Interstate highways (I-35, I-80 and I-29) and a network of secondary highways systems, nearly 4,000 miles of rail freight track, statewide airport coverage and 60 barge terminals that ship and receive, Iowa provides efficient and cost-effective transportation options.

It is projected by the Bureau of Economic Analysis that the warehousing and distribution industry in Iowa contributes approximately $5 billion to Iowa's gross domestic product. There are approximately 4,632 transportation and warehousing establishments in Iowa with $5 billion in sales, employing 64,480 people.

- Iowa's roadway system ranks 12th in the nation, with 113,377 miles of highway. Each year $300 billion in goods are shipped to and from Iowa. Trucks originating in Iowa can reach 83 million people within one day's drive and 252 million people within two days' drive. Freight and rail shipments can reach vital markets like Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Omaha and Kansas City in just a few short hours.
- Iowa has 108 publicly-owned airports, including 8 that offer commercial air service. These facilities annually accommodate 2.5 million passengers and transport 175 million pounds of cargo.
- Iowa is crisscrossed by nearly 4,000 miles of rail freight track, used by 19 freight carriers to carry over 259.3 million tons of freight throughout the state to other destinations. Iowa also has two transcontinental Amtrak passenger routes.
- The 491 miles of inland waterways in Iowa carry more than 12 million tons of freight each year.
- General refrigerated storage (public/private units) in Iowa totals nearly 80 million gross cubic ft.

EMERGING OCCUPATIONS

Iowa's fastest growing occupational data was retrieved from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and is displayed in Table 4. Information contained in the table varies slightly when compared to the Battelle report and data reported by Iowa Workforce Development. The discrepancies are based on several factors: differences in data collection methods, date ranges, industry or occupational classification, projection methods used and reporting periods. As part of ongoing planning, data collection methods, reporting periods, and type of data collected will be reviewed for opportunities to enhance consistency. In order to reach the degree of alignment and integration envisioned by the Branstad-Reynolds Future Ready Iowa initiative and WIOA in order to provide services and activities that meet current and future labor-market needs, it is imperative that Iowa policymakers are using the most up-to-date and accurate data, as well as the same methods of classification, reporting, and projection.

Table 4: Fastest growing occupations, 2014 and projected 2024, Numbers in Thousands

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Employment, 2024	Change 2014-2024, Number	Change 2014-2024, Percent	Median Ann. Wage, 2014
Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	$35,540
Wind turbine service technicians	49-9081	4.4	9.2	4.8	108.0	$48,800
Occupational therapy assistants	31-2011	33.0	47.1	14.1	42.7	$56,950
Physical therapist assistants	31-2021	78.7	110.7	31.9	40.6	$54,410
Physical therapist aides	31-2022	50.0	69.5	19.5	39.0	$24,650
Home health aides	31-1011	913.5	1,261.9	348.4	38.1	$21,380
Commercial divers	49-9092	4.4	6.0	1.6	36.9	$45,890
2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Employment, 2024	Change 2014-2024, Number	Change 2014-2024, Percent	Median Ann. Wage, 2014

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Employment, 2024	Change 2014-2024, Number	Change 2014-2024, Percent	Median Ann. Wage, 2014
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Wind turbine service technicians	49-9081	4.4	9.2	4.8	108.0	$48,800
Occupational therapy assistants	31-2011	33.0	47.1	14.1	42.7	$56,950

BATTELLE HIGHLIGHTS

IEDA Director Durham refers to the following guiding principles which emerged from the Battelle report as being transformational to Iowa's economy and workforce in coming years: · Implementation of appropriate measures of economic success which go beyond traditional measures of jobs and economic activity and include the quality of jobs and improvements in living standards for workers.

- Iowa's major industry clusters are driving increased economic performance and will remain critical to economic growth in the future.
- Balance and integration are keys to economic development planning, especially those that focus on innovation, retention and attraction.
- The state must provide support and resources sufficient to impact key areas such as workforce, innovation, entrepreneurism, broadband; transportation infrastructure and business climate.

EMPLOYER'S EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

Prior to the authorization of WIOA, Iowa was taking steps to improve its workforce delivery system by developing and implementing programs that increase the capacity of the workforce to meet the needs of employers. Offering opportunities for workers to receive specialized training and to engage hands-on learning will increase workers' value and appeal to current and future employers.

MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS

Middle-skill jobs as those that generally require some significant education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree. These postsecondary education or training requirements can include associate's degrees, vocational certificates, significant on-the-job training, previous work experience, or generally "some college" less than a bachelor's degree. In some of the analysis (especially when we using BLS projections for occupational growth over the coming decade), BLS estimates of the demand for education and training in detailed occupational categories. But, when analyzing recent trends and future projections in broad occupational categories, skills are divided

into high-skill, middle-skill, and low-skill subcategories based on the average educational attainments and/or training of people in those jobs. Accordingly:

- High-skill occupations tend to be those in the professional/technical and managerial categories.
- Low-skill occupations tend to be those in the service and agricultural categories.
- Middle-skill occupations are the others, including clerical, sales, construction, installation/repair, production, and transportation/material moving.

These skill categories reflect only average skill demands within broad occupational categories. Some detailed occupations within the technical and managerial categories require less than a bachelor's degree, some in the middle categories might require only high school, and some in the service category may require more than high school. There are notable disparities among Iowa's workers in terms of skills. Information provided by LMI Division, Iowa Workforce Development, in 2015 supported the belief that middle-skill jobs remain a fundamental element of Iowa's current and future economy. According to *Middle Skill Jobs in Iowa*, a publication prepared by the Labor Market Information Division (LMI) of Iowa Workforce Development, a significant challenge Iowa faces is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs. Substantial disparities exist between the number of workers able to compete for middle-skill jobs and those struggling to find low-skill jobs. In Iowa, 34% of available workers possess low-skills, while workers with middle-skills represent 32% of the workforce. Only 12% of available jobs seek workers with low skill-sets while numerous middle-skill jobs remain unfilled. In fact, 55% of jobs require at least mid-level skills. Targeting workers with low-skills for transition to middle-skill jobs is a critical step-forward in minimizing the skill-gap.

Further, helping Iowans up-skill to meet middle-skill job demands will help workers earn better wages. The average annual wage paid to employees whose jobs require only low-skills - skills that can be learned or acquired within 30 days without prior training - is only $22,605. This is 40.7% lower than the Iowa statewide average of $38,120 for all industries. Meanwhile, middle-skill workers in Iowa are earning a mean wage of $35,000 - $60,000 annually. Occupations at the higher-end of the pay range can be found in business and financial operations; healthcare; construction and extraction; and installation, maintenance and repair.

Iowa has a well-documented need for workers with at least middle-level skills and that need is expected to continue to rise in the next few years. Low and middle skill jobs are expected to remain fairly constant and in equilibrium with sufficient numbers of appropriately matched-skill workers to fill current and future jobs. A variety of methodologies and approaches exists in relation to defining work-skills, but it is generally accepted that low-skills are entry-level, non-credentialed skills.

LMI provided a list of skills that employers reported are needed by applicants for open positions. Basic skills include literacy, numeracy, and the abilities to locate and read for information. More than one-fifth (20.9%) of employers in all of the sectors surveyed feel that applicants need basic skills needed for the job, along with Written communication, 50%; Reading for Information, 43%; Mathematics, 39% and Locating Information, 26%.

SOFT-SKILLS

Soft skills that employers reported were needed by applicants for open positions include skills that are well suited to working with others. Nearly one-third (29.9%) of employers in all sectors surveyed reported applicants required soft skills. Soft skills commonly include Motivation, Dependability, Communication Skills, Time-Management, Teamwork, Leadership and Honesty.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

Occupational skills needed by applicants are typically the technical and know-how skills that apply directly to a job, often referred to as “hard skills” and are primarily job-specific. Nearly two-fifths (37.1%) of employers surveyed believed applicants lacked occupational skills. Other Hard-skills noted by employers as needed by applicants included: Analytical Thinking, Business Communication, Machine Operation, Basic Computer Literacy, Project Management, and Computer

Upon receipt of information concerning occupational skill needs by employers, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) began developing strategies to create opportunities for IVRS job candidates to learn the necessary problem-solving skills to work. While this is currently in development, it is being planned for and will continue to be addressed through a variety of methods including third party contracting for service, direct service provision by IVRS staff, and coordination with a multitude of workforce system partners. In regard to hiring processes, nearly half (46.1%) of the employers reported giving preference to applicants that had obtained certifications for the vacant positions. In addition, 38.7% of respondents indicated they give applicants with veteran status preference in hiring.

With Iowa’s current shortage of middle- and high-skilled workers, it is critical that the state develop strategies that will draw workers and connect them with available middle- and high-skill jobs. Strong gains across a broad range of occupations at both the middle- and higher-skill levels in Iowa demonstrates Iowa’s ability to grow middle- and high-skilled jobs and is a strong indicator of how well the economy has performed in recent years, despite the economic recession and slow economic recovery. Employer-driven policies, supports and industry-focused solutions will prepare a dynamic and Future Ready workforce to meet the challenges of the future. Innovative strategies that are business-driven and increase the skills, talents, and abilities of the workforce will prepare workers to meet the demands of tomorrow’s jobs. The Future Ready Iowa initiative seeks to meet this need by equipping 70% of Iowans with education and training beyond high school. Acceptable credentials, education or experience for most Middle-skill jobs include:

- High School Diploma + Moderate to Long-Term On-the-job Training
- High School Diploma + Registered Apprenticeship
- Postsecondary non-degree award
- Some College, no degree
- Associate’s Degree

IOWA’S IN-DEMAND AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Using LMI data and resources, some of Iowa’s top industry clusters are outlined below along with the standard educational, experiential, training, and skillset requirements.

Table 5: Iowa’s Top Industry Clusters & Associated Education, Skills, & Training (AST)

Industry Cluster	Credential	AST
Agriculture and Food Production	AS,	A, M, S
Automation & Industrial Machinery	PS	A, N
Avionics & Communications Electronics	HS, PS, BA	A, N, I
Biosciences	DP	A, N
Building & Construction Products	HS, PS	A, N, M
Heavy Machinery	HS	A, M

Industry Cluster	Credential	AST
Healthcare Services	BA, MA, HS	A, N
Information Services, Digital Media & Technology	AS, BA, SC	A, N
Insurance & Finance	HS, BA, PS	A, M, S, N
Metals Manufacturing	HS	A, M
Renewable Energy	BA, DP	A, N
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	HS	A, N, S

Key: Career Preparation determined by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Alternative employment pathways may exist as well as differing educational, training, or licensing requirements per state. Iowa requirements are used if/when available. Career Preparation areas/levels include: Education (typical education level needed to enter an occupation): DP = Doctoral or Professional degree; MA = Master's degree; BA = Bachelor's degree; AS = Associate's degree; PS = Postsecondary non-degree award; SC = Some college, no degree; HS = High school diploma or equivalent; < HS = Less than high school; Work Experience (typical work experience level commonly considered necessary for entry into an occupation, or substitutable for formal types of training): > 5 = 5 years or more; < 5 = Less than 5 years; N = None; and Job Training (typical on-the-job training level needed to attain occupational competency): I = Internship/residency; A = Apprenticeship; L = Long-term on-the-job training; M = Moderate-term on-the-job training; S = Short-term on-the-job training; None = N. Source: 2012-2022 State Of Iowa Occupational Projections, LMI, IWD 2014

In consideration of all the available data resources and public and private analyses which have been conducted around Iowa's changing economic and workforce landscape, indicators point towards the need for a robust and available workforce. The Unified State Plan, as developed in cooperation and collaboration between the required and many optional partners, forms the foundation on which Iowa's Future Ready Workforce will grow and be further developed. In order to achieve the highest potential for success for ALL of Iowa's workers, including those with barriers to employment and the youth populations, the state will need to create opportunities to connect all facets of the workforce: employers, job-seekers, providers, and others in meaningful and lasting ways. Through the incorporation of best practices which are business-driven and benefit current and future job-seekers, mutually agreed upon goals will be achieved.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Iowa’s pre-recession employment level was 1.66 million. So the economy first has to recover the jobs it lost in the recession before going on to add additional opportunities for unemployed workers and new entrants into the workforce. Iowa’s statewide annual average unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 percent in 2014 from 4.7 percent in 2013. At the same time, the U.S. rate for unemployment also improved, dropping to 6.2 percent in 2014 from 7.4 percent in 2013. Iowa and Hawaii tied for the ninth-lowest unemployment rate in the nation. The number of unemployed persons in Iowa averaged 74,000 in 2014, down from 78,200 in 2013.

Men accounted for 60 percent of the unemployed in Iowa in 2014, compared to women who made up 40 percent. Minorities and youth continued to experience the highest rates of unemployment: Blacks or African Americans (14.1 percent), youth 16 to 19 years of age (12.0 percent), and Hispanics (8.5 percent). Workers with less education also continued to experience a higher unemployment rate than better educated individuals: those with less than a high school diploma (10.9 percent), high school graduates with no college (5.8 percent), those with some college or associate’s degree (4.6 percent), and those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher (2.1 percent).

The July 2015 labor statistics show that an 11 percent unemployment rate for persons with disabilities while persons without disabilities had a 4.8 percent unemployment rate. This is a significant discrepancy that the core partners will address as the collaborative work continues, and the unemployment rate for this population declines, the outcome will demonstrate the system improvements expected with the WIOA Unified State Plan.

Unemployment insurance benefits paid and average duration continued to trend downward in the wake of the recession. The total weeks compensated for unemployment insurance decreased by 7.2 percent versus 2013. Average duration of benefits dipped to 12.9 weeks from 13.7 in 2013. These levels peaked for Iowa in 2009 when the average duration of benefits were 15.6 weeks paid and 2.6 million weeks were compensated—over twice the amount paid in 2014. Recent benefit amounts now trend near pre-recession levels.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Table 6: Iowa Employment Statistics

Labor Force Statistics	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Employment	1,566,100	1,560,800	1,555,500	1,644,500
Total Unemployment	81,800	72,600	63,400	60,300
Percent Unemployed	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5

Information obtained from LMI, IWD, 2015.

Iowa's long term unemployment also eased somewhat in 2014, down to 18.8 percent of total unemployment from 21.1 percent in 2013. Unemployment rates in all nine of the state's metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's) and most rural counties decreased in 2014. The Ames MSA experienced the lowest rate of the nine major labor market areas at 2.9 percent; Davenport-Moline-Rock Island MSA was the highest at 6.3 percent. Jobless rates for Iowa's 99 counties ranged from a low of 2.6 percent in Lyon to a high of 6.3 percent in Lee.

For the Program Year 2014 (PY14), the Dislocated Worker Entered Employment rate resulted in 69.1%. The target rate for program year 2014 was 70% however this result was within the minimum target rate of 80% of the negotiated goal of 56.0%. Dislocated Worker Entered Employment accounts for individuals employed in the 1st quarter after exit quarter.

VACANCY DATA

Table 7 shows reported vacancies by occupational category. The vacancy data reflects data captured between October 31, 2013 and November 30, 2014. The majority of vacancies are within the sales and related, office and administrative support; transportation and material moving; healthcare practitioner and technical; production; and food preparation and serving related occupational categories. The categories are clustered using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system.

Among the employers who responded to the survey, 2,984 (31.0%) reported having one or more current or anticipated job vacancies, while 6,643 respondents (69.0%) reported having no job vacancies. There is an average of 34,378 job vacancies per day reported by employers across Iowa. The majority of reported vacancies exist in positions that typically require some training beyond high school or in middle-skill jobs. Of employers that responded with job vacancies, 41.3% were businesses with 10 or fewer employees, 51.2% had between 11 and 99 employees and 7.5% had 100 employees or more. While large employers only accounted for 7.5% of the survey responses, nearly half (47.2%) of the total job vacancies in the state were with large employers. During the same period of time the average ratio of unemployed persons for every vacant position was 1.7%. Vacancy data reflects data captured between October 31, 2013 and November 30, 2014. The majority of vacancies are within the sales and related, office and administrative support; transportation and material moving; healthcare practitioner and technical; production; and food preparation and serving related occupational categories.

Table 7: Iowa's Current Vacancies, by Category

Category	% of Total	Vacancies per Day (average)

Category	% of Total	Vacancies per Day (average)
Sales & Related	11.6%	3,994
Office & Administrative Support	11.0%	3,779
Transportation & Material Moving	10.6%	3,643
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	8.3%	2,847
Production	7.5%	2,593
Food Preparation & Serving Related	6.8%	2,333
Computer & Mathematical Science	5.5%	1,887
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	4.9%	1,696
Management	4.8%	1,640
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	4.3%	1,480
Business & Financial Operations	3.7%	1,287
Construction & Extraction	3.6%	1,221
Healthcare Support	3.5%	1,205
Architecture & Engineering	3.0%	1,047
Community & Social Science	2.1%	720
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	2.0%	683
Education, Training & Library	1.9%	639
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Related	1.5%	504
Protective Service	1.1%	386
Personal Care & Service	1.1%	366
Life, Physical & Social Science	1.0%	355
Legal	0.1%	45
Military Specific	0.1%	28
Total	100%	34,378

Note: Totals may vary due to rounding methods. Source: Iowa Workforce Development's Job Bank

NOTABLE SUBGROUPS

There are a number of subgroups that face more significant barriers to employment and therefore require enhanced services such as those envisioned under WIOA. Among these groups are individuals with disabilities, veterans, and the incarcerated population. Each of these groups experience unemployment rates that are significantly higher than those of the general population. They also represent vital resources that the state will need to utilize in order to help counteract the workforce quantity and quality challenges. **Table 8** provides the overview of Iowa's general population and demographic characteristics.

Table 8: Population & Demographic Characteristics

Population Characteristics	Iowa	Des Moines	Cedar Rapids	Davenport	Sioux City	Iowa City
Population, July 1, 2015	3123899	209220	129195	102448	82517	73415
Persons under 18 years, %	23.9	24.8	23.5	24.0	26.6	14.9
Persons 65 years and over, %	15.8	11.0	13.1	12.6	12.4	8.2
Female persons, %	50.5	51.1	50.9	51.3	50.8	50.3
White alone, %	92.1	76.4	88.0	80.7	80.6	82.5
Black or African American alone, %	3.4	10.2	5.6	10.8	2.9	5.8
American Indian & Alaska Native alone, %	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	2.6	0.2
Asian alone, %	2.2	4.4	2.2	2.2	2.7	6.9
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1	<0.1	0.1	<0.1

Population Characteristics	Iowa	Des Moines	Cedar Rapids	Davenport	Sioux City	Iowa City
alone, %						
Two or More Races, %	1.7	3.4	2.9	3.9	3.7	2.5
Hispanic or Latino, %	5.6	12.0	3.3	7.3	16.4	5.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, %	87.1	70.5	86.0	76.6	73.5	79.7
Veterans, 2010-2014	219006	12073	9526	7013	5310	2579
Foreign born persons, %, 2010-2014	4.7	11.3	3.4	3.9	10.7	13.4
Language other than English spoken at home	7.4	17.2	5.1	6.4	17.9	17.2
High school graduate or higher, age 25 years+, %	91.3	87.3	93.3	90.7	83.6	*95.4
Bachelor's degree or higher, age 25 years+, %	26.4	24.7	30.9	27.3	20.5	58.8
With a disability, under age 65 years, %, 2010-2014	7.7	10.4	7.5	7.4	8.8	5.7
Persons without health insurance,	7.2	12.0	8.8	12.9	14.7	8.7
Persons in poverty, %	12.2	19.9	11.9	17.7	16.6	**27.6

QuickFacts data derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.

POPULATIONS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

WIOA defines a number of populations which may experience significant barriers to employment. Iowa is no different than any other state in recognizing that many of its residents may experience difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. The State Plan outlines many of the ways that these individuals will be assisted.

Among the individuals with significant barriers to employment, the following are most notable:

- There are 88,508 potential displaced homemakers as defined as non-wage earners living in a family setting (2014 American Community Survey)
- There are an additional 124,355 individuals that are considered low-income, as defined by earning less than 125% of the federal poverty level wage (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are 15,619 American Indians or Alaska Natives in the state (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are 27,352 youth that have significant disabilities (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are approximately 2,314 homeless individuals,
- 675 youth aged out of foster care in Iowa in 2014, of this, more than 2% percent lacked a formal transition plan (IA Dept. of Children and Families)
- 213,227 or 7.4 percent of all individuals in the state speak a language other than English at home, which may indicate limited English proficiency (2014) American Community Survey).

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

There are 76,576 working age people with a recognized disability in Iowa and 46.5% of them are employed. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation, behind South Dakota and North Dakota. There

are approximately 14,500 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20. Each year 25% of youth with disabilities age out of the school system with the goal of achieving career success. Transitioning these individuals into the workforce with the skills needed to compete for in-demand jobs will be essential to meet Iowa's growing demand for skilled workers. Iowa's low unemployment rate and the significant skills gap in the labor force, place a greater focus on the need to find ways to bring more people with disabilities into the workforce. Iowa still ranks 7thin the nation in terms of the gap in labor force participation rate (LFPR) between those with and without disabilities. Iowa is outperforming the national average with 34.7% of their 26,400 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities employed and 52.5% of the 13,600 Iowans who are blind or have vision loss are employed as are 58.5% of the 22,900 with hearing differences. Iowa must continue to focus on how to best empower more individuals with disabilities through the independence that employment provides.

Table 9 highlights the top two barriers to employment the clientele of for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) face throughout Iowa. It is important to keep in mind those served by IVRS have a presenting disability in addition to the listed barriers. This data is current as of December 14, 2015 and includes information from the IVRS total caseload. Of IVRS total caseload (13,982), there were 3,334 persons who were considered low-income. This is determined by participants' income and state assistance dependency at the time of application. It represents nearly a quarter (23.85%) of all persons currently being served by IVRS with some agencies reporting more than 30% low-income. An average of seven out of 10 participants lack basic educational or occupational skills, with participant residing in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, and Mason City reporting much higher percentages (9.44, 12.05, and 10.77 respectively). IVRS' prior standards and indicators required the Agency to evaluate the progress made toward self-sufficiency by comparing the income levels at application and at closure of the case record. IVRS continues to evaluate the progress job candidates make toward achieving self-sufficiency as defined by the number of individuals who report dependency upon their own wages at substantial gainful activity levels at closure. IVRS continues to focus and make substantial progress impacting individuals incomes.

Table 9: Individuals Whose Wages Increased from Application/At Closure: 2012-2015 (%)

FFY	Count Increased Annual Wages	Total Successful Closures	Percent
2012	2,009	2,162	92.92%
2013	2,024	2,185	92.63%
2014	2,046	2,205	92.79%
2015	2,180	2,321	93.93%

Table 10 presents the number of individuals with disabilities that have co-occurring barriers to employment with other programs and services that specifically serve this population. IVRS connects individuals with those programs and services based on the goals identified and the services that are available. IVRS' caseload data is displayed is for a 12-month period.

Table 10: Individuals with Co-Occurring Barriers to Employment, As of 12/2015

Agency	Agency Caseload	Low Income Barrier Count	Low Income % of Caseload	Lack Education or Occupational Skills Barrier Count	Lack Education or Occupational Skills % of Caseload
Burlington	549	90	16.39%	25	4.55%
Cedar Rapids	1568	464	29.59%	148	9.44%

Agency	Agency Caseload	Low Income Barrier Count	Low Income % of Caseload	Lack Education or Occupational Skills Barrier Count	Lack Education or Occupational Skills % of Caseload
Council Bluffs	863	271	31.40%	104	12.05%
Davenport	884	233	26.36%	84	9.50%
Dubuque	1070	180	16.82%	40	3.74%
Fort Dodge	968	249	25.72%	63	6.51%
Iowa City	929	284	30.57%	76	8.18%
Mason City	910	229	25.16%	98	10.77%
North Central	1599	350	21.89%c	87	5.44%
Ottumwa	779	197	25.29%	51	6.55%
Sioux City	997	206	20.66%	16	1.60%
Waterloo	1183	227	19.19%	53	4.48%
West Central	1683	354	21.03%	76	4.52%
13982	3334	*23.85%	921	*6.72%	

*AVERAGE PERCENTAGE PER OFFICE

According to the data, the number of individuals who needed to obtain their high school diploma by fiscal year was relatively small compared to the caseload totals. In these cases IVRS staff works to connect the job candidates with providers of HISET - the high-school equivalency exam used in Iowa -so these individuals can improve their education and pursue post-secondary training. Most of the individuals who receive services from IVRS out of high school have graduated from their secondary education program, which speaks to the collaboration IVRS has with the secondary schools.

Over the course of years the percent of individuals with disabilities who have not obtained their high school diploma prior to working with IVRS has declined. Many times IVRS counselors are involved in staffing to encourage students to remain in school and obtain their high school diploma in order to increase their opportunities upon graduation. Table 11 shows that while IVRS and schools are successful with encouraging secondary completion, students still exit with credentialing skill gap. IVRS works to provide appropriate training programs to enhance the job seeker's skill sets so they can become more competitive and employed in an integrated work environment. Only 6.7% of the caseload demonstrates a lack of education or skill sets that require further development.

Table 11: Percent of IVRS Job Candidates Enrolled in HISET (GED) by FFY 2012-2015

FFY	2012	2013	2014	2015
Count	33%	20%	20%	11%

Over the course of the past three fiscal years, the percentage of cases in training by category has not substantially changed. This shows that once the individual with a disability achieves their high school diploma or HISET, a substantial portion of the IVRS caseload pursues a post-secondary training credential. While it is not difficult for the person with a disability to obtain their post-secondary credential, the difficulty comes with the employment process. This population of individuals is one of the highest educated populations and has one of the highest unemployment rates. With the WIOA requirements of increased workforce system partnering, IVRS plans to work more extensively with IWD and other core program partners to educate Iowa business and

employers are educated on the talents and skills of this population, and the supports available to enhance successful competitive integrated employment.

Table 12: FFY2015 Credential Attainment, IVRS' Caseload

Credential	Count Achieved	Percent
High school diploma and moderate to long-term OJT	77	1.87%
High school diploma and apprenticeship	1	0.02%
Postsecondary non-degree award	528	12.82%
Some college, no degree	923	22.41%
AA, AS, BA, BS, post graduate and professional degree	949	23.05%
All Other Education Levels	1,640	39.83%

IWD conducted the fifth annual Workforce Needs Assessment from July 2014 through October 2014. In addition to vacancy and retirement data, the survey also addressed the demand for workers and skills required in the workforce. The results of the survey were analyzed on both a statewide and regional basis. In July 2014, a total of 39,996 employers in the state were contacted either by mail or email and asked to complete the survey. By the end of the survey period (October 31, 2014), IWD had received 9,754 responses, yielding a 24.4 percent response rate.

Of the employers that responded to the survey, 2,984 (31.0 percent) reported having one or more current or anticipated job vacancies, while 6,643 respondents (69.0 percent) reported having no job vacancies. There is an average of 34,378 job vacancies per day reported by employers across Iowa. The majority of reported vacancies exist in positions that typically require some training beyond high school. Of employers that reported job vacancies, 41.3 percent were businesses with 10 or fewer employees, 51.2 percent had between 11 and 99 employees and 7.5 percent had 100 employees or more. While large employers only accounted for 7.5 percent of the survey responses, nearly half (47.2 percent) of the total job vacancies in the state were with large employers. During the same period of time the average ratio of unemployed persons for every vacant position was 1.7 percent.

LOW-INCOME WORKERS

According to US Census data, of Iowa's 3,004,857 citizens, 367,816 individuals are living in poverty. In 2014, Iowa ranked 15th among states for the percentage of people who had incomes below the poverty line, 12.2 percent or $23,834 for a family of four, and 14.0 percent of working women, ages 18-64, had incomes below the poverty line. During the same period 14.9 percent of Iowa's children under age 18 in related families had incomes below the poverty line, ranking Iowa 10th in the nation for child poverty. Creating real opportunities for Iowa's low-income earners to advance within the workforce system remains a priority of the workforce delivery system partners.

In consideration of other factors, such as Iowa's Housing Wage, fair market rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is $689. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities - without paying more than 30 percent of income on housing - a household must earn $2,298 monthly or $27,576 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year; this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of $13.26. In Iowa, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of $7.25. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 73 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or a household must include 1.8 minimum wage earners working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. The estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is $10.56. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a renter must work 50 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or, working 40 hours per week year-round,

a household must include 1.3 workers earning the mean renter wage in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. Low-income workers are considered a priority population. Supporting working families through a range of state, federal and public-private partnerships will continue to be a priority of the Branstad-Reynolds administration and Iowa policymakers.

IOWA'S AGING POPULATION

The 2014 Iowa Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data reported 80,569 individuals over the age of 64 working throughout the state. They represent approximately 5.7 percent of the total workforce. The educational services (8.8 percent); agriculture and mining (8.0 percent); arts, entertainment and recreation (7.9 percent); and personal services (7.9 percent) industries have the highest percentage of their workforce over the age of 64. There are more males than females in this portion of the workforce, with 51.1 and 48.9 percent respectively. Of those employees eligible to retire, almost all (94.2 percent) of them meet the current skill requirements of the positions they occupy. Iowans over the age of 65 make up about 16 percent of the state's population, outpacing the national average of 14 percent, according to a report published by the Administration on Aging, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. By the year 2030, Iowa's 65+ population is expected to double.

The future year estimates in subsequent reports will reflect employees who did not retire in the year they actually were eligible as they may choose to continue their employment. In the next five years, there will be a significant number of workers eligible for retirement from the manufacturing; healthcare and social services; wholesale and retail trade; education; and public administration industries, according to information obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). The report also looked at the number of older Americans living in poverty and those who still are in the workforce. The number of older Iowans living below the poverty level at $11,770 for an individual is lower than the national rate of 9.5 percent at only 7.5 percent.

While the number of retirees can be somewhat hard for employers to gauge as they look toward the future. The annual estimated number of eligible retirees through 2018. With an estimated 11,949 employees already eligible to retire within the state, many retirement-eligible employees are choosing to remain in the workforce due to their employer's retention efforts or other reasons. According to the survey, an average of 1.2 percent of the state's workforce becomes eligible for retirement each year. Current projections available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics, show that between 2015 and 2018 at least 40,000 people will be eligible to retire in Iowa.

VETERANS

Iowa's veteran population is a recognized priority in the provision of workforce development services. The state has a proud tradition of effectively transitioning its returning military professionals to civilian employment. There are more than 219,006 veterans of working age (between 18 and 64) in Iowa, representing another vital potential workforce resource. The state's veteran population has a labor force participation rate that is; on average 5 percentage points lower than the state as a whole. Twenty-six percent of veteran's experience some type of disability, a rate that is nearly twice that of the non-veteran population. Therefore their participation in the state's labor force is depressed due to barriers they face. Veterans are also significantly more likely to leave the labor force before the age of 55 than their non-veteran counterparts due either to disability or retirement benefits. More detailed information on programs available for Veterans is provided under the Veteran-specific section.

Ex-Offenders (Returning Citizens)

Another notable group that faces significant barriers to employment in Iowa is its incarcerated population. Over 8,200 inmates were under the custody of the Iowa Department of Corrections in Iowa prisons as of December 31, 2015. An additional 28,924 are on probation/parole and 1,517 are housed in community-based residential facilities (halfway houses). Ninety-one percent of this population is male. The incarcerated population has a larger share of minority inmates than the general population and a significantly lower level of educational attainment. Programs such as the Offender Re-entry Project, Registered Apprenticeship programs and other partnerships between the Department of Corrections and the workforce development community are aimed at acquiring workforce skills and reducing recidivism.

The groups listed above offer resources to help combat Iowa's workforce quantity challenge. Programs discussed in this plan are offered to provide these workforce populations the training and support required to allow them to productively enter the state's labor force and to gain permanent, self-sustaining employment.

LABOR MARKET TRENDS

According to Battelle, the Iowa economy is evolving. There is a shift from goods-producing to service-providing industries in response to a range of factors including an aging population, automation, and technology advances. Manufacturing, the largest of the goods-producing industries, has been transformed by technology. Iowa's nonfarm employment is a mix of goods-producing and service-providing industries. Natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing are defined as goods-producing sectors. In Iowa, the goods-producing component of the economy has lost employment due to the decline in manufacturing jobs since 2000. The goods-producing industries, which accounted for 21.5% of the state's nonfarm jobs in 2000, represented 19.0 percent of these jobs in 2014. Both construction and manufacturing incurred large job cuts as the result of the 2008-2009 recession. Meanwhile, the state's service-providing industries have increased their proportion of nonfarm employment from 78.5 percent in 2000 to 81.0 percent in 2014. The top three service-providing sectors from 2000-2014 (based on rate of growth) were professional and business services (+26.5 percent), education and health (+22.9 percent), and finance (+16.1 percent).

Information Technology lost 14,800 jobs or 36.6 percent of its employment over the period. Most of the losses were concentrated in telecommunications and in book and newspaper publishing and printing. However, the sector is starting to add jobs again as new businesses emerge that provide internet publishing and broadcasting services and web search portals. Health services will continue to be one of the fastest-growing sectors in the state due to the state's aging population, which will increase the demand for these services.

Some of the newer technologies will play an important role in driving employment growth over the next decade. Included among these are the mobile internet, cloud technology, 3D printing, advanced robotics, renewable energy and next-generation genomics.

For nearly a decade, the millennial generation has been entering the workforce in growing numbers. Currently, this youngest group of workers represents the largest component of the state's workforce at over 600,000 (38 percent). In 2013, over half of the generation was concentrated in the 25 to 34 year-old age cohort. The Millennials have become larger than the Baby Boom generation, and the generation has not realized its full potential since many of its members are still in their teens and attending school. Though there is a lack of consensus on exact dates, a Millennial is someone who

was born in the 1980's and 1990's. This generation is also referred to as Generation Y, or the "echo boom" generation. Generation Y represents a population bulge, rivaling the size of the Baby Boom generation. Within just a few years, workers in this group will account for about one half of the state's total workforce.

AGING IOWANS

Birth years are generally used to define the generations: Millennials (1980-1999), Generation X (1965-1979), Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and the Silent Generation (1925-1945). Each generation displays unique traits that are the result of the economic, political and social environment in which they were raised. For example, the Millennials were disproportionately affected by the deep recession of 2008-2009, which in many cases delayed their entry into the workforce. A Pew Research Study found that based on measures such as the percentage unemployed or the share living in poverty, this generation of college-educated adults is faring worse than Gen Xers, Baby Boomers or members of the Silent Generation when they were in their mid20s and early 30s. A major generational shift is occurring in the workforce as the Baby Boomers are beginning to retire, while their children—the "Millennials"—enter their prime working years. The Baby Boom generation is currently 50 to 68 years of age, and accounts for 32 percent of the state's workforce. The ongoing retirements of the Baby Boomers are likely to cause skill shortages since these individuals have acquired a broad base of knowledge and skills that will need to be replaced. Several of Iowa's major industries have relatively high proportions of workers in the 55 and over age category, which will require many positions to be filled. Iowa's Educational Services and Utilities sectors have the largest concentration of older workers at 30 percent.

Other sectors with high proportions of older workers are:

- Mining (29 percent),
- Public Administration (28 percent),
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (27 percent) and
- Transportation and Warehousing (27 percent).

Iowa's labor force expanded again in 2014 following small declines during the 2009 to 2012 recovery period. The deep recession of 2008-2009 officially ended in June 2009, but its effects lingered with job growth subpar for the next several years. The lack of job opportunities following the recession discouraged many individuals from seeking employment. In 2015, Iowa's labor force is again expected to experience strong growth following a gain of over 30,000 workers last year (+1.8 percent). From 1990 to 2014, Iowa's labor force expanded by 253,400 workers, translating into a growth rate of 17.5 percent or 0.7 percent annually. In contrast, the U.S. labor force grew by 23.9 percent over the same period, or close to 1.0 percent annually. Future labor force growth for both Iowa and the nation is expected to be slower as the population ages. According to the 2013 population estimates, Iowa ranks 10th in the nation based on the proportion of its population 65 and over, and 4th in the nation based on its share of population 85 and over.

HISTORICAL PATTERNS

Historical patterns show that labor force growth is tied to population growth and a strong economy. An area that continues to add both people and jobs is most likely to experience long-term economic prosperity. In Iowa, the metro areas have become magnets for individuals looking for higher-paying job opportunities. This trend has been apparent for some time, and is one of the factors that have decreased the supply of younger workers in many of Iowa's rural counties. For example, Dallas

County, which is a part of the Des Moines metro area, leads all Iowa counties based on population and labor force growth. From 1990 to 2014, the county increased its labor force by 26,000 workers for a robust growth rate of 161.5 percent. Johnson County ranked second, adding 26,500 workers (45.9 percent). Based on numeric change, Polk County increased its labor force by the largest number—66,800 (35.2%). Conversely, 22 of Iowa's rural counties lost a sizable portion of the rural labor force over the same period; Page County led the group with an 18.5 percent drop. Other significant losses occurred in Winnebago County (-17.2 percent) and Hamilton County (-15.5 percent).

Although Iowa's labor force has grown at a slow pace, the state has one of the higher labor force participation rates in the nation. In 2014, the rate was 70.4 percent compared to 62.9 percent for the U.S. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the working age population (16-64) who are employed or unemployed.

It is important to note that Iowa has identified the collection and evaluation of data by and between agencies as an area needing improvement. Throughout the plan various data sets have been drawn from and reviewed and it is acknowledged by agency leaders and stakeholders that improved data collection, evaluation and dissemination methods be updated to reflect current technological advances and to draw a more accurate and consistent picture of workforce services. Such a difference is noted in the Georgetown Report which projects Iowa to have approximately 1.84 million jobs in 2025; while Iowa's Labor Market and Information Division (LMI) projects it will have 1.8 million in 2022. In particular, the Georgetown Report estimates there will be a larger number of jobs in government, real estate, and professional, scientific, and technical services, while Iowa projects there will be a larger number of jobs in education.

Table 13: Georgetown Report projects more total jobs by 2025 than the state of Iowa projects.

Industry	2022 LMI Projections	2025 Georgetown Projections	Difference
Educational services	187,000	47,000	140,000
Healthcare and social assistance	244,700	213,000	31,700
Manufacturing	221,100	189,900	31,200
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	108,600	86,700	21,900
Accommodation and food services	127,300	116,000	11,300
Wholesale trade	74,000	63,500	10,500
Management of companies and enterprises	22,300	14,800	7,500
Retail trade	193,500	189,700	3,800
Utilities	6,100	6,100	0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2,200	4,400	2,100
Information	27,000	30,200	3,300
Transportation and warehousing	75,200	79,500	4,300
Other services (except public administration)	68,900	80,700	11,800
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	22,400	34,200	11,800
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	82,500	97,500	15,000
Professional, scientific, and technical services	53,900	71,900	18,000
Construction	80,100	99,700	19,600
Finance and insurance	105,200	133,900	28,700
Real estate and rental and leasing	15,100	54,700	39,600
Government	87,600	226,600	138,900
Total	1,804,600	1,839,900	35,300

Note: Differences shown in italics are cases for which Iowa projections for the particular occupation are higher than Georgetown Report projections. Columns may not sum to totals due to rounding. Sources: Labor Force & Occupational Analysis Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development, “Iowa Industry Projections by (2012-2022) by NAICS Code,” 2015; and Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020, 2013.

SKILL GAPS

Data on Iowa’s occupations confirm that Iowa retains a strong demand for skilled workers. Employers in all industries have a growing need for workers with training or education beyond high school. According to a 2014 report published by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, less than 40 percent of Iowa’s adults ages 25 - 64, have at least an associate’s degree while more than 60 percent of jobs in the state will require postsecondary credentials by 2018.Iowa’s percent of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher is 25 percent. Economic projections show that skill-based technological change across industries and occupations will support rising demand for postsecondary education and training.

In the American education system, the four-year Bachelor’s degree is the default educational pathway. However, while many good jobs that pay a living wage do not require a Bachelor’s degree, but they do require some education or training beyond high school. There are 29 million such jobs in the national economy. In Iowa, there are 400,000 middle-skill jobs that pay at least $35,000 per year; this represents 26 percent of all jobs in Iowa. Forty percent of these jobs pay more than $50,000 annually and 14 percent pay more than $75,000 annually.

IVRS recognizes that education is an avenue to achieve self-sufficiency and provide a competitive edge to persons with disabilities. As a result almost 36 percent of the IVRS caseload is actively involved in obtaining a post-secondary credential or degree.

Middle-skill jobs will comprise 39 percent of Iowa’s employment. That 39 percent breaks down into these categories:

- Associate’s degree holders (12 percent)
- Certificate holders (5 percent)
- Workers with a professional certification or occupational license as their only credential beyond high school (5 percent)
- Workers who completed apprenticeships (3 percent)
- Workers who completed some college coursework that have market value including noncredit courses with market value (14 percent)

There are five pathways to these jobs: two-year associate’s degrees, postsecondary certificates, professional certifications and occupational licenses, registered apprenticeship programs, and employer-based training. Another avenue, referred to as a career pathway, is one in in which students and trainees take a series of courses in a narrow range of occupational competencies coupled with work-based learning opportunities, and results in attainment of industry-recognized credentials.

Disparities exist in the college participation rate of low-income students compared to students from families with higher incomes. The number of students who enroll in college immediately after high school has remained stagnant for low-income students, while increasing for middle- and upper-

income students. With more of Iowa's students projected to be from low-income families in the future, increasing college access will become even more crucial.

Nine of Iowa's 10 largest school districts reported increases in four-year graduation rates. Of those districts, Cedar Rapids reported the largest gain of 4.1 percent; the district's overall four-year graduation rate is 85 percent for the Class of 2014. Iowa graduation rates are calculated with a formula established by the U.S. Department of Education. **Table 14** provides a comparison of Iowa's four-year graduation rate for the classes of 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011:

Table 14: Iowa's Four-Year High School Graduation Rate by Subgroup

Class Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Class of 2014	90.5%	76.4%	84.1%	83.1%	78.6%	78.3%	90.8%	81.7%	92.2%
Class of 2013	89.7%	72.7%	80.4%	75.7%	73.8%	83.2%	91.1%	79.5%	91.5%
Class of 2012	89.3%	72.7%	79.7%	73.9%	74.1%	72.7%	89.9%%	77.5%	91.1%
Class of 2011	88.3%	69.9%	78.1%	70.0%	73.2%	79.2%	88.5%	75.2%	90.2%
Difference 2013 to 2014	0.8%	3.7%	3.7%	7.4%	4.8%	-4.9%	-0.3%	2.2%	0.7%

Source: Iowa Department of education, https://www.educateIowa.gov/article/2015/04/01/Iowa-s-high-school-graduation-rate-tops-90-percent

Iowa's annual dropout rate decreased in the 2013-14 school year from the year before. The 2013-14 dropout rate was 2.7 percent, a decrease of 0.1 percent from the previous year. The rate reflects the percentage of students in grades 9-12 who drop out of school during a single year. The state's 2013-14 dropout rate represents 3,932 students.

Table 15: Grades 9-12 Dropout Rate by Subgroup

Academic Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
2013-2014	2.7%	4.5%	5.3%	5.2%	7.2%	6.2%	1.6%	4.4%	2.2%
2012-2013	2.8%	4.4%	5.6%	5.7%	6.9%	6.7%	2.0%	5.3%	2.3%
Academic Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
2013-2014	2.7%	4.5%	5.3%	5.2%	7.2%	6.2%	1.6%	4.4%	2.2%
2012-2013	2.8%	4.4%	5.6%	5.7%	6.9%	6.7%	2.0%	5.3%	2.3%

EDUCATION DATA

Demographic data on children in the college PIPEline indicate that Iowa's future population of high school graduates and traditional-aged college students will be fewer in number and will be increasingly more diverse. Iowa's school-aged population has become more diverse over the past decade, and is projected continue along this path.

The IDOE shows that minority students made up 9.7 percent of total public school enrollment in 2000-2001, but by 2012-2013, their share of enrollment had more than doubled to 20.2 percent. The Hispanic student population increased the most, from 3.6 percent to 9.3 percent.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.*

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* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Iowa boasts an array of programs, services and initiatives dedicated to supporting the efforts of a range of workforce stakeholders, including job-seekers and employers.

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The following section highlights some of the many workforce development activities. Customers entering the workforce system are provided comprehensive services and targeted referrals to other core partners. A large percentage of Wagner-Peyser referrals are from UI.

Through the IowaWORKS integrated service delivery system:

- Customers are provided career services through WP
- Services are provided through the 15 integrated one-stop centers and four satellite offices
- Dedicated WP staff are located in each of the 15 integrated one-stop center and four satellite offices
- Customers ready for employment after receiving career services may receive staff assisted job search and placement
- Customers in need of training services are referred to other core partners depending on customer needs
- Training services are provided through WIOA, VR or Adult Education Services

ONLINE SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Resume builder
- Targeted job leads
- Career exploration and assessments
- Identify gaps in skills; experiences and education
- Adult/DW

One-stop services aim to respond to business demand for workforce improvement by up-skilling adults and dislocated workers and equipping them with current, in-demand skills to help them compete in today's job market. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers, form the backbone of the one-stop delivery system. All customers have immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in basic career services, with connection of the customer to additional individualized career services, when determined appropriate in order for a customer to achieve their career goal and obtain or retain employment.

YOUTH

The WIOA Title I Youth Program seeks to provide young people with customer-centered, high quality services to enhance their skill sets and likelihood of gaining and retaining meaningful employment and attaining self-sufficiency. WIOA youth programs are meant to provide participants with a continuum of services to help them navigate between the educational and workforce systems. Services are based on individual needs of each participant.

TRADE

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program provides reemployment assistance to workers who are displaced - due to a lack of work and no fault of their own - from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor. Assistance is provided to the adversely affected workers so they can overcome job loss and secure reemployment. IWD staff conducts informational meetings for the workers of the closing organizations and helps affected workers access benefits and services which will help enhance their re-employability and build competitiveness for in-demand occupations. The program provides seamless services to participants through a coordinated and functionally aligned effort.

WAGNER-PEYSER WORK WITH EX-OFFENDERS

Thousands of inmates and youth are released from Iowa prisons each year. Many of them are eager to get a job and lead a productive life. Without a job it is nearly impossible for these individuals to establish a new life and become productive citizens. Hiring an ex-offender can help them integrate into society so they can become a taxpayer instead of a tax burden. Iowa Workforce Development, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Corrections, has implemented the Ex-Offender Initiative. IWD staff assigned to this initiative work with inmates and network with employers to address the barriers they may have in hiring ex-offenders. Each of the participants in the program completes the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC). In addition, offenders are also offered work readiness classes that emphasize job applications, resume writing, interviewing skills and effectively addressing the criminal history issue. All of these classes will help the offender present himself or herself better during the recruitment, interviewing and hiring processes with employer. Many employers experiencing labor shortages consider their number one challenge is to identify, attract

and retain employees. To address these needs, employers are increasing their applicant pool by looking at individuals with criminal histories. Employed ex-offenders are some of the most dedicated and productive employees. They are overwhelmingly dependable and punctual and the turnover rate is atypically low.

FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM

This program benefits an employer by providing fidelity bond insurance in situations where the employer chooses to hire someone thought to be high risk. The advantage of the program is that the employer profits from the worker's skills and abilities and is covered in case of potential theft or dishonesty. The bond promotes confidence in a job seeker who needs gain re-entry into or maintain a connection to labor market and demonstrate that he or she can be a productive worker.

RAPID RESPONSE ASSISTANCE AND LAYOFF AVERSION

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion is a proactive, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed to help companies access an available pool of skilled workers affected by downsizing. It also allows a quick response to layoffs and plant closings by coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers. Federal and state WARN (Iowa Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) laws offer protection to workers, their families, and communities by requiring employers to give advance notice to the affected workforce or their representatives (e.g. a labor union). The rapid response system first seeks to avert layoffs, when possible, while maintaining the capacity to return workers to productive employment and/or education as quickly as possible if the layoff is unavoidable. Effective rapid response activities require collaboration with employers, employee representative(s), workforce system partners and the community to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize the disruptions on companies, affected workers, and communities that are associated with job loss.

NATIONAL AND STATE EMERGENCY GRANTS (NEG'S AND SEG'S)

These special grants are used to temporarily increase the capacity of state, local, and tribal governments to provide dislocated worker services in response to plant closings and mass layoffs by providing retraining and re-employment services to individuals dislocated because of a closure or substantial layoff from a specific business or facility. Emergency grants assist dislocated workers so that all customers would benefit from the service integration, functional alignment, and resources among programs. State or National Emergency Grants provide time-limited funding assistance in response to significant economic events and responds to an unanticipated need for assistance that cannot reasonably be accommodated within the ongoing operations of the WIOA formula-funded (including the discretionary resources reserved at the state level). In addition, SEG's or NEG's provide temporary employment in response to federally-declared "emergency or disaster situation of national significance". This may include declarations by recognized chief official of a federal agency with jurisdiction. Individuals dislocated by the disaster event perform clean-up and recovery activities in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state, and local efforts.

VETERANS

Iowa Workforce Development currently has 15 Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs) who are located in our IowaWORKS offices across the state. DVOPs main activity is to provide intensive services (comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual, employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate

achievement objectives and appropriate combination, of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals; group counseling; individual counseling and career, planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training) to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who have a significant barrier to employment. DVOPs are an essential resource in our IowaWORKS centers.

Iowa has one Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) who is domiciled in the Des Moines IowaWORKS office. The LVER conducts outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a State under the applicable State employment service delivery system.

The Skilled Iowa initiative also offers Iowans - with Veterans having priority - an opportunity to upgrade their skills through an unpaid internship program. The initiative's first internship trained a Veteran at a central Iowa business. The business ultimately hired the Veteran for a fulltime position. Over 500 internships have been offered, and 58% resulted in an offer of employment to the participant. Those numbers include 59 Veterans who participated in an internship, 48 who completed the activity, and 24 (or 50%) who were offered employment. For more information about Skilled Iowa, go towww.skilledIowa.org.

HOME BASE IOWA

Another initiative of Iowa Governor Branstad is "Home Base Iowa," which was signed into law on Memorial Day, 2014. This legislation provides the following benefits to Iowa Veterans, as well as Transitioning Service Members looking to make this state their home:

- Fully exempts military pensions from state income tax, and includes surviving spouses in this exemption;
- Special license plate fees waived for those eligible for veteran-related specialty plates (Bronze Star, Disabled Veteran, Ex POW, Gold Star, Iowa National Guard, Legion of Merit, Medal of Honor, Pearl Harbor Veteran, Purple Heart, Retired by branch, Air Force Cross Medal, Airman's Medal, Navy Cross, Service Cross Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Medal, Soldier's Medal, Silver Star Medal, Veteran;)
- Allows private employers to give preference in hiring and promotion to veterans and surviving spouses of military personnel who died either while on active duty, or as a result of such service;
- Increases funding and eligibility for Military Homeownership Assistance Program;
- Requires licensing boards to adopt rules giving credit for military training and experience, as well as draft proposals allowing license reciprocity for military spouses; and
- Higher education institutions must set academic credit standards for military experience.

Another component of Home Base Iowa is member businesses and communities. The Home Base Iowa Communities initiative designates communities as centers of opportunity for military veterans and further highlights Iowa's statewide commitment to welcoming veterans to the state. Standards to become a Home Base Iowa community include:

- Ten percent of the businesses in the community agree to pledge to hire a specific number of veterans, post their jobs with IWD, and become a member of Skilled Iowa;
- The community develops its own welcome/incentive package for veterans;
- The community prominently displays the Home Base Iowa Community designation; and
- The community obtains a resolution of support from the appropriate local governing body.

Iowa currently has 36 Home Base Iowa communities. For more information, see www.homebaseIowa.org. This website also provides information on job opportunities in Iowa through the .jobs microsite for Veterans, veteran-friendly employers and communities, resources for veterans, Home Base Iowa employers, and more.

Iowa was also the first state to partner with Hilton Worldwide to offer no-cost accommodations to military personnel. The Hilton Honors hotel stays can be used to pursue job opportunities in any industry - and can be used to support job interviews, skills training, housing searches for newly employed Iowans, and other job-seeking activities within the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. Iowa is making points available to Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, Spouse, National Guard and Reserve members, and anyone meeting the Wagner-Peyser definition of a Veteran. Case management is not a requirement. Iowa is currently the largest user of this benefit.

An Air Force Lieutenant Colonel was the first Home Base Iowa hire and the first recipient of Hilton Honors benefits. A native of Maine, the LTC is an Air Force Academy graduate completing 20 years of service to our country this summer. His distinguished career included service as an F-16 pilot, fighter squadron commander, and senior analyst. His last assignment was at the Pentagon as the deputy division chief for operations force management. He has over 2,817 total flying hours, as well as two Distinguished Flying Crosses for service in Serbia and Iraq. He moved to Iowa in 2014 with his wife - an Iowa native - and family to start his civilian career in Des Moines.

IOWA ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Adult education has a rich history in Iowa of providing services that assist adults in improving their skills, achieving their educational goals, and transitioning to further education or employment. Instruction is designed for adults functioning at the lowest levels of basic skills and English language instruction to advanced levels of learning. As defined by Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA), Adult Education enables adults to: (1) become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; (2) obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and (3) complete a secondary school education.

The federally-funded adult education and literacy programs administered by the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) Division of Community Colleges provide lifelong educational opportunities and support services to eligible participants. Programs assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for work, further education, family self-sufficiency, and community involvement. Iowa's adult education and literacy (AEL) programs are delivered through the state's 15 community colleges. By improving the education and skill levels of individual Iowans, the programs enhance the competitiveness of state's workforce and economy.

Through instruction in adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE) and English as a Second Language (ESL), programs help learners to:

- gain employment or better their current employment;

- obtain a high school equivalency diploma by passing the state approved assessment;
- attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training;
- exit public welfare and become self-sufficient;
- learn to speak, to read, and to write the English language;
- master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school;
- become U.S. citizens and participate in a democratic society;
- gain self-esteem, personal confidence, and a sense of personal and civic responsibility.

Eligibility for enrollment includes persons that are at least 16 years of age and not enrolled or required to be enrolled in a secondary school under Iowa Code chapter 299.1A; and meet one of the following:

- lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society;
- do not have a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

In FY 2015, AEL program enrollment was 19,464, with an unduplicated headcount of 17,773. However, the data management system used to report for federal accounting purposes consisted of 18,321 participants. Of these students, 12,203 were eligible for, and therefore included in, federal year-end reporting based on the NRS requirements.

ABE instruction had the most enrollees in 2015 with 5,859 participants; 48 percent of the total enrollment. ESL was the second largest group of participants with 4,899 participants, while ASE represented 12 percent with 1,444 enrollees. There has been a five year average increase of 5.3 percent in ESL enrollment. Of those that were enrolled in 2015 and federally reported, 50 percent were female and 35 percent self-identified as White. Thirty-one percent of participants identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, 19 percent as Black or African American, and 12 percent as Asian. The remaining three categories (Native American, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two or more races) combine to about 3 percent of the participants.

SERVICE DEMOGRAPHICS

The largest age group served by AEL programs ranged between 25-44 years of age, with 49 percent in this category. The next largest group, 19-24, accounted for 26 percent. The 45-59 age group had 1,576 participants which were slightly higher than the 16-18 age group with 1,208 participants. Additional, optional demographic information is collected from participants in the AEL program that can assist in directing resources to target needs. The three highest status barriers to employment, as indicated upon entry into the AEL program, included the following: self-identified as unemployed (43 percent); self-identified as a single parent (9 percent); and self-identified as being low income (7 percent). It is important to note that a participant might indicate more than one status measure.

Table 18: AEL Populations with Identified Barriers to Employment

Region	Displaced Home-maker (%)	Low-Income (%)	Disability (%)	Veteran (%)	Single Parent (%)	Un-employed (%)	Corrections (%)	Basic Skill (%)	English Language Learners (%)	Grand Total, Number
1	+	18	5	+	20	58	-	31	11	535

Region	Displaced Home-maker (%)	Low-Income (%)	Disability (%)	Veteran (%)	Single Parent (%)	Un-employed (%)	Corrections (%)	Basic Skill (%)	English Language Learners (%)	Grand Total, Number
2	+	19	6	+	10	46	-	60	14	315
3	+	2	2	-	13	33	-	43	23	221
4	+	2	1	-	4	17	-	37	28	321
5	+	0	1	+	4	35	29	53	29	1280
6	-	1	+	-	+	55	7	33	44	678
7	-	0	+	-	-	44	-	37	40	1041
9	1	21	-	+	19	49	-	54	16	1628
10	+	13	3	.3	8	37	11	29	20	2574
11	1	3	1	.1	10	47	10	35	33	5135
12	-	+	+	-	3	45	-	25	51	1443
13	+	3	5	+	15	29	25	58	12	992
14	+	3	3	+	10	69	-	34	12	320
15	+	1	8	+	8	53	-	41	21	765
16	+	14	5	+	12	35	45	63	5	1073

While individual unduplicated participation in adult education decreased by 1.3 percent, “persisters” and “completers” improved between FY15 and FY14. Individual participants that remained in the program longer than 12 hours--“persisters” (12,203) increased to 68.5 percent. This is a 23.9 percent increase from FY14 (55.3 percent).

MEASURING EDUCATIONAL GAINS

To measure educational gains, AEL programs pre- and post-test participants after a minimum number of instructional hours. Without a post-test, measuring gains would be impossible. Of the FY15 “persisters”, 63.3 percent were post-tested (7,720) as compared to the post-testing rate of 59.0 percent in FY14. As a result of the increase in post-testing, 5,370 demonstrated an educational functioning level gain in FY15 (often reflected as a one to two grade level equivalency gain) and is considered a “completer”. This represents an additional 1,422 completers (36 percent increase) in FY15.

Performance reflects not only educational gains, but also the awarding of Iowa’s High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) for eligible students passing the state identified assessment (as of January 2014 the state transitioned from using the GED® assessment to the HiSET® as a measurement of high school equivalency). In FY15, the first full reporting cycle for using the HiSET®, 1,942 diplomas were issued, a decrease of 1,466 from FY 14.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven approach for preparing workers for jobs while meeting the needs of business for a highly-skilled workforce. It is an employer-driven, “learn while you earn” model that combines on-the-job training, provided by the employer that hires the apprentice, with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of national skills standards. The model also involves progressive increases in an apprentice’s skills and wages. Registered Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Apprentices can be new hires, dislocated workers, youth or incumbent workers - anyone who needs skill upgrades.

While it is used in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, registered apprenticeship is also instrumental for training and development in growing industries, such as health care, information technology, transportation and logistics, agriculture, hospitality and energy. There are five components to typical registered apprenticeship programs. These include:

1. Business Involvement Employers are the foundation of every registered apprenticeship program.

2. Structured On-the-Job Training Apprenticeships always include an on-the-job training (OJT) component. OJT focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job. This training is based on national industry standards, customized to the needs of a particular employer.

3. Related Instruction Apprenticeships combine on-the-job learning with related instruction on the technical and academic competencies that apply to the job. Education partners collaborate with business to develop the curriculum, which often incorporates established national-level skill standards.

4. Rewards for Skill Gains Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment which serves to reward and motivate apprentices as they advance.

5. Nationally-recognized Credential Every graduate of a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a nationally-recognized credential. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that apprentices are fully qualified for the job.

Iowa Currently has 740 Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors over 7000 Active Apprentices and those numbers continue to grow. The state plans to double the number of Active Apprentices in the next 5 years.

Developing Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the following industries is a priority in Iowa:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- HealthCare
- IT
- Hospitality
- Agriculture
- Construction

Iowa was one of only four states that had a 20-30% increase in Active Apprentices according to DOL. According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity, Registered Apprenticeship is thriving in many organizations across the US, with more than 19,000 RAP meeting the Department of Labor's standards nationwide. Nationwide, there are about 415,000 apprentices, and over 44,000 participants graduated from the apprenticeship system during the most recent year. While 33% of employers offer some form of apprenticeship program, only 14% have registered apprenticeship programs via the U.S. Department of Labor. Of all companies, 36% plan to either maintain or grow their existing apprenticeship program and an additional 10% plan to explore or start a program. High-performance organizations are 4.5X more likely to indicate they plan to grow their existing apprenticeship program or start one.

Community Colleges Job Training and Development Funds

Each year, U.S. employers spend $177 billion on formal training programs and $413 billion on informal on-the-job training.8 Employers often hire other businesses, educational institutions, or individuals to train their employees. While employers spend most of their formal training dollars on college-educated workers, they spend 25 percent of their formal training budgets on middle-skill workers and 17 percent on high school graduates.

Iowa has two programs designed to support job training and development for new employees (260E) and existing employees (260F). Together, they are an important part of the state's workforce development efforts. These programs, which are administered through the community colleges, play an essential role in enabling employees to remain current in their training and development so that the businesses they work for remain competitive. Through these public-private partnerships, employer training is provided at little or no cost. The programs are supported through bonds that are repaid using a diversion of a portion of payroll withholding tax revenue.

IOWA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The mission of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to work for and with individuals who have disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES BUREAU

The Disability Determination Services Bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs.

REHABILITATION SERVICES BUREAU

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau assists eligible individuals to become employed. Persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services have a wide range of disabilities. Most offices are already co-located in the One-Stop Centers across Iowa. Vocational Rehabilitation is a State-Federal program. The Federal share is 78.7%; the State share is 21.3%. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau has 14 area offices and 32 service units.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BUREAU

Administrative Services Bureau provides support to the other elements of the Division through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting and payroll; statistical records, reporting and closed case file control; personnel management and collective bargaining administration; purchasing and property control; information systems and the physical plant management of the Jessie Parker Building. The Office of the Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the statewide programs. The administrator determines program scope and policies, promotes public interest and acceptance, directs budget funds, develops program plans and provides for staff development, research and evaluation. Under the umbrella of the administrator are the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Group.

Collaborative Transition Protocol (CTP)

CTP aligns secondary school IEP and IVRS IPE also providing Student Accommodation Reports for smoother postsecondary transition. Collaborative training is occurring at secondary, postsecondary and VR levels with disability support services

BENEFITS PLANNING

Benefits planning provide analysis and assistance for economic independence to individuals on SSI/SSDI.

IWD/IVRS Pilot Project

Five one stop centers are working with VR to improve work flow efficiencies through improved intake and data sharing linkages, enhanced wrap-around supports cross-system and streamlined processes.

Earn and Learn Programs

VR-eligible students with disabilities, in select target areas, benefit from Earn and Learn programs. Earn and Learn programs exist for specific trades in collaboration with Community Colleges, Registered Apprenticeship programs and businesses. VR provides stipend and facilitates business involvement, communicates with secondary, postsecondary and business implementing pathway. Earn and Learn programs can lead to various OJT employment options with a specific focus on employee needs and business needs. Efforts are being made to establish more dedicated integration with Registered Apprenticeship programs. IVRS has attended Career Pathways trainings and are finding more opportunities to network with RAP partners and connect students to RA and related programs.

PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYMENT

VR job candidates can access a continuum of employment services designed to meet the job candidate at their ability and provide steps for employment progress through a menu of service options designed to facilitate competitive employment.

Self-Employment Program

The Self-Employment program provides resources to help future eligible business owners in developing skills specific to running their own business and provides connection to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN)

Job candidates with disabilities are the ultimate beneficiaries. The EDRN is a one-stop resource for businesses. VR conducts regular ongoing meetings for network of service providers, including a web site, to provide timely response for business inquiries and support.

BUSINESS SPECIALIST

The Business Specialist integrates VR staff into business and industry. Contracts are being established with businesses integrating VR service delivery and pathways specific to that business.

AAA EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS

This collaborative project with the Iowa Department of Aging provides six employment specialists housed at the Area Agencies on Aging and includes employment services and training for eligible participants.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS

A myriad of skill training programs designed to meet business needs through specific training. VR eligible Job Candidates are connected with opportunities through cross collaboration with schools, businesses and community providers. Walgreens REDI, Project Search and Transition Alliance Programs are among the more than 20 programs across the state.

ACCESS2ABILITY

Access2Ability is private/public partnership with Manpower Staffing agency to improve employment outcomes for VR eligible job-seekers.

MOA WITH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON DATA DASHBOARD

Students with Disabilities are the ultimate beneficiaries. This program explores ways to better serve students in schools through training, parent/family engagement, resource sharing.

MAKING THE GRADE

This contract with community providers focuses on competitive job experience for students in secondary school. Seven sites across state are focused on increasing competitive employment experiences and opportunities.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Targeting eligible VR job candidates, in partnership with Department of Human Rights and Iowa Department for the Blind, this program helps increase social advocacy and life skills development for youth. Junior and senior high school students participate in a week-long experience at ISU learning about the qualities related to leadership. Self-advocacy, work-readiness, and interpersonal skills development are taught. Participants also learn about employment laws and labor market needs. Through the experience participants develop confidence in their work abilities and become more connected to their community which increases employment success.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (RAP)

In the February, 2016 report, How States Are Expanding Apprenticeship, By Angela Hanks and Ethan Gurwitz, Iowa was highlighted as the leader among states in “developing and supporting strategies to increase Registered Apprenticeship.” Among the contributing factors is the leadership provided by the federal Office of Apprenticeship, which oversees Registered Apprenticeship in the state. Having registered more new RA programs over the past few years, Iowa RAP is expected to keep growing. State support in the form of the Apprenticeship and Training Act in 2014, initially proposed by Gov. Terry Branstad, in his 2014 Condition of the State address and subsequent budget proposal, the act established an apprenticeship program training fund and set annual appropriations at $3 million, tripling the amount of state funding available to support apprenticeship programs. The Iowa Economic Development Authority is responsible for overseeing the funding. This initiative complements other efforts to attract new businesses to the state, which recently became home to large data centers for Facebook, Microsoft, and Google.

The apprenticeship training program funds will be used to support grants to Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors—which are typically employers, labor-management partnerships, or industry associations—to subsidize the cost of RAP. Such costs include related classroom instruction, purchasing equipment for the apprenticeship program, and establishing new locations to expand apprenticeship training. As of 2015, 67 sponsors had submitted applications to receive grant funds.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLIND

The Department for the Blind’s mission is to empower Iowan’s of all ages who are visually impaired and blind to become employed, as well as, live independently in their community. All services at Iowa Department for the Blind, or IDB, promote employment, living independently, and full inclusion.

The Department is recognized as a leading provider of services in the United States. These rehabilitation services include innovative and effective Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs, as well as, world-class library services. The benefits to clients are many and include an impact on attitudes, confidence and independence. The collective social and economic impact is also significant. As Iowan’s with vision loss obtain employment they contribute to Iowa’s economy.

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies.

Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. IDB programs include:

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Iowans who are blind or have visual impairments and have goals to become employed can receive assistance planning for employment or maintaining current job through training, education, technology, career counseling, and more.

TRANSITIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Transitional Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with middle, high school and college students who are blind or have visual impairments set employment goals and develop plans for achieving the goals they set. This program eases the transition from high school to the world beyond with career counseling and work experience activities by partnering with educational, employer, family, and partner stakeholders.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

Legally blind entrepreneurs can receive training throughout Iowa to run vending machine businesses.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

In partnership with the Department of Human Rights and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, eligible VR clients can gain vital skills during a week-long event. Skills include:

- Leadership
- Social
- Advocacy
- Life Skills

Independent Living Program

Iowans who are blind or have Visual Impairments who desire to live independently in their home or community can access:

- Training
- Support Groups
- Rehabilitation Teaching for Iowan’s with Vision Loss

Orientation Center

The Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center provides a curriculum for learning the skills of blindness needed for employment, from traveling to technology needed on the job for vocational rehabilitation clients.

CAREER RESOURCES CENTER

The Career Resource Center provides accessible technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment.

Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

This program provides resources and training to ensure individuals they can participate in skill and certificate training. The library is a comprehensive resource where eligible participants can develop skills needed to gain, retain and advance in a career. Accessible resources and training are provided to locate, evaluate and effectively use information. In addition, resources to develop and enhance digital literacy skills are available. The Library also provides accessible resources and programs for English Language Learners with visual impairments and individuals with other disabilities, i.e. dyslexia, hand mobility impairments, etc.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Iowa Department of Human Services makes a positive difference in the lives of Iowans we serve through effective and efficient leadership, excellence, and teamwork. The Mission of the Iowa Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safe, stable, self-sufficient, and healthy lives, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the state. We do this by keeping a customer focus, striving for excellence, sound stewardship of state resources, maximizing the use of federal funding and leveraging opportunities, and by working with our public and private partners to achieve results.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Home and Community Based Services Supported Employment targets youth (15 and older) or Adults with Disabilities (ID and BI) or Brain Injury. This program provides participants with basic work skills and supports through career exploration, developing work skills and work supports.

PROMISE JOBS

Promoting Independence & Self-Sufficiency through Employment, Job Opportunities, and Basic Skills (PROMISE JOBS). Family Investment Program (FIP) Participants are eligible to receive employment & training services that include supportive services to address barriers to employment. Work readiness services to increase opportunities for employment outcomes are also a part of the PROMISE JOBS program. This includes overarching activities such as education, certification, training, job search assistance, and employment.

FUTURE READY IOWA

Future Ready Iowa aims to achieve systemic changes to increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary credential with the intended result of increasing the number of skilled workers available to employers. Igniting economic development with a skilled workforce and the best educated student population in the nation will achieve Governor Branstad's goals, which will increase the income levels of Iowa families.

For the workforce development system this means creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligns government programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business. Future Ready Iowa was developed by the National Governors Association Policy Academy Developing Iowa's Future Talent PIPEline and list the general membership of the Policy Academy.

To achieve the prosperity supported by world-class talent educated with Iowa's values and work ethic, Iowa's government is responding with the workforce development system of the future. Iowa's workforce development systems will build the system of tomorrow to attain the results needed today through skill building focused on the job-driven expectations of business and industry - occupational and soft skills.

Through implementation of career pathways and infusing of robust sector strategies across systems, Iowa is committed to serving the underserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location. By 2025, 70% of all Iowans will have earned a postsecondary degree or industry-recognized credential or certification - the new minimum - that meets employer needs.

FUTURE READY IOWA OBJECTIVES

Identify and meet employer needs by focusing on sector strategies, career pathways and better aligning state and federal programs and initiatives, including public-private partnerships, to support high-skill, high-demand jobs.

Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including an interactive portal of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.

Improve college and career readiness, increase interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) study and careers.

Minimize education-related debt.

Future Ready Iowa Strategies

1. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and employment needs and capture those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand interactive portal to be driven by a public-private collaborative, leveraging and institutionalizing the sector strategies and career pathways methodologies.

2. Improve degree and credential completion and target resources to support attainment of high-demand credentials, degrees, and certifications valued by employers, including for those individuals with barriers to employment.

3. Cultivate, develop and align work-based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, STEM school-business partnerships, student internships, teacher externships and registered apprenticeships for individuals through public-private partnerships.

4. Create a system of coordinated resources to engage, assist, and reinforce Future Ready career guidance for parents, students, educators and adults.

5. Ensure secondary students have access to high quality career and technical educational programs aligned with labor market needs.

6. Ensure all Iowa students meet high state academic standards, including being literate by the end of the third grade and achieving in STEM disciplines.

7. Increase rigorous concurrent enrollment opportunities in high demand career pathways, including STEM disciplines.

8. Institutionalize the college-going process within secondary schools statewide (College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion, assessing “college fit,” etc.).

9. Elevate and operationalize promising financial literacy models that impact student borrowing.

10. Nurture entrepreneurial connectivity and skills development.

IOWA DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

On March 29, 2012, Governor Terry Branstad signed House File 2320 mandating a reduction in the number of Area Agencies on Aging. Frequently referred to as the “modernization of the aging network,” this initiative effectively reduced the number of AAAs from 13 to six to enhance efficiency. The Iowa Department on Aging works closely with Iowa’s six Area Agencies on Aging and other partners to design a system of information, education, support and services for Iowans that assists older Iowans and adults with disabilities maintain independence. A summary of services offered includes:

ADVOCACY

Advocate for changes in public policy, practices and programs that empower Iowans; facilitate their access to services; protect their rights; and prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation. Activities may include legislative advocacy, information dissemination, outreach and referral, research and analysis and coalition building.

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

Conduct planning, policy development, administration, coordination, priority setting and evaluation of all state activities related to the objectives of the Federal Older Americans Act.

HEALTH

Support policies, programs and wellness initiatives to empower older Iowans to stay active and healthy and improve their access to affordable, high quality home and community-based services.

OLDER IOWANS

The 2010 U.S. Census found that 20 percent of Iowa's population is currently 60 years of age or older. By 2030, 20 percent of the population in 88 of Iowa's 99 counties will be aged 65 or older.

ABE SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Individuals aged 55 and older, at or below 125% of poverty, and unemployed can take advantage of opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and useful part-time jobs in community service organizations. The primary objective is to increase the numbers of older persons who can obtain employment. Assist participants in receiving work skills training and provide work services for non-profit and governmental organizations.

GOVERNOR'S STEM COUNCIL

Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievement, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa. The STEM Council follows this definition of STEM:

"…an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work and the global enterprise enabling the development of STEM literacy and with it the ability to compete in the new economy."

The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is a made up of leaders in higher education, business, pre-K through 12 educators, as well as state and local government officials. The STEM Council is led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. The executive director of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is Dr. Jeff Weld. There are 47 members on the STEM Council, including 17 members that comprise the Executive Committee.

CURRENT STEM INITIATIVES

Microsoft's IT Academy targets secondary and community college students and their teachers and provides office software and systems network analyst training and certifications to 150 Iowa secondary schools and community colleges.

Iowa STEM BEST Business Engaging Students and Teachers targets secondary school lead applicants with business commitments & Secondary STEM learners. This incentive program is designed to drive school/business partnerships for content delivery/aligned instruction. There are currently five active sites involving 14 districts and businesses.

STEM Teacher Externships target secondary teachers of STEM subjects, and industry partners in STEM areas. Secondary teachers of math, science, technology, and engineering matched full time in summer to an industry to take on authentic tasks and role.

STEM Internships provide grants to employers to support Iowa students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through internships that lead to self-sustaining jobs with Iowa employers.

IOWA OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP USA

The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 authorizes the federal government, in cooperation with the states, to oversee the nation's apprenticeship system. In Iowa, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) is responsible for registering apprenticeship programs that meet federal guidelines. It issues certificates of completion to apprentices and encourages the development of new programs. Registered Apprenticeship is a proven system for training employees in a variety of occupations that require a wide range of skills and knowledge. It is an ideal way for employers to build and maintain a skilled workforce. Registered Apprenticeship combines supervised on-the-job learning with technical related instruction in subjects related to the apprentice's chosen occupation. Registered Apprenticeship, by virtue of its success in preparing skilled workers, helps America compete more effectively in the global economy, and contributes to America's economic development and sustained economic growth.

The Registered Apprenticeship system provides opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. In this regard, the Registered Apprenticeship system effectively meets the needs of both employers and workers. While Registered Apprenticeship is highly active in traditional industries such as construction and advanced manufacturing, it is also instrumental in the training and development of high demand industries such as healthcare, childcare, and energy and information technology. Registered Apprenticeship programs are operated by both the public and private sectors, with programs registered with OA called sponsors. Employers, employer associations and labor-management organizations often serve as sponsors.

Recently, community colleges and workforce development centers have collaborated with business and industry to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs through sponsoring employer-participation agreements. Regions that adopt robust Registered Apprenticeship programs in the context of economic development strategies create seamless Pipelines of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and future workforce demands.

The State of Iowa tripled funding for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in 2014 to $3 million and has been recognized by The UAS DOL in regard to innovative practices and number of new Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses to attract and grow business, employment and workforce in Iowa. Ground-breaking economic growth strategies focusing on cultivating start-up companies and helping existing companies become more innovative complement the activities underway to retain and attract companies that are creating jobs for Iowans.

Developing sustainable, adaptable communities ready for this growth is also an essential part of our work at IEDA — providing programs and resources that help communities reinvest, recover and revitalize to make each community's vision a reality. Much of what you know about Iowa is true. It's what you don't know that sets us apart. The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress seeks to build Iowa's economic health and strengthen supports to employers as well as current and future employees through dedicated collaborations among key agencies and streamlined processes.

FEDERAL CAREER LINK PROGRAM - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Low to moderate income individuals can participate in industry-driven training programs that invest in projects that assist the underemployed and working poor to obtain the training and skills they need to move into available higher-skill, higher wage jobs.

Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E)

Finances training for new jobs created through a business expanding or locating in Iowa through the sale of bond certificates by Iowa community colleges.

Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE tax credits) (260G)

Assists community colleges to establish or expand training programs for occupations needed by Iowa business.

Targeted Industries Internship Program (TIIP)

Provides grants to small and medium-sized companies under 500 employees in the advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information technology industries to help support their internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in the state upon graduation.

Iowa Jobs Training Program

Finances training for existing of incumbent workforces of Iowa businesses.

Iowa Finance Authority

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses and has touched the lives of countless Iowans through a wide variety of affordable financing programs throughout its 40 year history. Among other programs, the Agricultural Development Division offers loan and tax credit programs to assist beginning Iowa farmers. Iowa Title Guaranty is also administered at IFA and offers guaranteed title to real property in Iowa.

Training Grants (15B)The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to $3 million for training grants awarded to "sponsors" to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant. Funds awarded may only be used to help cover the cost of conducting and maintaining an apprenticeship training program.

Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December).The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon “contact hours.” Contact hours are determined based on an applicant’s combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. The training grant is based on the applicant’s proportionate share of the statewide total of all contact hours.

Iowa Agricultural Development Division (IADD)

The IADD was established by the Iowa General Assembly in 1980 to provide financial assistance to Iowa’s grain and livestock producers. Operating expenses for the IADD are derived from modest application and service fees paid by program participants. The IADD also earns interest from a trust fund, but it does not receive any state tax dollars.

Economic Development

The Iowa Finance Authority issues tax-exempt bonds to businesses and organizations for a wide range of projects. These have included expanding and improving health care services, industrial development and housing. As of 2012, the Iowa Finance Authority has issued more than $7.5 billion in bonds to assist businesses build or expand in Iowa.

Economic Development Bond Program

Issues tax-exempt bonds on behalf of private entities or organizations for eligible purposes.

Private Activity Bond Cap Allocation

In 2014, the State of Iowa received $309 million of volume cap for allocation to eligible projects in the single-family, job training, student loan, beginning farmer, industrial and political subdivision categories.

Iowa Department of Corrections

The Iowa Department of Corrections Professional Development Training Program mission is to prepare and update institution and community correctional employees’ knowledge base, skills, and competencies; to enable them to perform their duties within the parameters of sound and effective correctional practices in order to protect the general public, themselves, and their co-workers, while managing offenders in an environment that supports offender change.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

WIOA provided the appropriate context in which to conduct a full-scale examination of Iowa's workforce delivery system partners, supporters and beneficiaries. Throughout the course of the state's planning process, the core partners engaged stakeholders, including employers, job-seekers, support agencies and others, in all aspects of plan development. Core Partner key staff met on a weekly basis working together as a team. The team reviewed existing policies and procedures through a combination of quantitative and qualitative exercises and analyses. In March, 2015, key stakeholders participated in a week-long Value Stream Mapping event to examine the global view of the Core WIOA and integrated mandatory employment and training agencies and programs in Iowa. Identification of alignment opportunities and best practices for employment services to Iowans were primary foci of the team.

VALUE STREAM MAPPING EVENT REPRESENTATION:

- Members of Industry
- State Workforce Investment Board Members
- Regional Workforce Development Board Members
- Department of Human Rights
- Department of Human Services - PROMISE JOBS
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation
- Iowa Department for the Blind - Business Enterprise Program, Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges - Adult Education Literacy
- Iowa Workforce Development - Youth Program -Job Seekers, Migrant & Seasonal Farm Worker
- Iowa Workforce Development (IowaWORKS) - Wagner Peyser - Job Seeker, Wagner Peyser - Business Services, Adult Program - Job Seeker, Dislocated Worker - Job Seeker, Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program, Trade Assistance, Adult Program - Business Services, Dislocated Worker - Business Services, Youth Program - Business Services
- Community Colleges - GAP Program
- Iowa Department of Management
- Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Value Stream Mapping team identified and prioritized key elements that would have the most significant and positive impacts to ALL Iowa jobseekers. Key elements were prioritized to allow for a more focused approached to planning. The team ranked and prioritized the level of difficulty in completing the activities needed to move identified tasks forward. Initially, the focus was on finding existing areas of alignment between the agencies and their respective activities and programs. As the work evolved, weaknesses and strengths of the system as well as its individual parts emerged. It was soon clear that Iowa's workforce entities had been operating under a "together, but separate" model and it was time for change. A mutual respect and understanding developed among the team members as they worked together to overcome challenges and maximize benefits as a single unified force.

Vital to the process was the purposeful exploration of how and where services could be further aligned to better support job-seekers, employers and service providers. Early on the team adopted a customer-centered approach and reviewed policies practices and potential changes from the perspective of the employer and the job-seeker. Planning efforts were continuously focused on how to best serve the needs of all Iowans - including those with the most significant barriers to

employment. Accessibility became a primary theme of the work being done and every potential policy, procedure, action or development was measured in terms of accessibility to ALL Iowans. All Iowans must be able to work within the context of their individual and unique natural and environmentally-specific circumstances.

As planning efforts advanced, the partners' came to learn from one another and a genuine dialogue of collaboration followed and ensured throughout the planning process. The Value Stream Mapping group also dissected and evaluated the system and its components for current and future effectiveness, accessibility, and a number of other measures.

System, program-level, and infrastructure weaknesses were identified and the following recommendations for improvements were made:

SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

- Current and Future Policies: Industry Driven
- Shared Purpose Reinforced by Quality MOUs
- Cross Training of All One-Stop Staff
- Certification of One-Stop Center
- Comprehensive Resource Assessment and Connection at all One-Stop Centers

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENTS

- Services: Appropriate & Accessible to ALL Iowans
- Universal Assessment
- Commonly Developed Intake & Referral Policies/Procedures
- Improved Referral Process
- Co-Enrollment in Programs (instead of sequentially enrolled)
- Waiting Lists Shared Across Programs
- Customers Make Informed Decisions
- Quality Customer Feedback System

INFRASTRUCTURE & FUNDING ADVANCES

- Data Collection & Sharing Across Agencies
- Blend & Braid Funds to Maximize System Capacity

This same team came back together in fall of 2015, to conduct a review of the plan and to further investigate areas of weaknesses and strengths. During the subsequent event, the issues were further examined and placed into one of two categories: system and program-specific. Program-specific issues were evaluated by the appropriate agency or group for further development. System issues were deferred for further development to workgroups and/or the planning team.

- ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN VALUE STREAM MAPPING EVENT
- Communication, duplication, and collaboration of all partners at one stops.
- Focus of workforce training beyond entry-level skills and towards postsecondary awards/credentials.

PARTICIPANT REFERRALS:

- method of delivery,
- accessibility and availability of appropriate service providers, and
- tracking of referrals once made.

INTEGRATION AND DATA SHARING TO ENSURE PROPER COLLECTION AND SHARING OF:

- client information,
- data, and
- areas of duplication in service provision.

IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTNERS.

SEAMLESS COORDINATION OF SERVICES TO JOB-SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

ELIMINATION OF THE SEQUENCE OF SERVICE MODEL AND INCORPORATION OF THE INTEGRATED PARALLEL CAREER PATHWAYS MODEL.

ABILITY OF THE PARTNERS TO:

- analyze and report on all program participants,
- track participant progress and outcomes,
- “talk” to each other via an integrated data collection and dissemination system,

ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS.

- New strategies necessary for identifying opportunities to provide skills training, work-based learning, registered apprenticeship, and postsecondary/credential seeking courses together.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY VALUE STREAM MAPPING TEAM

1) Integration of one-stop services to:

a) remove duplication of services,

b) enhance communication among partners,

c) reduce barriers for job-seekers and

d) support employer-driven policies.

2) Incorporation of middle-skills training and learn and earn models into system.

3) Common intake and referral process for all partners.

4) Universal assessment of job-seekers among agencies.

5) Advanced, consistent, training and cross-training for one-stop center and program staff.

6) Co-enrollment in educational programs upfront instead of sequentially.

7) Improved data collection and sharing capability among all agencies.

8) Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) improvements in:

a) Availability to job-seekers and service providers,

b) Accessibility to job-seekers, service providers, and training providers and

c) Method of selection and approval of eligible training providers.

9) Blending and braiding of funds to maximize resources and increase efficiency.

10) Development of policy recommendations to stakeholders.

In December, 2015, the team enlisted the help of a trained facilitator to assist in the process of coming together on any remaining items and to conduct a formal and comprehensive review of progress to-date in order to refine the focus and direction of the remaining planning work. During the event, a number of “themes” developed which served to provide the foundation for system-wide and program-specific improvements throughout Iowa’s Unified State Plan.

IDENTIFIED THEMES:

- ACCESSIBILITY
- SECTOR STRATEGIES
- CAREER PATHWAYS
- INTEGRATION - TECHNOLOGY, POLICY
- INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Evidence of the commitment to the above-described themes which now serve as the basis for Iowa’s Unified State plan are found throughout. Recommendations call for innovative strategies that are business-driven and focus on increasing the skills, talents, and abilities of the workforce so workers are prepared to scale industrial and commercial projects across the state. In order to drive the work and keep the momentum, Iowa is rapidly progressing towards a Sector Partnership model for service delivery. Such a model emphasizes industry-led local-level partnerships that maximize each region’s ability to develop the workforce needed to meet the evolving demands of employers and job seekers. Iowa’s Core Partners have plans to develop a handbook that highlights Best Practices which will serve as a guide for implementing the highest of standards and proven methods in One-Stop service delivery.

Iowa plans to continue to evaluate, develop and implement innovative approaches to improve system and program-specific elements of Iowa’s workforce delivery system. As part of this process, individual programs also evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of their individual programs and the WIOA planning and implementation team will keep meeting on a regular basis to provide the oversight and resources needed to support lasting improvements.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

When analyzing capacity, the state must acknowledge the resolute action of the fifteen local workforce development boards (WDBs). Iowa's local WDBs and their partners strive to find innovative methods of serving participants and employers in their local regions. When successful, they have developed model programming that is shared throughout the state. When program design has not produced desired results, the local providers have adjusted, refined, and shared their lessons. The pockets of excellence that exist around our state provide great opportunity to increase our capacity for serving those who can benefit significantly from our training and education programs.

During the 2013 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature made an historic investment in a portfolio of education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs designed to address Iowa's growing shortage of skilled workers and to increase the state's workforce delivery system capacity.

This $40.3 million annual investment in worker training programs is delivered through Iowa's fifteen community colleges and is serving an increased number of Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds to help them acquire the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for gainful employment. It is funded from the state's gaming industry receipts. The following existing and new community college education, workforce development, job training, adult literacy programs and student financial aid programs are now being supported from this fund. All of these programs are under the administrative oversight of the Iowa Department of Education with the exception of the Kibbie Tuition Grant Program that is being administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

This fund assists Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa's ongoing commitment to innovative and job-driven solutions.

Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund

- Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund (260C.18A) $15,100,000
- Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy Programs (260C.50) $ 5,500,000
- Pathways for Career and Employment Program (260H) $ 5,000,000
- GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I) $ 2,000,000
- Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40) $ 1,500,000
- Kibbie Skilled Worker Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130) $ 5,000,000
- ACE Infrastructure Fund (260G) $ 6,000,000
- Workforce Preparation Outcome Reporting System $ 200,000

Total $40,300,000

Workforce Training and Economic Development (WTED) Fund (260C.18A)

$15,100,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

The WTED fund was established in 2003 as part of the Grow Iowa Values Fund enabling legislation. The WTED fund has become an important source of financing for community college new program innovation, development and capacity building with a focus on career and technical education and the state's targeted industry clusters. This is the community colleges most flexible funding source and functions like a workforce development program block grant. This program can provide supplemental funding to support the PACE, GAP and adult literacy programs as needed.

Use of Funds

The monies in the Workforce Training and Economic Development fund may be used to support the following programs:

- Accelerated Career Education Program (260G).
- Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F).
- Career Academy Programs (260C.18A, subsection 2, paragraph c).
- Career & Technical Education Programs (260C.1, subsection 2).
- In-service Training and Retraining Programs (260C.1, subsection 3).
- Training and retraining programs for targeted industries (15.343, subsection 2, para. a).
- Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H).
- Gap Tuition Assistance Program (260I).
- Entrepreneurial education, small business assistance, and business incubators.
- National Career Readiness Certificate and the skills certification system endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers.

Targeted Industry Clusters

Priority is to be given to programs, projects and initiatives that fall within the states three targeted industry clusters. The program requires that **seventy percent** of the moneys appropriated shall be used on projects or programs in the areas of advanced manufacturing, renewable fuels and renewable energy, information technology and insurance, and life sciences which include the areas of biotechnology, health care technology, and nursing care technology.

Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H)

$5,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and was funded in FY 2014 for the first time to provide funding to community colleges for the development of projects in coordination with the economic development authority, the department of education, the department of workforce development, regional advisory boards, and community partners to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process, along with customized support services, to enable eligible participants to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. This program is closely aligned with the GAP tuition assistance program and the adult literacy program.

GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I)

$2,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and first funded in FY 2013 to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to enable completion of non-credit, continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. This program is closely tied to the PACE career pathways program.

Adult education and literacy programs (260C.50)

$5,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

$3,883,000 is allocated for the ABE/GED adult literacy programs delivered by Iowa's Community Colleges as provided for in new IC Section 260C.50

$1,467,000 is allocated for ELL adult literacy programs.

$150,000 is allocated for DE staff support and related leadership activities.

Iowa was one of only three states that did not provide funding assistance for adult literacy programs. This new state funding is supplementing the federal Department of Labor allocation. It will build on existing career pathways policy and programs by investing in adult basic education and integrated learning programs to help more low-skilled adult workers obtain postsecondary credentials and skill sets required for employment in middle skill jobs. This funding may be used to develop and deliver contextualized coursework tied to a community colleges PACE career pathway and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Statewide Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40)

$1,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This enabling legislation and statewide network was created in 2009 with a one-time allocation of $900,000 from the Department of Economic Development's targeted industry program funding allocation. All fifteen community colleges established a regional intermediary network but only a few remained after the initial funding was exhausted.

The program is intended to prepare students for the workforce by connecting business and education by offering relevant, work-based learning activities to students and teachers, particularly opportunities in occupations relating to STEM or to opportunities in targeted industries identified by the EDA. The program focuses on providing students with job shadowing, internships and teacher tour learning experiences.

This program funding can be used to support work-based learning experiences for students enrolled in PACE career pathways and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130)

$5,000,000 was appropriated to the College Student Aid Commission to support this program in FY 2016.

The Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program supports students enrolling in high demand career and technical education credit programs.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT (WOTC)

Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One of several workforce programs that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. WOTC provides an incentive to employers to hire workers who traditionally have identified barriers to employment. In Iowa more than 52,000 workers are hired annually with the assistance of the employer tax credit assistance. It also reduces the burden on employers who hire workers facing barriers to employment.

IOWA APPRENTICESHIP ACT, IOWA CODE CHAPTER 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to $3 million for training grants awarded to “sponsors” to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant.

Training Grants. Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December).The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon “contact hours.” Contact hours are determined based on an applicant’s combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. This grant is based on the applicant’s proportionate share of statewide total of all contact hours.

IOWA PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS BOARD

In 2012, the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board (IPEP) was created by Executive Order and was charged with the “study and recommendation of solutions and policy alternatives for issues arising in the area of economic development”. The mandate of IPEP is to continuously identify and study economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives. IPEP commissioned the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice to prepare a report on Iowa’s changing economic needs. A key finding was Iowa’s outpacing the nation in both GDP gains and total job gains from 2007 to 2013, and now exceeds its pre-recession levels in both economic output and total employment. Iowa’s economy continues to improve with most indices reflecting expansion and restored confidence in the economic climate. Despite softening of the agricultural economy, most sectors added jobs or maintained current levels through the end of 2015.

Iowa’s strengthening economy has underscored new challenges requiring innovative solutions. One of the most significant challenges Iowa faces is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill

jobs. Iowa's plan for achieving success in workforce development systems improvement to meet the needs of tomorrow's employers relies upon employer-driven policies, strong employer supports and industry-focused solutions. The Labor Market and Information Division (LMI) of Iowa Workforce development (IWD) is tasked with collecting, analyzing, and disseminating a wide array of labor market data and publications for review by Iowa's business and industry leaders as well as other workforce-related entities. Among them are employment, industry and occupational statistics, wages, projections, trends and other workforce characteristics. This information is reported for the State of Iowa as well as for each local region across the state.

IWD's Labor Market Information Division (LMI) works in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) along with the United States Census Bureau. The Division also works closely with local economic development and education professionals to provide custom workforce data in an effort to continually evaluate system needs and to inform recommendations for increased capacity. The establishment of Employers' Councils of Iowa in each region of the State provides another level of input directly from businesses regarding Iowa Workforce Development and One-Stop Center operations. Iowa remains committed to creating and supporting a business climate that results in additional sustainable job growth.

During the 2013 legislative session, The Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund was created with the chief goal of improving the lives of Iowans by helping them get appropriate training to compete for 21st century jobs. An historic $66,000,000 in annual appropriations was approved to address Iowa's growing shortage of skilled workers. This fund will assist Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa's commitment to advancing job-driven solutions.

CAPACITY TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS

Iowa's capacity to meet the evolving needs of the workforce is evidenced in real support through tripled funding to better support Registered Apprenticeship Programs (2014) throughout Iowa. In 2014 year, the Governor established the Home Base Iowa initiative which connects returning veterans with opportunities for careers in Iowa, encourages additional incentives when locating to specific communities and outlines ways for veterans to continue service in options like the National Guard or Reserves. Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievements, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa.

Iowa remains committed to ongoing capacity development aimed at achieving the vision and goals of Iowa's Unified State Plan. Crafting a vision that articulates the needs of many and reflects the values and philosophies of a wide range of partner agencies was important to those involved in writing the plan. The Governor's current goals for the state of Iowa, NGA Talent PIPEline vision and strategies, *Future Ready Iowa*, the current mission of Iowa Workforce Development as well as those from Core partner programs, and many other factors were considered, reviewed, and infused into the vision, goals, and throughout the plan. Further, on October 5, 2015, Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds advanced the Future Ready Iowa initiative by setting a goal of 70% of Iowans having two- and four-year college degrees, certificates, work-based learning opportunities, and other valuable credentials and experiences by 2025.

Iowa is well-poised to provide workforce and talent development activities given the knowledge base of our workforce partners. With system components such as career pathway system which includes bridges and stackable credentials, Registered Apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training programs that meet industry demands, we continue to pursue avenues for continuous improvement. The capacity of the state talent development system to continue providing workforce development activities is dependent on continued communication among state entities, as established through the WIOA Leadership Team. Equally important is communications between state and workforce development boards to ensure a venue through which refinements can be made.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

DEVELOPING A VISION

In developing the goals and strategies of Iowa's Unified State Plan, the Governor's economic goals, Iowa's NGA Talent PIPEline Goals, and stakeholder feedback were incorporated to maximize chances of success, reduce duplication of services, and to ensure effective alignment of all of Iowa's workforce delivery systems. The model advanced by Iowa's Unified State Plan incorporates and aligns all programs, infusing priority of services into each tenet. This system will focus on intensive services for those individuals who face the biggest obstacles in securing and maintaining employment; ensuring that each agency and partner works collaboratively to remove and reduce barriers to all Iowans. The State Board will provide a governing structure and will require state Core Partners to adopt or participate, to the extent appropriate for each program, the following strategies that frame, align, and guide program coordination at the state, local, and regional levels in order to achieve the state's three goals. Furthermore, the state will provide ongoing evaluation of the system to ensure maximum and consistent effectiveness.

UNIFIED STATE PLAN VISION

Iowa's workforce delivery systems will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa - a pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries. In alignment with the National Governor's Association Talent PIPEline vision and goals, this unified plan will ensure individuals are prepared for dynamic careers through an emphasis on lifelong learning while meeting the needs of employers. Iowa's workforce delivery system will assist more Iowans to become Future Ready by attaining the "new minimum" of high-quality education, training, and work readiness by bringing together education, rehabilitation, workforce, and economic development resources and ensuring that all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system. Future Ready Iowans will be ready to meet the employment challenges of today and into the future so that ALL Iowans work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

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* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

UNIFIED STATE PLAN GOALS

GOAL I: IOWA'S EMPLOYERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ADVANCED, SKILLED, DIVERSE AND FUTURE READY WORKERS.

GOAL II: ALL IOWANS WILL BE PROVIDED ACCESS TO A CONTINUUM OF HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATION.

GOAL III: IOWA'S WORKFORCE DELIVERY SYSTEM WILL ALIGN ALL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN AN ACCESSIBLE, SEAMLESS AND INTEGRATED MANNER.

Accessibility

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method. Accessibility encompasses a variety of ideas, actions, and high-level collaboration. A range of barriers exists for a diversity of populations. System-level barriers such as exclusionary hiring practices and a lack of employer supports, to geographic hindrances and other location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system. For instance, individuals living in Iowa's many rural communities experience higher levels of isolation, have limited access to available and affordable transportation, are not offered the same educational and training opportunities, and often lack personal and professional support networks and essential services. Adding to the mix is the job seeker's ability to gain skills due to a real or environmentally imposed restriction.

Recognizing the variety of barriers and restrictions imposed upon job seekers and workers, the State of Iowa is committed, regardless of language skills, age, location, ability, legal history, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, or socio-economic background may gain access. Access may require reasonable accommodations, natural and programmatic supports, intensive services, and creative methods to address the actual or perceived impediment toward meaningful access. Any individual who is seeking services from the workforce system will receive the appropriate, reasonable, and needed accommodation or support. All goals, strategies and actions inherently infuse options for accommodations and accessibility such that all Iowan's may be provided the necessary supports to be successful in achieving their employment goal. The plan goals, strategies and activities presume and require all core partners to provide the necessary services, support, modification or accommodation for ALL Iowan's to be successful. All entities responsible for Iowa's workforce services delivery system will work together to support and encourage a fully accessible and accommodated workforce system that works for ALL Iowans.

Sector Partnerships

The State of Iowa will support the development of statewide and/or regionally based, employer-driven sector initiatives. Sector strategies address the needs of employers through a focus on the workforce needs of specific employer sectors over a specific time period. While working to address the needs of employers, the needs of workers will also be met through the creation of formal career paths to self-sustaining jobs, reduction of barriers to employment, and sustained or increased jobs. Sector partnerships bolster regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and workforce delivery systems. Systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for employers and job-seekers, a broad diversity of stakeholders must be engaged through formal, organized sector partnerships.

Career Pathways

Career Pathways are components of sector strategies. Career Pathways support workers' transitions from training and education into the workforce and into an eventual self-sustaining career. Career Pathways work to increase education, training and learning opportunities for the current and future workforce. Career Pathways help job-seekers develop personal, technical, and employability skills which prepare job-seekers for in-demand and lasting jobs. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce services providers, employers, labor groups and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of Career Pathways approaches. A baseline survey of sector partnerships and career pathways has been completed that will form the foundation for developing career pathways moving forward.

Integration

Delivering workforce services that are better aligned to meet the needs of ALL system beneficiaries is the overarching aim of Iowa's integration strategies. A fully integrated and well-aligned system is one that prepares Iowa's employers with the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to grow a Future Ready workforce and empowers job-seekers and workers with skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment.

Integrated Education and Training

Integrated education and training opportunities will allow for the creation of a Future Ready workforce that prepares ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's jobs.

With improved accessibility and alignment of systems, ALL Iowans will be able to participate in the education and training opportunities that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for rewarding careers.

Activities to support integrated education and training strategies will align with the NGA Talent PIPEline/Future Ready Initiative recommendations as well as with concepts within the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce report. A youth-focused work group will be convened by the Core Partners and key stakeholders. Individuals and small businesses will be given guidance on business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning throughout the start-up, operations and maintenance phases of entrepreneurial pursuits.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

An effective performance management and accountability system depends upon several important factors:

- Clearly defined performance goals and measures;
- A data tracking system that provides timely and accurate information, which can be queried or reported in formats that permit close analysis;
- An on-going evaluation process that not only reviews the current level of performance, but also includes historical and projected performance;
- Flexible program policies that allow rapid adjustment to issues of economic and workforce impact; and
- A system of incentive and sanctions.

The State of Iowa has these elements in place for performance accountability of the workforce system. The primary goals featured in the system are the mandated program goals for WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser). While some of these measures (placement rates and earnings at placement) are elevated to an enterprise-wide or broader system level for purposes of gubernatorial reports or the Results Iowa website, there are no additional state-established goals for the employment and training system. Regional boards also have the option of establishing additional goals for their workforce areas. In practicality, extensive statutory program goals and reporting requirements that exist in the system mitigates local areas with limited resources to establish any additional goals, however. For this reason, Iowa welcomes federal initiatives to establish measures that are most representative of system success.

The data tracking system in Iowa is extremely valuable to the efforts to improve system performance. Because the state provides a comprehensive tracking system for its programs, the network of One-Stop Centers is supported by coordinated data tracking. The comprehensive reports and query capabilities provided by this system are essential to program analysis at both the state and local levels, leading to data-driven decisions that improve system quality and efficiency.

On-going evaluation and analysis of performance achievement occurs at federal, state and local levels. The ETA Regional Office provides a quarterly assessment of performance and expenditure levels of the ten states in the region. This information is used for comparative and analytical purposes, and is shared with local service providers. At the state level, regional representatives compile data on each region, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Locally, RWIBs routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities. For the next two Program Years, Iowa is proposing the following performance levels. These levels are subject to negotiation with the DOL/ETA, and final standards will be established.

WIOA Title I and Title III Benchmark goals for PY16 and PY17 are as follows:

Workforce Development Activities	PY 2016	PY 2017
Adult	PY 2016	PY 2017
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	64.0%	65.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	63.0%	64.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$4,000	$4,100
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	65.0%	65.0%
Dislocated Worker	PY 2016	PY 2017
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	65.0%	66.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	65.0%	66.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$5,500	$5,600
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	63.0%	63.0%
Youth	PY 2016	PY 2017
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	70.0%	70.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	67.0%	67.0%
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	58.0%	58.0%

Wagner Peyser Act

Wagner Peyser	PY 2016	PY 2017
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	63.0%	63.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	64.0%	65.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$4,500	$4,600

Leveraging Resources Among Iowa's State Agencies

In the past several years, a number of state agencies have focused their efforts toward the goal of increasing earnings by growing industries in these targeted clusters on both the supply and demand sides of the labor market equation. These efforts are further supported by a number of good management practices, codified by Iowa's Accountable Government Act, by which all state departments must produce a number of documents and make them available to the Governor and others, executive branch, the legislature, and the general public via the state's *Results Iowa* Internet site including:

- An agency strategic plan, updated annually,
- A corresponding performance plan with measurable goals for key strategies,
- A performance report, which details annual progress toward goals in the performance plan.

Assured Focus on Business and Customer Needs

Resources in the One-Stop delivery system come in a variety of forms. Some partners contribute funding for core services, intensive services, and training, while others may provide in-kind services. Local Service plans serve as the mechanism to ensure the focus is on the business and customer needs.

The local planning guidance asks the local workforce investment board to specifically address the status of the labor pool in context with the labor market, identifying the workforce investment needs of business, job seekers, and workers in the region. The board will then describe how they will use its resources and oversight authority to address workforce needs in the region and develop the annual budget. The state will review and comment on each of these plans and, if necessary, make recommendations on how to maximize their resources to address local workforce needs.

The success of these planning efforts and their implementation is evaluated not only by program performance outcomes, but also by a variety of customer satisfaction surveys, forums, and customer comment opportunities. The Workforce Investment Act statute requires a base level customer satisfaction survey format that is used to determine achievement of a performance standard. Iowa's performance on that measure has always significantly exceeded the performance goals, for both job seekers and businesses. In addition to those surveys, Iowa Workforce Development makes customer comment and feedback opportunities readily available in One-Stop Centers, through its website, and through additional customer surveys. The establishment of Employers' Councils of Iowa in each region of the State provides another level of input directly from businesses regarding Iowa Workforce Development and One-Stop Center operations.

Finally, the State has provided a number of forums and roundtables throughout the State, primarily focused on business, to further ensure that customer needs are being met. Iowa state agencies recognize that evaluating each agency's performance in isolation of the other services that are available in a community will not adequately support Regional Workforce Investment Boards in addressing capacity issues in their communities. It will be important to continue working together to identify stronger methods to evaluate the combined impact of all Iowa "One-Stop" Service Partner agencies on their communities to determine our collective success. This approach will be necessary to improve community support of business and job seeker interests.

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Iowa will make use of many activities to assess the successful provision of workforce services and the delivery of the Governor's strategic vision and goals. Efforts at integrated performance reporting, cross-system data alignment and systems interoperability will develop over the course of the four year plan and are contingent on negotiated agreement among the State Plan partners. The activities discussed below all play a role in ensuring that the state is able to make continuous and quality improvements in terms of adhering to federal and state regulations, providing quality services to the workforce system customer, and meeting federal and state outcome expectations.

With a common set of workforce performance measures for the core partners, reports will enable workforce program administrators and policy makers to identify best practices and improve the effectiveness of Iowa's workforce development programs. Future development of a dashboard of key indicators for local areas to access and compare success through non-personal identifiable information will stimulate dialogue and sharing of procedures, particularly across providers of similar size and economic composition. It is anticipated that for each region, the dashboard would report the number of individuals completing the program, the number of completers subsequently employed, their median earnings, employment stability, post-secondary or training enrollment, and education and training credentials earned. The workforce performance measures evaluate program efforts to:

- Provide job seekers with access to training that results in industry-recognized credentials;
- Connect individuals to short- and long-term employment;
- Increase participants' overall earnings; and
- Meet the needs of employers.

In addition to these measures, the state will continue to further implement additional regional level measures to achieving progress toward sector partnerships and career pathway development. These will include the following:

- efforts to track the development and expansion of sector partnerships throughout the state, by region and focus;
- a regional enumeration - the number of middle-skill industry-valued and recognized postsecondary credentials awarded in the region; and
- TBD training-related employment by occupation and or sector, to assess whether training and education programs are leading to employment in relevant occupational fields or industry sectors following program exit to measure post-program success and to aid in determining impact from labor market dynamics.

The state is developing a cross-agency team consisting of core partners, to annually review progress toward integration, One-Stop Certification, adherence to common regional board policies and risk assessment. Initially this review will assess One-Stop partners on whether they are meeting baseline federal requirements pertaining to co-location, cross-training, and meaningful virtual access to services in at least one comprehensive One-Stop in each local area. While this review will not be program specific it will include interviews to ensure understanding of regulations and the cohesiveness of local processes.

Recommendations on the criteria to be used in this review are being developed through the One-Stop Design workgroup, convened by the State Board for the purpose of WIOA implementation including representatives from all core programs and other state and local partners in the One-Stop system and is charged with identifying and disseminating information on best practices relating to business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, identifying and responding to implementation challenges, and providing policy recommendations to the State Board to guide the effective operation of the One-Stop system in Iowa. The criteria are supported with the development of the "One-Stop System Standards" by the workgroup. These standards and reviews help to ensure that all customers are able to access and receive the services they need in the most efficient manner possible. Criteria will include all of the following assessments at a minimum:

- Leadership, planning and collaboration (how well are core programs involved and aligned?),
- Customer-focus and customer-centered design (do clients get the services they need?),
- Manner in which the One-Stop will enable skills attainment leading to industry recognized credentials and degrees (does the One-Stop help move those with barriers to employment on a path to skills development?),
- Use of data for continuous improvement (do One-Stop operators utilize performance data to improve service delivery?),
- Professional development and staff capacity building,
- Employer engagement and focus on high growth sectors,
- Environmental, programmatic and technological accessibility of the One-Stop (is the facility accessible, visible, and capable of meeting the needs of many populations.

The cross agency team will also ensure that each board meets composition requirements and that meetings are being conducted correctly, providing consistency across the state. This consistency ensures that each region is able to carry out the Governor's vision as outlined in their local plan in the most effective manner.

The final way in which the State ensures effectiveness is through the development and delivery of a core partner customer satisfaction survey. The cross-agency team and policy work group will prepare and facilitate a survey of at least 500 past participants. Once the data is collected the results will be detailed in a summative report. The team will also analyze the data to identify areas in which the workforce development system can improve the customer experience and outcomes. If needed, those recommendations will be distributed to regions for revisions to local plans. By focusing on customer experience, the workforce development system will ensure positive outcomes and word-of-mouth referrals. These testimonials are necessary to ensure that customers have access and will continue to seek services.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7). "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

STATE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Significant work toward establishing strong sector partnerships was done when the Iowa Department of Education convened an advisory council in June 2015 to address sector partnership and career pathway implementation for the Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) program - a state funded initiative of the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund. Enacted and funded in 2013 by the Iowa Legislature, the PACE program supports the implementation of simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive academic and training pathways which enable eligible participants to acquire the necessary skills to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. Leveraging resources the council initially consisted of representatives from Iowa's community colleges, but was broadened to include core partners and industry leaders from across Iowa.

The council, known currently as the Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC), was well positioned to assist with the implementation of key WIOA provisions which emphasize in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways resulting in attainment of industry-recognized stackable credentials.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE COUNCIL

Common Definitions

The council was tasked with establishing common definitions and expectations for sector partnerships and career pathways aligned with WIOA and other federal guidelines such as the ability to benefit (ATB) provision of the Higher Education Act. To better understand the current sector partnership/career pathway landscape, these definitions were utilized in a survey which was sent to each community college, as well as other organizations involved with convening and facilitating sector partnerships.

Sector Partnership & Career Pathways Survey

The results of the survey were summarized in a report published in December, 2015. Relevant portions of the report have been summarized. There were 40 surveys returned with 36 completed survey responses. All of Iowa's 15 community college regions are currently being served by sector partnerships; 90 of Iowa's 99 Counties were being served by sector partnerships; 9 of 16 career clusters were represented and 11 of 16 career clusters identified by Battelle were represented. Additionally, the report showed that 20 of 40 respondents reported having developed and validated at least one career pathway; 30 of the respondents ranked their sector partnership maturity level as "emerging", while four respondents considered their progress to be in the "planning" stages and four considered their sector partnership planning to be in the "mature" stage.

The Sector Partnership Report can be accessed in its entirety at: https://www.educateIowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Sector%20Partnership%20Report%20FINAL%2001%2026%2016.pdf

Sector Partnership Toolkit

Iowa's response to sector partnership has been to build on existing promising practices. Sector partnerships are major components of Iowa's Unified State Plan and *A Future Ready Iowa*. A collaborative effort by the state to provide guidance and training on sector partnerships has resulted in a series of toolkits. The toolkit was produced through a partnership with the Department of Education and Iowa Workforce Development using funds made available by a grant from the Department of Labor in conjunction with Iowa Central Community College as a collaborator and partner. The toolkits are not exhaustive but aimed at preparing the state and regions to make data-informed critical decisions in planning, emerging, and sustaining sector partnerships. By identifying the evolution and processes associated with effective sector partnerships, Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC), a business-driven state-sponsored association, promotes a stream-lined workforce talent pipeline along with robust career pathways that link the needs of the employers with all Iowans. Each section in this toolkit contains a narrative, key points, an activity or checklist to practice the principle associated with each partnership, and a self-assessment that helps to evaluate progress and next steps.

Data Use in Sector Partnerships

The report also contains current data critical to developing robust sector partnerships in different regions throughout Iowa. For regions to prioritize targeted industries for growth and development of partnerships, they must keep the following common data points in mind for regional impact: Sector partnerships are composed of industries with shared needs, as well as various education, workforce, economic, and community organizations in supportive roles. Data helps to provide a baseline, but it is not the only consideration. In addition, sector partnerships operate within labor market regions and are not confined to municipal, county, educational, or even state boundaries. Reviewing the data by applying the step-by-step guide will help determine the best scope and size of a sector partnership. But lags, gaps, too little data, or too much data may create limitations. Consider the data as a starting point for future conversations with employers.

A review of information provided by EMSI (a composite, unsuppressed), and up-to-date labor market information database and analytical modeling tool available regionally through Enhance Iowa) about occupations, worker skills, commuting patterns, and other relevant data reveals Iowa's top industries, which include Construction with 99,778 total jobs in 2015; Healthcare with 203,505 total jobs in 2015; and Finance and Insurance with 95,215 total jobs in 2015. Growth between 2015 and 2015 is expected to increase by 24%, 22%, and 18% respectively.

The Sector Partnerships Toolkit can be accessed in its entirety by going to: https://www.educateIowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Sector%20Partnerships%20Toolkit%201.0%20Planning.pdf

One Door Many Paths: A WIOA Partners' Conference

The "One Door, Many Paths" Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Conference was held on June 27-28, 2016, at the Prairie Meadows Conference Center in Altoona, Iowa. This was Iowa's first jointly facilitated conference by Iowa Workforce Development, the Iowa Department of

Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Association of Iowa Workforce Partners in partnership with several other key state agencies and community partners. The conference was held to discuss ways to streamline workforce services for Iowans and find solutions to reduce Iowa's skills gap. The conference also addressed how to help Iowans who are unemployed or underemployed and those with significant barriers to employment. More than 500 attendees had the opportunity to explore areas related to career pathways, employer development, public and private partnership and building sector strategies.

During the conference, sector partnerships toolkit was released in an effort to provide guidance and training on sector partnership development. This is the first in a series of toolkits that aims to prepare the state and regions to make data-informed critical decisions in planning, emerging, and sustaining sector partnerships. Each section in the first toolkit contains a narrative, key points, an activity or checklist to practice the principle associated with each partnership, and a self-assessment that helps to evaluate progress and next steps. This publication was produced through a partnership with the Department of Education and Iowa Workforce Development using funds made available by a grant from the Department of Labor. Special thanks to Iowa Central Community College for their collaboration and partnership.

CURRENT POLICY

Iowa provides support for local sector partnerships through its Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) program. Funding: Iowa's PACE program funds partnerships between community colleges, industry, and nonprofits, with the community college serving as the grant recipient. While the PACE program is not limited to sector partnerships, PACE funds may be used to support the development and implementation of regional industry sector partnerships. In 2015, Iowa appropriated $5 million for PACE, with awards made to all 15 community colleges through a funding formula. The Iowa statute (Iowa Code 260H.7B) that established PACE identifies sector partnerships as a potential element of PACE programs, and lists activities that may be carried out by sector partnerships.

FUTURE DIRECTION

To strengthen the development and ongoing implementation of Iowa's sector strategies and career pathway systems, the Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will serve as a standing committee to the State Workforce Development Board and will have the following attributes:

Planned membership includes broad education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, economic development and business and industry association representatives. The Council will include the following attributes at a minimum:

- Business led and oriented;
- Tasked to provide state level leadership, support, policy development, coordination and guidance to regional sector partnership development;
- In charge of convening an annual statewide workshop for regional sector partnerships from across the state to share best practices and promote statewide collaboration;
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional sector partnerships;
- The Council will serve as an advisory committee to the State Board of Directors to help fulfill WIOA requirements.

Development and Maintenance of a statewide data base for sector partnerships and career pathways will give participants access to regional hot jobs based on in-demand and emerging industry. Funding is being leveraged from multiple departments, with a mix of state and federal funds and is coordinated through Iowa's Future Ready Initiative.

Training sessions for sector partnership facilitators will be conducted by recognized national sector partnership consultants and are being scheduled in 2016 to develop a statewide pool of trained, professional facilitators to provide technical assistance and support in the development of regional sector partnerships.

Funding from the 260H PACE Career Pathways annual appropriation from the Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund will be pursued to support ongoing sector partnership and career pathway development activities in Iowa. The Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges will be responsible for staffing and supporting this effort through the Sector Partnership Leadership Council.

Common Definitions

Sector Partnership

A sector partnership is a workforce collaborative that organizes key stakeholders and targeted industry partners into a sustainable working group that focuses on the long-term workforce needs of a targeted industry cluster. Membership in the sector partnership is determined by the targeted industry partners. Sector partnerships operate within a true labor market region and are not confined to particular workforce, education, or similar regional boundaries. The term industry partners means a concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, research and development entities, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are linked by common workforce needs. Sector support partners work to meet the skill, recruitment, and retention needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. By meeting the needs of sector partnerships on behalf of industry, jobseekers, and workers, sector support partners strengthen a region's overall economic vitality. Support partners should include entities such as:

- local government;
- local economic development agencies;
- local agencies;
- chambers of commerce;
- nonprofit organizations;
- philanthropic organizations;
- community service agencies;
- economic development organizations;
- industry associations;
- labor organizations, except in instances where no labor representation exists;
- representatives of local boards;
- representatives of K-12, adult education, and postsecondary educational institutions or other training providers; and
- representatives of state workforce agencies or other entities providing employment services; and representatives of other, related regional sector partnerships.

Key roles in the development and implementation of a sector partnership are that of the convener and facilitator or facilitating team. A convener is a credible entity in a position to identify regional

economic and labor needs and convene industry and support partners to develop strategies which address the identified regional needs. A facilitator or facilitating team is a neutral, credible, and trained entity tasked with ensuring the ongoing operation and sustainability of a sector partnership.

Accordingly, the facilitator assists in introducing options which address identified regional needs, distinguishing resource needs and funding sources, and other activities vital to the functioning of the sector partnership. The facilitator is not the sector partnership leader, a position which should be designated upon a partnership member. Rather, a facilitator works closely with the partnership leader to accomplish the aforementioned tasks. A convener and facilitator may be the same entity - i.e., the convener may assume the facilitator role - if that entity possesses the appropriate capacities to fully perform in both roles.

Mature Sector Partnership:

- has a clear neutral facilitator or facilitating team;
- is led by industry, as demonstrated by industry sector members playing leadership roles (chairperson, etc.), who are committed to the long term sustainability of the sector partnership;
- has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- includes critical and engaged support partners across programs from workforce development economic development, education, community organizations and others. Sector partnership actively communicates and collaborates with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area, community college boundary, or other boundaries;
- operates under a shared, long-term strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- has developed at least one effective, employer validated career pathway in support of a target industry cluster based on mapping knowledge, skills and abilities, and skill attainment at multiple entry and exit points;
- has clear, identified priorities and is able to demonstrate recent (within the past six months) or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership, including, but not limited to the design and implementation, with employers of work-based learning models in targeted sector(s); on-the-job training; cooperative education; paid internships and; pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs; and
- has common agreed-upon dashboard of success indicators (i.e. consensus around sector partnership “outcomes”) determined in part by indicators needed to bring about system changes.

Emerging Sector Partnership:

- has at least an interim independent facilitator or facilitating team;
- has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
- includes support partners from workforce development, education, economic development, and other programs or organizations in strategic roles. Is developing the capacity to engage in active communication and collaboration with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- can say with confidence when the partnership is expected to “launch;” and
- engaged in networking with mature sector partnerships.

Planning:

- determining whether the partnership really makes sense for their community;
- considering or preparing for actions needed to launch a partnership, but has not committed to the formation of a sector partnership; and
- working to identify partners who would be involved.

Career Pathway:

A career pathway consists of structured course sequences which organize rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services related to a targeted industry cluster to meet the education and skill needs of the region and state, and the particular needs of an individual, all in the context of workforce preparation. This is achieved through collaboration between industry partners and support partners within a sector partnership.

A career pathway must include advising and support services which identify education and career needs and goals to meet the needs of individuals with or without the need for relevant and reasonable accommodations. To meet the needs of all individuals, a career pathway must be equipped to effectively:

- enable an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential;
- prepare an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary and postsecondary education options, including Registered Apprenticeships; and
- help an individual enter and advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Attention must be given to strategies and approaches which accelerate the educational postsecondary credential attainment and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable. Such strategies must include, but is not limited to, the concurrent delivery of adult education and eligible postsecondary education programs, and “bridge” curricula which connects adult and basic education to workforce preparation programs and integrates education and training to allow students to advance in their education and employment.

A career pathway system is the cohesive combination of sector partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared accountability measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and sustainability of career pathways for youth and adults. As such, a career pathway system is a long-term objective for which all sector partnerships should strive. A career pathway system is an overarching frame and is not couched within any one public education, workforce, or other system; however, one system may take the lead on developing the career pathway. The value of a career pathway system is that it is not created in a vacuum, but connects and aligns all other related public systems to each other and to private and non-profit partners.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

ALIGNMENT STRATEGIES

Core Partners and other key service providers have been designing policies around the following strategies which were developed collaboratively among the partners and other relevant stakeholders. Core Partners have been meeting on a regular basis to ensure that planning efforts are truly partner centric and reflective of the requirements of those who are most at-need within the workforce delivery system in Iowa.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE ACCESSIBILITY

The Workforce System Partners will work with Iowa's employers to identify and reduce barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. The partnership will expand accessible opportunities for populations which have been traditionally underserved or underrepresented, and those who have one or more barriers to sustainable employment. Alignment and systems improve will help ensure accessibility to ALL Iowans.

Activities to support accessibility strategies will include the ongoing identification, and proactive reduction of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. Workforce System Partners will develop policies and implement procedures to ensure continuing and unhindered access to Iowa jobs for ALL Iowans.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

The Core Partners and key stakeholders will collaborate to engage employers in the continuous development of programs and initiatives that are responsive to Iowa's current and future labor-market needs and to significantly expand mature sector partnership activity throughout the state, applying demand-driven methodology.

Activities to support sector partnership strategies include working with employers to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment, closing skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers by expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries. Identifying and quantifying employers' education, training, and workforce needs will be a priority. Capturing those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand Dashboard to be driven by a public-private collaborative and disseminated via an accessible computer system will further support Iowa's sector partnerships. The core partners will infuse innovative strategies throughout service delivery to enhance integration opportunities for individuals with significant barriers to employment and to increase chances of attaining successful competitive employment.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CAREER PATHWAYS

ALL Iowans will be engaged in the career pathway development process by utilizing innovative approaches in the delivery of career services and offering a variety of career pathway navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce.

Activities to support career pathways strategies will be the development of an interagency definition of “self-sustaining employment.” Workforce delivery systems will work in concert to provide workers with the skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed through the systematic development of career pathways for in-demand industries. ALL Iowans will have access to the occupational and training resources and skills needed to work to their fullest potential and to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION

The quality of workforce development services will be improved through the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities and a focused communication strategy. Activities to support integration strategies will involve the creation of a service delivery model which is business-driven, user-friendly, data-driven and dynamic enough to meet the evolving needs of employers. Duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system will be identified. Policies and collaborative agreements will be drafted and implemented which maximize resources that foster a unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTEGRATION

An accessible data collection effort will streamline data collection processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aid in accurate performance measurement for decision making. The state will work to minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among Core Partners and relevant agencies. A robust policy will be adopted to ease transitions within and across systems and programs using a referral process that allows for direct connection among partners and providers, and holds agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success and navigating the system.

POLICY AND INTEGRATION

The state will establish an Iowa Sector Partnership & Leadership Council that is demand-side driven to provide cross-industry, cross-employer, and cross-agency leadership in the development and support of mature sector partnerships and holistic career pathways. Furthermore, the state will engage Iowa’s employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa. Previously compiled career pathway work is holistic and not institutionally biased - i.e. does not include just the programming of one service provider. The state will bring a diversity of stakeholders together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa’s current and future workforce. A center piece of this collaborative effort will be a policy council advising the State Board on proven and promising practices and policies that support an integrated system responsive to labor market needs.. Statewide policies will be developed that support Iowa’s businesses in offering creative and nontraditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.

Benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers will be maximized through the intentional braiding, integrating and seeking out of diverse funding streams. One-Stop Centers operate under an advanced training certification program to ensure all centers are accessible, operating consistently and that staff have access to the same knowledge, resources, and supports across the state that ensures:

- Professional Development
- Consistent staff training,
- Intra-agency cross training,
- Eligible Training Provider List access and training, and
- Advanced technology.

In-demand career opportunities and career pathways will be communicated to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including creation of a dashboard of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

To accomplish integrated education and training, Iowa's key workforce delivery system partners must:

- Ensure that ALL Iowans have full access and direct connection to programs that work to address essential components of reading instruction and literacy,
- Create affordable options for workers to obtain education, training, skills, including personal, soft, and basic skills, and financial literacy, necessary to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment, and
- Develop opportunities for ALL Iowans to develop entrepreneurial skills and concepts while providing opportunities for connection with Iowa business leaders.

The State Board requires that Core Partners adopt or participate, to the extent appropriate for each program, several strategies that will frame, align and guide program coordination to achieve the state's vision and goals. Under WIOA, one-stop centers and their partners are considered Iowa's local One-Stop System and are tasked with performing the following:

- providing job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages;
- providing access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers
- empowering businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce;
- participating in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of one-stop centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations; and
- ensuring high-quality, integrated and data-informed decisions made by policymakers, employers, and job seekers.

In order for Iowa's One Stop System to accomplish these tasks and to effectively develop a Future Ready Iowa to meet the ever changing demands of Iowa's economy, Iowa has developed workgroups to ensure high-quality customer service, avoid duplication of programs and activities, and developed a system to ensure that all customers receive the services they need.

Through the One Stop System certification process, Iowa's Core Partners are working to ensure continuous quality improvement (needs something better here) of our comprehensive and dynamic system to ensure that the needs of our economy are met and that ALL Iowans are Future Ready and work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Iowa's One Stop System has developed the following Strategies and action steps to align and strengthen programs and system partnerships:

IOWA WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES THROUGH THE PROVISION OF CONSISTENT, INTEGRATED, AND NON-DUPLICATIVE SERVICES ACROSS EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES. THE FOLLOWING ACTION STEPS WILL BE TAKEN:

- Create a service delivery model which is business-driven, user-friendly, data-drive and meets the evolving needs of employers
- Identify duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system and draft policies and collaborative agreements to maximize resources that foster a more unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services.
- Implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.
- Minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among core partners and relevant agencies.
- Develop a referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, which includes holding agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success.
- Establish a Sector Partnership & Career Pathway Advisory Council to serve as cross agency leadership in the development and support of sector partnerships and career pathways.
- Engage Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa.
- Bring a diversity of stakeholders (Policy Council) together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce.
- Create statewide policies that support Iowa's businesses in offering creative and non-traditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.
- Braid, integrate and seek diverse funding streams to maximize benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers.

DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN ACROSS ALL CORE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PARTNERS TO ENSURE INFORMATION IS SHARED. THE FOLLOWING ACTION STEPS WILL BE TAKEN:

- Intra-agency cross training will be completed on a continuous basis to ensure high quality services and referrals to the appropriate core partners.
- Eligible Training Provider List
- Technology component
- Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including a dashboard of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.

- Create an advanced training certification program of the One-Stop Center to ensure all One-Stop centers are accessible and operating consistently and that staff have access to the knowledge, resources and supports across the state.
- Identify liaisons between core and required partners to ensure a quality experience for customers accessing multiple services.

The core partners have been developing pilot projects in coordination with other workforce-related initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa and the Governor's increased commitment to work-based learning models. This planning and coordination is ongoing and will continue as part of Iowa's strategy to align required and optional programs now and into the future.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

During WIOA implementation, the core partners have collaborated to perform the State Board's required duties and responsibilities under the Act with the help of required partner agencies. The primary method of collaboration has been work groups involving partners and stakeholders. The work and accomplishments of these groups is detailed in this plan. Moving forward, however, the State Board will need a more robust operational framework to fulfill its duties and responsibilities under WIOA.

Currently, Iowa's State Board does not have standing committees to assist in their efforts to formalize a structure to engage partners and stakeholders in Iowa's workforce development system. The State Board will add standing committees to ensure a higher standard of state board functioning. The standing committees will be required to hold regular meetings and to report to the State Board on a regular basis. Once established, the committees will be charged with the following tasks:

- Review and make recommendations regarding plans and reports required under WIOA;
- Serve as an advocate of plans and strategies to the Board, IWD leadership, policy makers and stakeholders;
- Serve as an administrator to collect and manage workforce and talent development information on behalf of the Board;
- Review state, regional and local plans and activities as required by WIOA and provide status reports to the Board;
- Perform state workforce board functional responsibilities identified in ss. 101(d)(1) through 101(d)(12) of WIOA and provide recommendations to the Board;
- Review progress reports and provide status updates to the Board;
- Assess opportunities and recommend amendments to the Board's Strategic Plan;
- Convene and connect talent development resources to drive innovative workforce solutions that support economic development strategies;
- Consult with state, regional and local resources to champion collaborations and partnerships within the workforce system;
- Serve as convener to gather thought leaders and practitioners to perpetually evaluate talent development system(s);
- Serve as a connector of resources to other agencies, service providers, collaborators, initiatives or projects;
- Serve as a consultant to state/local workforce boards and partners regarding strategies and opportunities;
- Review talent development systems and networks and recommend innovative solutions and integration of resources;
- Recommend education and outreach strategies and campaigns to continually align resources and partners; and
- Perform other functional requirements of the state workforce board as determined by the state board or core partners.

Iowa will also attempt to update the statutory provisions governing the State Board to reflect the State's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. This will include

the creation of an operations team, tentatively consisting of representatives from the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Iowa Department for the Blind. The Operations Team will provide staff support to the Iowa Workforce Development Board of Directors to achieve improved alignment of the core WIOA programs and the state's education, workforce and economic development programs. The Director of the Department of Workforce Development will designate the person to coordinate and lead the operations team. Staffing and administrative costs for the operations team shall be provided by the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other potential partners as deemed appropriate.

The Operations Team will be tasked with the following:

- Coordination and staffing of activities of the State Board.
- Facilitation and coordination of all research, reports data, analysis, and recommendations associated with the operations team and its purposes.
- Provision of regular updates to the Workforce Development Board on the status of activities of the operations team and the progress made in aligning programs pursuant to the purposes of the board.

Iowa will also seek to create a Policy Council that will advise the State Board on proven and promising practices with respect to workforce service delivery from across the State and nation. The Policy Council will also make policy recommendations to help create a more integrated workforce development system that is responsive to current and future labor-market needs.

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STRUCTURE

The State Board was created in 1996. At its inception, the State Board consisted of nine voting members, with the following affiliations, and appointed by the Governor:

- Four members representing nonsupervisory employees

o Under Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(a), of the members appointed by the Governor to represent nonsupervisory employees, two members must be from statewide labor organizations, one member must be from an employee representative labor management council, and one member must be a person with experience in worker training programs;

- Four members representing employers; and
- One member representing a non-profit organization involved in workforce development services.

To this day, the State Board's voting membership remains structurally unchanged. It has the same makeup as it did on the day of its creation in 1996. The State Board's membership also includes nonvoting members. Over the years, the legislature has added nonvoting, ex officio members. Today, the State Board's membership includes twelve nonvoting members:

- Four members of the legislature.

o Under Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(b), the legislative members are two state senators, one appointed by the President of the Senate after consultation with the Majority Leader of the Senate, and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate from their respective parties; and two state representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives after consultation with the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives from their respective parties;

- One president, or president's designee, of the University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa, or Iowa State University, designated by the State of Iowa Board of Regents on a rotating basis;
- One representative of the largest statewide public employees' organization representing state employees;
- One president, or president's designee, of an independent Iowa college, appointed by the Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- One superintendent, or superintendent's designee, of a community college, appointed by the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents;
- One representative of vocational rehabilitation community appointed by the State Rehabilitation Council in the Division of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services;
- One representative of the Department of Education appointed by the State Board of Education;
- One representative of the Economic Development Authority appointed by the director; and
- One representative of the United States Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

WIOA section 101 sets forth criteria for a state board's membership structure under the Act. Under WIOA section 101(e), for purposes of complying with WIOA's state-board requirements, a state may use an "alternative entity" that:

- Was in existence on the day before the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998;
- Is substantially similar to the State board in described in WIOA sections 101(a) through 101(c); and
- Includes representatives of business in the State and representatives of labor organizations in the State.

The Iowa State Board meets the itemized criteria for qualifying as a complying alternative entity under WIOA. On June 24, 2015, Governor Branstad notified the U.S. Department of Labor that the State Board would serve as an alternative entity under WIOA section 101(e) during the original two-year assessment period.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Iowa's strategy for workforce development aims to support the State's core mission to meet the needs of Iowa's growing economy and align programs and resources to create an effective and efficient method of workforce development. The State's strategy is focused on supporting a unified workforce system that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners and workforce system partners. Iowa will increase opportunities afforded by the workforce system to individuals and to businesses. The State of Iowa has convened work groups, made up of members from partner agencies and other key entities, to develop innovative and practical solutions that are reflective of the state's vision and identified priorities.

Workgroup Priorities

- Youth Services
- One-Stop System Design
- Sector Partnerships
- Career Pathways
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Business Services
- Strategies for Serving Underserved Populations
- Policy

The workgroups have been actively reviewing policies, identifying program and system gaps, and have provided recommendations to improve alignment of activities across core programs.

The following strategies and activities support the state's workforce goals to create a Future Ready Iowa where ALL Iowans are afforded opportunities to work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Improving services to youth in Iowa is going to be accomplished through and examination of system weaknesses and strengths, identification of effective programs within the Core Partner agencies, and engaging of partners outside of the plan who are working to serve youth in other capacities such as school guidance counselors, Iowa National Guard and juvenile corrections. The aim is to align workforce services and ensure that each phase of service delivery is fully accessible to ALL Iowa youth. In order to address the variety of barriers and restrictions experienced by youth of all abilities

and backgrounds, especially for youth with multiple barriers to employment, creating a fully accessible system in partnership with other agencies serving youth is critical.

An example of a successful program which is now being used as a model in other areas of the state is IVRS' development of the Project Search Third Party Cooperative Arrangement (TPCA). The TPCA positively contributed to increased employment outcomes for eligible VR high school students from the Des Moines School District with the most significant disabilities. The focus was on students whose diagnosis consisted primarily of Intellectual Developmental Disability. The School District committed to using non-federal share dollars for the Project.

According to one of its founders, "The Project Search model yields excellent employment outcomes by providing framework for public and private entities to collaborate and deliver services in a coordinated and productive manner. This collaboration allows for total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job-skills training. Project Search is cost-effective and self-sustainable because it leverages the existing funding streams and expertise of partnering organizations in education, vocational rehabilitation, developmental disabilities services, and other agencies."

Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) offers a Transitional Vocational Rehabilitation Services program to middle, high school & college students (age 14 and older) who are blind or have visual impairments, with goals around employment. Transition program assists to navigate the transition from high school to the world beyond with career counseling and work experience activities.

IDB also offers a Youth Leadership Program for eligible VR clients, in partnership with the Department of Human Rights and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to increase leadership, social, advocacy and life skills development for students in secondary schools through participation in a week long summer experience.

One-Stop System Design is working to develop accessible formats and delivery methods through recognizing and addressing a variety of barriers and restrictions to individuals. Increasing technology and offering flexibility in scheduling will aid in improving services delivery. Increasing supportive services and requiring enhanced professional staff development to increase awareness and utilization of supports will begin in 2016.

IDB offers an array of services through its Orientation Center which prepares Iowans who are blind or have visual impairments in learning the skills of blindness needed for employment, from traveling to technology needed on the job. This program is also open to Iowans, such as employers, who are not visually impaired who wish to develop a better understanding of the challenges faced by the visually impaired.

A major milestone in the work which is being done is the development of a One-Stop System customer-centered design model. This model is being developed and will be rolled out to the local areas in 2017. It includes the creation of an incentive program to encourage center staff to provide enhanced customer service to ALL Iowans. The program currently under development by the core partners includes planning for the creation of the following:

- Collaborative core partner handbook for providing excellent services to job-seekers

o Guidance specific to serving priority populations, such as recipients of public assistance and others identified in WIOA and by the Governor of the State of Iowa

- Formal guidance on engaging businesses and recruiting community partners
- Online resource hub for One-Stop Center staff

o Web-based training

o Policy guidance

o Connection to additional resources and staff development opportunities

- New staff development and training requirements
- Center certification process
- Formal recognition of high-achieving centers, staff and clients
- Improved monitoring procedures developed by the core partners
- Technical assistance to center staff
- Center self-assessment tool
- Enhanced customer satisfaction surveys
- Formal, outside program evaluation process
- Improved processes for providing technical assistance and support to centers

SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Sector Partnerships in Iowa are focused on incorporation of sector strategies and increasing support for industry-led initiatives into workforce services. This includes looking at ways to increase monetary and administrative support of regionally-based sector strategies throughout Iowa. Iowa Workforce Development was awarded a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant in 2015 to meet the needs of employers and workers in the aftermath of the Avian Influenza epidemic which affected Iowa's poultry farms and workers through the development and implementation of sector strategies to meet the needs of affected businesses and associated supply chain. Funds from the grant are being used to provide sector partnership facilitator training to Iowa's impacted regions and to respond to the needs of employers and job-seekers.

IVRS area offices are also becoming involved and engaged in sector partnerships. At the state level, IVRS has representation on the statewide Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Advisory Boards and will be involved in policy development that addresses accessibility issues. At the local level, the sector partnerships are locally developed workforce partners that serve specific industry sectors by providing a talent pool of eligible job candidates, as well as technical assistance to business and industry regarding their specific questions and needs. The Burlington Area Office has one IVRS employee on each sector partnership which has proven to be a systemic approach to placement. This allows the team to serve the business, and when a member of the team resigns or retires, a new member from the organization is then placed on the partnership. In this manner business receives services in a continuous fashion, the relationship is built with the partnership, and there is not any gap in service delivery to the business. IVRS area offices are all working with their local workforce development partnerships to become engaged and involved, or in some instances to create these partnerships where they do not exist. IVRS can be instrumental in this development because IVRS is in every county and has personal contacts in each county. This will serve as a conduit to creating and extending sector partnerships to more rural and remote areas of the state.

The Department of Adult Education and Literacy is involved in the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development with a focus on aligning services as a participant transitions from adult education through integrated education and training to further their

education and employment opportunities. Through the Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration, a three-year technical assistance grant, a state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness and improving alignment among key agencies throughout Iowa.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The Governor, with support of the Iowa Legislature, increased the state's capacity to meet the rapidly evolving needs of employers through increased support to Registered Apprenticeship programs. In 2014, funding to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs was tripled. IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Additionally, IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships.

CAREER PATHWAYS

The Iowa Department of Adult Education and Literacy received a *Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration* grant which is a three-year initiative to assist states in advancing career pathways systems to transition low-skilled adults to postsecondary education and employment. A state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness. The project provides targeted technical assistance services to support state's work in developing and implementing career pathways system. The Career Pathways Exchange consolidates and distributes career pathways-related resources, events, and information from federal and state agencies and partner organizations which are reviewed and distributed to key partners in Iowa.

The Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) is a program through Walgreens that provides retail skills to externs or trainees with a variety of disabilities. The program works in partnership with agencies within a community to provide job coaches who can help externs gain skills and the opportunity for future employment. Participants in the REDI program are not guaranteed employment, however, the purpose of the training is to provide externs the skills and competencies required to be successful in the retail environment. IVRS works in conjunction with Walgreens stores offering the REDI, in addition to providing funding support to CRP partners who oversee job coaching and training. Externs who successfully complete the 120-hour REDI training have the opportunity to apply for openings at Walgreens or with a neighboring business. Since the initiation of REDI in 2012, IVRS has worked with six Iowa providers (CRPS) to deliver REDI training in twelve Walgreens stores across Iowa. IVRS continues to develop Occupational Skill Training Programs per local area office needs. Communication efforts are being expanded at the local IWD Regional Workforce Boards in order to ensure collaboration with existing career pathways and sector boards will be integrated and accessible for individuals with disabilities.

INTEGRATION

IWD is looking to purchase a unified, one-stop, web-based workforce case management and labor exchange system which will be fully accessible and operable by the core partners. This system will function as a shared intake and assessment system and serve as a means by which to collect program data. The use of this system will streamline operations and enhance the customer service experience.

Leaders of eight departments developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to support collaborative service design to increase employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The eight agencies are Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Human Rights/Division for Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of the Aging and Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council. The Partners agree to support all their local offices in adopting the MOA Objective and Strategies to increase employment outcomes for Iowans with disabilities through state and local collaboration, maximizing resources and minimizing duplication in the support for competitive, community integrated employment outcomes. The MOA increases emphasis on aligning workforce system partners through referral and communication, staff training on integrated activities and improved outcomes.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy programs concurrently provide access to contextualized instruction, that blends workplace skills with work based learning. Participants engaged in work based learning activities are exposed to an educational approach that uses workplaces to structure learning experiences that contribute to their intellectual, social, academic, and career development. Some of the work based activities that are offered in collaboration with core and required partners include:

1. Job Shadowing - An unpaid experience where a participant follows an employer for a short period of time (a few hours to an entire day) to learn about a particular occupation or industry.

2. Unpaid Work Experience - An unpaid work experience is a limited-term opportunity, longer than a job shadow, for participants to learn about a particular occupation or industry by working at a specific workplace.

3. Internship - Participant internships are situations where participants work for an employer for a specified period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation. Participant's workplace activities may include special projects, a sample of tasks from different jobs, or tasks from a single occupation.

4. Cooperative Work Experience - a program of work experience in an actual employment setting related to the vocational interests and educational programs provided to a participant at an area vocational/technical education center.

5. Apprenticeship - An agreement through which the participant gains instruction and support in exchange for work. Pre-apprentice activities can include targeted instruction to prepare the participant to learn with masters of the trade, craft, or profession and begins an occupational career while contributing to the productivity of the enterprise.

6. Service Learning - A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

7. Participant Entrepreneurship - A participant entrepreneur is a participant who starts a company or non-profit while still attending school.

IDB operates a Career Resource Center for Iowans with visual impairments which provide accessible technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education has an agreement that outlines shared responsibilities between IVRS and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to prepare youth with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated community employment. Through this agreement IVRS has ready access to the student's IEPs that are on the IVRS caseload, which allows for a more timely development of the IVRS eligibility justification (within 60 days) and the individual plan for employment (within 90 days). This Memorandum of Agreement expands beyond the previous agreement and provides greater direction and support to the local IEP teams. This agreement describes roles and responsibilities and also financial obligations.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

The core partners have been working collaboratively with required and optional partners to develop policies, procedures, and best practices to facilitate the organization and integration of workforce services under WIOA. Policies are prioritized by function rather than by program, when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate to best serve the needs of ALL Iowans, including employers. The shared objective is to create a system which is a truly integrated, seamless, and capable of interactive communication, case management, and incorporation of the appropriate use of technology for maximum effectiveness. This requires coordinating staff communication, inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders, and a means by which to keep the direction and progression of the remaining work focused.

Functional Alignment - Examines areas of natural alignment or similar program tasks of One-Stop Center staff to identify areas where workloads can be shared or supplemented through the use of functional teams, such as those dedicated to skills development and business services.

Service Integration - Places the priority on serving the diverse needs customer as opposed to meeting generically prescribed goals which may or may not benefit the customer's unique needs, talents, abilities and interests. Service integration also provides a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the aligned purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Iowa Department of Human Services makes a positive difference in the lives of Iowans we serve through effective and efficient leadership, excellence, and teamwork through a variety of workforce related programs and supports such as the Employment Assistance Program which provides home and community based services, supported employment to youth, 15 and older, or Adults with Disabilities (ID and BI) or Brain Injury. Basic work skills and supports through career exploration, developing work skills and work supports are among program offerings.

FUTURE READY IOWA

Future Ready Iowa aims to achieve systemic changes to increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary credential with the intended result of increasing the number of skilled workers available to employers. Igniting economic development with a skilled workforce and the best educated student population in the nation will achieve Governor Branstad's goals, which will increase the income levels of Iowa families.

For the workforce development system this means creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligns government programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business. Future Ready Iowa was developed by the National Governors Association Policy Academy Developing Iowa's Future Talent PIPEline and list the general membership of the Policy Academy.

To achieve the prosperity supported by world-class talent educated with Iowa's values and work ethic, Iowa's government is responding with the workforce development system of the future. Iowa's workforce development systems will build the system of tomorrow to attain the results needed today through skill building focused on the job-driven expectations of business and industry - occupational and soft skills.

Through implementation of career pathways and infusing of robust sector strategies across systems, Iowa is committed to serving the underserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location.

The goal of Future Ready Iowa is:

By 2025, 70% of all Iowans will have earned a postsecondary degree or industry-recognized credential or certification - the new minimum - that meets employer needs.

The goal will be accomplished through the following objectives:

- Identify and meet employer needs by focusing on sector strategies, career pathways and better aligning state and federal programs and initiatives, including public-private partnerships, to support high-skill, high-demand jobs.
- Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including an interactive portal of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.
- Improve college and career readiness, increase interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) study and careers.
- Minimize education-related debt.

The following strategies will aid in reaching Future Ready objectives:

1. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and employment needs and capture those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand interactive portal to be driven by a public-private collaborative, leveraging and institutionalizing the sector strategies and career pathways methodologies.
2. Improve degree and credential completion and target resources to support attainment of high-demand credentials, degrees, and certifications valued by employers, including for those individuals with barriers to employment.
3. Cultivate, develop and align work-based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, STEM school-business partnerships, student internships, teacher externships and apprenticeships for individuals through public-private partnerships.
4. Create a system of coordinated resources to engage, assist, and reinforce Future Ready career guidance for parents, students, educators and adults.
5. Ensure secondary students have access to high quality career and technical educational programs aligned with labor market needs.
6. Ensure all Iowa students meet high state academic standards, including being literate by the end of the third grade and achieving in STEM disciplines.
7. Increase rigorous concurrent enrollment opportunities in high demand career pathways, including STEM disciplines.
8. Institutionalize the college-going process within secondary schools statewide (College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion, assessing "college fit," etc.).
9. Elevate and operationalize promising financial literacy models that impact student borrowing.
10. Nurture entrepreneurial connectivity and skills development.

IOWA DEPARTMENT ON AGING

The Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is the designated State Unit on Aging and was established as a result of The Older Americans Act (OAA), enacted by Congress in 1965. The OAA promotes the well-being of older adults and assists them in remaining independent and in their own homes and communities. The U.S. Administration for Community Living distributes federal OAA funds to State Units on Aging which, in turn, designate Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) at the local level to provide information and services to older Iowans. Title III of the OAA provides funds to help states organize and pay for meals and a broad range of home and community based services through the AAAs and hundreds of service providers throughout the state; this structure is commonly called the "aging network." All persons who are 60 and older are eligible to receive services, but states are required to target assistance to persons with the "greatest social or economic need."

The Iowa Department on Aging is currently charged with an aggressive restructuring of the aging network. On March 29, 2012, Governor Terry Branstad signed House File 2320 mandating a reduction in the number of Area Agencies on Aging. Frequently referred to as the “modernization of the aging network,” this initiative effectively reduced the number of AAAs from 13 to six in an effort to create a more efficient network. The primary goal of the Department on Aging is to have Iowa be viewed as the premier state in which to live and retire.

IDA advocate for changes in public policy, practices and programs that empower Iowans; facilitate their access to services; protect their rights; and prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation. Activities may include legislative advocacy, information dissemination, outreach and referral, research and analysis and coalition building. The 2010 U.S. Census found that 20 percent of Iowa’s population is currently 60 years of age or older. By 2030, 20 percent of the population in 88 of Iowa’s 99 counties will be aged 65 or older.

IDA administers the ABE Senior Community Service Employment Program serving Individuals age 55 and older, at or below 125% of poverty, and unemployed and employers. The program fosters economic self-sufficiency and promotes useful part-time opportunities in community service organizations to increase the numbers of older persons who can obtain employment. The program also assists participants in receiving work skills training and provides work services for non-profit and governmental organizations.

GOVERNOR’S STEM COUNCIL

Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievement, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa. The STEM Council follows this definition of STEM:

“…an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work and the global enterprise enabling the development of STEM literacy and with it the ability to compete in the new economy.”

The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council is a made up of leaders in higher education, business, pre-K through 12 educators, as well as state and local government officials. The STEM Council is led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. The executive director of the Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council is Dr. Jeff Weld. There are 47 members on the STEM Council, including 17 members that comprise the Executive Committee.

Current STEM Initiatives target secondary and community college students and their teachers through the Microsoft IT Academy, which provides training on Office software and systems network analyst training and certifications to 150 Iowa secondary schools and community colleges.

Iowa STEM BEST Business Engaging Students and Teachers targets secondary school lead applicants with business commitments & secondary STEM learners through an incentive program to drive school/business partnerships for content delivery/aligned instruction. Five current sites involving 14 districts and businesses exist as part of this initiative.

The STEM Teacher Externships targets secondary teachers of STEM subjects, and industry partners in STEM areas. Secondary teachers of math, science, technology, and engineering are matched with full time work during summer to take on authentic tasks and roles in STEM industries.

IOWA OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP USA

The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 authorizes the federal government, in cooperation with the states, to oversee the nation's apprenticeship system. In Iowa, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) is responsible for registering apprenticeship programs that meet federal guidelines. It issues certificates of completion to apprentices and encourages the development of new programs.

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven system for training employees in a variety of occupations that require a wide range of skills and knowledge. It is an ideal way for employers to build and maintain a skilled workforce. Registered Apprenticeship combines supervised on-the-job learning with technical related instruction in subjects related to the apprentice's chosen occupation. Apprenticeship, by virtue of its success in preparing skilled workers, helps America compete more effectively in the global economy, and contributes to America's economic development and sustained economic growth.

The Registered Apprenticeship system provides opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. In this regard, the Registered Apprenticeship system effectively meets the needs of both employers and workers. Registered Apprenticeship is highly active in traditional industries such as construction and advanced manufacturing. It is also instrumental in the training and development of high demand industries such as healthcare, energy and information technology.

Apprenticeship programs are operated by both the public and private sectors, with programs registered with OA called sponsors. A sponsor may be employers, employer associations and labor-management organizations. Recently, community colleges and workforce development centers have collaborated with business and industry to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs through sponsoring employer-participation agreements. Regions that adopt robust Registered Apprenticeship programs in the context of economic development strategies create seamless pipelines of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and future workforce demands.

The State of Iowa tripled funding for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in 2014 to $3 million and has been recognized by The UAS DOL in regard to innovative practices and number of new Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

ApprenticeshipUSA targets Employers, Veterans, Youth, Unemployed, Underemployed, and Career Seekers through provision of a variety of services. Employers have access to tools to develop a highly skilled workforce to help grow their business. For workers, RA offers opportunities to earn a salary while gaining the skills necessary to succeed in high-demand careers. ApprenticeshipUSA exemplifies high standards, instructional rigor and quality training. Immediate Employment, Job Training, Skills, and Nationally recognized Certifications and Credentials for job seekers.

IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses to attract and grow business, employment and workforce in Iowa. Ground-breaking economic growth strategies focusing on cultivating start-up companies and helping existing companies become more innovative complement the activities underway to retain and attract companies that are creating jobs for Iowans.

Developing sustainable, adaptable communities ready for this growth is also an essential part of our work at IEDA — providing programs and resources that help communities reinvest, recover and revitalize to make each community's vision a reality. Much of what you know about Iowa is true. It's what you don't know that sets us apart. The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress seeks to build Iowa's economic health and strengthen supports to employers as well as current and future employees through dedicated collaborations among key agencies and streamlined processes.

IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PROGRAMS

Federal Career Link Program - A Community Development Block Grant targets low to moderate income individuals through industry-driven training programs that invest in projects that assist the underemployed and working poor to obtain the training and skills they need to move into available higher-skill, higher wage jobs.

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E) targets employers creating new jobs in Iowa by providing financing for training for new jobs created through a business expanding or locating in Iowa through the sale of bond certificates by Iowa community colleges.

The Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE tax credits) (260G) targets any business except retail and assists community colleges to establish or expand training programs for occupations needed by Iowa business.

The Targeted Industries Internship Program (TIIP) targets Iowa companies with under 500 employees in the Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, and IT industries. It provides grants to small and medium-sized companies under 500 employees in the advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information technology industries to help support their internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in the state upon graduation.

The Iowa Jobs Training Program targets current workforces of existing Iowa employers through financing training for existing of incumbent workforces of Iowa businesses.

The STEM Internship targets Iowa employers employing STEM major interns. This program provides grants to employers to support Iowa students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through internships that lead to self-sustaining jobs with Iowa employers.

IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses and has touched the lives of countless Iowans through a wide variety of affordable financing programs throughout its 40 year history such as the Agricultural Development Division which provides loan and tax credit programs to assist beginning Iowa farmers. Iowa Title Guaranty is also administered at IFA and offers guaranteed title to real property in Iowa.

Economic Development Bond Program - The Iowa Finance Authority issues tax-exempt bonds to businesses and organizations for a wide range of projects. These have included expanding and improving health care services, industrial development and housing. As of 2012, the Iowa Finance Authority has issued more than $7.5 billion in bonds to assist businesses build or expand in Iowa.

The Economic Development Bond Program issues tax-exempt bonds on behalf of private entities or organizations for eligible purposes. In 2014, the State of Iowa received $309 million of volume cap for allocation to eligible projects in the following categories: single-family, job training, student loans, beginning farmers, industrial and political subdivision.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Iowa Department of Corrections Professional Development Training Program mission is to prepare and update institution and community correctional employees' knowledge base, skills, and competencies; to enable them to perform their duties within the parameters of sound and effective correctional practices in order to protect the general public, themselves, and their co-workers, while managing offenders in an environment that supports offender change.

Iowa Workforce Development, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Corrections, has implemented the Ex-Offender Initiative which focuses on connecting ex and soon-to-be-released inmates with career opportunities and supports. The workforce advisors assigned to this initiative network with employers to address the barriers they may have in hiring ex-offenders. Each of the participants in the program completes the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC).

Thousands of inmates are released from Iowa prisons each year. Many of them are eager to get a job and lead a productive life. Without a job it is nearly impossible for these individuals to establish a new life and become productive citizens. Hiring an ex-offender can help them integrate into society so they can become a taxpayer instead of a tax burden.

Many employers experiencing labor shortages consider their number one challenge is to identify, attract and retain employees. To address these needs, employers are increasing their applicant pool by looking at individuals with criminal histories. Employed ex-offenders are some of the most dedicated and productive employees. They are overwhelmingly dependable and punctual and the turnover rate is atypically low.

Iowa DOC supports Private Industry Partnerships In Iowa, which create opportunities for private companies to hire offenders while they are still incarcerated under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections (DOC).

Since the Private Industry Enhancement (PIE) program began in 1992, private companies and the DOC have worked in partnership at locations throughout the state. Offenders have worked millions of hours in fields such as manufacturing, printing, and call center operations, at facilities located on and off prison grounds.

The first private sector partner was established nearly twenty years ago and is still going strong. For employers, the PIE program offers a productive, reliable, and motivated workforce. Offenders are paid market based wages, and by law are allowed to retain 20% of their earnings. The balance is used to pay taxes, child and family support, victim restitution, and room and board. As a result, inmates are able to build some savings before they are released, while at the same time giving back to society.

Although inmates are paid market based wages, the benefits paid by employers are significantly reduced:

- Employers pay no medical or dental benefits;
- Employers pay no sick time, vacation or holiday pay;
- Employers pay no unemployment insurance;
- Employers pay no workers' compensation;

In addition, training assistance and training wage programs may be available, making the PIE program a very cost effective solution for many private employers. Inmate employees are carefully screened by the Department of Corrections, and are then interviewed and selected by the employer. As the employer, you retain the right to hire, promote or dismiss offenders, ensuring that you can operate your business successfully. The PIE program for private sector operations is administered by Iowa Prison Industries. IPI can help you determine if the PIE program is right for your company, and will work with you at every step along the way to get started.

The Corrections Education Program (ABE) targets offenders over the age of 18 who do not have a High School Diploma. It is designed to meet the basic literacy needs of adults and improve and/or upgrade current education and skill levels of adults.

Achieving an integrated partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the programs and activities outside the plan is essential to the success of effective policy planning and development. Central to the idea of achieving an integrated partnership which places the customer first, is a mission towards an integrated case management system that will help streamline workforce development service delivery across the state. The integrated case management system will help streamline service delivery and avoid redundancies. This will help to maximize resources so that they can be directed toward providing high-quality services to job seekers, employees, and employers that are responsive to real-time and future labor market needs.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

In December, 2015, the partners convened a team to review the Value Stream Mapping work previously completed during an intensive three-day event. The focus of this event was to advance the original themes, ideas and strategies that were developed during previous events through the creation of specific activities and assignment of partners to coordinate the activities. The recommended strategies to achieve the State's workforce development goals for ALL Iowans including employers and job-seekers, is discussed in this and following sections.

The infusion of accessibility and advancement towards improved alignment among the partners informed the process throughout. Enhanced delivery of workforce services through the incorporation of innovative ideas and actions will be achieved by furthering this work with robust policies and fiscal and legislative support in Iowa. In reviewing the following table, it is important to note that each of Iowa's goals has an industry, workforce, or system-focus. As evidenced throughout the table, all three foci were considered heavily in development of strategies and activities to accomplish the goals. As previously stated, Iowa's workforce goals are as follows:

GOAL I: Industry-focused

IOWA'S EMPLOYERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ADVANCED, SKILLED, DIVERSE AND FUTURE READY WORKERS.

GOAL II: Workforce-focused

All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation.

GOAL III: System-focused

Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGY

ACCESSIBILITY

In order to achieve accessibility, there remains much work to be done with Iowa's employers to identify and reduce barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. This includes expanding accessible opportunities for traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, and individuals with barriers to employment to enter into sustainable employment.

COORDINATED ACTION STEPS ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Identification of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans, with special emphasis on, but not limited to, the following:

- Individuals with Disabilities,
- Displaced homemakers,

- Low-income individuals,
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians,
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities,
- Older individuals,
- Ex-offenders/Re-entering Citizens,
- Homeless individuals including homeless youth and children, and victims of domestic violence,
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system,
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers,
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers,
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.),
- Single parents (including single pregnant women) and
- Long-term unemployed individuals.

2. Provision of guidance and support to Iowa's employers to address barriers to employment for ALL Iowans, and

3. Reduction in barriers to employment for ALL Iowans.

In order to create a fully accessible system which emphasizes service to individuals, IWD is transitioning to a web-based customer service model. This model will include a customized intake form currently under development by the core partners which will be fully accessible and available in multiple languages.

By bridging services across agencies and programs and placing a greater emphasis on improved and expanded staff training which includes intra-agency cross-training, services to individuals will be further enhanced. A process and procedure for a greater focus on monitoring for program effectiveness within the One-Stop Centers is being developed by the core partners and will be rolled out to local areas in 2017. The plan calls for enhanced customer feedback systems and engagement of stakeholders in the monitoring and feedback process. Provision of technical assistance and feedback on the state-level to local areas will assist in the evaluation of programs and services to individuals, and businesses, and will improve program overall effectiveness. Non-punitive corrective action plans with the goal of providing guidance as well as a formal recognition program for high-achieving centers, staff, and job-seekers will be fundamental to the success of this program.

The needs of businesses are going to fuel the creation of a service delivery model which balances the needs of employers with the employment needs of job-seekers. Minimizing the participatory burden of businesses and individuals will in itself create improved access and encourage job-seekers to pursue additional services. A reporting system which is created, supported and implemented among core partners and relevant agencies will reduce the participatory burden to staff as well.

A referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, which includes holding agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success is underway and set to be rolled out in conjunction with the Iowa One-Stop Center standards in 2017. The braiding and blending of funding streams will maximize benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers.

SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

The implementation of sector partnerships will engage employers in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. Coordinated action steps resulting from the incorporation of sector strategies and support of industry-led initiatives into workforce services will include the following:

1. Work with industry to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and main self-sustaining employment.

2. Close skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers by expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries.

3. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and workforce needs and capture those needs in a comprehensive system (planned to be Career Coach) to be driven by a public-private collaborative and accessible system.

The Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant/National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships in regions impacted by the Avian Flu epidemic by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare & transportation and logistics. This funding is being used, in part, to support the advancement and work of a state sector council - *Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council* (SPLC), which provides leadership in the development and support of sector partnerships and career pathways. The purpose of the SPLC is to engage Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa and in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. The NDWG is also funding, in part, the procurement of a CAEL contract which will provide facilitator training throughout the state to facilitate the advancement of sector strategies across Iowa.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. $3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs. IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing is a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. This begins with building a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, and wages. Elevate offers resources to the public specifically targeting those eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers, unemployed/underemployed Iowans, U.S. veterans, educators, along with K-12 students and their families. Elevate is a National Partner of The

Manufacturing Institute's *Dream It. Do It.* This initiative works to change the perception of the industry and inspire the next-generation workers to pursue manufacturing careers.

Enhance Iowa is another program which will assist in the support and coordination of services to individuals in Iowa. Enhance Iowa originated with a $15 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant was part of a larger federal initiative called Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training or TAACCCT. Started in 2009, the TAACCT program has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. Hawkeye Community College was chosen to lead a consortium consisting of all 15 of Iowa's community colleges. This consortium, now known as Enhance Iowa, will use the $15 million grant to train Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

The TAACCT grant awarded to Enhance Iowa is the fourth and last of four TAACCCT initiatives. Each wave of grants focused on a specific industry or needed skill set by employers. Enhance Iowa's grant focuses on the areas of IT, healthcare, utilities and manufacturing. In total, 71 entities were given $450 million in the final TACCCT award.

The first wave of funds was allocated on October 1, 2014, and they will continue to be dispersed over a four-year period. All of Iowa's community colleges will receive a portion of the money, allowing them to purchase new learning equipment and offer more programs. 45 new programs will be offered across the Enhance Iowa consortium as a result.

CAREER PATHWAYS

Coordinated efforts will engage ALL Iowans in the career pathway process using innovative approaches in the delivery of career services. Key to these efforts will be the offering of a variety of career path navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce for ALL Iowans. Coordinated action steps within Iowa's career pathways work will include the following:

1. Provide workers with skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed for ALL Iowans to secure self-sustaining employment.

2. Provide ongoing supports so ALL Iowans can maintain self-sustaining employment and work to their fullest potential.

Specifically, Youth Services will make connections to statewide support systems, increase and enhance youth engagement, and build the capacity of educators for encouraging movement through a variety of pathway options.

The development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development will continue to be a priority of Adult Education and Family Literacy in Iowa with a focus on aligning services as a participant transitions from adult education through integrated education and training to further their education and employment opportunities. Through the *Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration*, a three-year technical assistance grant, a state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness.

Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will provide leadership in the development and support of sector partnerships and career pathways through engagement of Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa and in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs.

IVRS plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRS will fund up to $1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing will promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing through creating a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, wages and nontraditional population integration into these careers. Enhance Iowa will assist in the support and coordination of services to individuals in Iowa through a Iowa's 15 community colleges to provide relevant training to Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in online career exploration. It provides users with local occupational level wages, industry trends, employment projections (growth/decline), occupational tasks, skills, education/training needed by occupation, where to find types of education/training, demographic data, and current job postings for employers in Iowa. The tool also includes a career assessment tool (short and long versions), military occupation crosswalk, career cluster, and resume builder.

Career Coach brings together federal, state and private sources under one simple-to-use on-line tool for anyone looking to explore career options by providing them the information to make career decisions. The data sources include the US Department of Commerce, US Department of Labor, US Department of Education, US Census Bureau, Employment & Training Administration and CareerBuilder.

Career Coach will be used, in conjunction with other methods, to communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders. In addition, students and job-seekers will be able to navigate the career planning process and be connected to a dashboard of career opportunities with information on required credentials, experience and eligible training providers, by region.

INTEGRATION

System-wide integration will rely on improvements to the quality of workforce development services through the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities. As the key to collaborative efforts across the various systems within Iowa, the coordinated actions steps for integration of services are extensive and include the following:

Development of an interagency definition of “self-sustaining employment”. IWD is exploring ways to address this issue and is looking into the Wisconsin online assessment tool to determine self-sufficiency in employment.

Implementation of an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.

The Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) was established to assist with the implementation of key WIOA provisions which emphasize in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways resulting in attainment of industry-recognized, stackable credentials. The SPLC will review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa’s workforce that supports employers and job-seekers.

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state, including businesses seeking to provide employment opportunities for individuals who are visually impaired.

IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to maintain or advance their current career. Iowa is consistently ranked as one of the nation’s highest in the percentage of blind and visually impaired people successfully placed, employed and remaining in jobs.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION & TRAINING

Preparing a Future Ready workforce that readies ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow’s workforce requires integrated education and training. This includes providing accessible and increased education and training opportunities for ALL Iowans that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the job market. ALL Iowans will also have access to entrepreneurial skill development and to learn business strategies and concepts through connections with Iowa’s business leaders. Coordinated action steps to integrate education and training opportunities will include the following:

1. Align with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce recommendations.

Align with the Future Ready Initiative recommendations.

3. Align with the NGA Work-Based Learning recommendations (forthcoming).

4. Convene a youth-focused work group.

5. Provide individuals and small businesses with guidance, to include business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning, in the start-up, operation, and effective management of entrepreneurial pursuits.

Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy programs concurrently provide access to contextualized instruction that blends workplace skills with work based learning. Participants engaged in work based learning activities are exposed to an educational approach that uses workplaces to structure learning experiences that contribute to their intellectual, social, academic, and career development. Some of the work based activities that are offered in collaboration with core and required partners include:

1. Job Shadowing - An unpaid experience where a participant follows an employer for a short period of time (a few hours to an entire day) to learn about a particular occupation or industry.

2. Unpaid Work Experience - An unpaid work experience is a limited-term opportunity, longer than a job shadow, for participants to learn about a particular occupation or industry by working at a specific workplace.

3. Internship - Participant internships are situations where participants work for an employer for a specified period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation. Participant's workplace activities may include special projects, a sample of tasks from different jobs, or tasks from a single occupation.

4. Cooperative Work Experience - a program of work experience in an actual employment setting related to the vocational interests and educational programs provided to a participant at an area vocational/technical education center.

5. Apprenticeship - An agreement through which the participant gains instruction and support in exchange for work. Pre-apprentice activities can include targeted instruction to prepare the participant to learn with masters of the trade, craft, or profession and begins an occupational career while contributing to the productivity of the enterprise.

6. Service Learning - A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

7. Participant Entrepreneurship - A participant entrepreneur is a participant who starts a company or non-profit while still attending school.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRS will fund up to $1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. $3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Iowa Department of Corrections has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of the Departments' major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to these incarcerated youth and adults. The IDOE will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Corrections (DOC) in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state-administered Adult Education and Family Literacy Program.

Iowa's adult education and literacy program employs innovative approaches to increase the education levels and self-sufficiency of inmates, while reducing the recidivism rate in Iowa. Corrections programs enrolled 653 participants in Iowa's information management system in PY 2014. Data sharing agreements have been reached and training provided to include all eligible adult education participants in reporting. This information will be used by both the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections to improve services offered in correctional education programs, to streamline services and to maximize benefits.

Iowa's approach to corrections education enrolls participants through state correctional institutions and through local correctional facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required common benchmarks (additional tracking of release dates for tracking follow-up will be implemented) through the Iowa's Assessment Policy. Funds awarded from the AEFLA program funds may be used to support the correctional programs in providing allowable academic programs within the twenty percent expenditure cap. State funds administered through the DOC are awarded to five community colleges to provide adult education programs for adult students in nine state institutions. The DOC contract, in partnership with the community colleges and Iowa Department of Education adult education and literacy team, establishes the level of staff, curriculum and program standards to be offered in each of the nine state facilities. These funds support and extend the academic programs to assist participants in acquiring the basic skills and competencies necessary to move from an institutional setting into the workforce and community.

Another initiative underway is the creation of a data collection effort aligned across core agencies. It includes the development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the system. As part of this work, Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Adult Education and Family Literacy, is developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways.

The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

- Identification and information on high-demand jobs;
- Pathways to high-demand jobs;
- Information on training including internships and apprenticeships;
- College and career planning information;
- Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information and
- Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The one-stop delivery system will address barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners through an advanced training and staff development program. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include, but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

One-Stop centers will develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. One-Stop systems provide workforce services that meet the labor-market needs of employers. Partners will collaborate to achieve an integrated approach to business services delivery in the State and Local One-Stop systems. This will include the implementation of business-focused outreach and initiatives.

Onsite workplace education allows workers to apply basic academic concepts to everyday job tasks, resulting in a better trained, more productive workforce. Local programs have been working with employers to identify skills employees need to be successful in their jobs and design a course of basic skills instruction around these needs. Instructors integrate examples and tools from the work environment to make learning relevant to the participant.

The Partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to help Local Staff:

- Facilitate engagement of employers, including smaller employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce services programs.
- Offer and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.
- Identify and develop a clear understanding of industry skill needs, identifying appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinating business services activities across programs, as appropriate, in order to support area employers and industry sectors most effectively.
- Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among Partners to present a unified voice for the One-Stop Center in its communications with employers.
- Use the forthcoming performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.
- Engage employers in sector partnerships that are responsive to labor-market needs.
- Incorporate employer input when developing innovative training opportunities that are responsive to labor-market needs.
- Develop a Business Services Team in each Local Region. The Business Services Team must consist of at least one Local Staff member from each Core Partner, and may also include Local Staff from other Partners.

In addition, the partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices regarding the development of programs and activities that may include but are not limited to implementation of initiatives such as:

- Incumbent worker training programs
- On-the-job training programs
- Customized training programs
- Apprenticeship programs
- Industry and sector strategies
- Career pathways
- Section partnerships
- Utilization of effective business intermediaries
- Public-private partnerships
- Other business services, strategies, and training opportunities, designed to meet the needs of employers.

Existing Services to Employers

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and IWD work closely with the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship, the community college system and others to identify employers' workforce needs and to develop solutions to address them.

The Technology Association of Iowa (TAI) works closely with the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and Information technology (IT) firms and other businesses heavily dependent on the IT sector to identify the occupational areas of greatest need. The entities collaborated to develop apprenticeship curricula for identified occupations. The resulting Registered Apprenticeship programs for these skills sets are operated in conjunction with internships for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and tuition reimbursement programs, which were already in place in Iowa. This endeavor has been so successful that, as IEDA recruits new IT companies to Iowa, the TAI Registered Apprenticeship Program has been one of its selling points. IWD staff recruits apprentices as they work with job seekers in need of new or updated skills. Depending on each employer's needs, workforce staff may use the National Career Readiness Credential tests or other assessment instruments, provide soft skills training, and provide help with resume writing and other services to prepare job seekers for apprenticeship opportunities.

The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) - was designed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout Iowa. Members of this group include staff from IVRS, the Department for the Blind, Veteran's Administration, Small Business Administration, and Division of Persons with Disabilities, Workforce Development, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Drake University, and Iowa Medicaid. Persons from high school transition age to the aging population are represented. Members of this group present to individual employers as well as employer organizations throughout the state. At present, much attention has been raised by this group to inform employers about Section 503 Rules for Federal Contractors. Internal tools and resources have been provided to staff of IVRS to assist in educating employers about compliance with Section 503. Additionally, this group presented a conference in August, 2015, to assist in education on hiring persons from diverse backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, and the value these individuals present to the workforce. In Iowa, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in the last decade; therefore, business and industry are considering populations that they traditionally did not pursue in hiring. With the limited number of work-ready job candidates, the conference agenda was geared toward emphasizing the benefits to employers of hiring persons with disabilities. IVRS is striving to create these connections during this economic opportunity.

Diversity Specialists - Another strategy that IVRS is using with business and industry is creating partnerships that embed diversity specialists in the business. Through a contract, IVRS collaborates with a business diversity specialist through sharing of service costs for IVRS eligible Job Candidates. The specialist then strives to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities in the place of employment. While only one of these arrangements currently exists, IVRS is working to expand these arrangements so that there is one diversity specialist in the geographic area of every IVRS area office.

Providing an integrated service system for employers can be accomplished similar to following the model developed by the workforce partnership in Burlington. This model ties in the community college, the special services and supports of IVRS, adult education, TANF, career pathways, etc. It provides industry the resources and supports they need and want, without involving extra unnecessary contacts and services not required. It provides a streamlined system for recruitment and retention assistance to meet their skill and labor shortage needs. In rural areas where there isn't a workforce office, IVRS can take the lead in developing the system and involve and invite workforce to travel out when those meetings with business occur so that workforce development uses their resources wisely and avoids unnecessary travel and duplication.

The community conversations has already started to develop this system with IVRS being the point of contact in communities where IWD is not located and the businesses are advising VR of what they want and VR is involving the appropriate partners to the table.

To strengthen the development and ongoing implementation of Iowa's sector strategies and career pathway systems, the Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will serve as a standing committee to the State Workforce Development Board and will have the following attributes:

- Planned membership includes broad education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, economic development and business and industry association representatives. The Council will include the following attributes at a minimum:
- Business led and oriented;
- Tasked to provide state level leadership, support, policy development, coordination and guidance to regional sector partnership development;
- In charge of convening an annual statewide workshop for regional sector partnerships from across the state to share best practices and promote statewide collaboration;
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional sector partnerships;

The Council will serve as an advisory committee to the State Board of Directors to help fulfill WIOA requirements.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

ENGAGING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

One of the best ways to ensure that future workers will meet the new and evolving skill requirements for jobs is for partnership with postsecondary educational institutions. To meet the skill needs of employers, partnership with educational institutions are critical to provide the needed training to create a pipeline of skilled workers. One-Stop staff works with local institutions and businesses to identify and create applicable training for occupations in need. To engage young people in the workforce system and educate them about the labor force, relationships with K-12 are invaluable, but it doesn't stop there. There must be a coordinated and continuous effort made by and in harmonization with all of Iowa's educational entities.

Iowa has 60 colleges and universities listed under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, including the community colleges, four-year institutions, and regents. Included are:

- two research universities,
- nine master's universities,
- nineteen baccalaureate colleges,
- twenty-one associate's colleges.

In addition, eleven special-focus institutions and three baccalaureate/associate's colleges operate in the state. The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, a governing board, oversees the state's three public universities - the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa.

One-Stop staff are partnering with schools to provide information to students through workshops in the classroom, providing educators with information on how to access workforce services and use LMI in the classroom, as well as career fairs and career days. Career days have been a successful way to partner with K-12, local post-secondary educators, businesses and One-Stops to provide information to young people about post-graduation options. State leaders realize that it is critical to continue to develop improved relationships and to engage educational leaders and innovators at all levels.

To further enhance partner engagement with educational institutions, the State of Iowa is improving the way it manages and disseminates the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Customers interested in training opportunities are made aware of all training options available to them through the Eligible Training Provider List. Eligible providers listed include community colleges, regent universities, private universities as well as other training programs including Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Youth programming is among the many critical updates under WIOA and active involvement with Iowa's educational institutions is essential to operating successful youth programs across the state. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing necessary system changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching Iowa's youth.

IOWA COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Programs such as the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, a state-led interagency initiative designed to better align policies and programs and to encourage collaboration among multiple state and community agencies on youth-related issues, will be the transforming force behind real improvements.

Youth programming is among the many critical updates under WIOA and active involvement with Iowa's educational institutions is essential to operating successful youth programs across the state. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing necessary system changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching Iowa's youth. The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council is an example of a state-led interagency initiative designed to better align policies and programs and to encourage collaboration among multiple state and community agencies on youth-related issues and is the transforming force behind real improvements. The purpose of the ICYD Council is to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels; increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth; and improving and coordinating state youth policy and programs across state agencies. IWD has been a dedicated partner of ICYD since 1999 and has representation at the leadership and work group levels. IWD has valuable relationships and partnerships as a result of ICYD and looks for opportunities to be a part of ICYD best practices.

The ICYD Council members are leaders of 11 state agencies are listed below:

- Iowa Department of Education
- Department of Human Rights
- Department of Human Services
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Child Advocacy Board
- Commission on Volunteer Service
- Department of Public Health
- Early Childhood Iowa
- ISU Extension and Outreach
- Judicial Branch, Juvenile Courts

The ICYD Council meets quarterly to receive reports from state agencies and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), review progress of current activities, review data, and establish priorities and recommending actions on the many issues affecting youth. The prioritized goal of increasing graduation rate to 95% by 2020 was selected due to its high visibility and as a summative measure of youth development efforts, and the many cross-agency issues that contribute to youth graduating from high school (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, teen pregnancy, and mental health). Each of the agencies represented on the Council has a role in achieving this goal and work to address these issues as individual agencies, and together as a team, to maximize efficiency in state government and make the best use of existing resources.

ICYD has participated in a variety of state and national youth initiatives and has been recognized nationally (e.g. National conference of State Legislatures, National Governor's Association, Forum for Youth Investment, and Children's Cabinet Network) for its work in coordinating youth development efforts. The ICYD Council provides a venue to enhance information and data sharing, develop strategies across state agencies, and present prioritized recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly that will improve the lives and futures of Iowa Youth.

The ICYD Council has several emerging activities in 2016/2017:

- Full implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Project, which assesses the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs. The overall goal of the project is to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders by ensuring that the right services are provided to the right youth at the right time.
- Implementation of the Juvenile Reentry System, which guides efforts to reduce the historical baseline recidivism rates for youth returning from placement in the Boy's State Training School.
- Develop strategies to eliminate the educational achievement gap for under-represented students.
- Utilize strategies developed in the performance Partnership Pilot proposal in existing statewide initiatives to improve outcomes for disconnected youth.
- Provide core membership to new youth-serving advisory groups and to consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing ICYD council.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

ENGAGING OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

To further enhance partner engagement with other education and training providers, the State of Iowa is improving the way it manages and disseminates the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligible providers currently listed include community colleges, regent universities, private universities as well as other training programs including Registered Apprenticeship Programs. The way information on ETPL is obtained, maintained, and disseminated is being improved in Iowa with updates to the ETPL and policies ongoing. As progress continues to move Iowa's workforce delivery system and services forward, additional outreach to, and engagement of, other types of training providers will also advance. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching ALL Iowans. Programs such as the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development inform policy and recommend programs targeting youth-related issues. These types of programs are the result of successful engagement with other entities and training providers.

IOWA COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (ICYD)

The purpose of the ICYD Council is to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels; increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth; and improving and coordinating state youth policy and programs across state agencies. IWD has been a dedicated partner of ICYD since 1999 and has representation at the leadership and work group levels. IWD has valuable relationships and partnerships as a result of ICYD and looks for opportunities to be a part of ICYD best practices.

IWD is represented on the HSED Task Force will assist the Iowa Department of Education in exploring new ways to help adults pursue and complete their HSED.

IWD/WIOA has looked for ways to expand partnerships with foster care and is a part of a workgroup assessing college retention for the foster student - to discuss issues and solutions to improve college retentions and outcomes for the foster students.

IOWA JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES

Dropout prevention; enhancing outcomes; because of expanded connections to the WIOA Youth Service Provider and American Job Center/IowaWorks/One-Stop staff, IWD hopes to contribute to iJAG's performance outcomes for high school graduation, continuing education and experiential learning.

ALIGNING YOUTH -FOCUSED ADVISORY GROUPS

The alignment of youth advisory groups will create more effective and efficient services and supports for youth and families. The Youth Services Workgroup created as a result of WIOA has reflected on the idea of blending with the ICYD Results Group. Agency representation on the WIOA Youth Services Workgroup is also a part of the ICYD Results Group. IWD works with the ICYD Council in with regard to career information targeted to youth; as well as youth rights and safety on the job.

Preparing a Future Ready workforce that readies ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce is the result of successful integration among education and training providers. Creating accessible and increased education and training opportunities for ALL Iowans that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the job market is equally important. ALL Iowans must be able to gain entrepreneurial skills and to learn business strategies and concepts through connection with Iowa's business leaders. The following action steps will support state strategies to further engage other education and training providers:

- Align with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce recommendations.
- Align with the Future Ready Initiative recommendations.
- Align with the NGA Work-Based Learning recommendations.
- Convene a youth-focused work group.
- Provide individuals and small businesses with guidance, to include business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning, in small business start-up, operation, and effective management.

PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP PILOT (P3) PROPOSAL

The goal of Iowa's P3 project was to provide an effective bridge between high school and entry into college, training, or employment for disconnected youth to improve their likelihood of a successful transition to adulthood. Iowa Workforce Development agreed to lead the project, partnering with the Department of Human Services and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, to contribute existing federal funding for the project. Other ICYD Council agencies also committed staff resources.

In October 2015, Iowa was awarded funds to implement the Juvenile Reentry System (JRES). Once fully implemented, JRES will guide efforts to reduce the historical baseline recidivism rates for youth returning from placement in the Boys' State Training School (STS), group care, and Psychiatric Medical Institutes for Children (PMIC's). A sub-committee of the ICYD Council, the Juvenile Reentry Task Force (JRTF), is implementing JRES and IWD has been involved in the planning since 2014.

PROMOTING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE (PROSPER) Promoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) was designed and tested by researchers at Iowa State University in partnership with researchers at Penn State University.

Iowa was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant (formerly Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant) to develop and deliver job-driven services to dislocated workers and employers through the development of sector strategies. Iowa has partnered with Iowa Central Community College and the Iowa Department of Education to utilize these funds to support sector strategies across Iowa.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

The State's strategies include blending and braiding of funding to maximize the leveraging of other Federal, State, and local investments in order to enhance access to workforce development programs at all levels. State leaders realize the benefit and added strength that bringing a multitude of diverse agencies and programs together represents.

Adult Education and Literacy

The adult education and literacy (AEL) program is Iowa's front-line program to help adults without a high school diploma or equivalency. As part of the state allocation for the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund, AEL provides services for individuals who need assistance acquiring the skills to be successful in job training and employment. Funds for the AEL program are leveraged with Title II funds to increase access to services through Your Future Starts Here Iowa (http://yourfuturestartshereIowa.org/), including services targeting English Language Acquisition participants. The $5.5 million investment has supported efforts to integrate standards based instruction with workplace learning to prepare participants to successfully transition to post-secondary training and careers. The AEL program continues to partner with statewide and regional entities to ensure a better understanding of the resources and services of the AEL program and how they can be accessed to build the skills needed for individuals to access higher education. This strategy better prepares individuals for educational success and saves more costly investments of remedial education courses at two- and four-year colleges.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

IVRS has met with the State STEMS Director to promote the ideas of how to expand high expectations for students with disabilities in the STEMS opportunities. IVRS also has a counselor or associate assigned to every high school and college in the State of Iowa to promote accessibility opportunities for students.

GEAR UP Iowa

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission has been awarded a second federal GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Grant totaling $22 million, beginning in fall 2014. This seven year project will support a cohort of about 6,300 students beginning in the 7th grade and will follow them as they progress through school. The program is a long-term partnership between Iowa College Aid, 12 partner school districts and nearly 40 partnering institutions of higher education and community-based organizations.

The students and their families will receive a variety of services aimed at preparing them academically, financially and inspirationally to enroll and succeed in college. Upon enrollment in a college, GEAR UP Iowa students will receive a modest scholarship for up to four years.

GEAR UP Iowa is charged with significantly increasing the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The Iowa College Student Aid Commission administers GEAR UP Iowa in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education and other state agencies; local school districts; postsecondary educational institutions; and community organizations, businesses, and industries.

The total of this seven-year Federal award of $22,379,301 will include $3,206,922 for the first year and represents 50% of the total project budget. The other 50% of program costs will be covered in the form of non-federal matching dollars from 36 partners across the state, totaling $22,670,801.

State-Administered Financial Aid

The State of Iowa appropriated over $70 million in scholarships, grants and loan forgiveness opportunities in 2015.6 This figure does not include financial aid awarded to students from institutional sources or appropriations to the state's public colleges and universities. Private, Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities During the 2014-15 academic year, Iowa awarded 81 percent of its need-based scholarship and grant funding to students attending private, not-for-profit colleges and universities. This percentage was substantially higher in Iowa than anywhere else in the nation.

Iowa's largest grant program, the Iowa Tuition Grant (ITG), awards aid to students attending private, not-for-profit colleges and universities. ITG is Iowa's largest grant program and had approximately 10 times more funds in 2015 than the second largest program, the Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Program.

The Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant and the Iowa Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant) target students who are enrolled in career or technical education programs in areas with high workforce demand at Iowa community colleges.

While there are no scholarships and grants designated solely for students attending Regent Universities, Regent University students can apply for state aid through programs available to all sectors, including the All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship, the All Iowa Opportunity Foster Care Grant, the Iowa Grant (eliminated after 2014-15) and the Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Program. In 2014- 15, 6 percent of state aid was awarded to students attending Regent Universities.

Iowa will continue to leverage state, federal and private resources to increase educational access for ALL Iowans, including those with barriers to employment and traditionally underserved populations.

U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program

Since FY 2011 these grants have helped colleges form regional and statewide partnerships that allowed broad reform of educational and training delivery including innovative strategies for reaching participants who are non-traditional adult learners and other such learners.

The **Bridges2Healthcare** consortium leads an initiative to accelerate progress and improve retention and outcomes of adults in the healthcare industry in **Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin**. Bridges2Healthcare established Health Care Academies to provide targeted counseling, assessments, and other services to individuals interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. The individualized support provided by success coaches and retention specialists at these Academies prepare non-traditional students for classroom training before they begin the courses, assist

individuals in accessing supportive services provided by the workforce system during their training, and guide program completers through career development after they have completed their programs.

The **Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing (I-AM**) consortium is an Iowa community college initiative to elevate advanced manufacturing, funded through a $13 million grant awarded in 2012. All 15 of Iowa's community colleges are working to collaboratively build training capacity by developing and awarding certificates (non-credit and credit), diplomas, and associate degrees in the following signature programs: welding, machining, industrial maintenance, industrial automation, manufacturing technology, robotics, and transportation and logistics. In addition, these programs will be aligned with third-party certifications, including the NCRC™, AWS, NIMS, and MSSC, which are part of the National Association of Manufacturers, endorsed Skills Certification System (NAMS).

"Each community college is doing a tremendous amount of work within their programs, with the support of more than 35 manufacturers and the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) to ensure that the I-AM initiative addresses and meets the skill needs of the manufacturing industry," explains Stephanie Ferraro, I-AM Statewide Project Director.

The fourth and final round of TAACCCT grants, awarded a consortium of all 15 community colleges in Iowa a $15 million grant to build training capacity in the areas of Information Technology, Healthcare, Utilities, and Manufacturing - also known as the "IHUM" Network. Grant funds will be used statewide to create more than 45 additional training certificates in the IHUM targeted areas. The **IHUM consortium** project was one of 71 awarded nationwide, the award is being used to support community colleges in developing partnerships with employers to educate and train individuals for in-demand jobs. Strategies addressed with the grant that will be leveraged include comprehensive career pathways, use of simulation and technology, intensive student support services, and statewide labor market information data related to employment opportunities. The project is supported by more than 30 businesses and business associations in Iowa.

PATHWAYS FOR ACADEMIC CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT (PACE) AND GAP

Both statewide programs are recipients of state appropriations from the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund aimed at supporting participants achieve educational skills needed to address middle skill gaps in-demand industries.

The PACE funding has been used to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process to navigate at-risk participants with customized support services, to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. Target population includes:

- Persons deemed low skilled for the purposes of attaining gainful, quality, in-state employment.
- Persons earning incomes at or below two hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level as defined by the most recently revised poverty income guidelines published by the United States department of health and human services.
- Unemployed persons.
- Underemployed persons.
- Dislocated workers, including workers eligible for services and benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-210, as determined by the department of workforce development and the federal internal revenue service.

PACE programs include the following components:

- Measurable and effective recruitment, assessment, and referral activities designed for the target populations.
- Integration of basics skills and work-readiness training with occupational skills training.
- Combining customized supportive and case management services with training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment.
- Providing training services at times, locations, and through multiple, flexible modalities that are easily understood and readily accessible to the target populations. Such modalities shall support timeless entry, individualized learning, and flexible scheduling, and may include online remediation, learning lab and cohort learning communities, tutoring, and modularization.

The leveraging of resources includes the building upon the pipeline process established by PACE to better serve the academic, training, and employment needs of the target populations. The goals of the pipeline include:

- Strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations and industry representatives.
- Conducting and managing an outreach, recruitment, and intake process, along with accompanying support services, reflecting sensitivity to the time and financial constraints and remediation needs of the target populations.
- Conducting orientations for qualified participants to describe regional labor market opportunities, employer partners, and program requirements and expectations.
- Eliminating temporal and instructional barriers have been minimized or eliminated.

Each PACE program is actively supporting and developing career pathways and bridge curriculum that can be leveraged by the core partners with the following goals:

- The articulation of courses and modules, the mapping of programs within career pathways, and establishment of bridges between credit and noncredit programs.
- The integration and contextualization of basic skills education and skills training. This process shall provide for seamless progressions between adult basic education and general education development programs and continuing education and credit certificate, diploma, and degree programs.
- The development of career pathways that support the attainment of industry-recognized credentials, diplomas, and degrees through stackable, modularized program delivery.

In addition to PACE, the GAP program was established to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to support applicants completing continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. While funds are targeting toward tuition assistance, support is also leveraged for related certificate costs including but not limited to books and materials.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

It is widely acknowledged that in today's ever-evolving economic and jobs climate, improving access to post-secondary credentials is an urgent need in Iowa and across the nation. Portable and stackable credentials are essential to developing an ever-progressing and Future Ready workforce. Postsecondary education and credentials are important to economic mobility for individuals in Iowa and across the nation, but according to a 2014 report released by CLASP, *Scaling Stackable Credentials*, many people can't afford to complete the requirements to earn a postsecondary credential; others find the process overwhelming. The full report can be accessed at: http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondarysthash.oHutDB2M.dpuf.

Future Ready Iowa

Iowa's Future Ready Iowa initiative aims to 70% of Iowans to have post-secondary credential beyond high school by 2025. The Future Ready Iowa initiative was created after Iowa received a National Governors Association grant in 2014 to develop a shared vision and strategies to improve the educational and training attainment of its citizens and the alignment of those degrees and credentials with employer demand. With Iowa's shortage of skilled workers to fill jobs in business, industry and non-profit organizations throughout, innovative solutions are being sought to close the skills gap through better alignment of education and workforce resources.

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in developing a personal career path through obtaining industry-recognized credentials and through direct contact with at-need employers.

Sector Strategies

Iowa's Unified State Plan goals include the robust development of sector strategies that engage employers in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. The Core Partners will work with industry to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and main self-sustaining employment. Expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries will lead to closing critical skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers. Identifying and quantifying employers' education, training, and workforce needs and capturing those needs in an accessible and multi-tiered system will strengthen the ability of the job-seeker to connect with the appropriate employer(s). Job-seekers will be able to learn about industry recognized credentials and find opportunities to obtain seek out employers who value their experience and accept their industry recognized credentials.

Career Pathways/Registered Apprenticeships

Coordinated efforts will engage ALL Iowans in the career pathway process using innovative approaches in the delivery of career services. Key to these efforts will be the offering of a variety of career path navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce for ALL Iowans. Coordinated action steps within Iowa's career pathways work will include:

1. Equipping workers with skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed for ALL Iowans to secure self-sustaining employment.

2. Ongoing supports so ALL Iowans can maintain self-sustaining employment and work to their fullest potential.

Specifically, Youth Services will make connections to statewide support systems, increase and enhance youth engagement, and build the capacity of educators for encouraging movement through the pathway options. Registered Apprenticeships will engage educational training entities to identify and enhance career pathways for Apprenticeship options.

Intermediary Network

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRS will fund up to $1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

Enhance Iowa

Enhance Iowa originated with a $15 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant was part of a larger federal initiative called Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training or TAACCCT. Started in 2009, the TAACCT program has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. Hawkeye Community College was chosen to lead a consortium consisting of all 15 of Iowa's community colleges. This consortium, now known as Enhance Iowa, petitioned for and was awarded a $15 million grant to train Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

The grant awarded to Enhance Iowa is the fourth and last of four TAACCCT initiatives. Each wave of grants focused on a specific industry or needed skill set by employers. Enhance Iowa's grant focuses on the areas of IT, healthcare, utilities and manufacturing. In total, 71 entities were given $450 million in the final TACCCT award. The first wave of funds was allocated on October 1, 2014, and they will continue to be dispersed over a four-year period. All of Iowa's community colleges will receive a portion of the money, allowing them to purchase new learning equipment and offer more programs. 45 new programs will be offered across the Enhance Iowa consortium as a result.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing is a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. This begins with building a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, and wages. Learn more about why this is so important for Iowans. Elevate offers resources to the public specifically targeting those eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers, unemployed/underemployed Iowans, U.S. veterans, educators, along with K-12 students and their families. Elevate is a National Partner of the Manufacturing Institute's *Dream It. Do It*. This initiative works to change the perception of the industry and inspire the next-generation workers to pursue manufacturing careers.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

IVRS has worked with the Department of Economic Development as part of the Iowa Self-Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities. This program supports individuals with disabilities who want to have 51% ownership in a business. The program provides a Business Development Specialist to assist the individual with a disability to receive technical assistance, (i.e. feasibility study, development of the business idea, development of a business plan, etc.) and financial assistance (i.e. up to $10,000 in funding to support start -up costs.) In addition IVRS works with Small Business Development Centers and the IWD Small Business Development teams to provide necessary technical assistance.

The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress (IPEP), an industry-led, CEO-level advisory board established by Governor Branstad in 2011 was charged with the task of continuously identifying and studying economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives.

IPEP set out three guidelines for approaching the re-envisioning of Iowa's economic development roadmap. First, engage a broad range of economic development stakeholders from private industry, economic development and higher education to ensure broad-based input. Second, complete a comprehensive analysis of Iowa's industry clusters, development resources and economic assets. Finally, review and recommend the programs necessary for Iowa to strengthen its existing industry clusters and capitalize on opportunities for growth.

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)

IEDA is charged with responsibility for coordinating four workforce training programs that deliver customized training to grow a skilled and talented workforce for Iowa business. Authorizing legislation is found in Chapters 260E, 260F, 260G and 15B of the Iowa Code. IEDA adopts administrative rules pursuant to Chapter 17A of the Iowa Administrative Procedures Act on how the programs are to be implemented. Three of the four programs, 260E, 260F and 260G-Job Credits are implemented by each of Iowa's 15 community colleges within its merged area. The 15B program is implemented by IEDA.

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (NJTP)

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (NJTP or 260E) became effective July 1, 1983. The 260E is a business incentive program designed to assist with the cost of training employees in new jobs created by a business expansion or startup in Iowa. To be eligible for assistance, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in intrastate commerce. Retail, health and professional services are excluded.

Community colleges enter into contracts, referred to as training agreements with eligible businesses to establish a single or multiple projects to provide training to employees in new jobs. To fund the cost of training, colleges borrow money from investors in the form of bond certificates. Like other bonds, revenues are pledged for repayment with interest to certificate purchasers.

Certificates are repaid by diverting a portion of the Iowa withholding tax generated by the new jobs into special funds controlled by the colleges. On average, the colleges sell about $38 million in bond certificates annually.

The Iowa Job Training Program (IJTP)

The Iowa Job Training Program (IJTP or 260F) became effective July 1, 1985. The 260F program assists Iowa based businesses to train, develop and upscale work skills of their existing workforces to remain economically competitive. To be eligible for assistance, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in intrastate commerce. Retail services are excluded.

Iowa Code establishes a job training fund under the control of IEDA in the Workforce Development Fund. Source of funds is $3 million in monies appropriated by the General Assembly for the 260F program. Funds are allocated to the community colleges based on the General State Aid Formula. Colleges enter into training agreements with businesses to provide services for training. A college submits to IEDA an application on behalf of the business for approval to use the allocated amount.

The Accelerated Career Education (ACE) - Job Credits

The Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE or 260G) became effective July 1, 1999. The 260G program assists community colleges to expand current training programs or to establish new programs for occupations most needed by Iowa businesses. To participate in 260G, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, construction, conducting research and development, or providing services in interstate or intrastate commerce. Excluded are retail, health and professional services.

Iowa Code establishes the total amount of program job credits which may be allocated statewide in any one fiscal year. The total allocated amount is not to exceed $5.4 million. A community college enters into a program agreement with a business to establish or expand a 260G training program. Colleges submit program agreements to IEDA for their proposed use of allocated job credits. A job credit is based upon the hiring wage that the participating business would pay to an individual completing the training program. Instead of paying all withholding tax due to the State of Iowa, the business diverts a portion of the tax to the community college to fund the training program. The diverted portion is equal to the approved 260G job credit amount.

Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program, Iowa Code 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. $3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

A key component of the unified plan is the ability to collect, maintain and update the critical information needed by all its stakeholders. Without timely, accurate, relevant, and accessible information, there can be no integration or efficiency in operation. There are several domains to the state operating systems:

1. Program implementation and operational system: Cross-agency alignment and provision of WIOA services requires a common system for collecting core data and reporting elements of the workforce delivery system. This promotes uniformity and consistency and increases efficiency through common tools, definitions and practice. Iowa's Workforce Development has been working on a product to share among core partners that will serve as a hub for intake in addition to tracking verifiable data and referrals. Through such an approach, Iowa is unifying data needed for performance reporting.

2. Labor Market Information (LMI) System: The LMI system provides the foundation for workforce analysis, research and strategic planning. The Division within Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) maintains a dynamic web site (https://www.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/labor-market-information-division) that provides data and information for individuals, workforce professionals, researchers, and economic development professionals and also produces customizable query tools using Tableau. Reports are available by region and local area such as workforce analysis reports, including employment and industry/occupation projections that will enable workforce partners to plan and coordinate their efforts more effectively. The Iowa Sector Partnership Leadership Council will use the most relevant and up to date labor market information to expand and develop appropriate and employer driven sector partnerships in the region most in need.

3. Communication System: State-level communication and information is distributed to workforce stakeholders across all workforce programs through an e-mail newsletter through a distribution list developed and maintained by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). The list contains over 1,000 individuals who have signed up to receive notifications of major statewide workforce development news. Members of the e-mail distribution list include business leaders, legislators, policy makers, program administrators, nonprofit organizations and more.

Coordination with economic development strategies is a critical component of Iowa's plan and state leaders recognize the importance of coordination with economic development strategies to effect successful implementation of Iowa's Unified State Plan.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in **Section II Strategic Elements** . This includes—

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF–

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI) DIVISION

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) website, www.Iowalmi.gov , provides data and information related to Iowa's labor market, economy and workforce. The website contains, but is not limited to, information about the following areas: wages employment; unemployment; industry and occupational employment; industry and occupational projections; unemployment insurance statistics; Laborshed Studies; employer surveys; education outcomes; career information; and other labor market related publications.

Information is organized by topic (i.e. indictors, industry, occupation and research) and uses Tableau to provide and display data for users such as job seekers; employers, IWD staff; economic developers; academic institutions; government agencies; nonprofit organizations; legislators; grant writers; labor organizations; consultants and other partners in an informative manner.

CAREER COACH

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in online career exploration. It provides users with local occupational level wages, industry trends, employment projections (growth/decline), occupational tasks, skills, education/training needed by occupation, where to find types of education/training, demographic data, and current job postings for employers in Iowa. The tool also includes a career assessment tool (short and long versions), military occupation crosswalk, career cluster, and resume builder.

Career Coach brings together federal, state and private sources under one simple-to-use on-line tool for anyone looking to explore career options by providing them the information to make career decisions. The data sources include the US Department of Commerce, US Department of Labor, US Department of Education, US Census Bureau, Employment & Training Administration and CareerBuilder.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Iowa Department of Education provides assessment and accountability services through a web based data system called TOPSpro (Tracking of Programs and Students) Enterprise for Title II case management and performance tracking. TOPSpro is a computerized database designed for program administrators in adult education, including statewide assessments and related accountability software to accurately measure progress, mastery of skills, and competencies needed to both complete, and advance one or more Educational Functioning Levels (EFL). It automates scoring, collects student demographic data, tracks agency and individual student performance, generates

reports, and aggregates data for state and federal year-end reports. Features of the data system and relevant processes include the following:

- Used for collecting information for the purposes of programmatic and annual reporting.
- Each local program uses TOPSpro Enterprise (TE®) that enable local providers to have immediate access to the data for targeting instruction for continuous program improvement.
- The local data are submitted monthly and annually to the IDOE for monitoring and aggregation into state and federal reports.
- TE® records each student's goals on entering a class (via the TE® entry record), as well as their educational outcomes (via the TE® update record).
- Assessment is designed to measure student performance through a checklist of competencies mastered. eTests are automatically loaded in TE® for reference and to drive program decisions.
- Exit tests for various instructional levels are provided and certain funding streams require that these tests be administered regularly to document student progress.
- The data collected consists of measurable skill gains in the following programs areas: English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and Adult Basic Education (ABE).

For program year 2016-17 the IDOE intends to use the same data system to meet program-specific requirements for collecting and reporting data for WIOA performance reporting requirements. This reporting structure is based on National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines, which are retained under WIOA. The area of change for the IDOE pertains specifically to the addition of UI wage record data as part of the reporting structure.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process begins with program staff at agencies funded by the Adult Education Family Literacy Act inputting the data at each site during the program year. Data collected from AEFLA funded agencies is aggregated at a statewide level through the web based portal. The annual data aggregation and data validation begins July 1 of each year. The purpose of the annual data validation process is to compile state and federal year-end reports due to ED:DAEL annually, December 31.

Performance measures include all elements in the federal NRS reports, including enrollment, attendance hours, completion of an EFL and advancement of one or more levels, separation before completion, and persistence within a level. Additional performance measures include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and placement, retention, or completion of postsecondary education, training, or unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Iowa's Title II has developed on-line tools to assess the enrollment rates of students enrolled in ABE, ASE and ESL respectively monthly and is publishing outcome data on attainment of equivalency diplomas.

Products

Research is conducted on several labor market related topics from which analysis and report are produced. Below are the following products:

- *College Student Analysis* - a survey of Iowa college students that asks information about their field of study, their desired occupation/industry, desired wages, desired benefits, their intentions to reside in Iowa following graduation and factors that would influence them to stay or relocate. Reports are provided for the state and three sections that cover community colleges, regent universities and private college students.
- *Education Outcomes*- assists colleges in determining the effectiveness of their educational programming as it relates to the students' transition into the workforce
- *Employment Benefit Analysis* - a survey conducted with IWD employers across Iowa are asked to provide information regarding benefits they currently offer their full-time and part-time employees in a regional analysis
- *Laborshed Studies* - provides local community leaders, economic developers, site selectors and existing or prospective employers a flexible tool for understanding the workforce characteristics and supply of labor for their local labor market based upon commuting patterns. Program also includes statewide data collections.
- *Workforce and Economic Development Status Reports* - this report aggregates many different economic, workforce, and education resources into document for Iowa and regional economic marketing regions.
- *Workforce Needs Assessment* - this report analyzes the needs of Iowa's workforce through a survey of Iowa employers and other labor demand data resources.
- *Unemployment Insurance Statistics* - monitors and analyze data related to Iowa's unemployment benefits and taxes for federal and state reporting, along with research purposes.
- *Dislocated Worker Survey* - this program collects data from employees who have been or will be dislocated, collecting data regarding occupation, wage, age, education level, services needed and future plans.
- *Promise Jobs Reporting* - analyze the employment outcomes of Promise Jobs participants as it relates to employment, wages and the industry they work.

Data is collected and reported for the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics federal-state cooperative programs:

- Current Employment Statistics- an establishment survey that provides detailed industry data on employment, hours and earnings of workers on nonfarm payrolls for the state and metropolitan statistical areas
- Local Area Unemployment Statistics - monthly and annual estimates of total labor force, employment and unemployment are prepared for the state, counties, large cities, metropolitan statistical areas, micropolitan areas, combined statistical areas, IWD regions, community college and congressional districts, and council of governments
- Occupational Employment Statistics-estimates occupational employment and wages paid by employers for the state, metropolitan statistical areas and nonmetropolitan areas known as balance of state
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - a near census of monthly employment and quarterly wage information by industry. Data is available at both the State and county level

Products are created under the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's Workforce and Labor Market Information Grants for job seekers; businesses/employers; workforce and labor market intermediaries; program and service planners of educational institutions and community organizations; policy makers; partners and other customers. The products include:

STATE AND REGIONAL INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS.

- The occupation projections provide detailed information on the estimated activity for each occupation in areas of employment, growth rate, total annual openings, wages, career preparation and skill requirements.
- The industry projection provide detailed information on the estimated activity for each industry in terms of employment and growth

IOWA LICENSED OCCUPATIONS - PROVIDES INFORMATION CONCERNING OCCUPATIONS IN IOWA THAT REQUIRE A LICENSE, CERTIFICATE OR COMMISSION ISSUED AT THE STATE LEVEL SUCH AS LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, ASSOCIATED FEES AND EXAMINATION INFORMATION.

SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS ARE ALSO CREATED SUCH AS:

- *Iowa Wage Report*- report uses OES occupational wages and updates them to make wages more current for the state, metropolitan statistical areas, balance of state areas and IWD regions
- *Iowa's Workforce and the Economy*- an annual statewide economic analysis
- *Middle-Skill Jobs in Iowa*- provides information on the mismatch of job opportunities and worker skill sets in Iowa and the IWD regions
- *Business Connection Guide* - a business operations resource directory filled with valuable information on starting and running a business
- *Career, Industry and Population Report* - provides an overview of the state's industry, occupation and population trends in a short, concise format describing growth rate patterns for each
- *Employers and Professional On*-Line Reference Guide- a resource for planning a business activity or changing existing practices in their organization
- *Career Planners and Job Seekers On*-Line Reference Guide- a resource of essential websites and tools aimed at directing individuals' career or job path towards professional fulfillment
- Also several state and region career exploration resources that are used to make informed career decisions. The publications provide occupational information on education levels, high-demand and high-growth jobs, STEM and Green Jobs.

B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS*.

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Core partners in Iowa realize there are currently significant data system limitations. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of a common participant identification method. Information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs.

To begin to overcome these challenges, Iowa has initiated work on a common intake system that will:

- customize and expand the existing intake system used in Iowa*WORKS* offices that assists in determining program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;
- assign a unique identifier to each program participant that will be used to link participants in each of the partner data systems;
- gather required reporting elements common across all partners;
- create a common portal by which customers may access services;
- allow participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes;
- and create a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.

IWorks will continue to operate as Iowa Workforce Development's data collection and case management system for:

- Wagner-Peyser Act
- WIOA Title I
- Veterans Employment and Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS

IWorks includes a self-service web-based labor exchange system called IowaJobs.org which is available to job seekers and employers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Iowa will implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) require core agencies to develop an integrated system that can be used as a common application for services across the workforce delivery system as well as a tool for common data reporting. OMB 1820-0508 outlines revisions to the RSA-911 State-Federal Program for Vocational Rehabilitation Case Service Record and OMB 1205-0NEW provides guidance related to data collection required by section 116(d) of the WIOA including 1) State Performance Report (data by entities that administer WIOA core programs, 2) Local Area Performance Report for Title I, Subtitle B programs, and Eligible Training Provider Performance Report for Title I programs. Although these new reporting requirements significantly expand the amount of data collection required by the agency, they also provide an opportunity for Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to move out of silos and identify ways the agencies can collaborate to provide a seamless electronic system to provide Iowa's citizens access to information about services available to them through the core programs and the ability begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet—even from the comforts of their own homes. First, IVRS technology staff must assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness is data collection, analysis, case management and reporting.

IOWA REHABILITATION SERVICES SYSTEM

The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) is an internal case management system that is owned, maintained, and updated by IVRS. The original concept of IRSS was the development of an interactive, intuitive system designed to meet agency needs for case management, financial management, contract management, vendor management and reporting. After many years of development and scale-backs on the scope of the project, IRSS was put into use in October, 2008. The system that was deployed at that time was developed to meet the data collection and financial needs of the agency. Limited reports were developed and included in the initial deployment to assist with case management. Shortly following implementation, the IVRS IRSS Priority Management Team (PMT) was formed and charged with the responsibility of developing improvements to the IRSS Case Management System to meet the financial, case management and reporting needs of the agency and move the system closer to the original concept. Representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau and Administrative Services Bureau, in collaboration with IT developers and project managers, develop the projects and business rules for all IRSS development.

Over the past seven years, many improvements have been made to the system, including major projects to financial processing for Disability Determination Services, and batch processing of Ticket-to-Work data and revisions to streamline data entry and make IRSS more efficient. The IRSS PMT Committee has also been assigned the task of moving the agency to a paperless case management process to meet future needs.

Considering the development timeframes for past changes to reporting requirements, the requirement changes to the RSA-911 Case Service Record Report in 2013 took several months of development and testing and extensive training with field staff. Proposed changes to the RSA-911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements will dominate IRSS development over the next several months and, as previously stated, will require much collaboration with IT staff in the other core programs. Significant changes in reporting requirements include:

- Reporting quarterly on open and closed cases rather than annually on closed cases;
- Collection of data related Pre-employment Transition Services for potentially eligible students;
- Compilation of financial data to assure Title I and Title IV expenditures meet the provisions of WIOA;
- Data collection and reporting after the date of exit;
- Development of a common application for all core WIOA programs including upload and download of common data;
- Determination of what data can be collected from other core WIOA programs through a common data dashboard and data elements that need to be added to IRSS or maintained outside of IRSS and imported through batch processes.

The IRSS PMT Committee is awaiting final reporting requirements from RSA. Implementation of the new quarterly reporting requirements is slated for FFY17. Once reporting requirements are finalized, development to meet the new requirements will be targeted for a completion date of 10/1/16.

Along with data required for federal reporting purposes, placeholders for other data that will be useful in measuring the effectiveness of the VR program will also developed into IRSS, for instance, involvement in third-party contract programs.

However, not all data used to measure the effectiveness of the program will be developed into the Iowa Rehabilitation Services (IRSS) Case Management System. Data collection sources maintained outside of IRSS includes:

- Transition Alliance Program (TAP) matrixes
- Making the Grade matrixes
- Iowa TIER for PETS and other transition data
- Department of Education Data Dashboard (in development)
- Iowa Career Pathways Dashboard (in planning stage)

Another initiative underway to minimize the burden of data collection across core agencies includes development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The work of this team in in its infant stages, but the team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the system.

Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, is also in the beginning stages of developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways. The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

- Identification and information on high-demand jobs;
- Pathways to high-demand jobs;
- Information on training including internships and apprenticeships;
- College and career planning information;
- Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information;
- Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The public dashboard is slated as Phase 1 development. Phase 2 includes development of an executive dashboard that can be used for analysis and as an evaluative tool by core programs. Measurements such as job placement data, job creation in high-paying jobs, increased family income, increased career counseling in secondary and post-secondary, and focus on STEM fields have been identified as target areas.

Regarding specific WIOA Performance Measures:

WIOA Performance Measures 1-3: IVRS does not currently collect 2nd quarter wage information. IVRS plans to get the wage information from IWD but it has not been built in the IVRS case management system as this is a new RSA requirement. We were able to go back and review data from 214, which is reported below.

WIOA Performance Measure 4: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the effectiveness in serving employers. We are working with our State Rehabilitation Council as well as Core Partners to develop a coordinated data collection system.

WIOA Performance Measure 5: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the education level of program participants except at application and closure. On a quarterly basis, IVRS will be collecting as a RSA911 requirement the education level obtained throughout the participation in the program. RSA has not sent final requirements for collecting this data.

IVRS reviewed data in efforts related to identifying WIOA Performance Measures for the second and fourth quarters of future years. To do this we went backwards and reviewed data from 2014, which will serve as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data which is being collected through a project with IWD.

Based on the data generated by this methodology, at this point in time IVRS will continue to evaluate and develop the baseline for these performance measures and then within two years request to negotiate performance targets that appear appropriate. At this juncture the data is only a snap shot of performance and trends must first be established. IVRS did attempt to establish baseline data from looking at past quarters. Based upon performance indicators for % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program was 465 with the total number of people exiting to be 912. This was the same data gleaned from the % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after exit from the program. The median earnings were $4731 (second quarter after exit). The % of participants who obtained recognized post-secondary credentials or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalency during participation was 275 at the second quarter after exiting the program.

As Iowa looks to support the coordinated implementation of state strategies through its various operating systems, detailed planning and coordination by core partners will continue. The state intends to analyze what is needed, what is valuable, and what is currently in place to build an agile project plan. This analysis will occur in Program Year 2016 and 2017, with implementation beginning in PY17. This analysis will ensure that the work completed is cost effective and of value to all partners.

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING BENCHMARKS, AND ITS GUIDANCE TO ASSIST LOCAL BOARDS, CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND LOCAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS IN DETERMINING EQUITABLE AND STABLE METHODS OF FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SEC. 121(H)(1)(B). BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, THE STATE MUST ALSO INCLUDE SUCH GUIDELINES.

STATEWIDE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The integrity of local direction is fortified by the guidance provided by representation of the local region's businesses, labor, educators and local elected officials - in short, the local Workforce Development Board (WDB). In each region, the WDB is supported by the Iowa Workforce Development Board, and Iowa state agencies, in guiding the coordinated implementation of Iowa's Integrated Service Delivery system in each of the 15 regional workforce development areas that is responsive to the job seekers, employers, Registered Apprenticeship and other partners within the communities in each region. In addition to Wagner-Peyser, Trade, Veterans, New Iowans and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the Iowa Integration Service Delivery model will provide services to Unemployment Insurance recipients and PROMISE JOBS participants.

The merger of multiple partners and services into a seamless delivery system in a well-integrated One-Stop Center requires planning, policy, and commitment. As a primary partner in each center, it is the policy of Iowa Workforce Development to provide a base level of core services, which in turn are complemented and enhanced by the partner services that may be of a more intensive level or involve training. In this way, integration is emphasized and duplication is minimized. This approach also promotes the maximum use of Workforce Investment Act funds for training activities. The Iowa Legislature passed House File 2699 (2008) that required Iowa Workforce Development to develop a plan by January 1, 2009 that would coordinate the workforce delivery system in a more efficient, cost-effective manner while improving services for customers; co-location and integration of all workforce and job training programs, and improves the effectiveness of the regional workforce system. This workforce delivery system is known as the Iowa Integrated System Delivery model.

Adoption of the Iowa Integrated Service Delivery model by the local WDB in collaboration with Iowa Workforce Development includes the development of local functional leadership whose responsibility is to manage the delivery of products and services regardless of their program source. This includes referrals made to employers, registered apprenticeship programs and other benefits that would benefit the job seeker in their search for employment. Iowa has three functional teams that deliver services in a comprehensive manner at the core and intensive level, which include skill development, and placement. The philosophy of Iowa's Integrated Service Delivery model applies to services provided to both job seekers, employers and future workforce participants.

Policy guidance for integrated service delivery in the One-Stop System is provided in the form of field memos, a Policy and Procedure Manual, and through the Iowa***WORKS*** Integration Policies Guidebook (Iowa Workforce Development, February 27, 2012).

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Iowa Workforce Development

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) administers Iowa's Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner Peyser Act programs. IWD commits its resources to Iowa's prosperity by working to ensure the income security, productivity, safety, and health of all Iowans. The department strives to provide safe workplaces, provide a productive and economically secure workforce, provide all Iowans with access to workforce development services, and create a model workplace. In coordination with the Division of Labor Services and the Division of Workers' Compensation, the department is comprised of the following areas of services:

- Administrative Services Division
- Communications Division
- Labor Market Information Division
- Operations Division
- Information Technology Division
- Appeals Division

Director Beth Townsend has general supervision over the various areas within IWD. The director prepares, administers, and controls the budget of the department and its divisions along with Michael Mauro who is the Division of Labor Workers' Compensation Commissioner.

Administrative Services Division

The Administrative Services Division provides a variety of services to keep the agency operating smoothly and to assist employees working in the IWD administrative offices. The following is a short list of administrative support functions provided:

- employee services
- building management
- office services
- printing services
- financial reporting
- accounting

Communications Division:

The Communications division within IWD works to communicate all aspects of the agency to external and internal stakeholders quickly and effectively. It is the responsibility of the communications division to respond to all media inquiries in a timely and efficient manner.

Labor Market Information Division

Edward T. Wallace is the Deputy Director and as such provides general oversight and direction to the Labor Market Information Division. The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division collects, analyzes and prepares a wide array of labor market data including the unemployment rate, employment levels, industry and occupational statistics, wages, projections, trends and other workforce characteristics for the State of Iowa as a whole as well as for other defined geographic

areas within the State. It is the mission of the Division to produce and deliver information in a reliable and timely manner in order to inform data-driven decisions for business, career, educational programming and economic development.

Operations Division

The Operations Division provides a variety of services to businesses, workers, and the citizens of Iowa by collecting unemployment insurance taxes, maintaining the Iowa Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, and making payments to eligible jobless workers. The Operations Division is also responsible for the delivery of various state and federally funded employment and training services. The regional one-stop centers and offices provide a variety of services to meet the workforce and workplace needs of job seekers, dislocated workers, unemployed persons, and Iowa businesses through partnerships of state and local service providers. They provide job counseling, job training, job placement, and assistance to special needs populations. The division administers the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, which includes the following:

- Adult
- Dislocated Worker
- Youth
- Rapid Response
- National Emergency Grants

The division also administers worker profiling and reemployment services including:

- Alien Labor Certification Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- PROMISE JOBS
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Wagner-Peyser Job Placement
- Job Insurance Benefits Navigation
- Unemployment Insurance Assistance
- Bonding
- Assistance Navigating Local Veterans Employment Opportunities
- Disabled Veterans Opportunity Program
- WorkKeys
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology Division within IWD helps develop, maintain, and manage all of the necessary information technology services utilized by both IWD employees and customers using IWD’s variety of services.

Appeals Division

IWD’s administrative law judges working within the Appeals Division, hear and decide administrative appeals regarding unemployment insurance benefits.

Division of Labor Services

The office of the Labor Commissioner was created by the General Assembly in 1884.The Division of Labor administers a variety of services to employers, contractors, and other entities involved in creating and managing workplace safety. The following services are managed by the Division of Labor:

- Amusement Parks and Rides Inspection
- Asbestos Abatement Licensing
- Boiler Inspection
- Child Labor
- Contractor Registration
- Elevators and Escalators
- Hazardous Chemical Required Reporting
- Minimum Wage and Wage Collection
- Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Education
- Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement
- Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Recordkeeping

Division of Workers' Compensation

The Workers' Compensation Law was enacted by the General Assembly in 1913. The law provides medical services and wage replacement benefits to workers who sustain injuries arising out of their employment. The Workers' Compensation Law is administered by the Division of Workers' Compensation Commissioner. Iowa was one of the first states to provide benefits for injuries, occupational diseases, and occupational hearing losses sustained by workers. Injuries resulting in death, permanent disability, or temporary disability must be reported to the commissioner. If a compensation agreement cannot be reached, the employee may request a hearing before a deputy commissioner that covers the judicial district where the injury occurred. Decisions are reviewed by the commissioner and may be appealed to the district court and Supreme Court.

Iowa Workforce Development Organization as Related to the Unified State Plan Process under WIOA Attached

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) works with the Iowa State Board of Education to provide support, supervision, and oversight for the state education system that includes: public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies (AEAs), community colleges, and teacher preparation programs. Iowa's adult education and literacy programs assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assists adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and assist adults in completing a secondary school education. This chart is designed to reflect the line of authority from the authorized state official signing the state plan extension to the state director for adult education. The line of authority goes from the state director for adult education to the bureau chief of the Bureau of Adult, Career and Community College Education to the division administrator of the Division of Community Colleges to the Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education. The Director is the authorized State Official who has the authority to sign Iowa's Adult Education & Literacy Stat Plan.

Adult Education and Literacy Organizational Chart Attached

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The mission of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to work for and with individuals who have disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals. Disability Determination Services Bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs. Rehabilitation Services Bureau assists eligible individuals to become employed. Persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services have a wide range of disabilities. Most offices are already co-located in the One-Stop Centers across Iowa. Vocational Rehabilitation is a State-Federal program. The Federal share is 78.7%; the State share is 21.3%. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau has 14 area offices and 32 service units. Administrative Services Bureau provides support to the other elements of the Division through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting and payroll; statistical records, reporting and closed case file control; personnel management and collective bargaining administration; purchasing and property control; information systems and the physical plant management of the Jessie Parker Building. Office of the Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the statewide programs. The administrator determines program scope and policies, promotes public interest and acceptance, directs budget funds, develops program plans and provides for staff development, research and evaluation. Under the umbrella of the administrator are the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Group.

Iowa Department for the Blind

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. Iowa is consistently ranked as one of the nation’s highest in the percentage of blind and visually impaired people successfully placed, employed and remaining in jobs. Its library features one of the world’s most comprehensive collections of reading materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille and digital audio). The Department continues to utilize innovative methods and technology to provide quality services to blind and visually impaired people in Iowa. The administrative rules define the specific standards, criteria and guidelines that govern the Department’s operations. The administrative rules are based on the legislation defined in the Iowa Code. The rules are created through a process of confirmation by the Department, the public and legislative rules committees.

Iowa Department for the Blind Organizational Chart Attached

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Iowa is governed by the State of Iowa Constitution (Iowa Constitution) and the Iowa Code. As State of Iowa administrative agencies, the core partners must act in compliance with the Iowa Constitution and Iowa Code. As an elected official in Iowa's constitutional democracy, the Governor must do the same.

The State Board's membership is thus dictated by Iowa Code at Section 84A.1A(1), which is available online at www.legis.Iowa.gov/docs/code/84A.1A.pdf. Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) gives the State Board two classes of membership: voting and nonvoting. The voting members of the State Board have been the same since its inception. The General Assembly has added nonvoting members at various points throughout the State Board's existence.

The statutorily prescribed voting membership structure is set forth at Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(a), which states:

The governor shall appoint the nine voting members of the workforce development board for a term of four years beginning and ending as provided by section 69.19, subject to confirmation by the senate, and the governor's appointments shall include persons knowledgeable in the area of workforce development. Of the nine voting members, one member shall represent a nonprofit organization involved in workforce development services, four members shall represent employers, and four members shall represent nonsupervisory employees. Of the members appointed by the governor to represent nonsupervisory employees, two members shall be from statewide labor organizations, one member shall be an employee representative of a labor management council, and one member shall be a person with experience in worker training programs. The governor shall consider recommendations from statewide labor organizations for the members representing nonsupervisory employees. Not more than five of the voting members shall be from the same political party.

And the nonvoting members are listed in Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(b):

The ex officio, nonvoting members are four legislative members; one president, or the president's designee, of the university of northern Iowa, the university of Iowa, or Iowa state university of science and technology, designated by the state board of regents on a rotating basis; one representative from the largest statewide public employees' organization representing state employees; one president, or the president's designee, of an independent Iowa college, appointed by the Iowa association of independent colleges and universities; one superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, of a community college, appointed by the Iowa association of community college presidents; one representative of the vocational rehabilitation community appointed by the state rehabilitation council in the division of Iowa vocational rehabilitation services; one representative of the department of education appointed by the state board of education; one representative of the economic development authority appointed by the director; and one representative of the United States department of labor, office of apprenticeship. The legislative members are two state senators, one appointed by the president of the senate after consultation with the majority leader of the senate, and one appointed by the minority leader of the senate from their respective parties; and two state representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives after consultation with the majority leader of the house of representatives, and one appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives from their respective parties. The legislative members shall serve for terms as provided in section 69.16B.

Because Iowa's State Board membership structure is prescribed by statute, it may only be changed via legislation that amends the Iowa Code. The constitutionally required process for enacting legislation must be followed in order to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the membership structure so that is in compliance with all of the membership structure requirements in section 101(b) of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

The Iowa Constitution sets forth core rights and responsibilities of the government and citizens of Iowa. Among the subjects addressed in Iowa Constitution is how a statute in the Iowa Code is enacted or amended. No State of Iowa administrative agency is authorized to enact legislation, either by the Iowa Code or Iowa Constitution — meaning none of the WIOA core partners have the legal authority to unilaterally amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure meets the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA. Nor does the Governor have legal authority to act unilaterally to amend the Iowa Code.

Article 3, Section 1 of the Iowa Constitution defines the Iowa General Assembly as the Iowa Senate and House of Representatives. It also vests in the General Assembly the "legislative authority of this state." Thus, only the bicameral Iowa General Assembly is authorized to enact legislation under the Iowa Constitution.

A bill may originate in the Senate, the House of Representatives, or both (via companion bills). A bill may be amended, altered, or rejected by either chamber. Article 3, Section 16 requires a bill to pass both the Senate and House of Representatives be presented to the Governor for consideration.

Article 3, Section 16 of the Iowa Constitution requires that, in order for a bill to become a law, the Governor must sign the bill. Put otherwise, the core partners are dependent upon the General Assembly enacting legislation to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1), and the Governor signing such legislation into law, in order to change the State Board membership structure to meet all of the requirements in section 101(b) of WIOA.

Iowa does not have a fulltime legislative body. Ours is a part-time legislature. Under Article 3, Section 2 of the Iowa Constitution, the annual legislative session of the General Assembly begins on the second Monday of January each year. In 2017, that is January 9. There is no mandatory end date for a legislative session in the Iowa Constitution. Typically, a session ends sometime between April 1 and July 31 in a given year.

Even though the Governor is often involved in negotiations with legislators over matters of policy and budgeting, the Governor has little control over when the General Assembly completes a session. And most importantly with respect to the WIOA Unified State Plan, no core partner has any say in when a legislative session ends. The General Assembly concludes a session when it finishes its business.

After the General Assembly adjourns for the session, it does not reconvene until the second Monday of the following January. After the close of the 2017 legislative session, the Iowa General Assembly will not convene until January 8, 2018, unless a special session is called (which is a rarity and usually precipitated by a natural disaster that requires emergency appropriations or an economic downturn that necessitates changes to the state budget).

The General Assembly conducts its business as Senate and House leadership see fit, from the majority leaders to the committee chairs. No core partner has a say in whether a proposed bill will be brought up for debate, let alone whether a majority of the General Assembly's 150 legislators will vote for its enactment. Thus, no core partner is able to commit with any specificity to timelines or benchmarks when it comes to the General Assembly enacting legislation during the 2017 session.

However, the core partners can commit to having a bill introduced in each of the Senate and House of Representatives on January 9, 2017, the first day of the legislative session. The core partners will notify USDOL and USDOE when the legislation has been formally introduced. After that, each core partner can commit to having its legislative liaison register in favor of the bill. The core partners will notify USDOL and USDOE when each core partner's legislative liaison has registered in favor of the bill. The core partners will also advocate enactment of the legislation by the General Assembly throughout the session.

Lastly, the core partners also commit to notifying USDOL and USDOE when one of the General Assembly takes one of the following actions:

1) Enacts a bill to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure complies with all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b); or

2) Ends the 2017 legislative session (whenever that might be) without passing a bill to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure complies with all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b).

The General Assembly is its own entity, populated by 150 independently minded legislators who answer to their constituents and not administrative agencies. Under the Iowa Constitution, the General Assembly is one of three independent, coequal branches of state government, charged with carrying out the legislative function in our state. The core partners cannot bind the Iowa General Assembly to any sort of timeline or benchmark for monitoring purposes.

Action Plan:

1. Between now and January 9, 2017, engage stakeholders and members of the General Assembly in dialogue to lay the groundwork for the enactment of legislation that will amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the State Board's membership structure to meet all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b), as required by USDOL and USDOE.

2. Work with the Governor's office and Legislative Services Agency to prepare draft legislation so that companion bills to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure meets all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA are introduced in both houses of the General Assembly on or about January 9, 2017, and will report to USDOL and USDOE that they have done so.

3. The core partners will each register in favor of the bills as soon as possible thereafter, and report to USDOL and USDOE that they have done so.

4. During the 2017 legislative session, the core partners will discuss the proposed legislation with stakeholders and members of the General Assembly to encourage enactment.

5. The core partners will report to USDOL and USDOE:

a. If the General Assembly enacts the proposed legislation that amends Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the State Board's membership structure so that it is compliant with all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA; or

b. If the 2017 legislative session ends without passage of a bill that amends Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) so that the State Board's membership structure is compliant with all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA.

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

The Board members consists of nine voting members. The voting members represent employers, employees and a nonprofit workforce development organization. The current board chair is Andy Roberts and the vice-chair is Dee Vanderheof .

Iowa Workforce Development Board Voting Members

EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES

- Caroline Hicks, Swine Graphics Enterprises, LLP, Osceola
- Suzanne Kmet, Peddicord Wharton Law Firm, West Des Moines
- John Krogman, Connect-A-Dock, Inc., Atlantic
- Dee Vanderhoef, Iowa City

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

- Ken Sagar, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, Des Moines (Statewide labor organization representative)
- Andy Roberts, Plumbers and Steamfitters Union 33, Des Moines
- Stacey Anderson, GMP International Union, Dike
- Robert Gilmore, I.U.P.A.T. District Council 61, Des Moines

NON-PROFIT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

- Norene Mostkoff, HCI Care Services/VNS of Iowa, West Des Moines

EX-OFFICIO NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Gary Steinke, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Des Moines
- Drew Conrad, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls
- Greg Lewis, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Des Moines
- Steve Ovel, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
- Greer Sisson, U. S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship, Des Moines
- Jeremy Varner, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

- Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Des Moines
- David Mitchell, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Des Moines
- State Senator William Dotzler, Waterloo
- State Senator Jake Chapman, Adel
- State Representative Kirsten Running-Marquardt, Cedar Rapids Iowa
- State Representative Greg Forristall, Macedonia

The membership roster will be transitioning as four seats vacate and three filled by new members. The Senate must vote to confirm them. Future membership will adhere to the timeline for new members to join the State Board. Iowa will also attempt to update the statutory provisions governing the State Board to reflect the State's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce.

2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

During WIOA implementation, the core partners have collaborated to perform the State Board's required duties and responsibilities under the Act with the help of required partner agencies. The primary method of collaboration has been work groups involving partners and stakeholders. The work and accomplishments of these groups is detailed in this plan. Moving forward, however, the State Board will need a more robust operational framework in order to fulfill its duties and responsibilities under WIOA.

Currently, Iowa's State Board does not have standing committees to assist in their efforts to formalize a structure to engage partners and stakeholders in Iowa's workforce development system. The State Board will add standing committees to ensure a higher standard of state board functioning. The standing committees will be required to hold regular meetings and to report to the State Board on a regular basis. Once established, the committees will be charged with the following tasks:

- Review and make recommendations regarding plans and reports required under WIOA
- Serve as an advocate of plans and strategies to the Board, IWD leadership, policy makers and stakeholders;
- Serve as an administrator to collect and manage workforce and talent development information on behalf of the Board;
- Review state, regional and local plans and activities as required by WIOA and provide status reports to the Board;
- Perform state workforce board functional responsibilities identified in ss. 101(d)(1) through 101(d)(12) of WIOA and provide recommendations to the Board;
- Review progress reports and provide status updates to the Board;
- Assess opportunities and recommend amendments to the Board's Strategic Plan;
- Convene and connect talent development resources to drive innovative workforce solutions that support economic development strategies;
- Consult with state, regional and local resources to champion collaborations and partnerships within the workforce system;
- Serve as convener to gather thought leaders and practitioners to perpetually evaluate talent development system(s);

- Serve as a connector of resources to other agencies, service providers, collaborators, initiatives or projects;
- Serve as a consultant to state/local workforce boards and partners regarding strategies and opportunities;
- Review talent development systems and networks and recommend innovative solutions and integration of resources;
- Recommend education and outreach strategies and campaigns to continually align resources and partners; and
- Perform other functional requirements of the state workforce board as determined by the state board or core partners.

Iowa will also attempt to update the statutory provisions governing the State Board to reflect the State's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. This will include the creation of an operations team, tentatively consisting of representatives from the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Iowa Department for the Blind. The Operations Team will provide staff support to the Iowa Workforce Development Board of Directors to achieve improved alignment of the core WIOA programs and the state's education, workforce and economic development programs. The Director of the Department of Workforce Development will designate the person to coordinate and lead the operations team. Staffing and administrative costs for the operations team shall be provided by the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other potential partners as deemed appropriate.

The Operations Team will be tasked with the following:

- Coordination and staffing of activities of the State Board.
- Facilitation and coordination of all research, reports data, analysis, and recommendations associated with the operations team and its purposes.
- Provision of regular updates to the Workforce Development Board on the status of activities of the operations team and the progress made in aligning programs pursuant to the purposes of the board.

In legislation, Iowa will also seek to create a Policy Council that will advise the State Board on proven and promising practices with respect to workforce service delivery from across the State and nation. The Policy Council will also make policy recommendations to help create a more integrated workforce development system that is responsive to current and future labor-market needs.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

The WIOA performance accountability measures in Section 116 will be used to assess the effectiveness of programs and service providers statewide and ensuring continuous improvement in the service delivery system. In an effort to increase awareness, accuracy, and transparency, performance reports will be published for each region. These reports allow the state and regions to track and monitor performance regularly. Programs are assessed on their fiscal management, program implementation - including enrollment and performance benchmark attainment, and data management. Additional assessment includes partnership and career pathway efforts for PY 16. The state will target programs for technical assistance that fail to meet the state performance benchmarks. Failure to meet the performance benchmarks for two consecutive years could result in the reduction or elimination of funding.

The state's assessment of core programs, which aligns to Iowa's Performance Measures (Appendix A), uses the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) performance criteria that build in accountability through appropriate performance and outcome standards for the state and each program. Beginning with Program Year 2016 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017), the state will utilize the following WIOA Performance Measures for all WIOA core programs: adult, dislocated workers, youth, adult education and literacy (AEL), vocational rehabilitation and Wagner-Peyser (Wagner-Peyser will be excluded from performance measures 4 and 5. Based upon Federal guidance, some core partners are collecting and establishing baseline data to be reported for implementation at a later date.)

1) Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

For youth: Placement in Employment or Education 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.

2) Employment 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

For youth: Placement in Employment or Education 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

3) Median Earnings: The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

4) Credential / Diploma: The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. Program participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall be included in the percentage counted as meeting the criterion if such participants, in addition to obtaining such diploma or its recognized equivalent, have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

5) Skill Gains: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

6) Serving Employers: The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers (yet to be determined).

Iowa intends to negotiate performance standards annually (as was done with WIA) with each respective federal agency. As appropriate, Iowa will instruct each local area on procedures for negotiating their local performance standards or asking them if they desire to adopt the same level as the state. Iowa's performance level goals for these primary performance measures will help Iowa achieve continuous improvement for each new program year.

In addition to measuring annual performance outcomes, quarterly progress is measured and shared with the local areas. The local areas are able to use these reports to identify areas for improvement. Should local areas fall significantly behind on their goals, they will be required to submit a performance improvement plan outlining the steps needed to bring their performance outcomes up to standards. The Core partners works with the local programs to monitor performance measures consistently throughout the year and provide technical assistance to improve outcomes. Programs receive an annual monitoring (on-site or desk review) to assess fiscal, program and data management performance. The new WIOA performance measures will be added to current federal measures and the same processes will be used to measure quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs.

IVRS uses a data metrics system for analysis of program effectiveness as well as for measuring the success of a number of innovative system designs that have been implemented during the last year including but not limited to:

- Provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities transitioning from school to post school outcomes;
- Provision of work experience opportunities to students with disabilities in transition through the Making the Grade contracts
- Participation of the potentially eligible student population in pre-employment transition services;
- Engagement of and delivery of services to the aging population through the Employment Services Contract with Iowa Department of Aging
- Infusion of systemic alignment of state agency services through the Medicaid aligned funding agreement
- Provision of strategic employment services in the health care industry through the Unity Point Contract
- Accomplishment of goals with the Collaborative Transition Protocol resulting in more systemic planning to achieve student outcomes through the Collaborative Outcomes for Students
- Expansion of the Assistive Technology Specialist program

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The core partners have developed a work group to address performance and data issues. This has resulted in the development of the participant service account. This group will continue to meet as the partners to collaborate on WIOA implementation. The assessment based on past performance in the primary indicators of performance set forth in WIOA section 116 will serve as the foundation on which the core partners will measure the effectiveness of Iowa's workforce services delivery system.

The eventual plan is for the work group to evolve into a team that monitors the system's achievements on an ongoing basis to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system. This continuous self-assessment will be an important part in the partners' ongoing efforts to improve workforce services delivery in the state so that the system is streamlined and responsive to current and future labor-market needs.

The state will bring a diversity of stakeholders together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce. A center piece of this collaborative effort will be a policy council advising the State Board on proven and promising practices and policies that support an integrated system responsive to labor market needs. Statewide policies will be developed that support Iowa's businesses in offering creative and nontraditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.

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D. EVALUATION

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Evaluation

The Core partners works with the local programs to monitor performance measures consistently throughout the year and provide technical assistance to improve outcomes. Programs receive an annual monitoring (on-site or desk review) to assess fiscal, program and data management performance. The new WIOA performance measures will be added to current federal measures and the same processes will be used to measure quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs.

In the past several years, a number of state agencies have focused their efforts toward the goal of increasing earnings by growing industries in targeted clusters on both the supply and demand sides of the labor market equation. These efforts are further supported by a number of good management practices, codified by Iowa's Accountable Government Act, by which all state departments must produce a number of documents and make them available to the Governor and others in the executive branch, the legislature, and the general public via the state's Results Iowa http://www.resultsIowa.org/ Internet site. These documents include:

- An agency strategic plan, updated annually,
- A corresponding performance plan with measurable goals for key strategies,
- A performance report, which details annual progress toward goals in the performance plan.

Assured Focus on Business and Customer Needs

Resources in the One-Stop delivery system come in a variety of forms. Some partners contribute funding for core services, intensive services, and training, while others may provide in-kind services. Regardless of the form, the Local Service plan is the mechanism employed by the state to ensure these resources are focused on the individual business and customer needs.

The local planning guidance asks the local workforce investment board to specifically address the status of the labor pool in context with the labor market, identifying the workforce investment needs of business, job seekers, and workers in the region. The board will then describe how they will use its resources and oversight authority to address workforce needs in the region and develop the annual budget. The state will review and comment on each of these plans and, if necessary, make recommendations on how to maximize their resources to address local workforce needs.

The Employers' Councils of Iowa in each region of the State provides another level of input directly from businesses regarding Iowa Workforce Development and One-Stop Center operations.

Finally, the State has provided a number of forums and roundtables throughout the State, primarily focused on business, to further ensure that customer needs are being met.

The core and partner agencies within Iowa's workforce system recognize that evaluating each agency's performance in isolation of the other services that are available in a community will not adequately support Regional Workforce Development Board in addressing capacity issues in their communities. It will be important to continue working together to identify stronger methods to evaluate the combined impact of all Iowa "One-Stop" Service Partner agencies on their communities to determine our collective success. This approach will be necessary to improve community support of business and job seeker interests.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

1. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS - YOUTH PROGRAM

SUB-STATE ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR THE TITLE I YOUTH PROGRAM FUNDS

Eighty-five percent of the funds Iowa receives for the WIOA youth employment and training activities are allocated to the regions. Iowa allocates 70 percent of that amount using the following federally prescribed formula:

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged youth in each region compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

The remaining 30 percent of regional allocations are based on the number of disadvantaged youth in each region as compared to the total numbers of disadvantaged youth in the state. This option is used to diminish the impact of unemployment concentrations dictated by the federal formula and focus on low-income youth.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Youth funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

2. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS - ADULT PROGRAM

SUB-STATE ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR THE TITLE I ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS

Eighty-five percent of the funds Iowa receives for the WIOA adult employment and training activities are allocated to the regions. Iowa allocates 70 percent of that amount using the following federally prescribed formula.

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged adults in each region compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

The remaining 30 percent is allocated in two parts: 1) one-half is based on the excess number of unemployed in each region as compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; 2) one half is based on the number of disadvantaged adults in each region as compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state. In this way, allocation credit is provided to support low-income individuals in the state.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Adult funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

3. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS - DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM

SUB-STATE ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR THE TITLE I DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM FUNDS

Of the funds received by Iowa for dislocated worker employment and training activities, the state allocates 70 percent to the regions using the following data and giving equal weight to each factor:

Insured Unemployment Data: For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who were receiving unemployment insurance.

Unemployment Concentrations Data: Based on the most recent calendar year, regions with unemployment rates above the state average.

Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data: The number of employees during the most recent calendar year that were impacted by a mass layoff or plant closing.

Declining Industries Data: During the most recent 24-months, the total number of jobs lost in the most recent four quarters as compared to the previous four quarters.

Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data: During the most recent calendar year, the number of farmers/ranchers who have delinquent loans as reported by U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Long-Term Unemployment Data: For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who meet the definition of long-term unemployed. An individual is considered to be

long-term unemployed if he/she was out of work for 15weeks out of a continuous 26-week period of time.

For the dislocated worker allocation process, equal application of all six factors of the formula ensures that all possible economic and workforce elements that exist in each local area impact the allocation process. In this manner, factors that might favor or disadvantage certain areas are equally applied.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Dislocated Worker funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

B. FOR TITLE II:

1. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the designated state agency responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive RFP process.

Adult education and literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to State and federal grant expectations, as measured through their status updates, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016-17, the IDOE will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that will determine the eligible entities that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. Through the RFP process, IDOE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible entities throughout the state and to ensure that access of services is provided in every county in Iowa. An eligible entity is an organization that can demonstrate past effectiveness (performance data demonstrating improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low literacy in reading, writing, math, English language acquisition and other relevant areas as well as outcome measures related to participant employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training) in providing adult education activities to eligible participants and may include: a local education agency; a community-based or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition or agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity as described above.

The IDOE will use 82.5 percent of the state allocation for the RFP. The priorities of the RFP include: (1) populations with greatest need and hardest to serve, which includes adult learners who are performing below the eighth grade level, (2) populations performing at or above the eighth grade level, but who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and (3) funds may be used (up to 20%) to serve participants in eligible correction settings.

The funding allocated to each service area will be based on up to 85 percent on the literacy needs identified as determined by reviewing the number of citizens needing literacy services (including those without a high school diploma and those with limited English language skills) within each county based on data from the American Community Survey and participants served. The remaining percentage of funds will be allocated based on effectiveness of serving participants through performance.

TIMELINE: The following steps will be taken in conducting the AEFLA competition:

- January/February 2017: IDOE publishes three-year federal AEFLA Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Unified Plan.
- February/March 2017: IDOE provides a bidder's conference and technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible entities.
- February/March 2017: IDOE establishes a review panel free of conflicts of interests to review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- March 2017: Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
- March/April 2017: Reviewers review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- April/May 2017: IDOE announces AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding.
- July 1, 2017: AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

The IDOE uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers. Through an RFP process, entities must provide narrative details to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration. The review of proposals will include rating responses to each of the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. To determine if an applicant is an entity of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults in the applicable academic areas related to the RFP. Prior recipients will use data from the student data management system, TopsEnterprise, to show how they have met state-negotiated performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English language learners. New organizations will be provided forms to show demonstrated student learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. An applicant also will be required to demonstrate ability to adhere to the Assessment Policy Guidelines in recording and tracking participant enrollment and progression. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition. Funded entities will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement.

2. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The IDOE uses developed internal processes to ensure that there is direct and equitable access to the grant funds. All currently funded providers and all other identified eligible agencies receive a grant or contract application notification by e-mail. This includes all known community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, literacy councils, public housing authorities, and any other provider that is eligible pursuant to Section 203(5). An announcement is posted on the Iowa Grants website at https://www.Iowagrants.gov/. In addition to the general distribution of the sections 225 and/or 231 application notifications, IDOE will post a notice of the availability of funding on the website maintained by http://www.Iowa.gov/. In addition, the IDOE provides application information at conferences, workshops, and other activities attended by potential providers.

The IDOE requires all eligible providers for sections 225 and/or 231 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. Statewide leadership activities are provided through contracted service providers in compliance with state contracting requirements. The IDOE has also developed interagency agreements with the Department of Corrections to provide the appropriate and necessary services for returning citizens. The IDOE ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts IDOE with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. The IDOE believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access.

C. TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i)of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The federal vocational rehabilitation basic support state grant in Iowa is divided between the Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Department of Education - Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the ratio of 19 percent to 81 percent. This is a historical agreement and has been in place for in excess of 40 years. The U.S. Department of Education - Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) acknowledges the 19/81 ratio between the agencies. This is apparent at the time of grant awards by RSA. The total allocation of basic support dollars to the State of Iowa are granted by RSA to the two state agencies in the ratio of 19 percent to Iowa Department for the Blind and 81% to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

1. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

With WIOA requiring common performance standards and a single outcome reporting structure across state agencies including the Iowa Department of Education (adult education and literacy), Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, and Iowa Workforce Development (Title I employment and training and Wagner-Peyser), data alignment and integration are paramount. From April 2015, a series of inter-agency meetings have been held to formulate Iowa's plan for data alignment and integration under WIOA. These cross-agency workgroup meetings established a plan to build upon Iowa Workforce Development's (IWD) central data warehouse and reporting mechanism. This system will provide the integrated data structure allowing for a single system for both standard and "ad hoc" reporting capabilities for WIOA stakeholders, as well meeting WIOA federal reporting requirements.

A series of subcommittees with subject matter experts reviewed WIOA requirements and data definitions, necessary program adjustments for common measures, system enhancements to capture necessary data, and business rules for both proper integration of data and reporting functions. The project is being overseen by the Performance Accountability workgroup.

Core partners in Iowa realize there are currently significant data system limitations across core partners in an integrated case management environment. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of a common participant identification method. Information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs.

To begin to overcome these challenges, Iowa has initiated work on a common intake system that will:

- customize and expand the existing intake system used in Iowa*WORKS* offices that assists in determining program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;

- assign a unique identifier to each program participant that will be used to link participants in each of the partner data systems;
- gather required reporting elements common across all partners;
- create a common portal by which customers may access services;
- allow participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes;
- and create a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.

IWorks includes a self-service web-based labor exchange system called IowaJobs.org which is available to job seekers and employers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. IWorks will continue to operate as Iowa Workforce Development's data collection and management system for:

- Wagner-Peyser Act
- WIOA Title I
- Veterans Employment and Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS
- Food Assistance Employment & Training

2. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.

STATE'S PLAN TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS

As Iowa looks to support the coordinated implementation of state strategies through its various operating systems, detailed planning and coordination by core partners will continue. The state intends to analyze what is needed, what is valuable, and what is currently in place to build an agile project plan. This analysis will occur in Program Year 2016 and 2017, with implementation beginning in PY17. This analysis will ensure that the work completed is cost effective and of value to all partners.

Integrated data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan. Iowa sees the need for clear authority, management and responsibility to remain within the agencies running specific programs. Each agency needs the flexibility to conduct analysis, evaluate data, engage service providers and prepare data for internal and state uses, as well as meet their unique reporting requirements of their corresponding federal agencies. As such, the strategy for data integration was to build upon the design from Iowa Workforce Development, a central data warehouse which established a common intake of the participant's individual record that could be pulled as needed by each core partner. Each agency's case management system could then build upon the common data program specific information. The data from these case management systems necessary for reporting would then be merged and matched for analysis, evaluation and reporting on the WIOA program as a whole, through IWD.

3. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE,

DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

STATE BOARD TO ASSIST GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY

The state board will be the catalyst as it acts to advocate, convene and recommend processes and plans to move WIOA forward. This will be done via work groups and standing committees. A particular requirement of a new standing committee will be to “serve as an administrator to collect and manage workforce and talent development information” on behalf of the state board. An accessible data collection effort will streamline data collection processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aid in accurate performance measurement to help improve decision-making. The state will work to minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among Core Partners and relevant agencies. A robust policy will be adopted to ease transitions within and across systems and programs using a referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, and holds agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success and making it easier for jobseekers to navigate the system.

4. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

IOWA’S DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF REQUIRED REPORTS

The data tracking system in Iowa is extremely valuable to the efforts to improve system performance. Because the state provides a comprehensive tracking system for its programs, the network of One-Stop Centers is supported by coordinated data tracking. The comprehensive reports and query capabilities provided by this system are essential to program analysis at both the state and local levels, leading to data-driven decisions that improve quality and efficiency.

An effective performance management and accountability system depends upon several important factors:

- Clearly defined performance goals and measures;
- A data tracking system that provides timely and accurate information, which can be queried or reported in formats that permit close analysis;
- An on-going evaluation process that not only reviews the current level of performance, but also includes historical and projected performance;
- Flexible program policies that allow rapid adjustment to issues of economic and workforce impact; and
- A system of incentive and sanctions.

The State of Iowa has these elements in place for performance accountability of the workforce system. The primary goals featured in the system are the mandated program goals for WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser). While some of these measures (placement rates and earnings at placement) are elevated to an enterprise-wide or broader system level for purposes of gubernatorial reports or the Results Iowa website, there are no additional state-established goals for the employment and training system. Regional boards also have the option of establishing additional goals for their workforce areas. In practicality, extensive statutory program goals and reporting requirements that exist in the system mitigates local areas with limited resources to establish any additional goals, however. For this reason, Iowa welcomes federal initiatives to establish measures that are most representative of system success.

On-going evaluation and analysis of performance achievement occurs at federal, state and local levels. The ETA Regional Office provides a quarterly assessment of performance and expenditure levels of the ten states in the region. This information is used for comparative and analytical purposes, and is shared with local service providers. At the state level, regional representatives compile data on each region, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Locally, RWIBs routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities.

The Partners will collaborate to develop common performance indicators to ensure:

- Federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, labor market driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers.
- Performance will be transparent and accountable to the communities and regions served.
- Data entry staff is trained and understand the importance of data validation, data collection processes, and the importance of accurate reporting.
- Compliance with applicable federal standards.
- Compliance with applicable Partner confidentiality obligations.

The WIOA performance accountability measures in Section 116 will be used to assess the effectiveness of Adult Education statewide and ensuring continuous improvement in the service delivery system. In an effort to increase awareness, accuracy, and transparency, performance reports will be published for each region. These reports allow the state and regions to track and monitor performance regularly. Programs are assessed on their fiscal management, program implementation - including enrollment and performance benchmark attainment, and data management. Additional assessment may include partnership, collaboration, and career pathway efforts.

The core partners will target programs for technical assistance technical assistance that fail to meet the state performance benchmarks. Failure to meet the performance benchmarks for two consecutive years could result in the reduction or elimination of funding.

The participant service account will include the Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) distributed by DOL. Each partner had the opportunity to submit feedback to the USDOL in September. The PIRL was reviewed members of each core agency. Each core partner will need to create a link to the participant service account. The unique PIRL Identifier will be the common shared data element used to link participants. The participant service account will populate each of the agency specific databases.

Next decisions for the PIRL include whether the participant, staff, or an agency batch process will complete specific data elements. Identification of allowable locations needs determined. IWD secured funding for the initial project to move forward. A project plan and scope need to be developed with a clear timeframe. Sustainable costs are not included. Modifications to agency specific applications are also not included.

A comprehensive list of data elements dependent on partners will be compiled to help develop the state data sharing MOU. This state level template will focus on measures and reporting requirements to be used for regional MOUs.

The participant service account will store information about the participant's post program success and Unemployment Insurance Wage record data. Reporting performance outcomes, the details of who, when, and how this information is to be shared are yet to be determined. The Participant Profile application includes identity authentication steps as a means to verify individuals and maintain privacy.

Another sub-group for Educational Training Provider List (ETPL) has also been meeting and is working on the draft policy surrounding the ETPL process for interested, qualified training providers.

Purpose of the Project

- Implement new performance accountability measures
- Refine the Educational Training Provider application and approval process
- Develop recommendations for additional measures
- Decide on a system for use as the core partner data base registration and data reporting management system.

Scope of the Project

- Review new performance measures and identify potential issues, including recording and reporting information
- Analyze current state of reporting requirements, identify gaps, efficiency opportunities needed indicators of performance
- Develop a matrix of required data and reporting requirements and coordinate with State leadership to identify additional shared performance requirements across agencies
- Develop IT scope of work guidelines for data sharing to successfully implement new data and reporting requirements, including the integration of additional program data (i.e.
- apprenticeship data, iJAG data, STEM credential data, etc.) into longitudinal data coordination efforts
- Make recommendations regarding effective dissemination of performance data to stakeholders, the public, workforce customers, and program managers
- Coordinate with NGA Talent PIPEline team
- Negotiate levels of performance/adjustment factors
- Delivery Plan
- Provide data to be shared by Core Partners to go into MOU
- State data dictionary
- Issue List
- Sub-group for ETP will
- Sub-group for Profile will
- An intake system to collect participant data
- A reporting mechanism for reporting state performance to the feds which is viewable by all core partners.

In order to meet the requirements of WIOA for cooperation between the programs of Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Department of Education common portal, referred to as the "Participant Profile," collects common demographical information and assigns a state wide Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) number. The profile uses OpenID to permit users to use their personal email address and password. This portal is owned by Iowa Workforce Development and is currently scheduled to receive upgrades which will make agency cross-use more efficient, reliable and secure.

The participant may create their own profile or one may be created by a staff member. The ID of the participant can be verified through DOT records or through Experian. Each individual program will have additional information specific to that program but will use common information, along with the PIRL number, from the profile.

The staff will have a dashboard with the status of each program by participant. Only the staff authorized for each program will have the ability to access details for each program.

Iowa's Common Data-Collection and Reporting Process

Iowa's common data-collection and reporting processes are used for all programs and activities provided by workforce investment funds at Iowa's One-Stop Centers. Iowa's Integrated Service Delivery system uses a common job-seeker registration and enrollment process that also uses the same computer software that generates the participant data base. IWorks is Iowa's data management system.

IWorks is web-enabled, requires a secure-password access and has been customized to meet Iowa's case management and reporting system needs. Each job seeker who comes to a One-Stop Center is asked to enter their specific demographic information, which begins their registration. This partial registration information is then completed and verified by Center staff to ensure complete data entry and program enrollment.

IWorks is the common data-collection process for the following programs:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Veterans Employment Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS
- Food Assistance Employment & Training
- Iowa's State Performance Accountability System

Iowa Workforce Development, Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation will adopt joint performance reporting requirements as outlined in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 116 providing that State joint performance measures and reporting requirements under authority of the Secretary of Labor and Education. Joint performance measures for WIOA shall consist of six (6) customer outcomes specific to core indicators of performance.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

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B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

IVRS has for the past four consecutive years exceeded the Federal Employment Standards. The review of data and the strategic plan is being revised to reflect the new opportunities provided by WIOA. New strategies are specifically being addressed in the areas of youth engagement, business services and outreach to individuals in segregated settings.

When evaluating the new performance measures as required under WIOA, IVRS went back and reviewed data from 2014. This serves as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data being collected through a project with IWD. The baseline shows 50.99% of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program, and that the same figure is obtained when considering the fourth quarter measure. This becomes the baseline for IVRS and will be the goal for the FFY 17 until we have more current data and trend information to determine a higher target goal.

On-going evaluation and analysis of performance achievement occurs at federal, state and local levels. The ETA Regional Office provides a quarterly assessment of performance and expenditure levels of the ten states in the region. This information is used for comparative and analytical purposes, and is shared with local service providers. At the state level, regional representatives compile data on each region, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Locally, RWIBs routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities.

An effective performance management and accountability system depends upon several important factors:

- Clearly defined performance goals and measures;
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Labor supply and demand data was analyzed in order to determine the impact from the education and training provided to participants in Title II and co-enrolled as participants in Iowa's skilled worker pipeline, By utilizing graduate data from the training providers for the supply, and Iowa's 2012 to 2022 Long-Term Occupational Projections for the demand, occupation-specific data was analyzed. This data by occupation includes:

- Type of award (certificate, diploma or degree)
- Program of study
- Projected job openings (both replacement and new)
- Wages
- Education/Training
- Experience
- Skills
- Projected job growth

The occupations were then aggregated into occupational categories for analysis, where necessary. The primary source for the supply of education awards was obtained from data housed within the Management Information System (MIS) at the Iowa Department of Education. For each training program offered by Iowa's community college, the corresponding classification of instructional programs (CIP) was used to track area of study. Occupational projections were used as the primary source for the demand representation. Future occupational demand was defined using the annual growth rate of Long-Term (2012-2022) Iowa Occupational Projections as produced by Iowa Workforce Development. These projections use the standard occupational classification (SOC) system and can be categorized at different levels (two-, three-, five-, and six-digit), where moving from a lower to higher level indicates more disaggregation in the occupational structure.

By linking occupations (SOC codes) to education programs (CIP codes) a crosswalk is created, such as the one available from the National Crosswalk Center®. Additionally, the National Career Clusters® Framework links every CIP code to one of the 16 career clusters, and the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE), assigned one of the 79 career pathways (where each pathway was associated to a unique career cluster) to each of the SOC Codes. While there might be some discrepancies this data is being used to determine the match between educational training needs and occupational demand. With the crosswalk, analysis can be done for each of the occupational categories with the corresponding projected employment demand. Levels for determining high/low wage and high/low demand are based on an average Iowa occupational growth rate for all occupations of 1.3 percent and on the 2013 Iowa average annual salary of $40,240. Regionally and statewide this process can help determine the effectiveness of sector partnerships, career pathway development and programs related to workforce delivery services.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

USE OF UI WAGE RECORD DATA

Unemployment insurance wage record data has and will continue to be matched to assist program data collection for students, apprenticeships, training participants, and Promise Job participants for purposes of matching it to employment, wages, and industry. Individual contracts and data sharing agreements are established between IWD and training providers. In return, IWD will provide an aggregate analysis of how their students faired economically after they left their program using wage records.

Iowa Workforce Development has an internal-earnings transfer procedure, and contracts with other national agencies in order to use quarterly wage information to measure progress for state and local performance measures. Each quarter, earnings from Iowa employers are uploaded, and the state system performs the job match by way of Social Security Number matches. Iowa also has a contract with the state of Maryland's administration of the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) and with U.S. Department of Labor's Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and (WRIS2), which provides earnings data for out-of-state individuals who participated in Iowa's workforce programs. These two systems also provide information on individuals who, as a result of our services, obtain employment with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Postal Service, and federal jobs, in general. All earnings data is secured through multiple, fire-walled systems, and access is granted only to individuals with a legitimate business need. By participating in the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS/WRIS2), Iowa has a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the workforce delivery programs, and is able to report more comprehensive outcomes against performance measures.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

The usage of TopsEnterprise (TE®), the information management system of Iowa's adult education and literacy, is in line with FERPA regulations and monitored on an ongoing basis to assure alignment. Users of TE® must annually sign and submit a Personal Confidentiality Statement which serves to safeguard personally identifiable information. Iowa's adult education and literacy (AEL) also requires each local program to sign an assurance as a part of the funding application indicating adherence to outlined technology requirements. The technology requirements describe the minimum level of security required by local programs. AEL participants have the ability to opt-out of information sharing through a Release of Information form. Students who refuse are not shared for any purpose including federal/state match. WIOA partners will be included in the release statement allowing students to approve the release of their data to the central repository. Likewise, a data sharing MOU will be established between the key individuals responsible for the central data warehouse.

Iowa Workforce Development utilizes data sharing agreements with the schools, agencies and training providers. The entities permit us social security numbers through Globalscape, a secured FTP site provided by IT. The social security numbers are then matched to unemployment insurance records. IWD reports findings in aggregate and reports if we have three or more participants. If we don't have at least three that information is suppressed. This is done so that you can't identify any individual specifically.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Iowa Workforce Development will provide all qualified Veterans with priority of service.

In order to maximize and provide priority of services to Veterans, Veterans will be able to register at all Iowa Workforce Development Center locations. Registration is also available on-line 24/7 through www.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov, or any of the regional websites. Iowa complies with final regulations which state recipients of USDOL funds for qualified job training programs are subject to the priority of service regulations, and are required by law to provide priority of service to Veterans and eligible spouses. If the SBE eligible Veteran's needs cannot be met at the point of intake (as determined by core service staff) or if the eligible Veteran requests, they will be referred to the DVOP or appropriate service provider for assistance.

The Iowa Director for Veterans Employment and Training (DVET) and/or his designee (ADVET), has a standing invitation to address district management at their monthly meeting to describe expectations of the Jobs for Veterans Act, and to review program performance. The state has followed-up by requiring that each SWA describe in their local customer service plan how they will ensure priority of service is provided in their programs. IWD Management staff will consult with local partners on how to implement priority of service, and will be monitoring compliance with the established procedure.

Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDBs) are to ensure One-Stop Operators and service providers recruit individuals in the priority of service categories and develop and provide appropriate services to meet those populations' needs. Local areas must establish written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described in this guidance for participants served in the WIOA Adult program for eligibility determinations beginning on July 1, 2015. Additionally, based on local policy, the Boards may:

- Establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals; and
- Choose to provide individualized career and training services to adults whose income is above the WIOA income guidelines requirement but below the Board-established self-sufficiency wage level.

Each region submits their plan for providing priority of service to Veterans. Each plan is reviewed by the state liaisons to the Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB). The state liaisons work with the DVET to develop expectations that can be enforced locally. Priority of service is monitored in the following manner:

- Local management staff audits job orders and other services;
- Local management will take corrective action on Veteran customer complaints; and

- Local office management conducts a random review of initial Veteran applications for proper qualification, quality of service provided, and to ensure that the appropriate service was provided.

Corrective action, in the form of continuing education and positive feedback is provided by the DVOP. If problems persist, local management, the Division Administrator and the DVET will be consulted.

Veterans will be made aware of their priority of service entitlement and about the services provided by DVOP staff to SBE eligible Veterans, not only through outreach activities , but through an information and self-assessment pamphlet available both in paper form and on the web. The pamphlet will describe for the Veteran the various services they may receive, their priority of service, and will provide a simple mechanism for the Veteran (and staff) to determine if career services are needed. It is expected that this method will help avoid oversight of Veterans in need of special services. In addition, large colorful posters featuring local Veterans were developed with non-JVSG funds and distributed to all IWD and partner locations asking, “Are You the Spouse of a Veteran?” and explaining priority of service for those individuals.

“The Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107-288) provides an emphasis on serving veterans by establishing a priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor, including Wagner-Peyser, WIOA and other job training programs offered through competitive grants. Priority of Service is the right of an eligible “Covered Person” to be given priority of service over an eligible non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training and placement services, notwithstanding other provisions of the law.

“Covered Persons take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining services and shall receive access to services and resources earlier in time than a non-covered person. If services or resources are limited, the Covered Person receives access instead of or before the non-covered person. Procedures or policies that restrict a veteran’s access to WIOA or WP services, even if such restrictions are intended to provide the veteran with specialized services, are contrary to the priority of service requirements.

“20 CFR Part 1010 and 38 U.S.C. 4215, Section 4215(a)(1) defines “Covered Persons” to mean veterans and the spouses “of any of the following:

a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;

b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:

i. Missing in action;

ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or

iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power; or

iv. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs or any veteran who died while such a disability was in existence."

"Covered Persons must have served at least one day in the active military, naval or air service, and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable as specified in 38 U.S.C 101(2). Active service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component. It does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes, nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel mobilized by the State rather than federal authorities. "Spouses of military personnel killed in the line of duty do not currently qualify for priority of service.

"Spouses of military personnel killed in the line of duty do not currently qualify for priority of service.

"As defined in USC 101, the term "surviving spouse" means a person of the opposite sex who was the wife or husband of a veteran at the time of the veteran's death, and who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran's death (except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the spouse) and who has not remarried or (in cases not involving remarriage) has not since the death of the veteran, and after September 19, 1962, lived with another person and held himself or herself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person.

"The Jobs for Veterans Act provides priority service only to veterans or eligible spouses who meet the program's eligibility requirements.

Proposed rule 680.650 re-affirms that veterans continue to receive priority of service in ALL DOL-funded training programs but that a "veteran must still meet each program's eligibility criteria." Thus for WIOA Title I Adult services, the program's eligibility and priority considerations must be made first, and then veteran's priority applied.

Local areas must give priority of service to participants that fall into one of the below priority categories (Proposed § 679.560(b)(21)):

RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Other low-income individuals. The term "low income individuals" is defined in WIOA Law—Definitions; Section 3(36) means an individual who:

- Receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or state or local based public assistance program; or
- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current U.S.DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines or
- Is a homeless individual, or
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT

The term “basic skills deficient” is defined in Section 3(5) to mean a youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. Iowa Workforce Development(IWD) is providing guidance for making this determination by defining it as an individual who meets ANY ONE of the following:

Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or

- Scores below 9.0 grade level (8.9 or below) on the TABE; CASAS or other allowable assessments as per National Reporting System (NRS) developed by the U.S. Department of Education’s Division of Adult Education and Literacy or
- Is enrolled in Title II adult education (including enrolled for ESL); or
- Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn’t enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation.

To ensure that local staff is aware of their responsibilities to provide priority of service, Veteran staff and management will train local non-vet staff and service delivery partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans’ employment and training needs. As well, the state has, and will continue to issue, field information memos to clarify these responsibilities. All such memos have been reviewed by the DVET.

DAS, IVRS, IWD, Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA office of Vocational Rehabilitation developed a new state training program for veterans with service connected disabilities.

This allows a qualified veteran who successfully completes a state work experience program the opportunity to be directly hired into the position and by-pass merit hiring. Additionally, the state of Iowa has established policies regarding priority of service for veterans. Veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in the statute and regulations, are eligible for priority of service. For the purposes of implementing priority of service, the Final Rule requires that program operators use the broad definition of veteran found in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Under this definition, the term “veteran” means a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component. This definition of “active service” does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (i.e., that which often is referred to as “weekend” or “annual” training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel who are mobilized by State rather than Federal

IOWA JOBS STATE VETERANS PROGRAM PLAN

The Jobs for Veterans’ State Grants (JVSG) creates opportunities for all eligible veterans and eligible spouses to obtain meaningful and successful careers through provision of resources and expertise that maximize employment opportunities and protect veterans’ employment rights. Services provided by the Veteran Representative include comprehensive assessments, development of an Individual Employment Plan, career counseling, and referrals to other veteran and community organizations as needed. The Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) is a member of the business services team. The LVER promotes the hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups; facilitates employer training, plans and participates in career fairs and conducts job development with employers.

Iowa has an effective business services program across the state. There are Business Services Teams located in each of the 15 Regions who coordinate efforts with DVOP staff to contact current and prospective employers, Federal contractors and subcontractors, and others to promote Veterans -SBE, aged 18-24, and non-SBE - as excellent job candidates and employees.

In addition, partners in the one-stops are utilized to train Veterans in identifying job skills as well as the “soft skills” related to job seeking and job retention. Assessment services are used to identify the skills, knowledge, abilities and preferences of Veterans so that the best possible job match can be made initially. Career exploration services are offered so that Veterans have a good knowledge of available jobs and specific information about occupations. Veterans are offered assistance in understanding the skills needed to function in the work place, and help in understanding how job and career advancement can be accomplished with an employer.

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment

IWD Management will serve the role of educators to the one-stop operators, their partners and the Regional Workforce Development Board members. They will train and educate on:

- The identification of Veteran under Title 38 of the U.S.C;
- Criteria for the identification of needs for referral for career services;
- Veterans’ preference requirements and methodologies;
- The difference between Priority of Service and Veterans’ Preference, and;
- Veterans’ integration policy as determined by Agency leadership.

Partners such as WIOA partners, PROMISE JOBS/TANF, Trade Act, and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services will also identify Veteran customers at their points of contact or entry, which may or may not be collocated with IWD Veteran staff at the one-stop. Those Veteran customers identified as having a significant barrier to employment as defined by USDOL, VETS, or age 18-24, will be referred to the DVOP for additional services. Veterans will be co-enrolled with PROMISE JOBS if they are receiving Family Investment Program (TANF) assistance and subject to the terms of a Family Investment Agreement (FIA), WIOA, or Trade Act if they are a dislocated worker. Veteran program management monitors case records monthly and quarterly report data to ensure compliance, address issues, quantify progress, and celebrate success with DVOP staff.

The state will ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for Veteran’s staff. This includes, but is not limited to, employing only Veterans to fill the DVOP positions with a preference towards hiring disabled Veterans. Each of these staff is trained in their new roles and responsibilities under the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002. The DVOP, and local Wagner-Peyser management, work closely with all partners to ensure the mandatory WIOA partners provide Veteran’s priority of service.

Iowa has focused staff resources on the utilization of DVOP Specialists, rather than LVERs, for a number of years. We believe it is a better investment of funds to ensure case management is offered to SBE Veterans and those aged 18-24 in accordance with VPLs 01-14, 03-14 and 04-14. All non-Vet staff is assigned to serve Veterans without an SBE, and we expect our non-JVSG funded BSRs to promote Veterans to our business customers. Iowa also elected to eliminate the Veterans Program Coordinator position, and now has a fulltime program manager to provide oversight, monitoring and training. With the deployment of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad’s “Home Base Iowa” initiative to encourage military personnel to make our state their home, we hired one LVER to conduct outreach to employers to assist Veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars, job search workshops, and facilitating employment, training and placement services.

Once identified either by self-assessment, core service staff, or partner staff, that the individual is a Veteran who is eligible for and could benefit from DVOP services, that staff would refer the Veteran job seeker to the DVOP. In offices without a full time DVOP, local management will be responsible for ensuring there is an efficient means of referral that ensures no Veteran eligible for and requiring career services goes without the appropriate service.

The DVOP will facilitate career services by working with the eligible Veteran to develop a written action plan to resolve barriers to employment (i.e. DVOP will refer for appointment with local county Veteran affairs to resolve financial issues and Veteran will follow through by making appointment and going to receive services).

Iowa has instituted an Integrated System of service that includes all of the partners in the Workforce Center, “All Means All.” The system consists of a Membership Team, Skills Development Team and Business Services Team. All DVOP Specialists will be assigned to the Skills Development Team, as this complies with their roles and responsibilities under Title 38. As a member of the Skills Development Team, they will be referred any Veteran their coworkers have identified as eligible for DVOP services because of age (18-24) or who has a significant barrier to employment and needs career services. While working in Skills, they will assist only Veterans who meet the criteria outlined in VPLs 01-14, 03-14 and 04-14; all other Veterans will be served by the non-JVSG staff.

The DVOP will locate, build and maintain good working relationships with Federal agencies (VA), state agencies (Health & Welfare, Education), community based organizations, Veterans and others that may be able to provide services to eligible Veterans age 18-24 or with a significant barrier to employment.

The DVOP staff in Iowa has maintained an excellent working relationship with their local VA VR & E staff. The procedure followed in serving Chapter 31 Vets is in accordance with VA/DOL Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) dated December 2008.

Iowa has established the position of Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) who is out stationed on a part-time basis at the VR&E Regional office. The position is filled by a DVOP specialist.

DVOPs receive referrals from the VR&E counselor through the ISC and are at that time informed of the Veteran's employment goal, barriers to employment and any other significant information.

Upon referral, the DVOP immediately conducts an interview to further assess the Veteran's situation. The DVOP will develop a mutually agreed upon, individualized case management plan to assist the Veteran while in receipt of employment services.

The DVOP will provide resume assistance, interviewing techniques, job leads and establish job development referrals with employers. The DVOP will also make referrals to assist with any special needs the Veteran may have. The DVOP maintains a minimum of weekly contact with the Chapter 31 Veteran and each month submits the results of the month's activities to the VR&E counselor and the ISC.

Iowa Workforce Development has partnered with the state DOL/ETA Office of Apprenticeship and hosts the following web site: http://www.Iowaworkforce.org/apprenticeship/. This web site has been recognized as the premier Apprenticeship web portal in the nation. DVOP staff routinely use this site to place Veterans in training.

The Iowa Department of Education works closely with the DVOP Specialists to disseminate information on Chapter 31 GI Bill programs, the Troops to Teachers program and various other educational programs to provide educational opportunities for our Veterans.

DVOP staff work closely with TANF - Employment and Training program (Referred to in Iowa as PROMISE JOBS) to provide job placement and referral assistance to Veterans who are TANF cash recipients. (Referred to in Iowa as the Family Investment Program).

Though Iowa has no active duty military installations or medical facilities in the state, DVOP staff maintains a close working relationship with the Iowa National Guard. This provides a strong linkage and referral system between all returning National Guard Veterans and the one-stop center.

Iowa Workforce Development maintains a Veterans Benefits and Services book that lists Federal, State, and Local Veteran benefits and services. Several agencies have partnered in contributing to this book, to include USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, Iowa Department of Education, both state and county Department of Veteran Affairs and others. This book is very well received and serves to both inform Veterans and to provide them with the knowledge to access Veteran services provided IWD. This book is distributed to partners, agencies and civic organizations across the state by the DVOPs, Division Administrator, Iowa National Guard, Iowa Department of Veteran's Affairs, ESGR personnel and volunteers, and USDOL VETS staff.

HOME BASE IOWA

Another initiative of Iowa Governor Branstad is “Home Base Iowa,” which was signed into law on Memorial Day, 2014. This legislation provides the following benefits to Iowa Veterans, as well as Transitioning Service Members looking to make this state their home:

- Fully exempts military pensions from state income tax, and includes surviving spouses in this exemption;
- Special license plate fees waived for those eligible for veteran-related specialty plates (Bronze Star, Disabled Veteran, Ex POW, Gold Star, Iowa National Guard, Legion of Merit, Medal of Honor, Pearl Harbor Veteran, Purple Heart, Retired by branch, Air Force Cross Medal, Airman’s Medal, Navy Cross, Service Cross Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Medal, Soldier’s Medal, Silver Star Medal, Veteran;)
- Allows private employers to give preference in hiring and promotion to veterans and surviving spouses of military personnel who died either while on active duty, or as a result of such service;
- Increases funding and eligibility for Military Homeownership Assistance Program;
- Requires licensing boards to adopt rules giving credit for military training and experience, as well as draft proposals allowing license reciprocity for military spouses; and
- Higher education institutions must set academic credit standards for military experience.

Another component of Home Base Iowa is member businesses and communities. The Home Base Iowa Communities initiative designates communities as centers of opportunity for military veterans and further highlights Iowa’s statewide commitment to welcoming veterans to the state. Standards to become a Home Base Iowa community include:

- Ten percent of the businesses in the community agree to pledge to hire a specific number of veterans, post their jobs with IWD, and become a member of Skilled Iowa;
- The community develops its own welcome/incentive package for veterans;
- The community prominently displays the Home Base Iowa Community designation; and
- The community obtains a resolution of support from the appropriate local governing body.

Iowa currently has 31 Home Base Iowa communities. For more information, see www.homebaseIowa.org. This website also provides information on job opportunities in Iowa through the .jobs microsite for Veterans, veteran-friendly employers and communities, resources for veterans, Home Base Iowa employers, and more.

Iowa was also the first state to partner with Hilton Worldwide to offer no-cost accommodations to military personnel. The Hilton Honors hotel stays can be used to pursue job opportunities in any industry - and can be used to support job interviews, skills training, housing searches for newly employed Iowans, and other job-seeking activities within the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. Iowa is making points available to Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, Spouse, National Guard and Reserve members, and anyone meeting the Wagner-Peyser definition of a Veteran. Case management is not a requirement. Iowa is currently the largest user of this benefit.

Performance Incentive Awards

The Performance Incentive Award Program will be in accordance with VPL 02-07. The total amount of the funds available for performance awards and incentives will be one percent of the total award for Veterans programs.

The Performance Awards and Incentives program will recognize those regions that excel in providing services to Veterans. Regions selected for awards will have demonstrated their excellence of service to Veterans or in support of Veterans programs. Awards will not be distributed in cash. The value of the awards will be significant enough to encourage regions to develop better approaches to delivering services to Veterans. The focus of the awards will be on improving the services to Veterans and strategies for the delivery of services, but not to the exclusion of non-Veterans.

The presentation of the awards will be in a venue that will highlight services to Veterans. The Director of Iowa Workforce Development has made a commitment to present the awards at the annual Veterans Conference during the third quarter of each year. Making the presentations in this manner will again emphasize Iowa's effort to improve services and highlight the contribution staff makes to improve the lives of Veterans across Iowa.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method to any individual who is seeking services from the workforce system. Accessibility as referenced throughout this plan refers to the direct and indirect ideas, actions, philosophies and physical and emotional supports used by an individual or employer to support employment for ALL Iowans. The Partners have legal obligations under federal and state anti-discrimination laws when providing workforce services. Federal and state antidiscrimination laws prohibit discrimination in the provision of services on the basis of an individual's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age, or disability. Meeting the Partners' legal obligations under federal and state antidiscrimination laws must be a focus when the Partners develop and implement policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices with respect to increasing and maximizing access to workforce services and when assessing the physical and programmatic access of one-stop system partners, physical office spaces, websites, etc.

Individuals with disabilities constitute a population that has traditionally been underserved or unserved by the workforce development system. The Partners recognize that state and federal anti-discrimination laws impose legal obligations with respect to workforce services delivery to individuals with disabilities. Further, WIOA singles out individuals with disabilities as a group with a barrier to employment that the Partners must target for increased and maximized access to workforce services. As such, the Partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to create maximized physical and programmatic access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Implementation of policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to increase and maximize physical and programmatic access for individuals with disabilities must be an element of One-Stop Certification that is strictly applied.

In developing the Unified State Plan, Iowa has incorporated several measures which will assist in ensuring that ALL Iowans have equal opportunities within the workforce delivery system and throughout the workforce. Iowa has worked very closely with and has relied upon the expertise provided by the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDOB). As core partners, IVRS and IDOB has provided ongoing technical assistance and support regarding development of policies, procedures, and system design and evaluation protocols to ensure that ALL Iowans have full and welcoming access. The Iowa Department for the Blind will also be utilized to consider all form of accessibility impacting field of vision. Their Assistive Technology services will ensure accommodations are in place to support access for needed services and supports for all Iowans.

Additionally, key staff and WIOA work group implementers have participated in LEAD Center Webinars regarding serving persons with disabilities under WIOA and have infused the promising practices and policies throughout the vision and goals and the entirety of the Unified State Plan. The

one-stop operations and system design group is developing effective policies, plans and procedures that will be incorporated into the One-Stop Center operations. In utilizing the reference guide as a foundation on which to design supportive policies, it is important to note that until such time as the Department of Labor announces new regulations pursuant to WIOA Section 188, the current Section 188 regulations cited herein are used. Section 188 regulatory requirements are organized into three Sections:

- Providing Universal Access to Programs and Activities
- Ensuring Equal Opportunity
- Obligation to Ensure Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities
- Implementing Universal Access and Equal Opportunity through the designation of a Qualified Equal Opportunity Officer

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

ACCESSIBILITY

The one-stop delivery system will address accessibility for Individuals who are English language learners by identifying and attempting to bridge the barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education. The obstacles faced by English language learners when accessing the one-stop delivery system can be minimized by implementing the following:

- Creating an inclusive environment for Iowa's one-stop system through deliberate diversity training;
- Provide culturally relevant and translated materials throughout the one-stop system as needed, driven by participant needs;
- Collaboration with additional partners who can assist with the barriers;
- Interweaving civic education in training offered to core partners and one-stop system staff;
- Develop a cadre of diversity trainers and translators for core partner agencies; and
- Incorporate accessibility for English language learners in the one-stop system certification process to address local policies relevant to the needs of English language learners.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

COORDINATION

Iowa began planning efforts for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) in early 2015 with the formation of a WIOA Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was appointed by the Governor's Office in partnership with Iowa Workforce Development. The Steering Committee included representatives from the all of the Core Partner programs, the Governor's Office, Iowa Workforce Development and other Key Program staff. This group was tasked with overseeing WIOA planning efforts in Iowa. The steering committee developed a strategy to ensure effective communications, created a planning timeline, established additional work groups and provided oversight for Iowa's WIOA planning and implementation efforts. Partners were able to come together to resolve conflicts, improve processes and to meet project goals. The following workgroups were formed to carry out state planning efforts:

- Communication and Governance
- Statewide Services Mapping
- Performance Accountability and Data Sharing
- Financial
- Career Pathways and Industry Partnerships
- Planning, Implementation and Policy
- One-Stop Operations and System Design
- Youth Services

In addition to the work groups, there were several special committees established to review and make recommendations regarding topics such as universal definitions, common intake and referral processes, serving populations with barriers to employment, and accessibility.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes

2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes

3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes

4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes

5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes

6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes

7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes

8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE.

REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Iowa has traditionally had 15 workforce development regions. Each of Iowa's 15 historic regions was initially designated as a local workforce development area under WIOA section 160(b)(2). Each of Iowa's 15 local workforce development areas is aligned; thus, under WIOA section 106(2)(A), each of Iowa's 15 local workforce development areas also constitutes a workforce development region.

Iowa's 15 Workforce Development Boards (WDB) are as follows.

Local Area/Region 1:

Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

Local Area/Region 2:

Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Floyd, Mitchell, Worth, Winnebago, and Hancock counties.

Local Area/Region 3/4:

Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, and Sioux counties.

Local Area/Region 5:

Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright counties.

Local Area/Region 6:

Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek and Tama counties.

Local Area/Region 7:

Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Buchanan and Grundy counties.

Local Area/Region 8:

Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac counties.

Local Area/Region 9:

Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine and Scott counties.

Local Area/Region 10:

Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties.

Local Area/Region 11:

Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren counties.

Local Area/Region 12:

Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth and Woodbury counties.

Local Area/Region 13:

Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby counties.

Local Area/Region 14:

Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Montgomery, Ringgold, Taylor and Union counties.

Local Area/Region 15:

Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Van Buren and Wayne counties.

Local Area/Region 16:

Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties.

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR "PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY" AND "SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY" IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.

DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

AT THE MAY, 2015 STATE BOARD MEETING, THE BOARD ADOPTED PROCEDURES FOR THE DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS AND THE PROCEDURES ARE OUTLINED BELOW:

A. At any time, the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and Regional Workforce Development Board from any unit of general local government or combination of units may submit a request for designation as a workforce development area. The State Board must determine if the new local area meets the Governor's policy criteria. The request will include:

1. To what extent the new local area is consistent with local labor market areas;

2. To what extent the new local area has a common economic development area;

3. A description of federal and non-federal resources available in the new local area, including appropriate education and training institutions to administer activities under the Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA;

4. Memorandum(s) of understanding between the CEO(s) of the new local area and local service providers, as described in the WIOA, section 121 (b), demonstrating commitment to integration and alignment of resources and services.

5. Consideration of comments received through a public comment process. The public comment period must provide at least 60 days for public comment prior to designation of the local workforce development area and provide an opportunity for representatives of interested business, education, and labor organizations to have input into the development of the formation of the local area.

B. A recommendation, including the reason and conclusion, for approval or denial as a new local area, will be made by the State Board to the Governor. The State Board may consult with any other stakeholders prior to issuing their recommendation. The decision of the Governor will be final and sent to the Chief Elected Official for the New Local Area.

C. Appeal:

1. An appeal must be filed to the State Board at the address in (b) of this section within 30 days of the date of the letter from the Governor.

2. The State Board will provide an opportunity for the CEO at their next public meeting to present their request for designation as a new area.

If the decision of the Governor and the State Board does not result in designation, the CEO may request review by the Secretary of Labor. The Secretary may require the area be designated as a workforce development area, if it is determined that the entity was not accorded procedural rights under the State appeals process or if the area meets the initial designation requirements at WIOA sec.106(b)(2).

Following adoption of the procedures for the designation of local areas, the local boards submitted initial designation decisions to Iowa Workforce Development Director Beth Townsend in September, 2015. Regions' 3/4, 8 and 11 requested recertification of their WIOA compliant boards. Region 16 requested to change the board's structure to conform to the new WIOA board configuration requirement and the remaining regions (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15) formally requested grandfathering of their non-compliant board structures. IWD is in receipt of the formal letters of request and documentation required for the local board certification process from all fifteen local CEO and RWDB Chairs that the RWIB's have been constituted according to the required WIOA procedures.

All fifteen regions submitted their formal requests to continue existing service delivery area boundaries. IWD has received the required documentation and board minutes supporting the requests.

"Performed Successfully" means that the local area met or exceeded the levels of performance the Governor negotiated with the Local Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the local area has not failed any individual measure for the last two consecutive program years before the enactment of WIOA.

"Met" is defined as a performance number that is greater than or equal to 90% of the negotiated goal and less than or equal to the actual negotiated goal.

"Exceed" is defined as a performance number that is above the negotiated goal.

"Failed" is defined as a performance number that falls below 90% of the negotiated goal. Performance for initial and subsequent designation is judged according to standards agreed to between the State and local area at the time of enactment rather than under subsequently imposed performance standards. Therefore, performance is judged according to achievement of the performance goals negotiated between the local boards and IWD for PY2012 and PY2013.

"Sustained Fiscal Integrity" means that the Secretary [of Labor] has not made a formal determination that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area of incorrectly expended funds due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration for the two year period preceding the determination.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

As identified in the preceding section, the State Board adopted new procedures for designation of local areas, which included a process for appeals relating to designation of local areas. An appeal must be filed to the State Board at the appropriate address identified in the section (b) of the policy, within 30 days of the date of the letter from the Governor. The State Board will provide an

opportunity for the CEO at their next public meeting to present their request for designation as a new area.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.

State of Iowa Appeals Process Under WIOA section 121(h)(2)(E). 1. Applicability of Appeals Process.

1.1. This appeals process applies only to a one-stop partner administering a program described in 20 C.F.R. § 678.400 through 678.410 and 34 C.F.R. §§ 361.400 through 361.410. 1.2. If a one-stop partner wishes to appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs, the one-stop partner must follow this appeals process.

2. Grounds for Appeal. A one-stop partner may only appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs if the Governor's determination is inconsistent with: 2.1. The proportionate share requirements in 20 C.F.R. § 678.735(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.735(a); 2.2. The cost contribution limitations in 20 C.F.R. § 678.735(b) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.735(b); and/or 2.3. The cost contribution caps in 20 C.F.R. § 678.738.

3. Form of Appeal.

3.1. A one-stop partner's appeal must include all of the following: 3.2. The one-stop partner's name; 3.3. The name of individual who will serve as the one-stop partner's point of contact for the appeal as well as that individual's job title, employer, telephone number, email address, and mailing address; 3.4. The program described in 20 C.F.R. §§ 678.400 through 678.410 and 34 C.F.R. §§ 361.400 through 361.410 that the one-stop partner administers; and 3.5. The grounds for the appeal under Section 3 of this Process. 3.6. All supporting documentation for the appeal in the form of an Appendix, with table of contents and numbered pages.

4. Filing of Appeal. The one-stop partner must file an appeal with all of the Iowa core partners by hand-delivery or certified U.S. Mail at the following addresses: 4.1. Iowa Workforce Development — Legal1 1000 East Grand Avenue Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.2. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services 510 East 12th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.3. Iowa Department of Education, Adult Education and Literacy 400 East 14th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.4. Iowa Department for the Blind 524 4th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50309

5. Deadline for Appeal.

5.1. A one-stop partner's appeal must be filed on or before the 21st day after the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs. If an appeal is not filed within 21 days after the Governor's determination, it is untimely and will not be considered. 5.2. For purposes of determining the deadline, Day 1 is the day after the date of the Governor's determination and Day 21 is the 21st day after the date of the Governor's determination. For example, if the Governor's determination occurred on December 1, any appeal must be filed on or before December 22. 5.3. An appeal is considered filed for purposes of calculating the deadline when it is received by all of the core partners, not when it is mailed. This

means that an appealing one-stop partner must take into account the amount of time an appeal filed via certified U.S. mail will take to be received by all of the core partners.

For example, an appeal that is mailed within 21 days of the Governor's determination but not received by all of the core partners until the 22nd day after the date of the Governor's determination is untimely and will not be considered. 5.4. If the 21st day after the Governor's determination falls on a weekend or state holiday, then the deadline to appeal will be the next regular workday.

6. Notice of Appeal. Within five days of filing an appeal, the appealing one-stop partner must send a copy of the appeal to all other local one-stop partners within the local workforce development area and/or region in-person, via email or U.S. Mail. 7. State Board Consideration.

7.1. Within five days of receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the Core Partners shall transmit the appeal to the Chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board and provide a copy of the Notice of Appeal to all non-appealing one-stop partners. 7.2. No one-stop partner is required to submit a response to an appeal. However, if a non-appealing one-stop partner wishes to submit a response to an appeal, it must submit its response to the State Workforce Development Board within five days of its receipt of the Notice of Appeal. 7.3. Within five days of receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the Chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board shall appoint a five-person standing committee to consider the appeal. 7.4. The presiding State Workforce Development Board standing committee shall consider the submissions of all partners when considering the appeal. 7.5. At its discretion, the State Workforce Development Board standing committee may hold a hearing on the appeal. Any such hearing may be held in person and/or electronically. 7.6. The State Workforce Development Board standing committee must issue a written decision on the appeal's merits within 30 days of receipt of the Notice of Appeal from the core partners. The State Workforce Development Board standing committee must provide a copy of its decision to all one-stop partners, which may be done via email.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.

Iowa Workforce Development issues and maintains policy and guidance for WIOA Title I programs. Policy and related guidance is disseminated to One-Stop center staff and related entities via Handbook sections, field memos, conference calls, bi-annual state meetings for youth career planners and another for integrated One-Stop staff, and provides on-going technical assistance. A quality assurance team conducts annual monitoring of files and provides oversight and technical assistance to regions. This team is available to answer questions regarding policy, applicant eligibility, local planning, board structure, and related matters regarding Title I programming.

Local Workforce Development Boards are provided guidance and support by Iowa Workforce Development as well as the State of Iowa Workforce Development Board, and Iowa state agencies in each of the 15 regional workforce development areas. The state of Iowa provides funding for satellite offices and local area staff support. In an effort to increase the number of FTE's in the Ex-Offender program, a Workforce Advisor was added in the Clarinda Correctional Facility in 2012 and that program was further expanded during the past two years. Additionally, $150,000 was dedicated to funding a State Library online system, Learning Express, in partnership with the State Librarian to provide virtual access points to job seekers in Iowa. Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training (260E)

The Industrial New Jobs Training Program provides businesses, which are expanding their Iowa workforce, with new employee training. Administered by Iowa's 15 community colleges, the program is financed through bonds sold by the colleges. Depending on wages paid, the business then diverts 1.5 or 3 percent of the Iowa state withholding taxes generated by the new positions to the community college to retire the bonds. Because of this structure, the training is available at what is essentially no cost since the bonds are retired with dollars that otherwise would have been paid to the state as withholding taxes. In addition to increasing worker productivity and company profitability, businesses participating in the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program may also be eligible for reimbursement up to 50 percent of the annual gross payroll costs expended for on-the-job training, as well as a corporate tax credit if Iowa employment is increased by at least 10 percent. Other significant measures are outlined in the following:

During the 2013 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature made an historic investment in a portfolio of education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs designed to address Iowa's growing shortage of skilled workers and to increase the state's workforce delivery system capacity.

This $40.3 million annual investment in worker training programs is delivered through Iowa's fifteen community colleges and is serving an increased number of Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds to help them acquire the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for gainful employment. It is funded from the state's gaming industry receipts. The following existing and new community college education, workforce development, job training, adult literacy programs and student financial aid programs are now being supported from this fund. All of these programs are under the administrative oversight of the Iowa Department of Education with the exception of the Kibbie Tuition Grant Program that is being administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

This fund assists Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa's ongoing commitment to innovative and job-driven solutions.

IOWA SKILLED WORKER AND JOB CREATION FUND

- Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund (260C.18A) $15,100,000
- Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy Programs (260C.50) $ 5,500,000
- Pathways for Career and Employment Program (260H) $ 5,000,000
- GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I) $ 2,000,000
- Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40) $ 1,500,000
- Kibbie Skilled Worker Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130) $ 5,000,000
- ACE Infrastructure Fund (260G) $ 6,000,000
- Workforce Preparation Outcome Reporting System $ 200,000

Total $40,300,000

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (WTED) FUND (260C.18A)

$15,100,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

The WTED fund was established in 2003 as part of the Grow Iowa Values Fund enabling legislation. The WTED fund has become an important source of financing for community college new program innovation, development and capacity building with a focus on career and technical education and the state's targeted industry clusters. This is the community colleges most flexible funding source and functions like a workforce development program block grant. This program can provide supplemental funding to support the PACE, GAP and adult literacy programs as needed.

USE OF FUNDS

The monies in the Workforce Training and Economic Development fund may be used to support the following programs:

- Accelerated Career Education Program (260G).
- Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F).
- Career Academy Programs (260C.18A, subsection 2, paragraph c).
- Career & Technical Education Programs (260C.1, subsection 2).
- In-service Training and Retraining Programs (260C.1, subsection 3).
- Training and retraining programs for targeted industries (15.343, subsection 2, para. a).
- Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H).
- Gap Tuition Assistance Program (260I).
- Entrepreneurial education, small business assistance, and business incubators.
- National Career Readiness Certificate and the skills certification system endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers.

TARGETED INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Priority is to be given to programs, projects and initiatives that fall within the states three targeted industry clusters. The program requires that **seventy percent** of the moneys appropriated shall be used on projects or programs in the areas of advanced manufacturing, renewable fuels and renewable energy, information technology and insurance, and life sciences which include the areas of biotechnology, health care technology, and nursing care technology.

PATHWAYS FOR ACADEMIC CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (260H)

$5,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and was funded in FY 2014 for the first time to provide funding to community colleges for the development of projects in coordination with the economic development authority, the department of education, the department of workforce development, regional advisory boards, and community partners to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process, along with customized support services, to enable eligible participants to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. This program is closely aligned with the GAP tuition assistance program and the adult literacy program.

GAP TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (260I)

$2,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and first funded in FY 2013 to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to enable completion of non-credit, continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. This program is closely tied to the PACE career pathways program.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS (260C.50)

$5,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

$3,883,000 is allocated for the ABE/GED adult literacy programs delivered by Iowa's Community Colleges as provided for in new IC Section 260C.50

$1,467,000 is allocated for ELL adult literacy programs.

$150,000 is allocated for DE staff support and related leadership activities.

Iowa was one of only three states that did not provide funding assistance for adult literacy programs. This new state funding is supplementing the federal Department of Labor allocation. It will build on existing career pathways policy and programs by investing in adult basic education and integrated learning programs to help more low-skilled adult workers obtain postsecondary credentials and skill sets required for employment in middle skill jobs. This funding may be used to develop and deliver contextualized coursework tied to a community colleges PACE career pathway and GAP tuition assistance programs.

STATEWIDE WORK-BASED LEARNING INTERMEDIARY NETWORK (256.40)

$1,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This enabling legislation and statewide network was created in 2009 with a one-time allocation of $900,000 from the Department of Economic Development's targeted industry program funding allocation. All fifteen community colleges established a regional intermediary network but only a few remained after the initial funding was exhausted.

The program is intended to prepare students for the workforce by connecting business and education by offering relevant, work-based learning activities to students and teachers, particularly opportunities in occupations relating to STEM or to opportunities in targeted industries identified by the EDA. The program focuses on providing students with job shadowing, internships and teacher tour learning experiences.

This program funding can be used to support work-based learning experiences for students enrolled in PACE career pathways and GAP tuition assistance programs.

KIBBIE SKILLED WORKFORCE SHORTAGE TUITION GRANT PROGRAM (261.130)

$5,000,000 was appropriated to the College Student Aid Commission to support this program in FY 2016.

The Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program supports students enrolling in high demand career and technical education credit programs.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One of several workforce programs that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. WOTC provides an incentive to employers to hire workers who traditionally have identified barriers to employment. In Iowa more than 52,000 workers are hired annually with the assistance of the employer tax credit assistance. It also reduces the burden on employers who hire workers facing barriers to employment.

Iowa Apprenticeship Act, Iowa Code Chapter 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to $3 million for training grants awarded to “sponsors” to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant.

Training Grants. Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December).The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon “contact hours.” Contact hours are determined based on an applicant’s combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. This grant is based on the applicant’s proportionate share of statewide total of all contact hours.

Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board

In 2012, the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board (IPEP) was created by Executive Order and was charged with the “study and recommendation of solutions and policy alternatives for issues arising in the area of economic development”. The mandate of IPEP is to continuously identify and study economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives. IPEP commissioned the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice to prepare a report on Iowa’s changing economic needs. A key finding was Iowa’s outpacing the nation in both GDP gains and total job gains from 2007 to 2013, and now exceeds its pre-recession levels in both economic output and total employment. Iowa’s economy continues to improve with most indices reflecting expansion and restored confidence in the economic climate. Despite softening of the agricultural economy, most sectors added jobs or maintained current levels through the end of 2015.

Iowa Workforce Development is currently conducting a full-scale review of its current policies, practices, and procedures with respect to the provisions of WIOA. The process of updating policies and procedures to ensure compliancy with WIOA provisions is nearing completion. A fully accessible and updated WIOA-compliant Policy and Procedure Manual for Workforce Services, including Iowa’s Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B Title I, is scheduled to be released by year’s end (2016). A comparison guide will be available to assist staff in transitioning to and conforming to the new, WIOA-compliant provisions.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

GOVERNOR'S SET-ASIDE FUNDING USE

Depending on the state set-aside fund availability the Governor, with guidance from the State Workforce Board, Iowa will establish implementation strategies based on the vision and goals in the State Plan. The State will designate specific employment sectors for priority spending based on regional sector strategy priorities and sufficient evidence of labor demand. Iowa will also look to invest resources in initiatives which may include the following:

- Bridging Youth Apprenticeship to Adult Apprenticeship
- Dual Enrollment
- Business Services
- Skills Gap and Labor Shortages
- Services to special populations and groups

The state intends to continue to provide the National Career Readiness (NCRC) assessment to Iowans as a tool to demonstrate work-readiness skills to employers.

The State is focused on improving the level and quality of Rapid Response services that will help affected workers to more quickly transition to new employment. Iowa recognizes that the local teams are often in a better position to identify layoff events within their areas, leverage relationships with employers, unions and other community partners, and tailor pre-layoff activities to the specific event. The local Rapid Response teams, as directed by the State, initiate contact with an employer within 24 to 48 hours after receiving notice that a mass layoff event has or will occur.

The Local Service Delivery Areas, as recipients of State Rapid Response funds, provide a certain minimum level of Rapid Response services depending on the size of the dislocation event (see table below). These are for planning purposes only and can be adjusted by local areas.

Service Level	Workers Affected	Minimum Level of Rapid Response Services(each subsequent level includes services from previous level)
1	10-49	Written and/or verbal presentation of basic transition information, including Unemployment Insurance, Dislocated worker programs, One-stop Center Resources, and relevant topics related to healthcare and retirement during employment transition.
2	50-99	· Topic-specific workshops (i.e. resume writing, interview techniques, online job search, budgeting, career planning, coping with job loss), preferably onsite prior to layoff. · WIOA Dislocated Worker Program registration sessions Tailored labor market information and related deliverables
3	100-249	· Scheduled visits to the affected worksite)s) to provide group and one-on-one assistance to affected workers

Service Level	Workers Affected	Minimum Level of Rapid Response Services(each subsequent level includes services from previous level)
		Targeted job fairs, specifically for the affected work group.
4	250- up	Transition center(s), on-site or within close proximity to the affected worksite, designed to provide services dedicated to affected work group.

Early intervention and comprehensive pre-layoff assistance is the foundation of the State's layoff aversion strategy which focuses on eliminating or minimizing the length of time impacted workers are unemployed. Building and maintaining relationships with the business community is critical. Regional Workforce Coordinators and local Business Services teams typically have established relationships with local businesses. These relationships allow for early warning of potential layoffs, as well as allow opportunity for early intervention to help avert a layoff through innovative solutions, including job-sharing and incumbent worker training. Statewide activities funds or Rapid Response funds may be available for statewide incumbent worker training activities.

Iowa will utilize direction from TEN 09-12 to create policy for Early Intervention/ Layoff Aversion efforts.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

RAPID RESPONSE

Rapid Response quickly coordinates services to layoffs and plant closings, and provides immediate aid to companies and the affected workers, including any situations that would be categorized as a natural disaster. During Iowa's most recent natural disaster, which occurred in 2008 as the result of widespread flooding, Iowa successfully coordinated Rapid Response efforts quickly and efficiently.

Following notification and confirmation of a layoff, the State Rapid Response Coordinator arranges an on-site meeting with the company, union officials (if applicable) and service providers in the region. Employee Information meetings are conducted to provide information about services available at Iowa*WORKS* Centers which include:

- assistance finding new employment
- resume workshops
- career counseling
- training in a new career
- assistance filing unemployment insurance (UI) benefits

Other state agencies or community-based organizations are invited to participate in the meeting. These services are fully funded by the Department of Labor through the State of Iowa under the Dislocated Worker Program. A petition may need to be filed for UI benefits under Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for job losses attributed to foreign competition.

The policy for Rapid Response related to WIOA regulations is being developed and updated pertaining to WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)(i)(II). The ultimate goal of an Iowa focused Rapid Response policy in terms of a disaster, mass layoff, or other dislocation event that exceeds the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources; is to assist with the transition of affected workers and help them gain employment as soon as possible.

Rapid Response quickly coordinates services to layoffs and plant closings, and provides immediate aid to companies and the affected workers, including any situations that would be categorized as a natural disaster. The last major Iowa natural disaster occurred in 2008 as the result of widespread flooding and Iowa successfully coordinated Rapid Response efforts quickly and efficiently.

The integrity of the agency mission is the primary catalyst for updating existing policy related to WIOA and Rapid Response. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will contribute to Iowa's economic growth by providing quality customer-driven services that support prosperity, productivity, health and safety for Iowans.

IWD has its own Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Continuity of Government (COG) and in situations of natural disasters, one of the first steps will be inter-agency coordination and following policy and incorporate planning for IWD essential functions.

As required, Rapid Response is structured to coordinate a statewide and local comprehensive response to specific emergency situations and convene all relevant partners.

The Federal legislation for both WARN and the WIOA contain specific requirements for employers and the State Dislocated Worker Unit (SDWU) in the event of a business closing or mass layoff. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has been designated by the Governor as the State department to administer the provisions of WARN and WIOA and to serve as the lead state agency for the coordination of services to workers and communities affected by business closings and mass layoffs.

The coordination of Rapid Response is handled through the Title 1 WIOA Dislocated Worker Program via a designated Program Coordinator. The Rapid Response Coordinator utilizes existing policy to implement a plan of action to a plant closing or mass layoff which includes the following essential components:

- Contact with company and labor officials from the affected business.
- Contact with all service providing agencies in the local area.
- Contact with all One-Stop partners.
- Arrangement and facilitation of Rapid Response meetings.
- Arrangement and facilitation of employee information meetings.

In situations of natural disaster or other state-declared emergency situations, the policy will be updated to contain initial steps and other supplementary planning steps, per DOL policy guidance relative to disaster DWNEG's and TEGL 2-15:

- Coordination with FEMA
- Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management through the Duty Officer who coordinates with County Emergency Management systems.
- Work with Local Workforce Development Boards and community stakeholders
- Business or businesses impacted by economic downturn or the natural disaster and cause of unemployment and affecting the current workforce
- Priority of Service
- Disaster Unemployment Insurance
- Fish and Wildlife
- Monitoring
- Work on Private Property

- Prevailing Wages
- Participant Eligibility
- Safety/OSHA

Economic shocks, national crises and natural disasters require a proactive, broad-based community response. The actions and strategies required to navigate the community through these difficult times require expertise of many entities. IWD is committed to creating a policy which involves legitimate steps and assembles a diverse group of national, state and local organizations and agencies to address the short-term and long-term impacts of such events.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

RAPID RESPONSE & TAA

The Iowa Trade Adjustment Assistance program works to provide seamless services to participants through a functionally aligned and coordinated effort between the state and local staff, provides early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Act petition has been filed:

Rapid Response is initiated by communications between the State Trade Coordinator, State Rapid Response Coordinator, and also in conjunction with local level leadership. The coordination includes:

- Company
- Impacted employees
- Date of the event
- Union affiliation, if any
- Contact person at the company

The work between the State Program level Coordinator and the local area is for the purpose to organize the full array of Rapid Response services as necessary including on-site presentations at the business location or off site, whichever is necessary. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-offs and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the emphasis is how the 3-partner-agency staff will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized comprehensive reemployment benefits and services.

TAA processes and protocols are followed as far as applications and a detailed description of TAA benefits/overview.

Work with the local area staff to determine a plan of action and potential co-enrollments in order to align services between WIOA, TAA and NEG DW so all customers would benefit from the service. All customers receive assessments, review labor market information, establish employment goals, and develop Individual Employment Plans that are shared and agreed upon among all partners/counselors involved. Leveraging of resources is utilized by having WIOA take the lead in conducting assessments (i.e., basic education levels, aptitudes, interests, financial situation, barriers to employment success) from which the results guide all partners/counselors in developing re-employment plans with the customers. These plans identify whether TAA training is necessary to secure employment, any possible barriers to employment/training success, and how those barriers will be addressed. Case management is done via a common computer system and all partners/staff have access to. Priority is given to ongoing communication for example, periodic combined staff meetings to reinforce the open communication between a customer and relevant program representatives to address customer needs or issues while working toward an integrated approach to address such needs and issues.

Once a customer enters approved training, there is additional coordination with W-P and Unemployment Insurance for an individual‘s ongoing income support.

IWD has developed and managed resources to integrate data provided through different agencies administering benefits and services in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting.

TAA, Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), WIOA, and W-P/Employment Service utilize Lotus Notes, IWORKS, and the UI mainframe systems to collect universal information (e.g., customer demographics, veteran Information, migrant worker information, employment status, disability, older worker, low income, public assistance, needs and barriers, etc.) for each customer. Through these systems, customer enrollment in various programs, customer participation, and exit outcomes are tracked. o In an effort to ensure reliable reporting, several mechanisms are in place. Each database (e.g., Lotus Notes) is programmed with its own logical checks or warnings that, depending on the nature of the potential error, will alert either the front-line user to it or the Trade Act Coordinator and the IT team member, at the time of running reports, to it. Such potential errors are examined and corrected as appropriate to ensure data integrity.

Furthermore, regular program monitoring (elements of which include reviews of participant files and the corresponding management information systems) as well as ongoing staff training improves the reliability of performance reporting.

Since the timing and level of detail for TAA presentations depend on whether or not a TAA certification exists or is expected, the analysis is organized accordingly. Moreover, included within the concept of expected TAA certification are those communities that have experienced many trade-related dislocations and thus have extensive knowledge of the program and an expectation of certification.

If a TAA certification has already occurred, the Rapid Response team still uses the initial meeting with workers to present the broad array of One-Stop Career Center services, but the TAA segment often becomes much larger and more important than it would be otherwise. Indeed, it is common that when a certification is in hand, the initial Rapid Response meeting might segue into a TAA benefits rights interview, at which most states enroll participants. These presentations are always conducted by TAA staff, which are best able to answer technical eligibility and service questions.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Under this plan, Iowa places a high priority on experiential learning, or work-based learning opportunities. This is an emerging practice for Iowa's Adult and Dislocated Worker program. The plan for development of this program is included herein. Currently, One-Stop staff work with area businesses to identify need and areas to incorporate skill building and mentoring into employment opportunities. These activities benefit both the customer by assisting them to gain exposure to an occupation while gaining skills, but also the business by helping them to train an individual while the program assists with the training costs.

On-the-Job Trainings (OJT) is beneficial to participants who are prepared to enter the workforce long-term. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite where there may be a chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist to complete a training plan, and are the employer of record. Incumbent worker training is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their current workforce. These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with a skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Transitional jobs are a time-limited work experience that is combined with comprehensive employment and supportive services. This work-based learning activity is for individuals with barriers to employment, are chronically unemployed, or have an inconsistent work history. The purpose is to support individuals to establish a work history, demonstrate success in a work environment and develop skills to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

Incumbent worker training is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their current workforce. These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with a skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Customized training provides training that is specific to an employer (or group of employers) specific requirements so that individuals will be hired by the employer after successful completion of the training. Customized training is designed to provide local areas with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of the job seekers and employers or groups of employers. These types of activities are very effective training models for both youth and adult populations. Gaining hands-on training in a work environment allows individuals to gain not only the transferable skills needed in employment, but the soft skills employers require.

Another strategy of Iowa's is to engage industry partners and facilitate work-based placements from the workforce system into its member businesses. The industry partner can speak the language of both worlds and facilitate enhanced relations and perceptions between private and public sector. The state enthusiastically supports work-based training strategies including incumbent worker training projects that will make both the business and employees more competitive. However, this is

One-Stop staff currently works with area businesses to identify need and areas to incorporate skill building and mentoring into employment opportunities. These activities benefit both the job-seeker by assisting them to gain exposure to an occupation while gaining skills, but also the business by helping them to train an individual while the program assists with the training costs. On-the-Job Training (OJT) is beneficial to participants who are prepared to enter the workforce long-term. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite where there may be a chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist to complete a training plan, and are the employer of record.

IWD received a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant/National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) which provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare and transportation and logistics. IN coordination with local areas, this program is piloting several new programs which involve experiential learning activities including On-the-Job Training (OJT) for dislocated and incumbent workers. IWD is looking to other states in the development and implementation of these strategies as well as to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation and Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Team models for adaptation to Adult and Dislocated Worker strategies. This will also allow for increased alignment with these core partner agencies. IWD will incorporate relevant policies and practices to ensure the highest of quality standards are achieved.

As part of Iowa's ongoing effort to improve OJT opportunities and ensure quality standards for businesses and job-seekers, IWD lawyers collaborated with IVRS' staff to provide training and education on the wage and hour rules and the Fair Labor Standards Act related to OJT services. These types of partner-to-partner learning sessions help to ensure OJT programs are conducted in a manner that is consistent with legal requirements; and to ensure that the program achieves the state purpose which is "participants will be compensated while learning an occupation."

As a result, IVRS enhanced OJT policies to include the following requirements:

1. The trainee receives a stipend, but is not an employee of the company;
2. The trainee receives a salary, and is an employee of the company.

The expected outcome of both is that the participant either earns a skill that is transportable to another company, or the participant is retained by the training company and achieves an employment outcome. This design creates automatic incentives for employers to provide training which results in improved skills and increased marketable attributes to the IJT participant. Furthermore, IVRS collects concrete data on OJT participant outcomes which is regularly reviewed and used in making future program recommendations.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team visits programs to establish rapport and discuss program management, performance data, professional development needs and program compliance. Such visits may also follow specific trainings to ensure concepts are being applied in the learning environment. Performance data and monitoring visits alert staff to programs that need assistance. In

the technical assistance model, staff visits programs that have been identified with a need to develop program improvement strategies. With guidance from Iowa's adult education and literacy team, the local program establishes an improvement plan. The Iowa adult education and literacy team monitors performance closely and conducts follow-up visits to ensure improvement plans are being implemented and are successful. One third of the programs are monitored with site visits annually and the remaining programs receive a "desktop" monitoring. The monitoring tool addresses data collection, instructional practice, benchmark gains, curriculum and lesson plan development, assessment practices, and fiscal management. Additional elements for site visits include classroom observations and student surveys. All monitoring results in a detailed compliance letter which documents findings, recommendations and commendations based on practice and implementation of policy.

As part of the Program Monitoring (PM) system, the Iowa Adult Education and Literacy team has developed an instrument tracking the criteria outlined in the WIOA Title II legislation for running an effective and high quality program. The PM process also evaluates fiscal and legal areas of responsibility. Each local program implemented under the provisions of the act will be evaluated by using formative and summative methods, monitored, and reviewed by the IDOE adult education and literacy team from the Bureau of Community Colleges. Monitoring tools include five sections:

- Financial Monitoring
- Program Management Monitoring
- Data Integrity and Implementation Monitoring
- Teacher Quality Monitoring
- Classroom Observation; and
- Student Survey

One third of the programs have an on-site audit conducted requiring formative and summative performance data, copies of program and fiscal policies, and interviews with staff and students to verify compliance with all federal/state mandates and requirements. The remaining 80 percent of the programs have a desktop audit which includes Financial, Program Management, and Data Integrity Monitoring. As Iowa has benefited from a state monitoring review increased attention to data monitoring has been incorporated to ensure local program compliance with AEFLA (Sec. 212).

In addition for ongoing assessment purposes:

1. The Iowa AEL requires all agencies to submit ongoing data that reflect student participation levels and progress along with monthly attendance.
2. The IDOE conducts an annual comprehensive qualitative program survey. This survey is required of all participating agencies and involves practitioner focus groups and interviews of both teachers and students. The results provide recommendations for state level planning and development activities, identify best practices and emerging needs, and help focus professional development and training to ensure effective instructional programs for targeted populations.
3. The Iowa AEL presently incorporates the Core Performance data matching system to track student outcomes in the areas of obtaining or retaining employment, as well as transitioning to postsecondary education or training. Under WIOA, the IDOE in collaboration with the IWD will create an accountability system to track and report the employment follow up required in the new legislation.

In addition to the monitoring tool, the PY16 Iowa Assessment Policy has established the following data requirements:

- Monthly entry of hours of instruction;
- Monthly exiting of students absent from the program for 90 days with no scheduled services;
- Assignment of a college issued identification number;
- Uniform procedures for the collection of student social security number; and
- Monthly review of data integrity reports to implement strategies for program improvement.

Monitoring reports are being tied to continuous improvement plans with required corrective action plans for any findings. The reports highlight the commendations for best practices and recommendations for improvement or initiatives that demonstrate promise.

Through the incorporation of skill competencies needed by employers, trainees are learning a range of specific skills needed as well as how to apply those skills in the appropriate job-setting. By working with employers to ensure their needs are being met, OJT participants who complete OJT are well positioned to add immediate value to the workplace and acquire marketable skills that allow for increased transition along one's chosen career path.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The Governor, with support of the Iowa Legislature, increased the state's capacity to meet the rapidly evolving needs of employers through increased support to Registered Apprenticeship programs. In 2014, funding to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs was tripled. IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs. IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships. Under WIOA , Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that request to be Eligible Training Providers are automatically included on the list and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial eligibility procedures as other providers because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure to become a registered apprenticeship program sponsor with the Department of Labor. These program sponsors must indicate their interest in being an Eligible Training Provider. Registered apprenticeship program sponsors will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies Iowa Workforce Development that it no longer wants to be included on the list. The biennial review must also include verification of the registration status of registered apprenticeship programs. Within the state's goals and throughout the plan and strategies there is a strong focus on RAP. The state has launched initiatives supporting RAP and there is a demand as well as a plan for doubling Iowa's active Registered Apprentices in the next four years. The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B to increase the number of

registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant. An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. $3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

3. PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Transition

IWD has submitted an Action Plan to address the transition to a WIOA-compliant ETPL. Below is the outline of the Action Plan.

1. Background.

1.1. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) supersedes WIA Title I, and re-authorizes programs for youth, adults, and dislocated workers under Title I.

1.2. In order for a training provider to be able to receive Title I program funds under WIOA, it and its program must be qualified as an eligible training provider by meeting certain criteria and be placed on an eligible training provider list.

1.3. WIOA requires that each state must maintain a list of eligible training providers and their eligible training programs. The list must be accompanied by relevant performance and cost information and must be made widely available, including in electronic formats, and presented in a way that is easily understood, in order to maximize informed consumer choice and serve all significant population groups.

1.4. On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 41-14, “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Training Provider Eligibility Transition,” to help usher in implementation of WIOA before the issuance of final implementing regulations.

1.5. TEGL 41-14 required states to implement WIOA section 122’s ETPL requirements on or before July 22, 2015.

1.6. Iowa did not implement WIOA section 122 in accordance with TEGL No. 41-14.

1.7. This contains Iowa's plan to implement an eligible training provider list that is compliant with WIOA Title I and its implementing regulations.

2. Plan for Transition to a WIOA-Compliant ETPL.

2.1. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) transferred its existing ETPL to a new web-based display, using Tableau. This ETPL is not fully in line with the consumer choice requirements under WIOA, as it does not have relevant cost or performance data, but is nonetheless easy to understand and sortable by county (and, consequently region/local area, since Iowa's regions/local areas have county lines as their borders). This ETPL is meant as a bridge to a WIOA-compliant WIOA. It can be viewed online at: www.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/eligible-training-provider

2.2. On August 26, 2016, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) posted a request for proposals (RFP) for a new workforce services case management system. This RFP included a preference for a system that includes an ETPL feature that meets the requirements under WIOA. If IWD is unable to find a suitable ETPL feature as part of this case management system procurement. If it is not, IWD will separately procure an ETPL that is WIOA compliant.

2.3. On or before October 15, 2016, IWD will distribute a draft policy and procedures for implementing WIOA section 122 and the final implementing regulations regarding the ETPL to the following stakeholders:

- Entities currently on the ETPL;
- State Workforce Development Board members;
- Local workforce development board members;
- Local WIOA Title I service providers;
- Local WIOA Title II service providers; and
- Register Apprenticeship programs.

2.4. IWD will solicit from these entities comments on the draft policy and procedures for implementing a WIOA-compliant ETPL.

2.5. IWD will also post the draft policy and procedures on its website to solicit public comments for 30 days.

2.6. IWD will consider all comments received following the comment period, make appropriate changes, and present a final draft to the State Workforce Development Board to be ratified at the first regularly scheduled board meeting following the close of the public comment period.

2.7. Upon the State Board's adoption of final policy and procedures for transitioning to a WIOA-compliant ETPL, the final policy and procedures will be distributed to stakeholders to make sure that entities currently on the ETPL know of the forthcoming changes mandated by WIOA and to encourage qualified entities apply for ETPL inclusion. This will include IWD working with partners to conduct outreach to Registered Apprenticeship programs and WIOA Title II service providers to increase those entities' presence on the ETPL.

2.8. As part of its plan to transition to a WIOA-compliant web-based ETPL, IWD will conduct outreach to entities on the ETPL to help test and implement any new ETPL system that IWD procures.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDING BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING FOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The local boards have incorporated priority of service processes and procedures for the identified target populations in each of their local plans. To ensure compliance with the requirements of priority of service to target populations, the State will update monitoring processes and procedures to include on-site visits, desk-monitoring, periodic case reviews and electronic review methods to ensure target populations are provided services in accordance with the WIOA requirements and that services and supports are sufficient to meet the additional needs of targeted populations.

A major milestone in the work which is being done by the core partners in Iowa is the development of a One-Stop System customer-centered design model. This model is being developed and will be rolled out to the local areas in 2017. It includes the creation of an incentive program to encourage center staff to provide enhanced customer service to ALL Iowans. The program currently under development by the core partners includes planning for the creation of the following:

- Collaborative core partner handbook for providing excellent services to job-seekers

o Guidance specific to serving priority populations, such as recipients of public assistance and others identified in WIOA and by the Governor of the State of Iowa

- Formal guidance on engaging businesses and recruiting community partners
- Online resource hub for One-Stop Center staff

o Web-based training

o Policy guidance

o Connection to additional resources and staff development opportunities

- New staff development and training requirements
- Center certification process
- Formal recognition of high-achieving centers, staff and clients
- Improved monitoring procedures developed by the core partners
- Technical assistance to center staff
- Center self-assessment tool
- Enhanced customer satisfaction surveys
- Formal, outside program evaluation process
- Improved processes for providing technical assistance and support to centers

Creation of an advanced training certification program of the One-Stop Center to ensure all One-Stop centers are accessible and operating consistently and that staff have access to the knowledge, resources and supports across the state. Tools used in the monitoring process will include on-site

visits, desk monitoring, periodic review of customer data and other methods as necessary to properly monitor the Priority of Service for Public Assistance Recipients.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Workforce Development Boards (WDB) must initiate any requests for the transfer of funds. The state will consider requests for transfer of funds based on the following criteria:

1. Before submitting a transfer request, the Workforce Development Board should analyze the changing economic conditions in their Local Area in order to identify a need for additional funding flexibility. If such a demand exists and there is a need to transfer more than the 20 percent of the original allocated or re-allotted formula allocation, the RWDB must submit a local plan modification to IWD. NOTE: Transfers from administrative funds to program funds within the same program's funding stream (i.e., Adult FY administrative funds to Adult FY program funds) do not require a plan modification.

2. All requests must include the following information:

a. The percent and dollar amount of the Adult or Dislocated Worker formula funds to be transferred.

b. The justification for this transfer between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs must be explained in the request, described in the local plan modification, and must, at a minimum, include the following information:

i. General purpose or reason for the transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs;

ii. An explanation of the need for the transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs;

iii. Information on how the transfer will affect the program from which the funds are being transferred;

iv. Narrative explanation of how the transferred funds will be used;

c. WDB are still expected to continue operating Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and are also expected to meet their agreed upon performance numbers, regardless of the funding transfer.

d. Once approved, IWD will monitor the affected RWDB for positive performance outcomes from these programs.

3. IWD will review the transfer request to ensure it will not negatively impact performance or the potential to acquire additional program resources, such as National Dislocated Worker Grants.

4. The state will have the authority and option to deny transfer requests based on the aforementioned criteria and to consider additional factors based on circumstances.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129, the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and a plan for how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures for the youth program are as follows:

In 2012 Iowa embarked on a service delivery model process that ensures services are integrated at the front line level and unified at the management level including core partners within the One-Stop. By refocusing the local regions' performance assessment from individual program performance measures to universal outcome measures, service seamless, efficient integration can be further enhanced regionally with the core and required partners.

Joint collection measures will be easier to manage and more clearly understood by Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDB), businesses, and workforce investment system partners.

As the Grant Recipient for the funding under the Act, the Workforce Development Board will be governed by the procurement policy as developed in accordance with Federal, State and local policies and approved by Iowa Workforce Development and the State Board. Iowa Workforce Development is the administrative/fiscal agent for this WDB and in this capacity administers and oversees all phases of the WDB's operations. The WDB has the responsibility to provide policy guidelines for the workforce region.

Requests for proposals (RFPs) shall be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance for youth workforce investment activities. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical. The WDB Director shall develop a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting contractors. WDB staff will review all proposals that meet the submission requirements and may submit summary reports of all proposals received to the Workforce Development Board as directed by the WDB. The WDB may review summary reports of all proposals received and select the agency or the service provider that it deems best able to operate the program efficiently and effectively, with price and other factors considered. After evaluation and recommendation of the RFPs by the Regional WDB staff, the Workforce Development Board will make the final selection of service providers. The Regional Workforce Development Board will have final authority for selection of service providers.

Final selections for funding will primarily be based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, fiscal accountability, cost/price analysis, staffing, potential for meeting performance standards/goals, program operation and coordination, quality of training especially in addressing competency deficiencies of clients, participant characteristics, past performance of the bidder, non-duplication of services, and funding.

A selection committee consisting of appointed WDB members, WDB Chairman, and WDB staff shall review competitive proposals. This task may also be assigned to an existing WDB committee (i.e. Youth Council or RFP Proposal Review Committee). The committee shall submit a recommendation to the full WDB for their review and final approval. The State Operations Team shall provide training, guidance, and/or technical assistance on an as needed basis to the selection committee. This shall include a comprehensive review of all proposals received by WDB staff.

The evaluation process will be divided into five major steps:

1. General review of the proposals;

2. Evaluation of the bidder's qualifications;

3. Appraisal of the technical aspects of each proposal;

4. Assessment of the cost aspects of each proposal and

5. Positive review of demonstrated performance, effectiveness, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, and quality of training.

Final selections will primarily be based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, participant characteristics, past workforce development experience and performance of the bidder and non-duplication of services.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

WIOA has an increased focus on serving out-of-school eligible youth, as well as those young people identified as most in need. Program focus includes: career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and ending services with employment in a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. The youth program aims to reposition this population of young people as an asset to employers whom have a need for skilled workers. Employers are a critical partner who can provide participants with essential experiential learning opportunities to enhance and apply their skills in a real-world employment setting. To reach this population several methods can be approached, however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be extremely

effective. Being visible in the community and meeting youth outside of traditional service delivery locations, such as: parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, One-Stop centers, emergency food programs and homeless shelters could assist you in your recruitment efforts.

Collaboration efforts with core partners is critical to establish referral processes, identification of how to blend and braid resources to reduce duplication of services, and to ensure appropriate services are offered by qualified professionals. This may include, but is not limited to partnerships with Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation. Given the out-of-school age increase to age 24, many Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants may be eligible for the WIOA youth program. Local areas are encouraged to partner with their local PROMISE JOBS staff to reach the TANF population. Community organizations can also be another strong partner in reaching out-of-school youth. Additional populations to target are Veterans and youth with disabilities. Utilizing multiple methods to connect with out-of-school youth ensures that as many OSY as possible are reached, which may include disconnected youth. Career planners will work with youth participants to: identify a career pathway which includes appropriate education and employment goals, considers career planning, the results of the objective assessment, and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant. Identification of career pathways allows participants to see a clear path towards sustainable employment, while obtaining stackable credentials. Experiential learning or work-based learning activities is considered the most important program element. The association between work-based learning opportunities and positive outcomes is a generally accepted standard. Experiential Learning activities available to youth participants include: Work Experience (WEP), Pre-Apprenticeship (PRE), Internships (INT), Job Shadowing (SHW) and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These activities are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the world of work and its requirements by helping them acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. These opportunities provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and must include academic and occupational education.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

The state plans to carry out these activities by assisting young people who are disconnected, disengaged and lack self-sufficiency by engaging them in employment, education and training that will support them in succeeding in the labor market and transition into successful adulthood.

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential (RBS) (SEC)
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate (SEC)
- Experiential Learning—Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component, academic and occupational education, which may include—

- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year (WEP)
- Pre-apprenticeship programs (PRE)
- Internships and job shadowing (INT), (SHW)
- On-the-job training opportunities (OJT)
- Institutional/Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if determined by the local board (OJT), (IST), (CUS), (APP), (ENT)
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster (PRE), (APP), (IST)
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate (LDS)
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months (MEN)
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate (PPS)
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate (G&C)
- Financial literacy education (FIN)
- Entrepreneurial skills training (ENT)
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services (JSP)
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and
- Training (WEP), (MEN), etc.; (SEC-when leads to credential)

According to CLASP, 5 million youth between the ages of 16-24 are out of school and are not working. This population of “out-of-school” youth includes; but it not limited to: high school dropouts, high school graduates who not looking for work and youth who may be homeless, incarcerated, parenting or exiting from foster care without a stable place to live. The WIOA Youth Program will focus its efforts on serving eligible young people in these target groups and other youth who are identified as the most in need.

Participants and career planners’ work together to determine which elements are provided based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants to obtain a focus to begin to develop competencies for the world of work. This includes identification of skills, needed skills, work-readiness, advanced training, career pathways, etc.

Goal setting and progression towards meeting those goals is another important component for participants. Identification of appropriate career pathways goals, career/employment goals and education/academic goals assists participants to formulate an action plan and make gains towards their career goals. Participants who are identified as basic skills deficient will have a goal of improving their skills in reading or math as applicable.

A variety of activities and services are available for youth to upgrade their skills through education and training or workforce activity. Experiential learning activities are considered the most important program activities offered. These activities assist participants to gain exposure to the world of work

while learning valuable skills and personal attributes that will assist them in future work opportunities. Career exploration is possibly the most important element of an experiential learning activity as it assists young people in making more informed decisions regarding their future.

Experiential learning activities include: job shadow, work experience, internships, on-the-job training and pre-apprenticeship.

Many young people need supportive services to ensure they can participant, or continue to participate in a WIOA activity or partner activity. Career planners will assess need and availability of funds outlined in their local service plan when offering support services.

Program participation concludes when a participant has met their goals and achievement objectives, has been determined to be self-sufficient and is no longer in need of additional services. Continued contact by the career planner is in place for 12 months, in addition, participants are encouraged to utilize one-stop and partner services for future needs.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII).

OOS YOUTH REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

The following outlines the criterion for both out-of-school youth, and in-school youth who require additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment. For youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment, additional assistance may be defined to include:

- Migrant Youth
- Incarcerated Parent
- Behavior Problems at School
- Family Literacy Problems
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Chronic Health Conditions
- One or more grade levels below appropriate for age
- Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment
- American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
- Refugee
- Locally defined "additional assistance"

Previously under WIA, local areas could define additional criterion for a youth who "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment" however under WIOA local areas may no longer define local barriers, however, the Governor can identify additional populations to target throughout the state and sub-state regions. For this reason,

the Governor’s office has been working closely with LMI to identify additional populations with barriers to employment, including youth.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

ATTENDING SCHOOL

Not attending school is defined as an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- no longer attending, or registered to attend, any school and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- not attending, or registered to attend, any school and has either graduated from high school or has an equivalent diploma; or
- attending a program through: Adult Education and Literacy, YouthBuild or Job Corps.

Attending school is defined as an individual is attending classes or is registered to begin classes and one of the following criteria is met:

- a public or nonpublic educational institution offering any grade kindergarten through twelve;
- homeschooled students;
- alternative school program; or
- within an institution providing post-secondary instruction which uses in its name the term "college", "academy", "institute", "university" or a similar term to imply that the person is primarily engaged in education.

6. IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.

BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT

Basic Skills Deficient is defined as an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- Is a youth that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level (below 9.0 grade level) on a generally accepted standardized test;
- A youth or adult that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society;
- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or
- Is enrolled in Title II Adult Education (including enrolled for ESL).

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

N/A

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes

2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes

4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes

5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. Yes

7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Iowa Workforce Development regional offices have implemented procedures to provide opportunities and to encourage participation in a range of professional development activities for workforce partners and staff. Staff development which incorporates the learning and awareness of required and optional partner programs as well as other community and faith based initiatives and organizations are provided in the following contexts:

Team Meetings and Combined Team Meetings

- Business services and youth,
- Business services and skills teams,
- Others as needed based on local area or Center needs.

Wednesday Morning Monthly Meetings

- Statewide Integrated Semi-Annual Meetings, in Partnership with the State

Additional Semi-Annual Meetings

- February and October, and Federal Holidays

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Community Partnership Meetings
- Procedures & Policy Reviews
- Other Relevant Topics as Identified by Local Areas, Partners and/ or the State.

Throughout the course of the year a variety of professional development opportunities are available by and to each of the partners within the workforce delivery system and beginning in 2016, a formal team will be charged with ensuring that professional development practices are appropriate to the current needs of the workforce system beneficiaries, providers and employers. This team will also be developing guidelines for assessing program effectiveness, progress toward measureable goals and adherence to the Unified State Plan and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. well as any additional requirements resulting from WIOA. Training and staff development will be fundamental to the successful implementation of Iowa's Unified State Plan. Per the statewide Memorandum of Understanding, the partners will collaborate to develop uniform One-Stop Certification criteria that reflect the following principles:

- One-Stop Centers will provide excellent customer service to job seekers, workers, and business.
- One-Stop Centers will reflect innovative and effective service design.
- One-Stop Centers will operate with integrated management systems.
- One-Stop Centers will operate with high-quality staffing.
- One-Stop Centers will increase physical and programmatic access to workforce services for individuals with barriers to employment, including but not limited to individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP.

The Partners will collaborate to develop policies, procedures, proven and promising practices, and templates to aid Local Boards in the One-Stop Certification process. One-Stop Center Local Staff must be routinely trained and keenly aware of how particular functions support and contribute to the One-Stop Center and One-Stop System. Appropriate policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices will help ensure that One-Stop Center Local Staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. As part of the over-all plan, the partners plan on forming a Skills Development Team to help train One-Stop Center Local Staff as part of an ongoing learning process that will develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to provide superior service to workers and job seekers, including those individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, that is responsive labor-market needs.

2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

WAGNER-PEYSER STRATEGIES

The one-stop delivery system is the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers, form the backbone of the one-stop delivery system. While some jobseekers may only need self-service or other basic career services like job listings, labor market information, labor exchange services or information about other services, some jobseekers will need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive skills assessments, career planning, and development of an individual employment plan that outlines the needs and goal of successful employment.

Basic career services must be made available to all job seekers and include services such as labor exchange services, labor market information, job listings, and information on partner programs. Individualized career services identified in WIOA and described in these proposed regulations are to be provided by local areas as appropriate to help individuals to obtain or retain employment.

Continuous Quality Improvement Model

The Continuous Quality Improvement Model has been identified as a possible tool or model for use in guiding staff development and center activities. This method is consistent with the purpose and authorized scope of each of the programs, and guide development and implementation of effective quality improvement strategies.

A framework of standards will be adopted to be used by one-centers and one-center staff to assess their own performance in providing quality services to participants. The standards provide one-stop operators with a framework for what programs should know and be able to demonstrate. By completing a self-assessment with the certification tool, one-stop centers can identify their strengths, as well as areas needing improvement. This is meant to furnish the data to make informed decisions in providing professional development activities and personal exploration. This process will help ensure well-qualified staff that are capable of meeting the diverse needs of the center’s participants.

The standards framework consists of three components:

1. Standards that are broad descriptors of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective adult education instruction;

2. Indicators that are sample concepts for implementing a standard; and

3. Examples of practices, which are some samples that demonstrates application of a standard.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE

Iowa's Integrated Service Model incorporates UI assistance into the normal customer process flow in each center. As customers enter a facility, staff are trained to ask "what brought you to the center today?" If the answer is related to the losing of a job, staff have been trained to assist the customer with the first basic need which is addressing the UI application. Each of the centers have computers available for the filing on-line claims. Local staff have the discretion to offer assistance as needed on a case by case basis.

One-stop teams will conduct an initial basic assessment of individual's needs and career goals. Customers will have immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in basic career services, with connection of the customer to additional individualized career services, when determined appropriate in order for a customer to achieve their career goal and obtain or retain employment. Staff will ensure all center customers have seamless access to all IowaWORKS services. Customers receive services through Wagner-Peyser (WP) and will automatically be co-enrolled into WIOA Adult and WIOA Dislocated Worker if date of birth and selective service requirements is met. Co-enrollment into all other programs to include WIOA Youth, Promise Jobs, Veteran's programs, etc. may be provided as appropriate.

One-Stop centers must engage Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, to ensure maximum availability of employment and skill advancement services to help claimants return to work as quickly as possible. Staff will encourage and facilitate access for center customers to all appropriate career services at each and every center visit to continuously engage them in the service delivery process until employed in self-sufficient employment. Customers will have continued access to services until their career or employment goal is achieved.

The Partners recognize that the State's workforce services must meet the needs of job seekers, workers, and businesses in order to help develop thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper. A cornerstone of achieving this goal is to provide excellent customer service to job seekers.

Excerpt from the statewide MOU:

The Partners agree that State and Local One-Stop System offices, including but not limited to One-Stop Centers, must:

- Reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the State and Local One-Stop Systems.
- Develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.
- Improve the skills of job-seeker and worker customers. The State and Local One-Stop Systems must create opportunities for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience by providing customers, including individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, as much timely, labor market, job-driven information, and choice as possible related to education and training, careers, and service delivery options, while offering customers the opportunity to receive both skill-development and job placement services.
- Provide career services that motivate, support and empower customers, including individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, to make informed decisions based on local and

regional economic demand and effectively attain their personal employment and education goals.
- Value skill development by assessing and creating opportunities for improving each individual's basic, occupational, and employability skills.

WIOA was passed in part to increase access to our workforce services. A particular focus for increased access is individuals with barriers to employment, a group that includes members of the following populations:

- Individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to individuals with vision loss
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals age 55 and older
- Returning citizens
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster system
- Individuals with LEP
- Individuals who have low levels of literacy
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act.

UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRALS FOR ADJUDICATION

Iowa continues to incorporate Unemployment Insurance services in the One Stop locations. Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Division regularly provides UI training at basic and advanced levels. Staff from field offices attend these classes as local management determines necessary and provides in-service training to One-Stop Center staff when appropriate. Each of the local One Stop and satellite offices have staff trained in recognizing and referring UI eligibility issues for adjudication. During these training sessions, local staff are encouraged to proactively identify and provide assistance to identified individuals on a case by case basis.

In addition, Iowa participates in the RESEA program which provides additional opportunities for addressing UI concerns while connecting customers with employment services.

The Partners agree that increased access to the State's workforce services—particularly for individuals with barriers to employment—must be a priority as they work together to deliver workforce services under WIOA. This necessarily includes outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. To achieve the priority of increased access for individuals with barriers to employment, the Partners will leverage the expert knowledge of its membership and collaborate to maximize access to workforce services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Profiling is the process used to select claimants for Reemployment Services (RES). Profiling is done within the first five weeks of an unemployment insurance (UI) claim. RES looks at a variety of factors such as previous occupation, previous industry, education, duration of employment, wages, etc. If selected, participation is mandatory as it is a condition of eligibility for UI benefits. Participants will receive a letter outlining which program they have been selected to participate in, where to report and what documents they need to bring.

Programs may include:

- Reemployment Orientation Workshop
- Reemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Emergency Unemployment Compensation Audit
- National Career Readiness Certificate testing

All of these services are designed to assure claimants are fully registered for work through Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and to provide customized reemployment services. Some examples of reemployment services include:

- assistance completing online applications
- résumé writing
- cover letters
- interview preparation

Participants seeking only information are not treated as participants and their self-service or informational search requires no registration. When an individual seeks more than minimal assistance from staff in taking the next step towards self-sufficient employment, the person must be registered and eligibility must be determined.

Recent studies completed by the U.S. Department of Labor found that people who received reemployment services returned to work earlier than people who did not receive services. Contact your local IowaWORKS Center for additional information. The Adult training program is designed to prepare adults for participation in the labor force by increasing their occupational and educational skills, resulting in improved attainment of self-sustaining employment. Low-income adults who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers to economic success are the primary beneficiaries.

The Dislocated Workers program provides retraining and re-employment services to individuals who have been dislocated from their jobs, and to displaced homemakers. Job seekers have access to computerized resource centers for career exploration, resume preparation, skills assessment and testing, job search, on-line work registration, and on-line unemployment insurance claims filing. Job seekers also have access to a variety of skill building workshops, job search assistance curriculum and individualized career services.

The Program Year 2014 (PY14) Dislocated Worker Entered Employment rate was 69.1%. The target rate for program year 2014 was 70% - within the minimum target rate of 80% of the negotiated goal of 56%. Dislocated Worker Entered Employment accounts for individuals who were not employed at date of participation, the percent employed in the 1st quarter after exit quarter.

Promoting Independence & Self-Sufficiency through Employment, Job Opportunities, and Basic Skills (PROMISE JOBS) targets Family Investment Program (FIP) participants and provides employment & training services that include supportive services to address barriers to employment and work readiness services to increase opportunities for employment outcomes. This includes overarching activities such as education, certification, training, job search assistance, and employment.

Iowa's Rapid Response targets workers who are displaced due to a lack of work through no fault of their own from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) - Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA). Rapid Response is a proactive, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes:

Assisting growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing or who have been trained in the skills Iowa companies need to be competitive and

Responding to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers.

Trade Act Assistance targets workers who are displaced due to a lack of work through no fault of their own from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). This federally funded employment and training program provides benefits to individuals displaced from their jobs due to foreign competition and jobs that are lost because the work activity was either moved out of the U.S. or as a direct result of foreign imports. IWD staff conduct informational meetings for the workers of the closing organizations and coordinate registered apprenticeship efforts and the classroom training benefit which involves individual class schedules, tuition payment, and student reimbursements for travel, childcare, books, and other approved costs.

National Dislocated Worker Grants target Dislocated Workers. Iowa currently has two National Emergency Grants (NEG) for Dislocated Workers. The Iowa Jobs Driven NEG provides Registered Apprenticeship Training for Iowa's top in-demand occupations.

The Sector Partnership NEG provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships in regions impacted by the Avian Flu epidemic by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare & transportation and logistics.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

STATE USE OF W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS

UI staff in IowaWORKS Centers has access to the labor exchange system for job listings and referrals, as well as Labor Market Information on the agency's website. All UI benefit claimants who do not have an active attachment to a job or industry are required to register for work through the UI application process or the state's job bank or at the nearest IowaWORKS Center. Each of the 15 integrated one-stop centers and four satellite offices has a resource area for UI claimants/job seekers to access job opportunities, employment trends, occupational information, education providers and programs, self-directed career exploration and assessment tools, financial aid information, online filing of initial UI claims and weekly continued claims, as well as access to telephones, fax machines and copiers.

Services provided to job seeker, including UI claimants, include:

- Self-service resources, including labor exchange services, unemployment claims
- Access to computers
- Resume development
- Access to job openings within Iowa and within 50 miles of our borders, as well as nationwide
- Labor Market Information for career explorations, in-demand career fields, average salaries, etc.
- Training and education resources
- Financial aid options
- Vocational assessment
- Automated job referrals
- Workshops on employment related topics
- Job search assistance and referral
- Specialized assistance for veterans, other eligible individuals, and migrant seasonal farm workers
- Assistance for ex-offenders
- Assistance with federal bonding
- Referral to partner and community provider services

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS

Iowa Code 96.4(1) requires all UI claimants register for work with Employment Services. The process is fully integrated into the UI Claim application process, as well as can be completed on the state's job bank, IowaJobs.org, or at the nearest IowaWORKS Center. Registration must be completed within ten days of filing the initial claim. Failure to complete a registration could result in denial of benefits.

The work registration requirement for claimants who are not work attached will be considered valid when, at a minimum, the following information is provided by the claimant:

- Name
- Mailing Address
- Email Address
- 1 desired job title (O*NET code)
- Education
- Most recent employer or experience, including internships, volunteer work, or military, with minimum 20-word job description
- IowaJobs.org account must be active
- IowaJobs.org account must be searchable
- Job Alerts must be selected

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST

All claimants no longer attached to an employer must be able to work, available to work, and is earnestly and actively seeking employment.

To meet the preliminary eligibility requirements, an individual must:

- be totally or partially unemployed
- have worked and earned a certain amount of wages in work covered by UI in the last 15 to 18 months
- have lost their job through no fault of their own
- be able to work and available for work

To remain eligible for UI benefits, an individual must:

- be actively seeking work (work search may be waived if certain criteria are met)
- be registered for work with IWD (unless waived) at the nearest IowaWORKS center or online at www.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov
- keep a record of all work search contacts and be ready to provide a copy if requested
- notify IWD of any refused job offers or referrals on the weekly continued claim
- report if they quit or are discharged from any job while claiming UI benefits
- notify IWD if they move or leave the area for more than three consecutive working days
- report all wages (whether holiday, vacation, severance, part-time or any other form of payment) when they are earned, not when payment is received
- contact IWD if workers' compensation, private pension or any other type of pay is received
- notify IWD if they enroll in or start school

Continued Eligibility Work Search Requirements

Unless waived by IWD, individuals are required to make a minimum of two job contacts each week. The work search requirement may be waived if an individual is temporarily unemployed and expects to be recalled by their former employer within a reasonable period of time or is approved for Department Approved Training (DAT). The work search requirement will be determined each time a claim is filed.

In order to meet the work search requirements, individuals must make two job contacts between Sunday and Saturday of the week they are claiming benefits. Contacts may be made in person, online, by mail or faxing résumés or applications. Telephone calls are not acceptable. The work search must be a reasonable and honest effort to find suitable work. Individuals must be willing to accept a reasonable wage for the job for which they are applying. An individual may not apply for the same position with the same employer more than once every six weeks.

Individuals must keep a written record of all work search contacts and be ready to provide a copy if requested by IWD. Failure to comply may result in denial of benefits. The information needs to include:

- Date of the contact
- Company name, address and phone number
- Contact name

Method and results of contact IWD recommends using the form provided at the back of this book. Members of a union hiring hall are required to be in good standing and must contact the union in accordance to hall rules.

Ability to Work and *Availability for Work Individuals* must be able and available for work while claiming benefits. It is important to notify IWD of any condition or situation which would prevent an individual from working, accepting work, or looking for work. These situations include, but are not limited to:

- illness, injury, or hospitalization
- being in jail
- attending school
- being on vacation or out of town
- no childcare
- no transportation

Individuals are notified of how to report any changes that could affect their benefits.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

REFERRALS

IowaWORKS integrated service delivery system provides participants assistance with skills development and employment services programs. Staff provide information to customers on community resources, Labor Market Information, HiSET (high school equivalency program), occupational training, on-the-job training and support services. Staff identify customers' needs,

assist with unemployment insurance, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, workshops and training.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE--

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

IOWA'S FARM LABOR WORKFORCE

Seasonal Farmworker - individuals who during the past 12 months is or was employed in farm work of a seasonal or other temporary nature and is not required to be absent overnight from their permanent place of residence.

Migrant Farmworker - a seasonal farmworkers (defined above) who travels to the job site and who are not reasonably able to return to their permanent residence within the same day.

Migrant Food Processors - See Migrant Farmworker

Intrastate Migrant Farmworkers - farmworkers who follow migrant stream within our state. These workers usually migrate throughout Iowa's significant areas/counties of agricultural production. For example, these farmworkers will migrate from northeastern counties to southeastern counties and from north central counties to northwestern counties and so forth.

Interstate Migrant Farmworkers - individuals who follow migrant stream within our state but that are coming from other states. Most of these farmworkers migrate from Texas, Georgia, Florida, and California

Foreign Labor Certified Farmworkers - nonimmigrant foreign workers with temporary H2A visas authorized to work in the U.S. on a seasonal basis; workers must comply with special terms and conditions.

This plan provides guidance on Iowa's strategy for meeting program compliance requirements to adequately serve targeted MSFW population through assessment of need, implementation of effective and culturally specific outreach activities, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

A. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY

Based on information provided by LMI, employers are noticing a decline in the number of farmworkers willing to migrate for seasonal opportunities. One of the reasons for the decline in available workers are the younger populations are not as interested in migrating long distances as were their previous generations. Many opt to stay closer to their permanent residence in southern states where climates allow for more year round farming opportunities. Older generations are leaving the employment realm and being supported by their younger generations who are not entering the farming industry at the levels their parents and previous generations once did. As a result, there is a shortage of available migrant and season workers who are current U.S. Citizens.

Some employers are turning to employment through the H2A Visa program to fill the void. Based on conversations conducted with employers who are exploring the H2A employment option, it is anticipated that future requests will increase compared to Iowa's current level (88) during FFY15.

The calendar of harvest remains the same for the upcoming year thus a need for seasonal and migrant workers will exist to meet the planting, growing and harvesting needs of Iowa's agricultural employers. It is projected that the need will exceed PY14 opportunities in Iowa. Current projections, derived from meetings with agricultural employers, project the need to be around 11,400 in PY15. Many of these opportunities will be filled through Foreign Labor Certification.

B. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

MSFW NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

In the previous section, **VI-WP (1)(a),** the unique needs of Iowa's MSFW were summarized, but the following section goes into detail as to what those specific needs are and how Iowa plans to address them in the coming months. Potential solutions and ideas for moving Iowa's MSFW program forward are addressed in this section.

Assistance with Immigration Paperwork and Vital Documents

Each year, Outreach Specialists bring forms and applications for families and individuals who are at various stages in the immigration process and as they venture out for work, critical appointments with the immigration office are needed to move the process forward. Home addresses are needed to be changed and then changed again. In years past Outreach Specialists have organized citizenship classes at labor camps to prepare and assist the MSFW population in this complex process.

An understanding of, and access to, personal identification processes are often needs of the MSFW population as well. Driver's licenses are needed for workers to legally drive employer vehicles, with some requiring as much as CDL certification. Having an Iowa ID for banking purposes is also a need for some MSFW.

Language Barriers

MSFW lack English language skills. One-Stop Center staff and outreach specialists have noted that almost every client who identifies as a migrant or seasonal farmworker experiences communication barriers. Some MSFW will bring in a family member such as a younger child to serve as an interpreter to enhance communication with staff. Most of these individuals are within the 25- to 60-

year age range. Interpretation and translation services are limited and promoting English as a Second Language (ESL) more within these populations is helpful. Iowa's workforce services agency currently has several bilingual, Spanish-only, advisors on staff in the Des Moines office, but the need for such services exists widely throughout the rest of rural Iowa. Outreach Specialists and other potential supports lack the necessary basic multi-lingual skills that would enhance services to Iowa's MSFW communities.

Information

Each year, many workers ask the same questions about the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. In their home state, they go to the office and they complete an application for unemployment benefits. Many of these workers are unable to write or read in their own native languages, so applying for UI benefits is too complicated in Iowa which requires the use of a computer and a command of the English language.

Outreach specialists request UI staff in One-Stop Centers provide presentations to answer and clarify questions or misunderstanding about the UI process, the same way that tax issues are clarified to MSFW by other agencies..

Providing timely and accurate Labor Market Information in order to achieve continuous employment for workers also has been noted as significant needs across Iowa.

Information relating to labor laws, workers' rights, employment authorization questions, and the Migrant Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) are needed across the state in multiple languages, in accessible formats and distributed broadly to ensure MSFW are getting the information they need.

Health Issues

Limited access to medical, public health, and preventative care services has consequences, especially among these isolated populations. New and older workers come unprepared to face the daunting work in the fields and can lead to the need for medical care. Pregnant women also need assistance as they expose themselves to extreme heat and other field conditions.

A lack of access to adequately healthy and nutritious foods and lifestyle choices are unfortunately a consequence of this type of work and associated lifestyle. The dichotomy of the MSFW populations who bring food to America's tables but are not able to eat nutritious meals is a reality needing to be addressed as well.

Job Opportunities and Up-Skilling

Lack of working-term employment opportunities is an emergent need of younger MSFW populations. Although most of these workers come every year to work in agriculture, many of them only have this type of employment during the year. Migrant workers come to Iowa year after, but in the last few years, many of the younger generations desire to stay in Iowa, wanting a chance at more stable, long-term employment. Some have demonstrated an interest in starting their own or a family-run business.

Occupational training and upskilling have become needs of the MSFW population as agriculture becomes more technologically advanced. In order for MSFW to maintain or transition into a new occupation or industry, new skills or training is often a significant need.

Housing and Rental Assistance

Migrant camps or local motel/housing that barely meet the minimal standards are a problem. Often times outreach staff have no access or ability to inspect living facilities. MSFW outreach specialists should have access to MSFW housing, to at least assist the Iowa Department of Public Health (DPH) with their inspections (currently not being done for a lack of DPH staff). Placement in substandard living conditions, affordable housing and/or financial support to access improved housing is often noted by MSFW.

Mistreatment

Mistreatment by the farm labor contractor or crew leader happens in this line of work. Although there are significantly fewer cases than years past, outreach specialists still find farmworkers are mistreated by their FLC or crew leaders. In some cases workers have been left behind after an emergency evacuation, such as a weather related event. Mistreatment can include sexual harassment, sexual violence, verbal abuse, and anger. More serious violations include MSPA regulations such as no fresh water, not enough breaks, or inadequate shade during extreme heat. Pregnant women may not be allowed enough breaks or visits to the restroom, not getting paid, or discrepancies in hours between what workers have registered and what the crew leader says they worked.

Education

There is a significant need for educational resources that focus on this population. While workshops for the general public are offered in most offices, as well as at some public libraries, Spanish-language workshops are not offered. Most of the individuals in this population do not have a resume and don't understand the importance of a resume in today's job market. Most of Iowa's MSFW typically have a lower than average education, with many not having completed high school or earning a GED or HiSET certificate. Although Iowa's One-Stop Centers market career development, HiSET and ESL resources to everyone who walks in the door, the MSFW population is less likely to take advantage of those resources. Additionally, navigating the educational system for MSFW children can be very complex.

Social Isolation and Chronic Poverty

Due to the inherent isolation among this population, many issues arise such as lack of transportation and all that results from decreased mobility. Many MSFW cannot independently seek employment or supportive services even if they wanted to and /or knew how or where to go for such services. Childcare is a noted need of many MSFW families, but is difficult to secure, afford and access within the isolated MSFW communities.

Most MSFW populations are living at or near the poverty line and also may be considered to be "underemployed" and local agencies may not be doing enough to target individuals that are underemployed. Currently, efforts and resources are focused primarily on individuals who are chronically unemployed.

Food Assistance

Many of Iowa's MSFW families come to Iowa with nothing but the money for gas to get here or have spent their financial resources on their way here. Many of them request applications for food stamps, information about food pantries, or alternate food sources.

Safety Concerns

There are risks inherent within the agricultural industry pertaining to physical health and safety. Exposure to nature's unpredictable events, such as tornadoes and natural disasters are also safety factors effecting Iowa's MSFW population. Studies consistently show the MSFW population is at an increased risk for domestic violence, sexual abuse/harassment and for human trafficking. There are statewide agencies in Iowa that specifically serve these specific populations such as the Attorney General's office, the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, etc. and work is being done to reach out to these agencies to develop plans and implement procedures to identify and assist these specialized populations which are at an even greater risk of harm.

To our knowledge, IWD outreach specialists and their team are the only representatives who conduct outreach to the MSFW population. Many of the MSFW population build their lives around their seasonal work and they expect to be laid off; they understand they have a high chance of returning to work within the next six months, once the harvesting or planting season begins, and many travel around from state to state, with few actually taking up residence in Iowa, making providing outreach services especially difficult.

In general, most of the MSFW population is not familiar with local schools, doctors, or programs that they could use to better their skills, health and education. Increasingly, computer and technology skills are needed to navigate legal and other state systems, and the MSFW population simply doesn't have these types of skills or necessary equipment such as computers. Moreover, the majority of MSFW workers simply do not have the time or meaningful availability to be able to access the many opportunities which may exist in their local area. The many programs, such as English as Second Language, safety programs, trainings, better job opportunities to improve their skills, may not be getting to those who need them most. Most MSFW populations are living at or near the poverty line and they also may be considered to be "underemployed. "Local agencies may not be doing enough to target individuals who are underemployed. Currently, efforts and resources are focused primarily on individuals who are chronically unemployed.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Iowa's outreach specialists will continue to reach out to agriculture employers and meet with MSFW to offer and provide workforce services. Outreach specialists will utilize the Workforce System resources to reach out to those workers who do not have the means to visit a local One-Stop center in order to receive workforce services. Resources the outreach specialists currently have access to include: database on agricultural employers and FLCs; Agricultural Recruitment System, local one-stop center staff meetings; Iowa's labor exchange system, IWorks; partnership opportunities with

National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus, and the Iowa Department of Education MSFW Youth Education program; community resource connections; and the H2A data bank.

Active Database of Agricultural Employers and FLCs. Each outreach specialist is responsible for updating Iowa's employer/FLC statewide database. This tool provides information on the current and projected hiring needs of agricultural employers and FLCs in order to better assist those workers seeking opportunities with employers needing a workforce.

Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS): Each outreach specialist and one-stop center will use the Agricultural Recruitment System as recruitment and referral tool that allows for the orderly movement of seasonal agricultural workers within the state, region, and country. This tool assists agricultural employers in meeting their temporary and seasonal labor needs by matching farmworkers with agricultural jobs. This system requires specific assurances and information in the Agricultural Clearance Orders in order to make appropriate referrals.

Attend One-Stop Center Staff Meetings. Outreach specialists attend local staff meetings in the one-stop centers within the Service Delivery District each are assigned. These are information sharing events of resources available at One-Stop locations and workforce system partners. This information is shared with the farmworkers and agricultural employers. Outreach specialists have access to a calendar of events related to job fairs, workshop offerings, credentialing opportunities, and other center workforce offerings. Outreach specialists keep one-stop center staff informed on farmworker and agricultural employer needs in order for center staff to assist during peak season events and to ensure appropriate referrals to supportive services are provided.

Labor Exchange System, IWorks. Outreach Specialists utilize the labor exchange system to create worker profiles to provide targeted service information and employment offerings, make referrals to supportive service entities, and identify credentialing opportunities for farmworkers. Outreach Specialists will also update employer profiles to keep One-Stop Business Service staff aware of contacts made and services being provided to reduce duplication of efforts.

Partnership Opportunities with NFJP Grantee and Iowa Department of Education. Outreach Specialists have established partnerships with the NFJP grantee, Proteus, and frequently conduct co-outreach activities; keep communication open to ensure invitations to all on-boarding events are represented by both entities, and regularly attend outreach meetings that include several local community and agency representatives. Over the past fiscal year, Outreach Specialists partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to locate students in primary and secondary education levels who may be traveling with their families. The initiative is to keep students from losing education coursework and credits which may prolong or prevent them from obtaining their high school diploma or equivalent. Outreach Specialists conducted co-outreach efforts with the recruitment coordinators to further encourage educational credentialing specifically related to basic education.

Community Resource Connections. Each of the Outreach Specialists have access to a database of local community resource connections in their assigned areas. These local advocacy groups, charity organizations, faith-based organizations and other entities provide assistance with supportive services to farmworkers when they arrive, during their stay, and help them prepare for departure. Many migrant farmworkers arrive in Iowa without the basic essentials, such as transportation, food, weather appropriate clothing, and little, if any, family connections. For those farmworkers desiring to make Iowa their permanent residence, the community resources assist with locating housing, schooling for children while they work and partner with One-Stop Centers to identify long-term employment opportunities.

H-2A Requests. Several agricultural employers utilize the H-2A Foreign Labor Certification process to bring farmworkers to Iowa to assist with the farm work related employment opportunities. The Outreach specialists conduct the pre-occupancy housing inspections to ensure workers arriving have safe living arrangements. Iowa is in the process of creating a Housing Handbook for employers who provide housing to the migrant and H-2A farmworkers. Most FLCs utilizing the H-2A program have a diverse mix of H-2A Visa workers, migrant workers from other states, and current seasonal workers currently residing in Iowa. Regardless of where the farmworkers' primary residence is, the Outreach Specialists provide information on worker rights and the complaint system.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

Reaching Farmworkers

Iowa Workforce Development serves the agricultural community through its outreach program designed to contact MSFW who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted at one-stop centers.

Through a targeted approach, Iowa outreach specialists have increased their focus on referrals of farmworkers to Workforce Services provided at the local one-stop locations. Outreach specialists are actively working with agricultural employers to identify permanent employment opportunities and encourage employers to consider employing workers they have hired on a seasonal basis who desire to make Iowa their permanent home.

Iowa plans to continue strengthening cooperative partnerships with National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus, and the Iowa Department of Education to conduct outreach activities to enhance the service offerings to MSFW.

Accessibility

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method. Accessibility encompasses a variety of ideas, actions, and high-level collaboration. A range of barriers exist for a diversity of populations. System-level barriers such as exclusionary hiring practices and a lack of employer supports, to geographic hindrances and other location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system. This is particularly true for Iowa's MSFW population. Individuals living in Iowa's rural communities experience higher levels of isolation, have limited access to available and affordable transportation, are not offered the same educational and training opportunities, and often lack personal and professional support networks as well as essential services. Adding to the mix is the job seeker's ability to gain skills due to other real and perceived restrictions.

Recognizing the variety of barriers and restrictions imposed upon job seekers and workers, the State of Iowa is committed to engaging and supporting ALL workers, regardless of language skills, age, location, ability, legal history, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, or socio-economic background.

Access may require reasonable accommodations, natural and programmatic supports, intensive services, and creative methods to address the actual or perceived impediment toward meaningful access. Any individual seeking services from the workforce system will receive the appropriate, reasonable, and needed accommodation or support. All goals, strategies and actions inherently

infuse options for accommodations and accessibility such that all Iowan's may be provided the necessary supports to be successful in achieving their employment goal. The plan goals, strategies and activities presume and require all core partners to provide the necessary services, support, modification or accommodation for ALL Iowan's to be successful. All entities responsible for Iowa's workforce services delivery system will work together to support and encourage a fully accessible and accommodated workforce system that works for ALL Iowans. For the MSFW community, this also means that Iowa's one-stop center staff and outreach specialist will be reviewing existing policies and developing new policies which will include innovative outreach strategies to reach Iowa's MSFW populations where they are rather than counting on workers to come in to the one-stop center, which oftentimes isn't a viable option. Activities to support accessibility strategies will include the ongoing identification, and proactive reduction of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. Workforce System Partners will develop policies and implement procedures to ensure continuing and unhindered access to Iowa jobs for ALL Iowans.

Iowa's Core Partners have plans to develop a handbook that highlights best practices which will serve as a guide for implementing the highest of standards and proven methods in one-stop service delivery. This handbook will contain a section specific to best serving the needs of Iowa's Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. Environmental, programmatic and technological accessibility of the one-stop centers will be the centerpiece of the policies and procedures which are yet to be fully developed.

One-Stop System Design

Offering accessible formats and delivery methods, recognizing and addressing variety of barriers and restrictions to individuals, technology and increasing technology, flexibility in scheduling, supportive services, and professional staff development will increase awareness and utilization.

Youth Services

Youth services is focused on system and other partner consideration, working to address the variety of barriers and restrictions, understanding accessibility and finding ways to delivery services.

The one-stop delivery system will address accessibility for Individuals who are English language learners by identifying and attempting to bridge the barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education. The obstacles faced by English language learners when accessing the one-stop delivery system can be minimized by implementing the following:

- Creation of an inclusive environment for Iowa's one-stop system through deliberate diversity and cultural awareness training;
- Provision of culturally relevant and translated materials throughout the one-stop system;
- Collaboration with additional locally-based partners who can assist with identification and enhanced reduction of barriers;
- Interweaving of civic education in training offered to core partners and one-stop system staff;
- Development of a cadre of diversity trainers and translators for core partner agencies; and
- Incorporation of accessibility for English language learners in the one-stop system certification process to improve how services are delivered to English language learners.

Outreach staff will continue to partner with the Iowa Department of Education to identify youth to assist with educational needs and with the National Farmworkers Job Placement grantee, Proteus, to identify adult farmworkers desiring to increase credentialing. In addition, outreach specialists will make referrals to assist with social service support needs, and work with Workforce System partners to address identified barriers. Outreach specialists will make concerted efforts to meet with farmworkers in locations where they gather, work, reside, or attend community events in order to build rapport with MSFW community leaders and solidify relationships among local partners serving MSFW populations.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM, INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Regular Trainings to Outreach Workers

All of outreach staff will receive twice annual training on services to employers and jobseekers, including, but not limited to, the Employment-related Law Complaint System, Sexual Harassment, Agricultural Recruitment System and Housing Inspections. New staff will have access to online training modules and in-person training. The outreach program is further supported by a full-time State Monitor Advocate position.

Additionally, technical assistance is offered to all one-stop centers for the Employment-related Law Complaint System, housing inspections, Agricultural Recruitment System and MSFW application and services.

Conferences for Outreach Workers

Outreach specialists are encouraged to attend the annual National Farmworker Conference (MAFO), which focuses on farm worker rights and laws, and regional training provided by U.S. Department of Labor Region 5 staff.

Additional Resources for Outreach Workers

Outreach specialists have access to online MSFW training on Workforce GPS, ability to attend U.S. DOL ETA, Wage and Hour and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission webinars, as well as access to information provided by Iowa Legal Aid and Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Increased Collaborations

Iowa continues to collaborate with other agencies, and will partner with other MSFW service agencies to provide training and technical services. The SWA also requests presentations at training sessions from service provider agencies. Agencies Iowa will continue to collaborate and partner with include, but are not limited to, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Legal Aid, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa State University Extension Service, schools, local law enforcement agencies, as well as other state, local and faith-based organizations. These agencies provide information on farm worker rights and laws that are changing or currently in effect for farm worker protection.

Employment Service Complaint System

All outreach staff will receive twice annual training on services to employers and jobseekers, including, but not limited to, the Employment-related Law Complaint System. New staff will have access to online training modules and in-person training. Further support is provided by a full-time State Monitor Advocate position.

Additionally, technical assistance is offered to all one-stop centers for the Employment-related Law Complaint System.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

Increasing Outreach Worker Training and Awareness

Iowa needs to be fully staffed with four (4) outreach specialists and one (1) State Monitor Advocate in order to meet the demands of the workers and employers. Moving to a District Service Delivery approach for outreach coverage should assist in reducing the coverage area for each outreach specialist so they can provide for greater service delivery and reduce the amount of time traveling. This along with other options, will be considered as Iowa works to improve its agricultural outreach planning efforts. Other entities and stakeholders will be engaged as part of this ongoing process. Continuing to increase our communication, coordination, and utilization of our Workforce System partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers.

As part of the Unified State Planning process, partner cross training at one-stop centers will be required. This will assist in providing the support and knowledge outreach specialists need to better fulfill their job duties. Other areas of increased alignment will also be reviewed and implemented.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

Professional Development Activities

Attendance at One-Stop Center Staff Meetings. Outreach specialists attend local staff meetings in the offices within their assigned Service Delivery District. These are information sharing events of resources available at one-stop locations and Workforce System partners. This information is shared with the farmworkers and agricultural employers. Each outreach specialist has access to calendar of

events related to job fairs, workshop offerings, credentialing opportunities, and other center workforce offerings. Outreach specialists keep one-stop center staff informed on farmworker and agricultural employer needs in order for center staff to assist during peak season events and to ensure appropriate referrals to supportive services are provided.

During PY2015, Iowa experienced vacancies in outreach specialist and State Monitor Advocate positions, reducing the level of services offered. There will be an increased effort toward examining why Iowa has experienced such turnovers and a plan for increasing retention, which includes increased support and training for outreach specialists.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Coordinating Outreach Efforts

Partnership opportunities with NFJP grantee and Iowa Department of Education. Outreach specialists have established partnerships with the NFJP grantee, Proteus, and frequently conduct co-outreach activities; keep communication open to ensure invitations to all on-boarding events are represented by both entities, and regularly attend outreach meetings that include several local community and agency representatives. Over the past fiscal year, outreach specialists partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to identify students in primary and secondary education levels who may be traveling with their families. The initiative is to keep students from losing education coursework and credits which may prolong, or prevent, them from obtaining their high school diploma or equivalent. Outreach specialists conducted co-outreach efforts with the recruitment coordinators to further encourage educational credentialing specifically related to basic education.

Community resource connections. Each outreach specialists have a database of local community resource connections in their assigned areas. These local advocacy groups, charity organizations, faith-based organizations and other entities provide assistance with supportive services to farmworkers when they arrive, during their stay, and help them prepare for departure. Many migrant farmworkers arrive in Iowa without the basic essentials such as transportation, food, weather appropriate clothing, and little, if any, family connections. For those farmworkers desiring to make Iowa their permanent residence, the community resources assist with locating housing and schooling for children, while the outreach specialists will work with partners in the one-stop centers to identify long-term employment opportunities.

H-2A requests. Several agricultural employers utilize the H-2A Foreign Labor Certification process to bring farmworkers to Iowa to assist with the farm work related employment opportunities. The outreach specialists conduct the pre-occupancy housing inspections to ensure workers have safe living arrangements. Iowa is in the process of creating a housing handbook for employers who provide housing to migrant. Most FLCs utilizing the H-2A program have a diverse mix of H-2A visa workers, migrant workers from other states, and current seasonal workers residing in Iowa. Regardless of where the farmworkers' primary residence is, the outreach specialists provide information on worker rights and the complaint system.

Outreach specialists will continue to engage agricultural employers to identify and address hiring needs of seasonal and permanent positions. Strategies that will be further developed include engaging agricultural employers, in partnership with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and local advocacy

group partners, to increase the use of MSFW as a pool of available labor for permanent employment opportunities specifically in transportation, which is a high-demand, high-wage occupation in many areas of the state. Utilizing local WIOA staff and NFJP grantee staff to assist in certificate training for truck driving, some agricultural employers cover the cost of coursework, and then hire the MSFW on a permanent basis. The MSFW program in Iowa plans to increase these types of collaborative efforts with agricultural employers in all areas of the state. Each of the outreach specialists will continue to work with agricultural employers in their Service Delivery District to identify skill demands in order to bridge the connection to a diverse workforce population.

Integration

Iowa operates under an Integrated Service Delivery model to ensure all customers are offered a comprehensive blend of services designed to jointly place them into full-time, non-seasonal employment or upgraded agricultural employment. The one-stop centers are heavily engaged in a number of job services activities including the recruitment efforts of domestic workers to H-2A vacancies by utilizing resources available that are either group-focused or individual, in printed and electronic format, and are presented in a variety of service delivery formats:

- Sending IWorks emails that enable center staff to create and send formatted e-mails to job seekers who are registered in IWorks (Iowa's labor exchange system) including job opportunities and targeted recruitment e-mails;
- Performing various recruitment activities, including outreach to find and refer qualified domestic workers to fill H-2A job openings; and
- Assisting with resume searches and center staff assisted services that encourage agricultural employers to list their job openings on the state's labor exchange system to fill their job openings locally and/or through the H-2A program, if necessary.

3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;
II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

SERVING EMPLOYERS AND MSFW THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTER

Iowa's MSFW outreach specialists coordinate outreach efforts to farmworkers, agricultural employers and community advocacy groups with the National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus; the Iowa Department of Education, Title 1 program; Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Economic and Community Development program; Iowa*WORKS* Business Services Representatives, and WIOA program managers.

This MSFW statewide team is focused on increasing outreach efforts to each entity with common and shared target populations who seek workforce, training, education, and community resources. As a result of this coordination of efforts, this group of state program managers meet at least quarterly to identify methods and resources to assist shared target population group with the services offered and reduce duplication of services provided.

Each partner has a peak season that may vary or coincide with each other which increases efforts to ensure adequate referrals and penetration to identify farmworkers and agricultural businesses in need of specific services. Iowa will continue to conduct co-outreach efforts with our Workforce System partners and increase identification of additional partners as the needs of farmworkers and agricultural employers evolve and change.

Workforce System Services

Outreach specialists and Workforce System outreach team members will provide agricultural employers information on the services available to them including:

- Assistance to generate IWorks emails that enable each center staff to create and send formatted emails to job seekers who are registered in IWorks including job opportunities, and targeted recruitment trainings;
- Perform recruitment activities to find and refer qualified migrant and seasonal farmworkers to fill the labor needs of agricultural employers;
- Providing information about the benefits of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).
- Assist with resume searches and on-site-staff assisted services that encourage agricultural employers to list and fill their job openings using IWorks/IowaJobs.org;
- Provide labor market information data such as supply and demand, salaries, training requirements, new and emerging occupations, and industry growth;
- Provide Rapid Response services due to plant closure or mass layoffs. These services are offered to workers at the employer‘s job site and include information on assistance that can be provided at the One-Stop Center.
- A more personalized employer service approach;
- Assistance with pre-occupancy inspections for those agricultural employers requesting participation in the inter/intrastate recruitment system and/or H-2A Foreign Labor Certification;
- Assistance with targeted recruitment, best practices to locate farmworker pools;
- Assistance to Farm Labor Contractors to meet U.S. Department of Labor complaints and regulations;
- Workshops tailored to agricultural employers‘ need;
- Information on business tax credits available to employers hiring workers meeting defined targeted population groups with barriers to employment;
- Assistance with internet website links;
- Assistance with informal, timely, and appropriate resolutions of complaints and apparent violations;
- Assistance with information on employment training programs;
- Assistance with information on basic education, literacy, and limited English language services to workers, workers’ families, and employers;
- Assistance with new approaches on agricultural ventures in areas not previously identified as agriculturally active, such as immigrants‘ and refugees‘ agricultural backgrounds, co-farm

tenants, farmland rentals and the incorporation of new produce that these immigrants used to harvest in their own countries.

Outreach specialists and Workforce System business services teams provide services to employers on an individual, as needed basis to address their hiring and employment needs. These services are in addition to the IWorks electronic job listing system.

(B) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

Employment Service Complaint System

Each one-stop center prominently displays the posters provided by ETA. The State Monitor Advocate and Program Manager conduct training sessions with Workforce System partners to keep the staff abreast on the complaint process. The Complaint System is a topic of discussion with the MSFW statewide team to identify methods for outreach to employers and farmworkers to increase awareness.

During farmworker on-boarding and orientation events, outreach specialists and legal aid groups provide materials outlining the Complaint System process and conduct question & answer sessions about the Complaint System. During field visits, agricultural employer focus group meetings and Farm Labor Contractor meetings, outreach specialists explain the process of the complaint System, how it affects employers, and areas where informal resolutions can be identified.

Farmworker Rights

Outreach specialists provide the Wage and Hour Division “Farmworker Rights” pocket reference guide, printed in both English and Spanish, to agricultural workers they contact during formal and informal meetings. Outreach specialists also provide Migrant and Seasonal Protection Act (MSPA) fact sheets and posters for employers to display where workers congregate during working hours. This will be one of the first items the State Monitor Advocate looks for when conducting Field Visits, Field Checks and pre-occupancy housing inspections for the H-2A program. The outreach specialists provide their contact information, along with the SMA’s, when conducting outreach to farmworkers, so they have an immediate means of reaching out for assistance.

(C) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Agricultural Recruitment System

Iowa’s State Monitor Advocate provides training to outreach specialists, one-stop center management, and one-stop staff on the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS).

Services to agricultural employers are provided by MSFW outreach specialists and other one-stop center staff through in-person meetings and telephone contacts with employers. Employers are apprised of all services available through the workforce system to include the ARS, job orders, file searches and other services as needed.

Iowa provides services to agricultural employers by effectively providing information about services available through the workforce development system and obtain sufficient information about the employer's needs to provide appropriate services. Outreach specialists will continue to conduct meetings with large agricultural employers to facilitate the exchange of information and maximize the effectiveness of the program. Staff promotes the use of the one-stop centers to recruit workers by helping employers assess their labor needs and making appropriate referrals to their job openings.

Outreach specialists will continue to develop and maintain productive relationships with agricultural employers, who are identified in several ways, including knowledge of the local labor market, incoming job orders, employer associations, and word-of-mouth. Iowa will continue to utilize existing processes to link available MSFWs with employers, including ongoing collaborative efforts with one-stop center staff and local community-based organizations that provide services to MSFWs.

State and one-stop center staff provide information on local labor market conditions, intrastate and interstate temporary agricultural worker recruitment requirements (including information on the Foreign Labor Certification process). Information is also provided on the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Protection ACT (MSPA) and how it affects agricultural employers and migratory workers.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

(A) COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Collaboration

Iowa will move forward immediately with entering into a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NFJP grantee, Proteus, for inter-agency referrals and data sharing. The goal will be to establish and demonstrate effective coordination of outreach and increased registration activities for both service providers. Outreach staff routinely conducts co-outreach with Proteus, as well as other organizations committed to providing assistance to the MSFW community.

The SWA will actively work to identify additional agencies with which it will be beneficial to enter into MOUs in order to provide a coordinated outreach effort for the MSFW population.

All MOUs will be evaluated on a yearly basis between all parties involved to change or adjust agreements as needed to better serve the MSFW population.

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review

and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Review and Public Comment

Iowa solicited public comments on the State's Unified State Plan in its entirety, including the Agricultural Outreach Plan, for a 30-day period. Other targeted stakeholders were notified of the posting and included the MSFW Outreach Specialists, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, NASS Iowa field office, and the NFJP grantee - Proteus. The plan was also posted (or linked) on all core partner websites with instructions on how to submit public comments. A statewide press release was issued by IWD and the Governor's office, a targeted and broad-based email notification was issued to all identified required and optional workforce partners, and the draft was publicly available Iowa's Administrative Rules website.

The State of Iowa did not receive any public comments on the Agricultural Outreach Plan portion of the State's Unified State Plan. The final plan, as submitted, will be posted for a period of 30 days beginning on or about September 1, 2016, to above described entities. All comments received will be reviewed, documented on the IWD WIOA website, and considered for inclusion and incorporation into the State's Unified State Plan.

(C) DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

DATA ASSESSMENT

Iowa did not meet the targets for the number of MSFW referred to jobs, referred to supportive services, referred to occupational trainings, the number of job development contacts or the required number of field checks during the prior plan year.

Iowa experienced considerable vacancies in Outreach Specialist and State Monitor Advocate positions which reduced the level of services being offered. This had an impact on referrals to supportive services, referrals to training opportunities, and field checks. In addition, many of the migrant workers traveling to Iowa do not desire assistance of workforce services in our state as they are here for the season work opportunities. They usually return to their primary state of residence once the opportunities for season employment have ended.

Remedies

Iowa needs to be fully staffed with four (4) Outreach staff and one (1) State Monitor Advocate in order to meet the demands of the workers and employers. Moving to a District Service Delivery approach for Outreach coverage should assist in reducing the coverage area for each Outreach staff so they can provide for greater service delivery and reduce the amount of time traveling.

Continuing to increase our communication, coordination, and utilization of our Workforce System partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers. Iowa will increase our focus on workers who currently reside in Iowa and provide increased efforts to move this pool of worker into more permanent and self-sustaining employment opportunities.

(D) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Assessment of Progress

In the prior Agricultural Outreach Plan, Iowa set the minimum required target goal of five (5) contacts per outreach day that was exceeded by averaging nine (9) contacts per outreach day. This can be attributed to Iowa's continued partnership with Proteus, the Department of Education, and Iowa State University's Community Outreach program and the MSFW Outreach Specialists' focus on contacting workers.

Outreach specialists, through conversations with advocacy groups, Workforce System partners, farmworkers, and employers, were able to better estimate the number of farmworkers in Iowa by nearly 50 percent. This is a result of establishing consistent and effective communication and relationship building, allowing an increased registration of MSFW in the Employment Exchange system by 50 percent. This is attributed to the efforts of the outreach specialists who collected demographic information at on-boarding and orientation events and mobile technology devices. As a result of the increased registration, Iowa was able to increase the coaching/career guidance services offered to MSFW.

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

State Monitor Advocate

The State of Iowa is in the process of hiring a new State Monitor Advocate (SMA). After hire, the new SMA will be responsible for reviewing the four-year Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP), and will provide feedback at that time. The SMA will continue writing, revising and commenting on the AOP.

Until such time as the SMA is hired and trained, the Workforce Services Manager, Todd Spencer, is serving as the acting SMA and has reviewed, provided input to, and approved, the Agricultural Outreach Plan in its current form.

F. WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Adult education programs offer a student–centered approach, in which instructors help participants set and achieve learning goals. Iowa adult education and literacy programs facilitate student progress by incorporating college and career readiness standards in instruction, sharing best practices and providing ongoing professional development and training for instructors, data specialists and coordinators of programs. Local programs measure educational levels and progress using standardized assessment tools and by following the assessment policy guidelines disseminated to programs annually. Providers record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

All of Iowa's federally funded adult education programs are instituting the federal College and Career Readiness Standards, and have already incorporated the Common Core standards in the high school diploma programs as per Iowa's administrative rule 23.7(1) adopted January 14, 2015:

> *b. The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and*
>
> *c. Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.*

In addition, local educational programs will continue to provide standards–based curriculum, instruction, and assessment focusing on the skills that enable learners to participate more fully within American society as citizens, workers, and family members. Funds will be released to eligible AEFLA programs to support professional development efforts in continued implementation of standards based instruction for 2016–2017.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
    1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
    2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Local Activities

The Iowa Department of Education will promote participation in adult education and family literacy programs through campaigns which include, but are not limited to, initiatives including workplace programs and career pathway development programs, by promoting research based practices and public and private sector partnerships to inform the public about adult education, literacy, and family literacy services. The one–stop System will be used as a vehicle to identify available educational and employment services, fiscal and human resources, and other client services to help this targeted population become literate and economically self–sufficient. The key objectives for core services are to promote accountability and transparency in investing in adult education and aligning performance accountability (enrollment, level gains, and core outcomes) to guide strategy development and drive continuous quality improvement are as follows:

- Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy program supports efforts to increase enrollment and retention by urging programs to offer flexible schedules, support services and year–round programs in attractive and age–appropriate settings. For program year 2014, a state goal to serve five percent of the total state population without a high school degree, 18 years and older, was started. This represents a 12 percent increase in enrollment in adult education and literacy programs since last year. In addition Iowa is actively raising public awareness of adult education with an initial statewide campaign. Iowa launched a branding campaign to promote public awareness of the effectiveness of adult education. This effort has provided support in the transition to the new state's assessment for awarding the high school equivalency diploma, effective January 2014. This statewide effort has been aimed at increasing access to services and connecting participants as quickly as possible to programs.
- Providers have been piloting and demonstrating innovative instructional methodologies, from individual to group activities, to meet the diverse needs of adult learners. Adult education programs offer a student–centered approach, in which instructors help participants set and

achieve learning goals. Iowa adult education and literacy programs facilitate student progress by incorporating college and career readiness standards in instruction, sharing best practices and providing ongoing professional development and training for instructors, data specialists and coordinators of programs. Local programs measure educational levels and progress using standardized assessment tools and by following the assessment policy guidelines disseminated to programs annually. Providers record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

In addition, through the introduction of STAR (Student Achievement in Reading), managed enrollment has been encouraged in each program to better direct explicit instruction in adult education and literacy classrooms. This approach supports the best practice model through student and instructor surveys as well as program performance. Additional programs will be able to adapt this approach once a cadre of state certified trainers is established in Iowa. This shift in classroom management requires a transition period and continual adjustments. Programs are excited about the results in the urban areas but continue to struggle with rural implementation.

The state benchmarks for each educational functioning level (EFL) remains the focus for local programs with performance–based funding and a targeted post–test rate of 60 percent for each program and each level of students served. This data is reviewed monthly during the coordinator webinar. Training from the state data specialist has made it possible for each program to review local data program wide as well as classroom specific. Iowa adult education and literacy programs help to ensure that adults have the skills needed to compete in the knowledge–based economy. This is in keeping with increasing economic opportunity and raising the standard of living in Iowa. Iowa's adult education and literacy programs have been associated with community colleges since 1968 and work together to facilitate adult learners' transition to post–secondary education. Pilots have been conducted and will be expanded to partner with credit and non–credit courses to encourage the transition of adult learners to a career pathway. The pilots are designed to increase the number of adult learners earning transferrable credit, marketable credential, and, or entering post–secondary education.

Planned Integrated Activities

Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation have been the mainstays of the program from the beginning including: 1) mutual referrals, 2) assessment, 3) tracking client goals and progress, and 4) decisions regarding the planned delivery of services to the client. There has always been strong collaboration with federal employment training programs to help adults prepare for the workforce and become self–sufficient. Adult education and literacy programs, in their local communities, seek out working agreements with Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Workforce Development, adult and juvenile court officials, and other service agencies.

With the increased awareness of the need for a workforce to be able to function in a highly technical environment, more emphasis is being placed on education. The adult education and literacy program has responded to this focus by supplying their services either in business and industry or in the classroom. The program is ready and able to provide assessment; instruction in basic academic skills; English literacy programs; workplace literacy; communication skills; and job seeking and retention skills.

Adult Basic Education

The goal of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program is to improve students' basic skills in language arts and mathematics. A model ABE program provides comprehensive services to meet the diverse educational needs of students and prepare them to transition to secondary education and job preparation classes

ABE programs include literacy (reading and writing) and computational skills necessary for functioning at levels comparable to students in the first through eighth grade. Courses may be remedial for students or they may provide educational opportunities for students who speak, but do not read, English. These programs are standards–based and are designed to teach the academic skills necessary for success, and to help students become more productive community members. These programs are also designed to help students develop job readiness skills, find employment, advance on the job, or enter adult secondary education classes.

English Language Acquisition

The total immigrant population in Iowa remains relatively small but increased by 2.5 percent over the past five years. In 2014, ESL services represented 47 percent of the total population served. As part of core services, English literacy services assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self–sufficiency; assist adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and assist adults in completing a secondary school education.

All of the funded adult education and literacy programs in Iowa provided ESL services, defined as a program of instruction designed to help individuals of limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language. ESL classes are offered in a diverse cross section of Iowa counties, from urban areas that have an influx of immigrants from many nations to agricultural counties that have experienced a growth in their ESL population.

Iowa's adult education and literacy programs also make available, as needed, opportunities for English literacy/civics programs. These programs incorporate English literacy and civics education for immigrants and other students with limited English proficiency to participate effectively in the education, work and civic opportunities of this country. The programs include one or more aspects of civics education and may incorporate distance learning strategies and video services. EL/Civics programs comply with the National Reporting System (NRS) Performance Indicators.

Within the English Language Acquisition program, students are placed in appropriate skill–level classes through assessments of general language proficiency. There are six levels of instruction: beginning literacy, beginning low, beginning high, intermediate low, intermediate high, and advanced. The assessments for progressing from one level to another measure both general language proficiency and specific standards mastered. The key objectives for adult education English language acquisition are to:

- Provide stress–free and comfortable learning environments in order to reduce anxiety that interferes with obtaining language fluency;
- Integrate language acquisition with relevant life experiences stressing the importance of critical thinking, problem solving, and self–sufficiency;
- Use proficiency standards for assessing the major accomplishments of the students;
- Develop students' receptive English language skills of listening and reading comprehension;
- Develop students' productive English language skills of speaking and writing;

- Provide students with the ability to use English that is accurate and appropriate in a variety of academic and social settings; and
- Provide students with English language and citizenship instruction necessary to successfully complete the citizenship application and interview process.

Adult Secondary Education

The primary goal of the Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs is to provide a curriculum that enables adults to attain a Iowa high school equivalency diploma. The ASE programs are performance oriented and deliver instruction through processes that facilitate, measure, and certify learning outcomes. Programs are conducted within flexible time limits, are relevant to the practical needs of adults, and teach the skills and knowledge necessary for self–sufficiency and employment.

Iowa's adult education and literacy's high school equivalency preparation activities are focused on assisting adults in the completion of a high school credential. Community colleges and correctional institutions, throughout the state of Iowa, operate 61 HSED testing centers. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, Iowa awarded 3,408 equivalency diplomas.

Integrated Education and Training

Integrated Education and Training (IET) is defined as an education model that "combines occupational skills training with adult education services to increase the educational and career advancement of participants. In programs that deliver IET, adults participate in both occupational skills training and adult education services at the same time." Through the adult education professional development leadership contractor, modules on IET are offered as a facilitated online course. The modules take educators and agency administrators through the process of developing plans for implementing one of four instructional models. These models integrate basic skills (i.e. ELA or ABE) with technical or occupational skills instruction. Specific objectives for the IET are:

1. Analyze and cite reasons for implementing IET models after reviewing various resources;
2. Define key terms and components of IET models;
3. Assess the degree of readiness to implement an IET model; and
4. Identify which IET models are best suited for the students and identify next steps for implementation.

Finally, effective implementation of a comprehensive IET model requires well–planned and integrated coordination of the program structure, student support services, and classroom activities. The IET training modules provided below are several options for agencies to choose the best method to meet their adult students' needs.

1. Co–Teaching: The co–teaching model involves skills instruction in a particular in demand sector along with basic language instruction, delivered in an integrated fashion. Team teaching and co–teaching are the main strategies used to deliver the curriculum. The language and basic skills instructor deliver literacy and language education while the technical instructor teaches the related certificate or credentialing skills. After completion of the class, students are better prepared to transition to a related advanced class or employment through a career pathway.
2. Alternating Teaching: In alternating teaching, students enroll in two different, but coordinated courses. For example, students interested in healthcare careers might also attend a basic skills class. This class may incorporate important components of jobs, such as customer

service and patient care, etc., along with basic language or reading skills. After attending the basic skills class, students go to a technology class to learn the digital literacy skills necessary to be successful in the workforce.

Workplace Education

Workplace education programs, defined as literacy services that are offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills, represent a growing trend in Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. In today's economy, employees must continually upgrade their skills to remain competitive. In addition to strong reading, math and communication skills, employees need skills in solving problems, adapting to rapid change and working in teams as defined in Section 203 of WIOA.

Onsite workplace education allows workers to apply basic academic concepts to everyday job tasks, resulting in a better trained, more productive workforce. Local programs have been working with employers to identify skills employees need to be successful in their jobs and design a course of basic skills instruction around these needs. Instructors integrate examples and tools from the work environment to make learning relevant to the participant.

Workforce Training Activities

Iowa adult education and literacy provides ongoing professional development for adult education and literacy programs on how to integrate job readiness skills into the basic curriculum and incorporate real world examples from a variety of work settings into academic instruction. Training has included the World Education course, "Integrating Career Awareness at Every Level." Iowa's focus has been to ensure that this integration occurs for English as a Second Language participants as well as with those preparing for High School Equivalency testing. Sessions during the adult education and literacy summer conference were dedicated to this topic. The development of the Adult Education and Literacy Plus Pathway pilot will include these elements for each functioning level in addition to workforce training specific to the designated career pathway.

SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

a. Adult education and literacy activities;
b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
c. Secondary school credit;
d. Integrated education and training;
e. Career pathways;
f. Concurrent enrollment;
g. Peer tutoring; and
h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Iowa Department of Corrections has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of the Departments' major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to these incarcerated youth and adults. The IDOE will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Corrections (DOC) in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state-administered Adult Education and Family Literacy Program.

Iowa's adult education and literacy program employs innovative approaches to increase the education levels and self-sufficiency of inmates, while reducing the recidivism rate in Iowa. Corrections programs enrolled 653 participants in Iowa's information management system in PY 2014. Data sharing agreements have been reached and training provided to include all eligible adult education participants in reporting. This information will be used by both the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections to improve services offered in correctional education programs, to streamline services and to maximize benefits.

Iowa's approach to corrections education enrolls participants through state correctional institutions and through local correctional facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required common benchmarks (additional tracking of release dates for tracking follow-up will be implemented) through the Iowa's Assessment Policy. Funds awarded from the AEFLA program funds may be used to support the correctional programs in providing allowable academic programs within the twenty percent expenditure cap. The option to use funds for the purpose of Section 225 will be available in the competitive application for Section 231 funds. Details of their activities and use of funds specific to corrections will be required and collected through Iowa grants as eligible providers describe their AEL activities. Currently, state funds administered through the DOC and awarded to five community colleges has exceeded the capped funds available through 231 for corrections and therefore no

federal funds in Iowa is being used to provide adult education programs for adult students in the nine state institutions. The DOC contract, in partnership with the community colleges and the Iowa Department of Education adult education and literacy team works to establish the level of staff, curriculum and program standards to be offered in each of the nine state facilities. With additional focus on transition services and reducing recidivism, the use of federal funds might be applied during the multiyear grant (2017-2020) to support and extend the state funded academic programs to assist participants in acquiring the basic skills and competencies necessary to move from an institutional setting into the workforce and community.

Programs will provide adult education instruction at all levels of basic academic skills, for students who meet the eligibility requirements for enrollment. Participants in correctional settings must qualify for adult education and literacy activities by lacking sufficient mastery of basic educational skills, or have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent. The use of funds will include all allowable activities detailed in Sec. 225(b)(1-8). Particular emphasis will be in developing programs that integrate the basic skills instruction with life skills, employability skills (which includes digital literacy) to help participants acquire necessary abilities to become and remain self-sufficient after leaving prison. Transition focused activities include pre-apprenticeship efforts as well as integrated education and training activities that are in partnership with the apprenticeship efforts. Corrections will continue to be a partner in the career pathway efforts to ensure that instructional activities are aligned with regional needs at each correctional location. Iowa’s adult education and literacy program gives priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave correctional institutions within five years of participation in adult education programs.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

The Iowa Department of Education will leverage past experiences with providing English literacy and civics education in meeting the new requirements under WIOA. Programs will be established through an application for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IECLE), section 243, as described in detail in VI.d.2 and require applicants to provide a narrative describing plans to provide literacy, English language acquisition (aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)) and civics education along with program access to integrated education and training services. In addition, each program will ensure access to career advising for each participant while engaging in occupationally relevant education and training that is aligned to a regionally developed career pathway. The application will be reviewed and scored by the IDOE to ensure compliance and quality of services. Some current practices within which could be adapted to an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program include the following service delivery:

- As an awarded eligible provider, the local community college offers classroom (English language acquisition and civics education) and/or blended learning instruction to a specific cohort of students. By partnering with other community college departments, including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology timely and relevant occupational skills that support in-demand regional employers is being provided to the cohort of participants. A recent example includes an I-BEST model approach for English language acquisition and civics education participants as CNC operators (which has been identified through sector partnership work as in-demand with a career pathway depicting a progression of ladders and lattices to other occupations and or training) with integrated contextual and employability skills offered over a 16 week period. The course includes key objectives related to building basic skills and becoming certified through an occupational assessment. As appropriate, the training includes introductions to regional employers and hands-on training, internships or apprenticeships to build work experience opportunities for cohort participants.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the designated state agency responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to eligible local entities for the provision of section 243, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). During grant year 2016-17, the IDOE will implement a competitive application process for IELCE funding that will determine the eligible entities that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. Through the RFP process, IDOE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible entities throughout the state and to ensure that access of services is provided in every county based on need. Funds will be used to support the operational expenses of local IELCE programs, including teacher salaries and benefits, classroom supplies, textbooks, and other items necessary to carry out instruction in English language acquisition, workforce preparation activities, and civics education.

During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts the agency with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. In addition, the IDOE will actively promote the release of the funding opportunity through the state grant process, among all eligible providers and will be conducting regionally face to face and webinar bidder's conference to address frequently asked questions for new and potential applicants. The IDOE requires all eligible providers for section 243 to use the same application process, the state grant management system, Iowa grants. The IDOE uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers. Entities must provide narrative details to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration along with alignment of English language acquisition with the CCRS. In addition, each program will demonstrate their connection to a career pathway and if access to career advising is embedded in the activity. The review of proposals will include rating responses to each of the 13 considerations. To determine if an applicant is an entity of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve English language acquisition and civics education concurrently and contextually workplace skills, along with access to work based learning through an integrated education and training model of instruction. Prior recipients of English Literacy and Civics Education funds under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) will use data from Iowa's student data management system, Tops Enterprise, to show effectiveness in meeting state-negotiated performance measures for English as a second language (ESL) participants. New organizations will be provided forms to show demonstrated student learning gain, specific to ESL learners. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Similar to the competition for 225 and 231 funds, the application will be reviewed by a panel and scored according to a point-based scoring rubric weighting each of the considerations. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition. Funded entities will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement.

TIMELINE: The following steps will be taken in conducting the IELCE competition:

- January/February 2017: IDOE publishes three-year federal IELCE Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Unified Plan.
- February/March 2017: IDOE provides a bidder's conference and technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible entities.
- February/March 2017: IDOE establishes a review panel free of conflicts of interests to review and score IELCE grant applications.
- March 2017: Due date for IELCE grant applications.
- March/April 2017: Reviewers review and score IELCE grant applications.
- April/May 2017: IDOE announces IELCE grant applicants that will receive funding.
- July 1, 2017: IELCE grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

IDOE plans to issue continual guidance and technical assistance to eligible providers on how to co-enroll participants in occupational training, as appropriate, and how section 243 funds may be used to provide occupational training as part of an integrated education and training program.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team is committed to a seamless transition to the required state leadership activities and has identified a number of areas in which services are already being provided through technical assistance or through targeted training. Funds made available under section 222(a)(2) will not exceed more than 12.5 percent of the AEFLA funds. Of the state leadership funds, twenty percent is awarded to local programs to implement required leadership activities under section 223. These local funds are awarded under the general AEFLA grant application according to enrollment in adult education and literacy programs. Activities that support the required leadership activities include:

A. Alignment studies have been initiated at the state and local level to identify best practices in strategies for integration and collaboration. Several working groups have been formed to address the implementation of WIOA and alignment. The removal of duplication and the addressing of gaps has been identified as a high priority in the ranking of recommendations among core partners. Funds will be used to build the capacity of local programs to coordinate and align services which will include cross-training core partner staff on intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and a common referral process. Additional efforts to align services includes work toward a common distance education platform that integrates education and training of basic skills, employability skills and career and technical education.

   In addition, the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development will continue to be a priority with a focus on aligning services as a participant transitions from adult education through integrated education and training to further their education and employment opportunities. Through the Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration, a three-year technical assistance grant, a state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness.

B. The state adult education and literacy program supports high quality professional development as demonstrated in the recently adopted Iowa Administrative Code 281:23.7 which defines the responsibility of the programs for providing professional development opportunities for professional and volunteer staff, including:
   - Proper procedures for administration and reporting;
   - The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and
   - Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

   In addition to responsibilities, standards and minimum professional development hours, plans and monitoring has been incorporated into the administrative code. This has resulted in the use of a professional development online tracking platform for adult education and literacy programs. The platform tracks instructor plans, hours of professional development attended (including required pre-service), catalogs of state and local offerings of trainings and provides reports to the state on usage, alignment of plans with attended activities as well

as classroom observations aligned with Iowa's instructor standards aimed at identifying the application of content standards in practice. By tracking individual and program plans, along with collective classroom observations, state leadership funds can be better targeted for needs that will support professional developments use in the classroom in areas such as, content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, effective program management (universal design), integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to post-secondary education, use of technology, distance education, serving students with disabilities, and tutor training and recruitment. Contracts for professional development services related to research-based activities include Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training and technical assistance; EBRI, ESL and Blended Learning study circles; and implementation of content standards.

C. Technical assistance will be provided to local programs to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established program, instructor and performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus include:
    a. Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:
        - STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
        - Writing webinars;
        - Low-literacy alphabet and vocabulary;
        - High-literacy fluency and comprehension;
        - Continued support of Adult Numeracy Initiative (ANI) cohorts;
        - Hosting the first Virtual Conference to highlight distance education and technology integration; and
        - Annual Adult Education and Literacy Summer Institute.
    b. Enabling local programs to establish, build upon, and maintain effective relationships with their regional core partners with common training on a system orientation, referral process, data sharing/reporting, and integration of education with occupational training, and sector partnership and career pathway development.
    c. Using technology to improve program effectiveness through a professional development tracking platform, developing online repositories of reviewed and aligned lesson plans, online training through customized modules and technical assistance focused on identifying and utilizing technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education.

D. Iowa's adult education and literacy team use a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to local programs, practitioners and participants. These will include activities such as:
    - Local program site visits;
    - A monthly electronic PD newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
    - Sessions at state and local conferences, including the first virtual conference, will showcase promising practices and models;
    - Webinars showcasing promising practices and models;
    - Job descriptions with embedded professional development activities based on the adopted Iowa administrative code; and
    - Dissemination of standards and annually updated handbooks.

Local programs are evaluated for effectiveness by the IDOE through their status update, oversight of data integrity, fiscal monitoring as well as desktop and site visits. For programs with reported findings associated with the administration of their grant, a corrective action plan is developed and approved by the state to track continuous improvement in identified areas of concern.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team provides activities such as the operation of professional development programs; the provision of technology assistance, including staff training; program improvement and support; alignment studies with standards and competencies, especially curricula incorporating 21st century skills, workplace readiness activities and phonemic awareness; coordination with other agencies to increase enrollment and successful completion in adult education programs; and linkages with post-secondary institutions.

Currently, communities of practice exist to help disseminate information to providers. Evidence-based instruction in writing, reading, and math has been driven by a cadre of trainers (STAR, numeracy academy, and former CASAS writing trainers). In addition, trainers involved with the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) have been able to offer specialized ESL and speaking training and develop strategies to address multi-level instruction. Training in these core subject areas has focused on the lead standards approach, promoted by education expert, Dr. Robert Marzano, and others which offers instructors a method for translating standards into curriculum by utilizing three interrelated action steps: identify lead standards; design coherent units of instruction; and conduct lesson studies. Adopting the lead-standards approach brings about greater coherence, provides focus, and ensures that standards are covered in a logical and effective manner.

Surveys have been conducted to establish a baseline of current practices and levels of integration for the one-stop centers. Based on this information, guiding documents will be developed and disseminated to assist eligible funded programs in their roles and responsibilities associated with partnering with the one-stop centers. Trainings will accompany these documents to assist with implementation and help address barriers to ensure seamlessly delivery for the participant.

Online professional development courses make it possible for Iowa's adult education and literacy team to provide information without disrupting local programs' service for adults. Improved consistency of instruction and reduced travel costs for trainers and participants are also important considerations for implementing distance learning. Online courses can be accessed at the convenience of the educator, thereby enabling new instructors to begin learning about their roles and responsibilities immediately. Iowa's adult education and literacy team is continually developing a repository for lesson plans and expanding online professional development courses in adult education. An integrated professional development platform enables local programs to submit additional online or face to face professional development opportunities offered throughout the state.

The professional development committee, which consists of local program coordinators, adult education and literacy instructors, and state staff, is designed to prioritize and coordinate state level staff development activities. This program year will see a number of changes to professional development as teacher effectiveness strategies are reviewed by the committee. Policies on professional development will help establish adult education and literacy expectations for the state.

Professional Development standards will assist programs in providing state approved targeted training that is aimed at improving quality instruction to adult learners. The main targets for Instructional System improvements include:

- Develop and disseminate guidance, documents, and models to align state policy with the qualification of staff and implement instructional standards for classroom management and high quality instructional practices;
- Expand the use of the STAR reading program with each funded program implementing the evidence based strategies in reading instruction; and
- Incorporate the professional development platform to support program and individual continuous quality improvement.

Additional activities supported by state leadership funds are evaluated against the following criteria:

- statewide implementation, adoption, and diffusion into adult literacy instructional strategies, methodologies and curriculum infusion;
- Programs' participation on state leadership committee;
- Programs' alignment of professional development to Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy Professional Development Standards http://bit.ly/IowaDepartmentofEducation;
- Alignment with Iowa Administrative Code (IAC):281.23;
- Implementation of standards based instruction: lead standards approach; designing coherent units of instruction; conducting lesson studies; participating in peer groups; and engaging in classroom observations for continuous quality improvement;
- Long-term improvement in program outcomes measured by the state and local program's ability to continually meet the state negotiated benchmark levels; and
- Adult learner assistance to effectively meet personal and program literacy goals.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Iowa Department of Education's Adult Education and Literacy team uses various means of assessment in an annual and ongoing evaluation process of local entities including: professional development evaluations; site and desktop monitoring; program status updates; monthly performance reviews; and quarterly financial reviews. The results of these processes determine program improvement actions and program improvement plans.

A. **Professional Development Evaluation.** Participants are surveyed after all workshops, conference presentations, and professional development offerings in compliance with Iowa's Professional Development standards to evaluate and provide feedback on the activity or event. Through the state sponsored professional development platform, My Learning Plan, all professional development offerings are available for registration, the tracking of hours, individual professional development plans, and evaluation forms. The platform is also designed to collect individual classroom observations to track the implementation of professional development in instruction to determine if the training impacted student outcomes and to determine areas where additional training may be needed. The annual training plan includes Iowa's priorities derived from input from surveys and training requests through the professional development platform, and guidance from a statewide professional development leadership council. Survey results and requests are reviewed with the professional development leadership council to decide if the training is technical assistance or a professional development opportunity and how best to deliver and define the objectives. Annual priority areas include:
    - *New Coordinator Training.* Provides new coordinators with information such as federal and State guidelines, data collection and National Reporting System (NRS) reporting, and resources needed to administer their programs.
    - *Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training.* Provides training on the fundamentals of the NRS. Topics include monitoring, data analysis and collection, types of data and measures, assessments, data quality, and related information.
    - *Instructor Training.* Provides information and resources to support instruction in the areas of high school equivalency preparation, evidence based reading instruction, math, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, and career pathways instructional strategies.

    Professional development offered by local entities is required and is supported by the allocation of state leadership funds to focus on priority areas.

    Actions Taken to Improve Quality. In state sponsored professional development, changes are made to future trainings based on input from participants. Data is compiled from the professional development platform based on local entities instructors attending trainings, number of professional development hours attended, evaluations, individual professional development plans and classroom observations to make data-driven decisions on future trainings. As such, consistent inefficiencies throughout local entities are addressed by the state as priority areas. Inefficiencies that are isolated to a local area is required to be addressed in their status update - consistent inefficiencies require an improvement plan.

B. **Site and Desktop Monitoring.** Iowa is currently in the process of updating and aligning the adult education and literacy monitoring to include program standards that address WIOA implementation, along with a quality assurance system that will ensure student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and regulatory compliance of local providers in accordance with federal laws and regulations that is risk based. The risk assessment can be used as a self-assessment tool, but is annually conducted by the state to evaluate variables associated with the program standards that determines the monitoring strategy appropriate for each local entity, desktop or onsite.

   Actions Taken to Improve Quality. If noncompliance finding(s) are identified, corrective action will be implemented through a program improvement plan within 45 days of the monitoring. The corrective action must identify the findings and specific strategies the local entity will implement to ensure that finding(s) have been resolved. While areas of recommendations does not require corrective action, local entities may include improvement strategies that will be implemented in the upcoming year of funding.

C. **Program Status Update.** For each continuing year after a competition, local entities are responsible for reporting back on strategies implemented during the program year and to address goal and performance areas requiring continuous improvement. Documented evidence of implementation for the previous year is required that can include qualitative and quantitative examples. Improvement strategies for any unmet performance and for each performance target that is not at least 90 percent achieved is required, detailing plans and other actions taken to improve quality in the upcoming year of funding. Status update forms are created on the grant management system and are able to collect documentation or evidence of implementation in any format provided by the local entity. Ad hoc reports are able to be generated comparing applications with updates within and across local entities. This information is used to track continuous quality improvement in the programs. Specific targets are required for updating which can include: enrollment, post-testing rates, educational functioning level gains, transitioning services and integrated education and training participation.

   Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Status updates that fail to include sufficient documentation or continuous improvement will be negotiated back through the grant management system for additional information. Review of the updates is conducted by a panel. Technical assistance is provided for each local entity that has an update negotiated back for revisions. This assistance can include strategies related to goal setting, examples of documentation, or clarifying definitions.

D. **Monthly Performance Review.** Conducting data integrity reports and monthly reporting of student records are requirements of Iowa's Assessment policy. This data is pulled from the online data management system and reviewed for validity. The following data elements are reviewed: Participant educational levels; Monthly attendance; Hours of instruction; Monthly exiting of students absent from the program for 90 days with no scheduled services; and Assignment of a college issued identification number. Key data elements are posted on the department's website for tracking local entities progress toward targets - this data includes NRS enrollment and High School Equivalency Diplomas awarded. Each program is also assessed for post-test percentage and progress toward the state negotiated educational functioning level benchmarks among participants served. While this data is available to each program at any time through the data management system, the state's review is conducted at least monthly.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Performance reports are being tied to continuous improvement plans with required improvement action plans for any data elements that is not being updated on a monthly basis. Local entities that do not report their data are in non-compliance to Iowa's Assessment policy. Iowa's adult education and literacy funded programs are allocated funds based on performance. Lack of data limits the ability for the state to make data-driven decisions. In addition to technical assistance on data reporting, NRS guidelines and the implementation of Iowa's Assessment policy, best practices and recommendations are provided to assist the program in developing their improvement plan.

E. **Quarterly Financial Reviews.** Through the grant management system, Iowa grants, quarterly claims from each local entity is reviewed by the state adult education and literacy team for allowable an allocable use of AEFLA funds. This review includes documentation for each expenditure against the budget and allocation for each local entity. There are three levels of approval, along with the requirement for original signed invoice. The financial review also tracks funds from state leadership that is allocated to each program for the purpose of implementing required leadership activities described in detail by the application from the local entity.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Financial reviews that are non-compliant are negotiated back for editing. These negotiations include outreach for technical assistance to both the program coordinator and fiscal agent, if necessary. Clarification on expectations is offered along with corrective actions. Due to the layers of approval needed, each level has the ability to negotiate back if necessary for correction or additional documentation. Amendments to the budget can be requested in alignment with the caps for correction and administrative percentages. These amendments are reviewed and approved based on the rationale provided by the local entity. Each amendment creates a new budget, however each previous budget version is kept in the grant management system for tracking. Changes in the budget and submissions of claims are time stamped to ensure timely response and processing.

A Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is required for any assessment that does not meet the required standard or demonstrate improvement for each negotiated target during the competition and in the continuing years. These plans are developed in partnership with the department to ensure clarity in their actionable elements. With funding tied to performance, programs are incentivized to meet state negotiated benchmarks.

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes

3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes

4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes

6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes

8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Ryan M. Wise**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The Purpose of VR is to assess, plan, develop and provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment and achieve economic self–sufficiency to the greatest extent possible. The purpose of this Unified State Plan is to unite the CORE partners in supporting service delivery to Iowa common goals, objectives and measures.

The State Rehabilitation Council is a working advisory board providing guidance, direction and recommendations to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) met four times in 2015. These dates were February 3rd, May 12th, August 4th and November 10th.

IVRS provided the following information to SRC members at each meeting:

Administrative Report Financial Overview Rehabilitation Services Update State Plan and Independent Living Update Legal Update The Iowa Client Assistance Program (ICAP) report

SRC members are also provided detailed updates related to IVRS progress on state plan goals, objectives and strategies. The current SRC structure consists of three sub–committees which include Outreach, Finance and Planning and Evaluation.

Additional activities and/or information shared by IVRS with SRC members included:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – WIOA; Community Conversations; Services to Special Populations; Satisfaction surveys; Community Rehabilitation Provider Rate structure; Collaborative initiatives; Employment First; Disability Employment Initiative; Employer's Disability Resource Network; Making the Grade; Ticket To Work/Partnership Plus; Value Stream Mapping; Veterans; Transition Alliance Programs; National Disability Employment Awareness Month; Skills Training opportunities; Project Search; Walgreens Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) and Memorandum of Agreement signed between IVRS and the Iowa Department of Human Services which outlines roles and responsibilities in serving youth under age 24 whom require supported employment services.

SRC Policy Recommendations: IVRS Administration continues to update SRC members with changes proposed under WIOA legislation. IVRS has and will solicit input and request a vote from the SRC prior to policy changes. IVRS is represented on the statewide steering committee discussing the implementation of WIOA in Iowa, and has been a contributor in writing the unified state plan.

In June 2015, the State Rehabilitation Council was provided information on the proposed rules and the impact this may have on policy changes. During that meeting the SRC agreed to the possible policy revisions related to: the continuum of services model; serving the potentially eligible, transition components, and pre–employment transition services; compliance processes with section 511; the infusion of the competitive integrated employment language; changes to the IPE timeframes; and job–driven employer development. They also agreed that certain provisions should not be adopted until the regulations are published to ensure that the policy conforms to those provisions as well as avoiding unintended consequences.

IVRS and the SRC agreed that no action would be taken on serving individuals at risk of losing their job for placement directly into service. Only job candidates that had been placed into employment and require post– employment services would be served in this capacity. At this time individuals who are at risk of losing their job and who have never been served by IVRS must go through the eligibility process and go on a waiting list if they do not meet the priority of service category being served. This may change once the regulations are authorized. Another policy that they determined should not be developed was the 4–year follow along for supported employment. It was determined that this should remain the responsibility of the long term funding sources and currently IVRS has an agreement with the Department of Human Services that this is their responsibility.

The SRC and IVRS discussed the implications to employers and IVRS related to provisions of the Dream Act. It was agreed that individuals who have permission to participate in training and work in the United States due to approval by the Dream Act, may receive services and achieve placement by the date of the expiration on their approval. This is consistent with IVRS policy and RSA regulations that states there is no durational requirement for residency and the individual simply must be available and able to work. If the individual obtains permission to remain in the United States after the expiration date the individual and IVRS may amend the IPE beyond the expiration date.

In November, 2015, the Unified Plan components were discussed, along with the results of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment at the SRC meeting. Input regarding the proposals by IVRS was sought from and provided by the SRC. During the meeting the SRC discussed the results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the implications for policy related to the key components of the WIOA. The following summarizes the recommendations as a result of the CSNA:

1. Potentially eligible students – it was recommended and IVRS agreed that the pre–employment transition services that would be provided to students with disabilities on the caseload would also enhance the skill sets of students who are potentially eligible.

In addition, IVRS will primarily serve those who are potentially eligible by meeting with whole groups of students, but would serve individual potentially eligible students if their class schedule does not allow them to participate in classes. 2. Iowa Workforce Development Integration – it was recommended and IVRS agreed that IVRS would have staff involved in and supportive of the instructional classes, service teams, and business services so that individuals with disabilities may gain access and that the workforce programs and services will provide the appropriate accommodations. The Continuum of Services model as it related to integration with the workforce partners was also discussed and approved. 3. Competitive Integrated Employment – it was recommended and agreed to by IVRS that the policy related to competitive integrated employment demonstrate a strong emphasis on progressive employment and creating customized employment opportunities for the most significantly disabled youth. During the March 2016 meeting the school plan for students covered under Section 511 was discussed and agreed to by the SRC. Clarification

on responsibilities for those in segregated employment has been sought from the consultants with the technical assistance centers. 4. Job–driven model of training – it was recommended that the Unified Plan should emphasize the job–driven model of training through an informed choice process that respects the unique choices of individuals with disabilities. Discussions on the implementation of STEM projects will continue after the Rehabilitation Services Bureau develops the Comprehensive System of Continuum of Services Model. 5. Employer Relations – it was recommended by the SRC and IVRS agreed that the Unified Plan should reflect the participation of IVRS on sector partnerships, as well as the fact that IVRS staff must still work to provide placement opportunities to individuals based on job matches and the more intensive service needs required by the job candidates.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and SRC Operations:

1. Community Conversations: As part of the requirement for public meetings and input, IVRS held Community Conversations in 25 areas of the State of Iowa over the course of the past year, since congress passed the WIOA. SRC members were invited to participate, but only the CAP representative and the CRP representative actually attended the meetings in their areas. The intent of these conversations was to solicit information from an array of diversified stakeholders about ways to enhance service and expand employment opportunities for job candidates of IVRS. The Community Conversations were well attended by local communities with not only service providers and job candidates in attendance, but almost every meeting had members of the business community providing input and ideas. At the June and November 2015 meetings, the SRC considered the information, the suggested strategies the conversations produced, and determined the initiatives and actions infused into the unified plan were appropriate. Information gleaned from the community conversations will be considered by SRC in monitoring the progress of the IVRS state plan.

2. Services to Special Populations: Progress on state plans goals are shared by IVRS at each SRC meeting. There is a current goal to “improve outreach and rehabilitation rates for individuals who are unserved and underserved such as individuals who are age 55 and older, and students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.” IVRS continues to work with the Iowa Department on Aging and Skilled Older Worker program to increase referrals and employment outcomes between both agencies. A lack of funding has stalled the proposed project for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in secondary schools and is in progress of development and implementation between the Iowa School for the Deaf and the Iowa Department of Education (DE). IVRS continues to provide input and explore options with DE and internal staff with a goal of improving outcomes for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations. IVRS maintains a Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa School for the Deaf in efforts to better serve this targeted population.

IVRS worked with the Iowa School for the Deaf in developing a transition process that coordinates services and supports for students who are deaf as they progress through school and transition into post–secondary options upon graduation. IVRS allocates a VR Counselor to ISD for 20 hours a week in order to enhance access to services and supports for employment to this targeted population. The Iowa Client Assistant Program, which is also represented on the State Rehabilitation Council, developed a short five minute video for IVRS focused at providing outreach to the Deaf community to help create awareness and understanding of VR and the services available.

3. Satisfaction surveys: Satisfaction data continues to be analyzed by SRC members, and as part of a SRC directive, was expanded to solicit information from current cases of individuals receiving services from IVRS. Survey results are shared at regular SRC meetings and reviewed monthly by

IVRS management. Last December, a proposal was made by Dr. Darlene Groomes (Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling at Oakland University, Michigan and a former VR counselor) to work with Iowa as one of seven states participating in her research project. Dr. Groomes followed up with face–to–face meetings with IVRS staff and SRC members – and called–in to two SRC meetings to provide an initial review of data. Dr. Groomes spoke to the group about process improvement and how customer satisfaction surveys fit into program evaluation. The survey has three indicators that states have found are important in VR. Her survey, developed in 2012–2013, digs deeper into satisfaction with services. She will be looking at specific quality indicators and employing new techniques to improve services. The survey will run in Iowa for a year. IVRS, during implementation, provided feedback to Dr. Groomes and revisions have occurred in the survey process. IVRS has also taken data from the third quarter and provided training to VR field staff based on seven questions where there was a 25 percent or more gap between the responses of successful and unsuccessful case closures. The training related to continued support for the agency's use of Motivational Interviewing and potential impact on these targeted questions. 4. Collaborative initiatives: IVRS Administrator David Mitchell continued his efforts to solicit feedback from SRC members to explore opportunities to expand or develop partnerships. Progress made by IVRS in various initiatives was reported at each SRC meeting. These have included collaborative efforts established between IVRS and the following entities; the Veteran's Administration, the Employers Disability Resource Network, Manpower (Project Ability), Disability Rights Iowa, Social Security Administration (Ticket–To–Work, Partnership Plus), Project Search, Benefits Planning, the Iowa Association of Community Providers, Iowa's Workforce Development, the Iowa School for the Deaf, Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, Iowa Department of Human Services (including Money Follows the Person and Iowa Medicaid Enterprise), the Iowa Rehabilitation Association, APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First), Developmental Disabilities Council, the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), Unity Point Diversity Initiative and Walgreens Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI).

5. Value Stream Mapping: Additionally, several SRC members participated in a week–long event hosted by the Department of Management referred to as "Value Stream Mapping" (VSM). This involved a process of looking at efficiencies, inefficiencies and duplication within current systems. This process helped determine what Iowa needed to better align systems to ensure employment services are as seamless as possible for shared customers.

6. Employer Engagement: The SRC asked for clarification on IVRS responsibilities for developing business relationships within our current system. The IVRS Business Consultant attended a SRC meeting to discuss the IVRS role in working with employers to recruit, train and diversify their workforce. Shared training has been arranged between IVRS with other entities (including Workforce/DEI, Manpower, ICIE, APSE, EDRN and SHRM). IVRS continues to have an expectation for all field staff to be involved in business development. The SRC took a lead role in organizing a series of three webinars and on–site training activities focused specifically at business partnerships. These were available state–wide and highlighted October Disability Awareness activities.

7. Third Party Cooperative Agreements: Third party cooperative agreements have been included as part of the ongoing communication between IVRS and the SRC, specific to the sustainability model. The SRC is aware of increased expenditures as IVRS continues to expand third party cooperative agreements.

8. Legislative Reception: SRC members hosted their annual Legislative Reception at the State Capitol to provide education and updates and thank legislators for their support of IVRS.

Coordinated efforts have occurred between SRC and IVRS to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the Iowa Job Honors program.

9. SRC Updates: Staff and partners of IVRS have been asked to share information at SRC meetings. Guest speakers this year have ranged from a representative from Disability Rights Iowa who reviewed mandates under Olmstead and Iowa efforts towards integration; a professor from Drake University who discussed “What Makes an Employer a Good Partner?”; the ICAP who provided an overview of Value Stream Mapping and conversations about accessibility; and Motivational Interviewing by IVRS staff.

SRC members have been provided an overview of IVRS policy, procedures, fiscal reports, agency updates, and operational information through the year. Quality assurance plans and performance measures for IVRS staff were reviewed, along with appeal information. SRC meetings were revised four years ago to allow for public comment prior to subsequent agenda items. The public comments that have been presented in the past were about one particular case situation involving the Independent Living Program. IVRS was upheld in this decision through a District Court decision, occurring December of 2014. Copies of all IVRS reports and SRC discussion materials are included on the IVRS website with a link to the SRC. At no other time has any person from the public attended the SRC meetings to submit a comment, but if they do they are heard and the topic is added to the agenda when appropriate. The IVRS staff attorney does not advise open discussion of legal issues where the agency is in a legal dispute.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

IVRS has excellent communication with the Council and engages in regular communication and updates. Council members receive weekly updates that are sent to all IVRS staff. Discussion times are included in SRC meetings providing for opportunities to openly respond to questions and concerns. Council Committees meet prior to each Council meetings with IVRS staff representatives providing further opportunity for input and recommendations flowing from the Council and IVRS. Lunch and Learn meetings are also held at each Council meeting providing for education and understanding of common interest area topics. Specific response to the Council’s input and recommendations are outlined in the previous section.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

None noted.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

Waiver Continuations and New Requests: IVRS has a number of third party cooperative agreements with school districts. The Third Party Cooperative Arrangement verifies that project funds provided from the school district are certified as non–federal dollars. IVRS continues to review and approve all services under this arrangement for purposes of maintaining administrative control for program and fiscal responsibilities of the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement. IVRS also certifies that the order of selection policy is applied to individuals receiving services under the agreements and all provisions of applicant status apply as appropriate. All intensive services provided are under an approved IPE and authorized by the responsible IVRS counselor. Effective with the passage of WIOA and the development of policy, potentially eligible students will be able to benefit from the pre–employment transition services in these agreements.

1) Project Search: IVRS requests a continuation of the waiver of statewideness for Project Search which had been approved by RSA in the FY2014 state plan. The opportunity to expand Project Search continues to be explored by IVRS with interested parties outside of the Des Moines school district. Additional locations beyond Des Moines (the originating site for Project Search approved under the waiver) currently include Ames and Waterloo, IA. As part of the approval process, IVRS completed an analysis to confirm that Project Search services provided under the TPCA were not currently provided by the school district to students with disabilities. Project Search primarily serves the most significantly disabled and IVRS promotes this as an opportunity for students to achieve competitive integrated employment instead of moving into extended employment.

Before involvement in Project Search, IVRS provides a comprehensive assessment for eligibility and employment planning. All IVRS services are available to eligible participants. These services are enhanced and complimented through Project Search and their comprehensive efforts at providing specific on–the–job community support, necessary to complete rotational community work experiences in the hospital setting for nine months. This support is done in conjunction with the development of work readiness skills occurring in an integrated classroom setting at the work–site along with specific work and academic competencies based upon individually chosen job sites. The key components of the Project Search model involve an extensive period of training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long–term coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, job coaches, and employer.

IVRS developed the Project Search Third Party Cooperative Arrangement (TPCA) which served to contribute to increased employment outcomes for eligible VR high school students from the Des Moines School District with the most significant disabilities, with a focus on those whose diagnosis consisted primarily of Intellectual Developmental Disability. The School District committed to using non–federal share dollars for the Project. This is currently the only Project Search of its kind in the State of Iowa, although additional projects are being considered. The Waterloo area is investigating the possibility of a Project Search as well.

According to one of its founders, “The Project Search model yields excellent employment outcomes by providing framework for public and private entities to collaborate and deliver services in a coordinated and productive manner. This collaboration allows for total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job–skills training. Project Search is cost–effective and self–sustainable because it leverages the existing funding streams and expertise of partnering organizations in education, vocational rehabilitation, developmental disabilities services, and other agencies.”

Service outcomes include the participating youth obtain training that is necessary to gain marketable skills to enhance their ability to secure competitive employment. This goal is achieved by offering participating youth real–life work experiences, combined with training in employability and independent living skills, to help make successful transition from school to productive adult life. Independent living and social/life skills are addressed to ensure compatibility and fit for work readiness and daily living activities. IVRS also partners with six other Project Search programs across the State of Iowa. Project Search is a career pathway on the job training program for the most significantly disabled student and provides training in STEM related careers when it is part of a high school program. Collaborative efforts include referral, service provision and funding. These occupational skill training programs have demonstrated effectiveness in bridging the gap through providing work place immersion with education/employment supports for individuals with the most significant barriers to employment. IVRS is monitoring data outcomes and will be sharing that with our community providers as part of our Quality Assurance Process.

2. Transition Alliance Program: The Transition Alliance Program (TAP) which RSA approved in 1997 under a Waiver of Statewideness continues to be explored in other areas of the Iowa. TAP is jointly funded by a school district and IVRS. Each TAP provides enhanced transitional services to eligible IVRS clients who require year–round support up to age 25. All TAP contracts include information related to Order of Selection/IVRS Wait List, and outline non–federal provisions and match dollars accordingly. TAP Outcomes are described in other portions of this plan.

IVRS confirms that the requirements of the VR services portion of our Unified State Plan will apply to the services under the waiver. IVRS also certifies that the order of selection policy is applied to individuals receiving Project Search, Making the Grade, and TAP services under this waiver. All non–federal share of costs are provided by a local public agency.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Agreed.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

IVRS maintains compliance with the Order of Selection and assures that all services provided under the waiver with the Unified State Plan meet this requirement.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

IVRS has been involved in cooperative relationships with many Federal, state and local agencies and programs for many years. Those include:

1. Veterans Administration – IVRS has a long standing agreement with the VA which was updated in FFY14. This agreement spells out the referral process, which agency will be responsible for which services, the inclusion of each other's employees in staff development activities, and the identification of key liaison individuals.

2. Department of Human Services – This is a general agreement between DHS and IVRS which allows and encourages interaction between the two agencies around individuals with whom we both work. It relates to referrals, joint planning, and office space, shared funding and related activities. An IVRS staff person is a required member of the Iowa Mental Health Planning Council, a group that represents a cross–section of constituencies and interest groups. Over 50% of its members must be consumers, family members, advocates, and others who are not state employees or providers. The duties of the council are to advocate for adults with a serious mental illness and children with a serious emotional disorder and to monitor, review, and evaluate the allocation and adequacy of mental health services within the State.

3. Governance Group — Leaders of eight departments developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to support collaborative service design to increase employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The eight agencies are Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Human Rights/Division for Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of the Aging and Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council. The Partners agree to support all their local offices in adopting the MOA Objective and Strategies to increase employment outcomes for Iowans with disabilities through state and local collaboration, maximizing resources and minimizing duplication in the support for competitive, community integrated employment outcomes.

4. The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) – is a collaborative group of state, federal and private partners working together to identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities. EDRN Partners include Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Iowa Department for the Blind; Deaf Services; Division of Persons with Disabilities; Veterans Administration; Social Security Administration; Iowa Workforce Development; U.S. Small Business Administration/SCORE; Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa. EDRN provides Iowa employer's access to qualified applicants, enhances the available labor market by combining on–the–job training, internships and classroom experiences for high–demand occupations and serves as a resource for up–to–date information about disability employment issues for the business community.

5. Youth Leadership Forum, College Leadership Forum, – Along with several other state agencies IVRS has participated in efforts to provide Summer leadership development opportunities for 40 high school or college students with disabilities since 1999.

6. Developmental Disabilities Council – IVRS has a team member serve on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. The DD Council's focus is to arm those who are affected by disability with the information, skills and confidence to stand up and take action; to offer solutions, and be a driving force for the change they want to see.

7. Iowa Transportation Council – IVRS also as a team member serve on the Iowa Transportation Coordination Council. Chaired by staff from the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Public Transit, the ITCC meets every other month discussing such issues as mobility management, accessibility of transportation in Iowa, State Transit Assistance Special Project Proposal applications pertaining to coordination, and the encouragement of state and local agencies' involvement in the passenger transportation planning process. Having grown considerably from the three original member state departments, the ITCC now boasts membership from statewide organizations, state departments, and federal groups.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

1. University of Iowa – IVRS also has an agreement with the University of Iowa Program for Assistive Technology and Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center. This outlines responsibilities for personnel providing rehabilitation and independent living services to persons with disabilities with the support of assistive technology and assistive technology services. It establishes parameters for how we provide assistive technology devices and services authorized with a minimum of expense or duplication of effort. IVRS also has an agreement with the University of Iowa and Drake University related to the professional preparation program in Rehabilitation Counseling. IVRS agrees to provide practicums and internships, and advertise openings with the university in order to recruit new talent into IVRS.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

NA

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

IVRS works closely with our Regional Workforce Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in coordinating services and supports for out–of–school youth. An agreement is shared with the Iowa Workforce Development providing data exchange and the sharing of safe data information.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

IVRS maintains compliance with state contracting programs and follows the Iowa Department of Administrative rules for financial bidding and contracting.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The agreement between Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education outlines shared responsibilities between IVRS and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to prepare youth with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated community employment. Through this agreement IVRS has ready access to the student's IEPs that are on the IVRS caseload, which allows for a more timely development of the IVRS eligibility justification (within 60 days) and the individual plan for employment (within 90 days). This Memorandum of Agreement expands beyond the previous agreement and provides greater direction and support to the local IEP teams. This agreement describes roles and responsibilities and also financial obligations. An amendment will be developed for the agreement once the DE has identified the manner in which the schools will document their responsibilities to the student who is covered under section 511. (A copy of the MOA is available on the IVRS website.)

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

Local Education Agencies (LEA – This is the formal term for local school districts). IVRS has developed arrangements with local school districts regarding referrals, seeing clients in the school, participating in IEP staffing's, providing pre–employment transition services, serving eligible students/youth as well as potentially eligible students, and various other activities. In Iowa, every high school has an IVRS counselor formally assigned to serve that school. Counselors can provide consultation that includes information and referral assistance, to benefit clients who are eligible but awaiting services from IVRS. Iowa also has a team member serve on the Special Education Advisory Board, which discusses outcomes and policies related to students and youth in transition. The purpose of IVRS involvement is to connect with schools for transition, provide guidance on policy development and strategies for student outcomes, while also providing information that impacts the most significantly disabled students/youth as it pertains to Section 511 of WIOA. IVRS and the Iowa Department of Education are currently working on a shared data dashboard that will assist both IVRS and local high school districts to better understand the level of collaboration occurring between the two. This dashboard will outline the number of potentially eligible students on an Individual Employment Plan and compare that to the number of students who have been referred to IVRS. It will also outline outcome data such as students participating in post–secondary training, employment outcomes, hours worked, and hourly wages for students connected to IVRS. Also outlined on the dashboard will be Indicator 14 data collected by the Department of Education so that

a comparison can be made between the outcomes of IVRS participants and those not connected to IVRS. This dashboard will help identify schools that are succeeding and schools that need improvement in their collaboration with IVRS. This will allow the two programs to target these schools for development of practices that will assist in successful outcomes for students with disabilities. IVRS is currently serving on an Iowa Department of Education Statewide Planning team that is exploring how to better serve all students in schools. Part of this planning focuses on parent engagement with both the high schools and IVRS. Through this team, IVRS is hoping to identify strategies to better engage parents through resources such as Parent Educator Networks and ASK Resources. IVRS is also looking at developing a website for parents to encourage engagement. IVRS is also involved with ASK Resources and the Special Education Directors in developing webinars and trainings for parents as it pertains to Section 511.

IVRS will serve the potentially eligible student as defined by the legislation similar to the integration and continuum of service model described later in this plan. The various pre–employment transition services will be provided to students who are potentially eligible, who are in the cooperative agreement projects, and who are on the IVRS waiting list for services. This new model will, as it is infused into our system, ensure that only those individuals who require intensive services are determined eligible and receive IVRS intensive services. During the past 4 years IVRS has recruited students as early as the sophomore year into the caseload, since the only way to provide pre–employment transition services was if the individual was eligible for services and off the waiting list. Through the Quality Assurance Process, there have been a few cases that were recruited as first semester sophomores, determined eligible within 60 days, but at their second semester junior year or senior year of school have been staffed out and no longer demonstrate the academic discrepancy originally observed at eligibility. With this new model, IVRS can provide the Pre–Employment Transition (PETS) services to potentially eligible students, not only to positively impact their lives but also as an assessment time to give the student ample opportunity to mature and grow. In this manner, IVRS will then only recruit those students into the caseload when it is clear from the PETs experiences that the student requires more intensive services to be successful and will need IVRS assistance to prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. This is a new thought and structure for IVRS staff and will take time for them to fully understand and implement the new model with fidelity. The implementation of service delivery of Pre–Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible students creates an excellent opportunity to collaborate with secondary education professionals as well as staff from other core programs with a vested interest in service to this demographic. However, this opportunity also creates an obstacle in that there is no common system to collect data on the provision of these services. The Iowa Department of Education owns and manages a data system called Iowa TIER. The system has the capability to house universal screening, intervention, and progress monitoring data for every student in the state. This system appears to be the most viable option available to record and collect data relevant to the delivery of PETS services. IVRS is collaborating with the Department to use this data system to record and track Pre–Employment Transition Services (PETS) provided to potentially eligible students. Benefits to using the Iowa TIER system include: • Reduction of data–entry by IVRS Staff; • Centralize data collection related to pre–employment transition services provided by local education agencies and IVRS while reducing duplicative data entry; • Connect with other data in the system to evaluate the effectiveness of the IVRS and DE collaboration. The following issues have been identified:

• The Department of Education’s funding stream has been exhausted so funding sources will need to be identified for development of PETS tracking. • LEA and IVRS staff will need to be trained on how to access the system and enter data. • The IVRS Case Management System (IRSS) will need to be developed to include placeholders for PETS data needed for reporting purposes. • IVRS and the Department will need to develop a batch process to import the data into IRSS. New strategies for

addressing these issues: • The IRSS Priority Management Team (PMT) will identify and develop fields needed for PETS reporting. • The IRSS Priority Management Team (PTM) will work with Department of Education IT staff to develop a batch process for data collection. • Rehabilitation Services Bureau Management will collaborate with DE to provide training to IVRS and LEA staff. • IVRS has currently identified an internal tracking system for PETS and this will continue until success is demonstrated from the previously described collaborative efforts. The National Disability Rights Network estimates that as many as 50% of prisoners have mental illness or other types of disabilities. More alarmingly, the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice claims that more than one in three youths who enter correctional facilities have previously received special education services. Early intervention is a key prevention strategy to keep individuals with disabilities from entering the penal system. Under WIOA, IVRS now has the ability to work with groups of students who are potentially eligible to provide pre–employment transition services. This change in legislation allows staff to broaden outreach in the secondary setting to help students in transition explore vocational options, engage in work–based learning opportunities, receive workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills, and learn how to advocate for themselves. Students who require the more intensive services of IVRS will be recruited to complete the application process. Engagement in PETS will afford students with disabilities the opportunity to identify a vocational goal, structure their curriculum to prepare for acceptance in post–secondary training, and eventually acquire employment that meets their future financial needs. Providing an avenue for students with disabilities to attain employment in a high–paying occupation will systematically break the cycle of poverty, thus reducing the potential of incarceration as well as reducing many other identified barriers to employment such as lack of work history and/or work experience, lack of educational or occupational skills, welfare dependency, and homelessness. IVRS anticipates that working with the potentially eligible students, and encouraging the GEAR UP program (as described below) in the communities in which it is offered will also create a positive impact with fewer students lost to the correctional services.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

IVRS has not supported segregated employment for over 16 years. However, schools have still transitioned students with the most profound disabilities into segregated settings without the assistance of IVRS. IVRS local area office supervisors are working with the local school districts to develop plans that identify how we will work collaboratively so these students may try employment first. “Section 511” programming provides students with opportunities to: discover options of competitive integrated work that would be of interest to the student; assessment and work experiences in the community; along with supported employment services designed so that the job is stable by the time of graduation with the focus of encouraging students to be competitively employed by high school graduation. Information briefings are being developed and shared with VR staff, school officials, parents, and community partners in efforts to identify opportunities to provide pre–employment transition services that focus on competitive integrated employment. Services such as Discovery, Career Exploration, Work Readiness Assessments and Work Adjustment are examples of services VR can arrange with the assistance of our community provider partnerships. While coordination efforts are occurring immediately, more concentrated discussions and education of the education community is necessary to refocus schools from segregated employment to Employment First. It will take effort, however, to get a consistent message out to all school districts, AEA regions, VR offices and community providers and must be a joint responsibility with the Department of Education. Communication is occurring at the Bureau Management level to develop strategies for this implementation. A policy draft will be developed that will outline procedures for

implementation that can be shared with involved partners outlining the steps to follow. Section 511 follow–up for tracking individuals who select to enter into segregated employment, after receiving community employment services, will be delegated to a VR Resource Manager. Those protocols have been developed and will be implemented effective July 2016, with all staff and management in the field operations receiving training prior to the implementation date. Students and parents who refuse to work with IVRS and do not allow the schools to refer the student to IVRS will be the responsibility of the local education agency, as IVRS has been advised by the DE that this is their choice and the schools may not violate their trust. Collaboration Transition Protocol (CTP) is a process that was developed by IVRS, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Area Education Agencies (AEA) and implemented throughout Iowa. In 2015, the CTP process was redesigned and re–named (Collaborative Outcomes for Students) to move the focus away from IVRS eligibility and toward improving collaboration at the local level to achieve outcomes. While IVRS has demonstrated through the CTP that students were linked with IVRS and determined eligible with 100% accuracy, the outcomes in terms of employment were disappointing (status 30s were significant). The process is changing from being offered to select schools to being available to all high school districts in Iowa. The new process will allow expanded local control over the plans on how to improve collaboration between these three agencies and achieve outcomes for students. A Steering Team was developed to review both qualitative and quantitative data to determine which school districts are struggling with collaboration and student outcomes. Based on their findings, a recommendation will be made to local teams consisting of: the IVRS Supervisor, IVRS Resource Manager, AEA representative, and local school district administrator. Teams will review the information and develop a plan of action to improve collaboration to provide better outcomes for students with disabilities. By moving decisions to local planning teams, better plans and better services for students with disabilities is anticipated. IVRS has a written agreement with the community colleges which calls for IVRS staff to be housed on campus and have ready access to students and faculty. In a few settings, staff are provided space to use when they regularly visit the campus, since they do not have permanent office space available. In many community colleges space has been allocated for a Rehabilitation Associate or a Counselor and they are members of the disability resources on campus. This co–location and collaboration creates greater conduits for transition as students have ready access to a counselor or associate who provides guidance and resources. In two areas, the IVRS area office is located on a community college campus. IVRS recognizes that these agreements need to be updated and will work to achieve this over the course of the next few months. Specific staff is assigned to each of the three Regents Universities in Iowa. Staff has ready access to students, faculty and administration in these settings. There is an Agreement between IVRS and the Iowa Board of Regents.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, hereafter known as IVRS, and the Iowa Department of Education, hereafter known as the DE, both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post–secondary education and/or employment, for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education and are eligible, or potentially eligible, to receive vocational rehabilitation services. Specifically, the intent of this agreement is to:

• Define the responsibilities of both division within a tiered system of support; • Provide for efficient and effective utilization of agencies' resources; • Minimize duplication; and, • Delineate a basis for

continuous, effective working relationships between the two agencies. II. Consultation and Technical Assistance IVRS staff will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEAs, AEAs and potentially eligible students with disabilities. These services are intended to benefit students or youth with disabilities as they transition from school to post–secondary life related to an employment outcome. These services are to assist school personnel in developing a seamless system of transition for all students. A vocational rehabilitation counselor or other staff member will work in concert with educational agencies designated by the DE to provide services for individuals who are receiving special education services under an IEP, or services provided according to Section 504 to provide pre–employment transition services to individuals who are potentially eligible but have not yet applied for services. Services may include, but are not limited to, group tours of universities and vocational training programs, employer or business site visits to learn about career opportunities, career fairs coordinated with AEAs and Workforce Development partners and employers to facilitate mock interviews, resume writing, job exploration counseling, work place readiness, work–based learning, counseling on opportunities at post–secondary institutions, self–advocacy and other general services applicable to groups of students with disabilities and youth with disabilities. Due to staff capacity issues, these services are generally provided with groups of students and youth who are under an IEP or Section 504, but may be delivered individually if the class schedule is not conducive to group work. Educators will request consultation and technical assistance services from IVRS when needed to plan for individual transition needs, including development of the individual's course of study. Educators will consult with IVRS regarding the individual's impediments to employment and provide all information available.

In a multi–tiered system of support (MTSS), IVRS involvement is directly related to the level of support needed by the student and the point at which IVRS involvement is required.

III. Transition Planning IVRS counselors and educators are both responsible for the development and completion of the employment component of a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) in concert with the student, the parents, and the IEP team. IVRS involvement in the IEP development and completion will be determined by individual student need, not student age or grade. IEP teams and IVRS counselors will consider four factors to determine when employment preparation should start and the intensity of the services that should be provided:

1. Student knowledge and skills; 2. Student learning characteristics, including student response to ease of accessibility and accommodations; 3. Complexity of support needs; and, 4. Number of environments effected. The more intense the need for services, the earlier preparation should start and the more people who have specialized knowledge (e.g.; work experience counselors, IVRS counselors) should be involved. This involvement may be provided by IVRS without a case record, but instead as part of the pre–employment services (PETS) provided. These services can be conducted in a group setting and will require collaboration to determine the PETS activities that are needed by that specific LEA and will suit the students in that setting. When appropriate due to scheduling and other factors they may be provided individually but only when such conflicts prevent the service from being provided in groups.

Those students who require more intensive services in order to learn, understand and apply the information from PETS activities will be encouraged to submit an application for IVRS. Intense services may not be provided without the student having been determined eligible and served under an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).

IVRS staff will review information for students who submit an application for services and AEAs/LEAs will share existing information which will assist IVRS in determining a student's eligibility. If needed, students will participate in additional assessment(s) to determine eligibility services.

The scheduling of these assessment(s) will require collaboration between IVRS, LEA and AEA staff members.

Once an eligibility determination has been made by IVRS, the decision will be shared with the LEA and AEA staff. This information will be considered as part of the student's transition plan within the IEP.

IVRS counselors will develop an IPE for each individual determined to be eligible for IVRS within 90 days of being removed from the IVRS waiting list. The student, parents, educators and IVRS counselors will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with one another.

IV. Roles, Responsibilities and Financial Obligations Each division shall be responsible for the costs they incur in carrying out this agreement, including:

IVRS

Provide pre–employment transition services in collaboration and coordination with the LEA, ensuring that services (including individualized services under an IPE) are not duplicative nor do they supplant existing LEA services.

Use assessment information provided by education to determine eligibility and services. Securing additional assessment only when necessary and assuming financial responsibility for the cost of the additional information.

Provide consultation and technical assistance to educators.

Participate in the development of the employment and related components of the IEP, based on individual need.

Develop an IPE for students within 90 days of being removed from waiting list, unless an extension is approved.

Ensure the IPE goals are consistent with IEP employment goals.

Provide or arrange for services required by the IPE goal, when the individual has been determined eligible for IVRS services and has an individual employment plan where the services are needed for the student's specific employment outcome.

Provide assistance in the purchase of tools, supplies and other job related personal expenses for IVRS eligible students who have demonstrated success in a 4+ career and technical program as it relates to the IPE goal.

Arrange and pay for job development needed to serve the most significantly disabled students who require supported employment services. If long–term supports are needed after high school, IVRS will assist the LEA in coordinating these services.

DE

Will ensure AEAs and LEAs understand their responsibilities to:

Provide all existing educational assessment and performance information relevant for the determination of IVRS eligibility and services.

Request consultation and technical assistance from IVRS counselors when needed for planning and implementing transition services.

Consult with IVRS staff for identification of student's vocational needs and services.

Develop and complete the employment component of the IEP, based on individual need.

Ensure IEP employment goals are consistent with IPE goals.

Work with IVRS staff to identify whether IVRS referral is appropriate and the supports needed to complete the application.

Pay for all services listed on the IEP, unless another agency or entity agrees to provide such services.

Provide and/or pay for job coaching, when needed, as part of the instructional component of the IEP.

Provide and/or pay for extended school year supports, as needed

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

The mission of IVRS is to provide expert, individualized services to Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support.

The determination of eligibility requires that a qualified rehabilitation professional employed by IVRS perform a comprehensive analysis of the disabling conditions, impediments to employment and justification of why the individual requires services from IVRS to be successfully employed. As such, an eligibility justification is a process for the rehabilitation counselor to learn about the individual's presenting disability and gain understanding of the implications. Through a process of analysis, the IVRS counselor must consider the impact of the disabling conditions upon the person's ability to work, and then synthesize the information to determine if the individual can be successful with IVRS simply providing technical assistance and consultation to existing systems or if the individual requires intensive services to be successful in employment. A thorough process of developing an understanding from the individual's point of view, analyzing the information and synthesizing it in relationship to IVRS requirements and then determining the priority of service and service needs involves:

1. Gather information that describes the individual's disability and the difficulty the individual is having in gaining access to services and supports to be successful in employment; 2. Analyze the information in relationship to the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain and advance in employment and how the individual can access services and supports that exist to more fully

understand the implications of the individual's disability upon employment; 3. Consider those impediments that have been identified to determine the seriousness on the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain or advance in employment as well as the timeframe required to successfully complete services and obtain employment that could not otherwise be obtained from other organizations; and, 4. Determine the priority for services by examining the seriousness and evaluating if the serious impediment has implications in preparing for, obtaining, maintaining or advancing in employment and the specialized services and supports that are necessary for the individual to be successful. Scope of services: Scope of services are provided to individuals who have a priority rating consistent with the category being served. All other IVRS eligible individuals will be placed on a waiting list. Students on the waiting list may receive pre–employment transition services but no expenditure may be authorized on the case record.

As appropriate to the vocational needs of each individual and consistent with each individuals' informed choice, VR must ensure that the appropriate rehabilitation services are available to assist the individual with the disability to prepare for secure, retain, regain or advance employment. These services should be consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choices. IVRS may determine that a student is no longer eligible for services and close the case if an error in determination was made.

Note: Parental consent is not needed for the initial meeting between student and IVRS staff or any related initial follow–up meetings. Written and parental consent is needed for completion of the IVRS application for students under the age of 18 and can be obtained after the initial meeting.

All school personnel, including school nurses, shall share educational information of students with disabilities, including electronic access to IEPs, when appropriate and necessary for IVRS services. This shall include referrals to IVRS. Similarly, the IVRS staff shall share relevant information about students with disabilities when appropriate and necessary to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post–secondary education and/or employment.

IVRS staff may have access to relevant special education data and related systems in order to ease provision and documentation of services.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

IVRS develops cooperative agreements with private, non–profit entities to provide specific services under the State Plan and in the past this has related to Establishment Grants which fostered new service delivery in areas of need. The last Establishment Grants performed were in 2011. The non–profit organization agrees to provide funding that is used to match the federal allocation. Those funds are then awarded to the non–profit entity, consistent with state competitive procedures. The funds are designated for specific services as long as they are provided to eligible IVRS clients consistent with categories of the waiting list that are receiving services. IVRS monitors programs and expenditures for compliance with existing state and federal policies. If a cooperative agreement does not comply with the statewideness agreement, IVRS will obtain a waiver of statewideness. At the current time, IVRS does not manage any of these types of Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. IVRS also provides coordination efforts with our state's independent living centers and State–wide Independent Living Council. Independent living services are provided through the Administration of Community Living and have their own state plan. There are opportunities being discussed with the Centers to provide the IL Core Services in compliment to VR employment services, which will enhance service capacity efforts. For example, an individual is in active job search, but needs housing and transportation assistance to manage daily activities. The IL Center would have expertise to address the housing and transportation needs allowing VR services to focus on employment needs.

IVRS has purchase of service agreements with 60 community rehabilitation program partners. These agreements provide services in the community for: assessment, training, supported employment, work–readiness, work adjustment, and specific occupational skills development. When the individual being served is an adult and supported employment is a required service, then the agreement with the Department of Human Services – Medicaid is implemented for funding (see that MOA for details.) If the individual being served is a student, then IVRS supports the students with those services in accordance with the agreement with the Department of Education. Regardless of the individual being served, IVRS does not allow a delay in service if the individual is on a waiting list or beginning application for services from a comparable benefit.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

IVRS has established contractual agreements for the provision of supported employment services with approximately 60 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPS) in Iowa. Agency standards for services must be met for a contractual agreement to be developed between IVRS and a CRP. Prior to arranging for Supported Employment, the IVRS counselor must identify funding for extended services required to maintain employment after the IVRS case file is closed. IVRS has provided funding for Supported Employment Services through a shared funding arrangement with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise System. IVRS has developed a Menu of Services which serves as an agreement between IVRS and the CRP. The focus of the Menu is on the job candidate's needs which drive the planning and service delivery process. IVRS counselors and job candidates determine which outcomes are needed in order for the job candidate to progress forward in reaching the supported employment goal as identified on the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). There are specific categories from which the counselor and job candidate may choose one service or a combination of services that lead to supported employment placement and stabilization: – Discovery Services – Workplace Readiness Assessment – Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation – Career Exploration and Job Shadowing – Work Adjustment Training – Occupational Skill Training – Transportation Training – Job Development – Supported Job Coaching. Reports from the CRP describe the quality indicators and benchmarks that were accomplished, in addition to other pertinent information necessary to enhance vocational success, and the job candidate's and counselor's understanding of the questions asked. The IVRS counselor and job candidate refer their questions and service requests to the CRP, which determines if it has the capacity to provide answers and work in partnership with the counselor and the job candidate. A team meeting occurs to discuss the plan for Supported Employment services delivery. IVRS is making changes in the alignment and collaboration of service rates through participating the past four years in an Employment First Grant through the Office of Disability and Employment Policy. Strategic planning has collaboratively occurred through the Administration of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the State Employment Leadership Network and the DOL, Disability Employment Initiative. These efforts resulted in a focus on improved alignment of services and the funding of those services to support service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities. IVRS, in January of 2016, revised the Menu of Service to reflect alignment with hourly Medicaid Service rates and related performance measures and billable units which improve accountability and connection to service outcomes. Training was rolled out January 1, 2016. Community rehabilitation providers along with a wide–variety of community input contributed to the final product. Additional follow–up trainings and meetings have been required as the CRPS struggled with understanding some of the planning requirements. Many asked to change the process without even participating in the current structure and so they were advised that because they have voice frustrations over IVRS failing to be consistent statewide, IVRS would follow the Menu of Services policy and procedures for at least one year before considering changes. This is considered necessary to get everyone working in the system following the same policy and procedures so that the work can be performed consistently. Also IVRS believes that it is impossible to know what needs to change unless the participants have all experienced the current expectations and policy plan. Experience can then inform the process. Iowa VR has been the lead agency in the Employment First initiative and worked

with 30 plus community providers in receiving direct subject matter expertise with community integrated employment strategies. These efforts of provider transformation, along with Community of Practice webinars during the past two years, positively impacted customized employment service delivery as well as increased numbers of individuals with the most significant disabilities accessing competitive, community integrated employment. As an effort to impact the outcomes of the most significantly disabled students/youth in secondary education, IVRS will modify the service contract called Making the Grade (MTG) to provide work readiness and work place learning opportunities to students who are MSD. This project will focus on providing opportunities so as to bypass extended evaluation after graduation. Further information on the MTG is found under the WIOA strategies as a result of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) – was designed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout Iowa. Members of this group include staff from IVRS, the Department for the Blind, Veteran's Administration, Small Business Administration, and Division of Persons with Disabilities, Workforce Development, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Drake University, and Iowa Medicaid. Persons from high school transition age to the aging population are represented. Members of this group present to individual employers as well as employer organizations throughout the state. At present, much attention has been raised by this group to inform employers about Section 503 Rules for Federal Contractors. Internal tools and resources have been provided to staff of IVRS to assist in educating employers about compliance with Section 503. Additionally, this group presented a conference in August, 2015, to assist in education on hiring persons from diverse backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, and the value these individuals present to the workforce. In Iowa, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in the last decade; therefore, business and industry are considering populations that they traditionally did not pursue in hiring. With the limited number of work–ready job candidates, the conference agenda was geared toward emphasizing the benefits to employers of hiring persons with disabilities. IVRS is striving to create these connections during this economic opportunity.

Diversity Specialists – Another strategy that IVRS is using with business and industry is creating partnerships that embed diversity specialists in the business. Through a contract, IVRS collaborates with a business diversity specialist through sharing of service costs for IVRS eligible Job Candidates. The specialist then strives to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities in the place of employment. While only one of these arrangements currently exists, IVRS is working to expand these arrangements so that there is one diversity specialist in the geographic area of every IVRS area office.

Preliminary data shows that this is a very cost–effective way to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In FFY 15, there were 15 placements with Unity Point, an organization that provides medical services through the various clinics and hospitals in Des Moines. The intent of this contract is for assigned staff from Unity Point (UP) to connect job candidates of IVRS with UP department managers who do the hiring to provide assistance and opportunities for placement. UP staff complete the following: advocate with the supervisor of the employers' department unit to hire IVRS work–ready job candidates; develop employment opportunities for targeted job candidates through communication and collaboration at UP with Contractor's hiring authorities; track and ensure training of IVRS job candidates who are newly hired so they become familiar with and understand the business culture of the work unit; complete a job analysis on each job an eligible IVRS job candidate is placed into; involve the IVRS counselor in the accommodation and assistive technology discussions with the hiring manager; work with the job candidate's employment supervisor to identify a mentor on the job; discuss how the job candidate is adjusting to the new job and connecting the supervisor; and place and work only with eligible and active IVRS job candidates who have been referred under the annual contract. This provides an enhanced way to integrate the business culture into counseling and guidance and employment plan development.

Sector Partnerships – IVRS area offices are also becoming involved and engaged in sector partnerships. At the state level, IVRS has representation on the statewide Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Advisory Boards and will be involved in policy development that addresses accessibility issues. At the local level, the sector partnerships are locally developed workforce partners that serve specific industry sectors by providing a talent pool of eligible job candidates, as well as technical assistance to business and industry regarding their specific questions and needs. The Burlington Area Office has one IVRS employee on each sector partnership which has proven to be a systemic approach to placement. This allows the team to serve the business, and when a member of the team resigns or retires, a new member from the organization is then placed on the partnership. In this manner business receives services in a continuous fashion, the relationship is built with the partnership, and there is not any gap in service delivery to the business. IVRS area offices are all working with their local workforce development partnerships to become engaged and involved, or in some instances to create these partnerships where they do not exist. IVRS can be instrumental in this development because IVRS is in every county and has personal contacts in each county. This will serve as a conduit to creating and extending sector partnerships to more rural and remote areas of the State of Iowa.

On–the–Job Training – Another service provided by IVRS is the On–the–Job (OJT) Training service. IVRS met with IWD (DOL) lawyers to learn the wage and hour rules and the Fair Labor Standards Act related to OJT services in order to revamp the IVRS service to achieve a more consistent service; to ensure the program is conducted in a manner that is consistent with legal requirements; and to ensure that the program achieves the state purpose which is “participants will be compensated while learning an occupation.” The OJT service has two distinct options: 1. The trainee receives a stipend, but is not an employee of the company; 2. The trainee receives a salary, and is an employee of the company. The expected outcome of both is that the participant learns a skill that is either transportable to another company, or is retained by the training company and achieves an employment outcome. The OJT service is typically used for those individuals for whom more intensive training on the job is needed in order to be successful. Occupational Skills Training Programs have been provided to the following top IVRS Employers: FFY2015 Top Iowa Employers Hiring Individuals with Disabilities As this data is compared with the top industry clusters in the State of Iowa it is clear there is a disconnect between those hiring individuals with disabilities that work with IVRS and the State of Iowa industry clusters (see Labor Market Information in the USP) that are the top employers, (except for health care employers listed). This comparison demonstrates that IVRS and disability service organizations will need to concentrate on creating skill development training programs that will enhance the skills of persons with disabilities so they may competitively compete for middle skill occupations. On–the–Job Training Results: 2012 2013 2014 2015 Successful Closures 56 86 52 52 Average Hourly Wages $9.56 $9.40 $9.40 $9.19 Average Hours Worked Per Week 29 26 31 27

The Area Aging Association contracts are designed to better serve individuals that IVRS is working with who are 55+ years of age. IVRS collaborated with the Iowa Department on Aging to develop a program to hire six Employment Specialists providing full state coverage through the Area Agencies on Aging. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment completed for the last state plan had identified a need for specialized programming for this population. The SRC agreed and as a result these projects were developed. These services are available on a state–wide basis for any VR job candidate age 55 or older. IVRS counselors are working in collaboration with AAA staff to provide wrap–around services. Employment Specialists partner with the IVRS counselor to assist in identifying job goals, resources in the communities, and businesses that are open to hiring older workers. The AAA contract started in FFY 2014 and had 90 individuals referred to the program with seven placements. Due to that being the first year of the program, the focus involved getting

individuals referred to the program. So far in the current fiscal year there have been 102 referrals made to the program, an additional 22 placements, and 8 successful closures. Staff Training – On October 29, 2013, IVRS invited Denise Bissonette to provide training to staff on 30 Ways to Shine, which is a training curriculum for individuals with disabilities to learn not only job keeping skills but also skills that assist them in being noticed and prepare for advancement in the work setting. In addition staff participated in a training provided by the Association of Providers for Supported Employment and Iowa Workforce Development on job development and employer development facilitated by Denise Bissonnette. In FFY 14 six cases closed successfully received the "30 Ways to Shine" training, and since that time the case narrative records show that staff are using this work readiness training more extensively than the data supports. While training was provided to staff on how to record this information into the case management system, ongoing analysis, training and communication will need to be infused to assure that services provided are recorded accordingly so this curriculum can be measured and evaluated. The skills learned through this training were the expressed skill deficits that employers identified as issues demonstrated by today's workforce. More consistent training and providing this training at a younger age may address the concerns noted by employers in the Community Conversations and better prepare the future workforce.

The Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) – is a program through Walgreens that provides retail skills to externs or trainees with a variety of disabilities. The program works in partnership with agencies within a community to provide job coaches who can help externs gain skills and the opportunity for future employment. Participants in the REDI program are not guaranteed employment, however, the purpose of the training is to provide externs the skills and competencies required to be successful in the retail environment. IVRS works in conjunction with Walgreens stores offering the REDI, in addition to providing funding support to CRP partners who oversee job coaching and training. Externs who successfully complete the 120–hour REDI training have the opportunity to apply for openings at Walgreens or with a neighboring business. Since the initiation of REDI in 2012, IVRS has worked with six Iowa providers (CRPS) to deliver REDI training in twelve Walgreens stores across Iowa.

REDI Training Results: 2012 2013 2014 Successful Closures 5 7 11 Average Hourly Wages $8.28 $8.33 $8.14 2015 REDI data is integrated into our Annual CRP Report Cards which are distributed in the spring of the 2016. This additional time allows for a more complete set of data/outcomes. Occupational Skill Training Programs – continue to be developed and coordinated per local area office needs. We are expanding communication efforts at the local IWD Regional Workforce Boards in order to ensure collaboration with existing career pathways and sector boards that will be integrated and accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Manpower – IVRS began a partnership with Manpower in 2013 to assist Iowans with disabilities gain employment. Job Candidates gain exposure to positions that could turn into a permanent hire; they have access to jobs that are most plentiful in the current economy; and they are able to tap into Manpower's expertise in attracting and placing over 5 million people globally in a variety of positions through a proven intake process that identifies the best candidate match. By partnering with Manpower, our candidates also receive 24/7 online training through Manpower Training Development Centers. This is achieved through IVRS counselors completing a passport identifying barriers to employment and accommodations needed by the job candidate in order to be successful. Manpower and VR then assist the employer in providing the necessary accommodations and training required for the job candidate to be successful and meet the business's needs.

Manpower Placement Results: 2012 2013 2014 2015 Referrals 115 99 Successful Placements 24 (20%) 28 (28%)

Iowa Self–Employment Program – Self–Employment is a vocational option that may be considered as part of an individual's informed choice. A program for self–employment has been developed under an agreement between Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB). It is available to active candidates of IVRS or IDB who are able to become self–sufficient by establishing, expanding, or acquiring a small business. IVRS employs two full–time business staff who specialize in assisting job candidates with a vocational goal of self–employment. Before investing time and money into a self–employment venture, the candidate must complete an in–depth study about the business they intend to start. The IVRS/IDB Counselors and the candidate, guided by the technical assistance of the IVRS Business Development Specialists, will outline a plan of action to help explore: an individual's qualifications and skills; the entrepreneurial idea; determination of the feasibility of the business idea; and facilitate Business Plan development should the idea demonstrate promise. Iowa Economic Development, Iowa Small Business Development Centers, Iowa Job Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) are organizations that can help with preliminary exploration of business ventures, and services available through Iowa Workforce Development may also provide additional education. IVRS and IDB provide the financial assistance to start a business to their respective job candidates with matching dollars provided by the job candidate. When the candidate is served by both agencies, IVRS and IDB coordinate the services and the plan. The data below demonstrates the number of successful businesses supported that remained in business two years post the opening of the business.

Self–Employment Program Summary: 2012 2013 2014 2015 Successful Closures 39 54 38 49 Average Hourly Wages $11.10 $15.75 $13.65 $13.74 Average Hours Worked Per Week 29 31 31 29 Active ISE job candidates as of 9/30 year–end 83 137 122 107

SRC Business Engagement – An additional example of business coordination occurred through the work of our State Rehabilitation Council. The Council facilitated for National Disability Awareness Month in 2015 a series of three educational webinars hosted with local collaboration/discussion occurring at three host sites. This created awareness around the business case and benefits of hiring people who have a disability. Approximately 80 people attended the session across the state, for each webinar.

A few quotes from the series: "Great job yesterday at our Business Education seminar! I enjoyed your presentation – it was absolutely aligned with our goal of delivering information to our businesses that is oriented to their success at broadening the employment pool and consequently their markets – without talking about compliance with this or that regulation." –CEO Economic Development GCVA "I am new to the HR world, and this information has been very helpful. Please send me more." – HR Manager, Mason City, IA "This helped me connect the dots on how I can help candidates and employers. Accommodations don't have to be huge costs. They can be simple ways to make the environment work for everyone." – Recruiter, Waterloo Chamber of Commerce – IVRS also encourages and supports local office involvement with their Chamber of Commerce. This does involve approval of funding for local memberships. This is reviewed with each member registration and area offices are asked to respond to the following questions: State if it is a New Membership or a Renewal. Briefly explain how membership relates to your office placement blueprint. . Explain how your office will specifically use the Chamber membership. Specify who is involved and how information will be shared. Explain how you will know the Chamber membership is of value. Identify costs and timeframe based on membership. If your membership is a renewal, also briefly explain the impact of your membership from last year's involvement.

America's Job Honor Award – IVRS also has two videos featured through America's Job Honor Award that highlight business partnerships and individuals who have overcome barriers to have

successful employment. These videos are excellent communication tools for business talking to business and exemplify positive features of accessing VR employment services.

IVRS efforts in coordinating with our business partners will foster competitive community integrated employment. IVRS has not supported segregated employment outcomes for sixteen years so the strategies outlined above as well as what will be developed during this plan will continue to focus on increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes. Customized employment strategies including Discovery and customized job carving will be highlighted in on–going training efforts for VR staff and community providers as effective business resource tools. This training is integrated into sustaining the state's Employment First efforts.

IVRS also incorporated a goal on working with business and industry into every staff's performance plan. These goals are measured not simply as to if the action steps were performed, but if the actions resulted in an Employer Account.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The following two tables reflect the number of current job candidates and their respective Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for their employment goal. This is current as of February, 2016 and represents areas where business coordination can be prioritized. The first table is representative of all age groups and the second table is reflective of our youth, 22 years and younger. This reflects the types of industries that our job candidates are interested in and will help establish priorities for business development and coordination efforts.

Count of Case Number Revised SOC Category Total 11 – Management 339 13 – Business and Financial Operations 243 15 – Computer and Mathematical 408 17 – Architecture and Engineering 237 19 – Life, Physical, and Social Science 275 21 – Community and Social Services 518 23 – Legal 47 25 – Education, Training, and Library 665 27 – Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media 565 29 – Healthcare Practitioners and Technical 725 31 – Healthcare Support 424 33 – Protective Service 238 35 – Food Preparation and Serving Related 609 37 – Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance 400 39 – Personal Care and Service 632 41 – Sales and Related 396 43 – Office and Administrative Support 1176 45 – Farming, Fishing, and Forestry 137 47 – Construction and Extraction 223 49 – Installation, Maintenance, and Repair 535 51 – Production 682 53 – Transportation and Material Moving 292 55 – Military Specific 23 Grand Total 9789

Current Age (Multiple Items) Count of Case Number Revised SOC Category Total 11 – Management 160 13 – Business and Financial Operations 114 15 – Computer and Mathematical 228 17 – Architecture and Engineering 137 19 – Life, Physical, and Social Science 171 21 – Community and Social Services 184 23 – Legal 15 25 – Education, Training, and Library 392 27 – Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media 381 29 – Healthcare Practitioners and Technical 448 31 – Healthcare Support 299 33 – Protective Service 172 35 – Food Preparation and Serving Related 324 37 – Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance 138 39 – Personal Care and Service 443 41 – Sales and Related 150 43 – Office and Administrative Support 447 45 – Farming, Fishing, and Forestry 105 47 – Construction and Extraction 180 49 – Installation, Maintenance, and Repair 418 51 – Production 384 53 – Transportation and Material Moving 123 55 – Military Specific 22 Grand Total 5435

IVRS utilizes all of our employment services for adults and youth. We have seen value in understanding the business needs and being able to integrate those needs into counseling and

guidance that lays the foundation for employment planning and access to career pathways for students and youth with disabilities. Programs like the IVRS Transition Alliance Programs, Making the Grade, Project Search, Occupational Skill Training Programs, Pre–Employment Transition Work Readiness Programs, Access to school STEM programs, and the increase involvement of the Iowa Department of Education Intermediary Network focused on work based learning opportunities for all students combine to enhance transition employment services for IVRS job candidates. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau Chief is actively involved with the Special Education Advisory Board and the Administrator works with the Department of Education's Work Based Learning Grand as well as the Future Ready Iowa Program.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

IVRS and the Iowa Department of Human Services has established a MOA regarding our collaborative partnering efforts. The purpose of this agreement is to establish a statewide system of coordinated, cost efficient vocational/employment services for people with developmental disabilities with minimal overlap of responsibility and maximum utilization of resources between the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, hereinafter referred to as IVRS, and the Iowa Department of Human Services, hereinafter referred to as DHS. This agreement will serve to clarify roles and responsibilities of IVRS and DHS in regard to common consumers. In accordance with section 101(a) (8) (B) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.53(d), this agreement includes the following provisions: 1. A description of the financial responsibility of the State Medicaid program to provide such services; 2. Information identifying the terms, conditions, and procedures under which mutual job candidates will be served by IVRS and DHS; 3. Information describing procedures for resolving interagency disputes under the agreement; and 4. Information describing the policies and procedures for each public entity to determine and identify the interagency coordination responsibilities for purposes of promoting the coordination and timely delivery of employment–related services. Philosophy This agreement is predicated on the belief that individuals with disabilities should be provided vocational options with priority placed upon creating opportunities for competitive employment in the community providing for integration and career growth. Services will be delivered based upon an individualized plan for a person according to his or her needs. Individual choice of service options will be honored to the extent possible through a coordinated service delivery system that makes the best use of existing and potential financial, human and community resources. Both IVRS and DHS are considered funders of the last resort by their respective legislation. This MOA will assist in clarifying roles and responsibilities for reaching service/funding decisions. Joint Responsibilities IVRS and DHS agree to the following joint responsibilities in that: 1) Services authorized under this agreement must be provided by an approved vendor in a manner supportive of the philosophy governing both agencies, with an emphasis on informed choice and person–centered planning. Vendor approval prior to the delivery of services is required; however, separate certification or accreditation standards may be applied between IVRS and DHS. 2) Collaboration on the provision of joint staff training or cross training of staff is ongoing in order to ensure operational activities continue to meet the needs of the parties involved. 3) IVRS and DHS agree to obtain written consent from the client, provider and/or authorized representative for the release of information to any individual or entity not associated with the administration of the program. 4) A system is established that assures the following: (a) Plans shall address employment outcomes and specify services to be delivered and identify available options and responsible party. (b) A partnership is developed that combines resources and individual expertise to provide appropriate employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities. 5) Technical assistance and support is provided as a matter of routine or as requested to consumers, family members, advocates, case managers, VR counselors, service providers, IVRS/DHS administrative staff, other State agencies staff and the general public. 6) Supported Employment Services will ensure a smooth transition from the short term (IVRS/DHS funded) to the ongoing/extended (DHS funded) or natural supports, when applicable. 7) IVRS and DHS will provide services/resources to the extent of available funding. 8) IVRS and DHS shall cooperate and collaborate in all respects in the performance of this agreement including, but not limited to, sharing individual and service

provider information. To the extent that any of such information is confidential pursuant to any federal or state statute or regulation, the party receiving that information shall ensure its continued confidentiality and use of such information only for the purposes set forth in this agreement.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Responsibilities

(1) The IVRS Counselor will direct services for individuals at a local level by:

(a) Processing the application upon receipt of the referral to determine if the person qualifies and meets the criteria for requested IVRS services within 60 days of application. (b) Developing Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in accordance with IVRS guidelines after eligibility is determined. (c) Serving as a primary information resource for the individual with a disability, his/her family, the case manager, and other members of the team working with the person regarding IVRS programs and services (i.e.: provide assessment or benefit planning information, etc.) (d) Providing vocational guidance and counseling for individuals with disabilities and their families;

(e) Providing expertise to the team in defining goals, objectives and support services needed to attain appropriate employment; (f) Contributing in the development of the Individual Service Plan (ISP); (g) Participating in team meetings that involve a mutual client or impact vocational services; (h) Assisting in monitoring individual progress on reaching Employment Outcomes; (i) Arranging and/or purchasing services; referring to other services, as needed and as identified in the Individual Plan of Employment; (j) Assuring quality of vocational services provided; (k) Providing ongoing communication with all members of an individual's team as needed; (l) Cooperating with case manager in monitoring quality of employment service, reviewing both individual and provider progress; (m) Encouraging individuals who enter Supported Employment Services and receive Social Security benefits to become aware of and utilize SSA work incentives; (n) Identifying ongoing supports to begin by the time of an individual's stabilization on the job. (2) Personnel assigned by IVRS will provide tracking and monitoring required for contract expenditures completed by IVRS. (3) For eligible individuals, IVRS may purchase adaptive equipment, rehabilitation engineering and worksite modifications for community employment purposes only, consistent with the Individual Employment Plan. (4) Provide referral and funding as required for supported employment services not covered by Waiver such as Employer Development. IVRS will implement appropriate supported employment funding for transition students until age 24. IVRS will be the funder of first resort for transition–aged youth under the age of 24 who require Supported Employment Services. If a vocational outcome is not achieved by the time a job candidate turns 24, or SES is no longer an employment goal, any remaining authorizations will be cancelled by IVRS in order for DHS funds to be utilized. Any student between their 18th and 24th birthday who achieves stabilized employment will receive long term support from the waiver. IVRS funding includes vocational services for eligible VR job candidates transitioning from secondary–school programs focused on competitive, community–based integrated employment. Services will be coordinated with IME for a smooth transition of necessary services. (5) An eligible client of IVRS waiting for services from the Waiver can be served by IVRS. Services for supported employment services are authorized by IVRS until Waiver funds become available. At that time, IVRS would cancel any unused authorization(s) for remaining supported employment (d–code) services in order for Waiver funds to be used.

Both IVRS and DHS must adhere to their own policies and procedures for selecting vendors and authorizing funding. When IVRS determines that an employment outcome has been achieved, the DHS will assume responsibility for employment related support services as indicated in their individualized plan.

Department of Human Services Responsibilities

(1) The case manager will coordinate services for individuals at a local level by: (a) Referring the individual (with guardian if involved) to IVRS if pursuing supported competitive employment. It is the individual and/or guardian's responsibility to contact the counselor and make application for services. The case manager will provide the most recent ISP with psychological, medical and all diagnostic reports from DHS files upon request of the counselor with a signed release from the individual. (b) Convening and chairing team meetings, providing reasonable notice of meetings in advance to the IVRS counselor; (c) Working with the IVRS counselor, individual, family or guardian in selecting a vocational/employment service provider; (d) Sending updated copies of the ISP and related materials to IVRS counselor and vocational services provider; (e) Including the Employment Services Outcomes and action steps in the ISP, and document how the required extended support services will be delivered; (f) Including IVRS counselor and provider reports in employment reports; (g) Cooperating with IVRS counselor in monitoring of the quality of employment service, reviewing both individual and provider progress; (h) Providing copies of the plans of care to IVRS counselor and provider when submitted for approval (as needed). (2) Provide funds for job development, job coaching and on–going support to DHS eligible individuals for supported employment services. For those eligible individuals of both programs, coordinated efforts will continue including negotiating a cost sharing arrangement that would include IVRS funds for Employment Development and recognizing IVRS intent to provide funding supports for those individuals 24 years of age and younger. During the transition period, both DHS and IVRS will make efforts to coordinate the service and funding arrangements with input from the consumer and case managers. (3) Monitor contracts through DHS Quality Assurance.

Resolution of Conflict

In the event that IVRS and DHS are unable to achieve an acceptable cost–sharing arrangement, the following will apply:

Attempts will be made to resolve the issue at the lowest level of disagreement. When a responsibility for payment issue cannot be resolved at the lowest level it should be referred to the next highest level.

If the IVRS counselor and the DHS team member are unable to achieve an acceptable cost–sharing arrangement, administrative representatives from both agencies will discuss and bring resolution in the form of a cost–sharing arrangement to the matter.

This MOA recognizes that each agency has its own administrative mechanisms for the timely resolution of internal disputes. This MOA recognizes these procedures and permits each agency to resolve its own internal disputes.

This statewide agreement supersedes any previously developed agreement between IVRS and DHS.

EXECUTION AND MODIFICATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

Americans with Disabilities Act. The provider ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [Public Law 101–336] and all amendments and requirements imposed by the regulations issued pursuant to this act.

Termination. It is agreed by both parties that this agreement may be terminated by notice in writing by either party 30 days before termination date.

Any modification or amendments to the contract must be in writing and agreed to by both parties.

This agreement is effective October 1, 2014 or the latest date of signature through September 30, 2016.

Either party may terminate this agreement, completely or in part, by submitting 30 days written notice to the other party.

Either party may request modification of this agreement at any time by submitting 30 days written notice to the other party.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

IVRS has a representative on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and their Executive Director serves on the leadership team of Employment First, which is coordinated through IVRS. A MOA with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. There has been a change in the vision with the focus and belief that all individuals can be employed with the right supports and that through progressive employment options, there is something for everyone. Specific goals, strategies and benchmarks have been achieved during the past three years, with additional strategic planning occurring to continue momentum in the future as it relates to interagency cooperation as well as involving community partners, families and education in implementing an Employment First approach.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

IVRS and the Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication. In addition, IVRS is adopting the Medicaid rates that DHS is implementing in FFY 16. Collaborative planning efforts occurred with DHS in the implementation of the Iowa Employment First Principles which resulted in approaching Iowa legislatures in a collaborative manner resulting in increased state monies being available to serve Iowans with disabilities.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

IVRS maintains a web–based case management system with resulting monthly, quarterly, and annual reports providing job candidate caseload data which, along with budget information, is used to predict resources available for service delivery. An internal budget team meets monthly and the Administrative Services Bureau Chief has developed a sustainability model that is used as a foundation for the allocation of agency financial resources. Discussions occur regarding the filling of vacancies, justification of hiring decisions, waiting list removal decisions and setting case expenditure guidelines. The Iowa Department of Administrative Services and the Iowa Department of Management reviews every hiring decision and hiring justifications are required. The table below contains the major personnel categories and vacancies as of 10/1/15 in the Administrative Services Bureau, Rehabilitation Services Bureau and Planning and Development team. Personnel in the Disability Determination Services Bureau are not reported as they are not covered by the IVRS State Plan. In projecting vacancies over the next five years, the numbers reflect current employees over age 55 that could choose to retire. In recent years, IVRS has hired some Rehabilitation Assistants and Rehabilitation Associates to provide caseload management support, freeing Master’s level counselors to focus on their core functions of eligibility decision making, plan development, counseling and guidance and job placement. Positions are targeted to offices based on optimum caseload size as well as clients projected to come off the waiting list and move into active services.

Area Office Supervisors and other managers have 20 total positions. Professional staff – counselors and rehab associate have 116 current positions and Support staff including rehab assistants have currently 58 positions

IVRS implemented a workforce planning model approximately five years ago and continue to use the model in reviewing personnel decisions to make staffing and hiring decisions. The total IVRS current caseload is 13,597 positions and staffing decisions are based upon the workforce planning model which delineates appropriate case load sizes per Counselor, Rehabilitation Associate and Rehabilitation Assistant. Clerical support staff models have changed with the implementation of the use of transcriptionists, Dragon Naturally Speaking software the integration of technology.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

There are no current vacancies with our Area Office Supervisors and manager levels. Our professional staff, Counselors and Rehabilitation Associates currently has 12 vacancies. Our Support Staff including Rehabilitation Assistants have 11 current vacancies.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Area Office Supervisors and Managers are projected to have 14 vacancies during the next five years. Professional Staff including Rehabilitation Counselors and Associates are projected to have 47 vacancies during the next five years and our Support Staff including Rehabilitation Assistants are projected to have 29 vacancies.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

In the State of Iowa there are two institutions of higher education that provide a post–secondary graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling: Drake University, Des Moines; and the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Both programs offer a degree that allows graduates to work not only in rehabilitation counseling but also mental health counseling. In the past IVRS found that it was difficult to recruit students into IVRS because of their strong interest in mental health counseling.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The University of Iowa has 23 students enrolled in the Master Degree Rehabilitation Counseling program. Drake University has 36 students enrolled in their Master Degree Counseling Program.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The University of Iowa has 13 student graduates during the prior year and Drake University had 14 student graduates.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The agency actively works with the two Rehabilitation Counseling programs in Iowa and recruits from graduate programs in Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin. During the past year, IVRS area offices supervised practicum and intern students in the Rehabilitation Counseling programs to provide them with field work exposure to the state rehabilitation agency. In an attempt to address the recruitment of individuals from minority backgrounds into the field of rehabilitation, IVRS reviewed its recruiting and hiring practices to assure consideration of applicants from diverse backgrounds. IVRS actively attempts to recruit from a wide variety of sources including the Iowa State hiring system, Iowa Workforce Development and various community newspapers. Communication with staff continues on the importance of working with our diverse client basis from a service delivery perspective, but also from a staff recruiting basis. The screening process is equitable to all applicants. Screening is done strictly on a numeric basis and the top scoring applicants are interviewed. Applicants are selected from the top scorers.

Specific consultation has occurred with our Iowa Department of Administrative Services in efforts to expand recruitment from non–traditional sources. Currently about 6.86% of the employee pool is minority status and 14.6% are persons with disabilities. Although the State of Iowa as a whole is underutilized for Females, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities, IVRS has met or exceeded all state goals. With the addition of the Rehabilitation Associate and Rehabilitation Assistant classifications, the options for applicants from diverse populations have also increased. IVRS continues to focus on diversity growth especially in the professional classification levels and have had several meetings with the Iowa Department of Personnel to expand recruitment strategies. The Bureau Chief of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau is on the Advisory Board for the University of Iowa. . She meets with students after the board meetings to discuss employment with IVRS, the benefits, the qualities that the state agency is looking for and current trends. As a result, more students from UI have applied for jobs within the last year with IVRS. The greatest barrier currently is the Department of Administrative Services took over the screening of applications and denies students who only need to complete their internship for meeting the minimum qualifications. A change in personnel job descriptions is occurring, which will allow for competitive hiring of students who still need to complete their internship requirements. Since the Chief has been on the Advisory Board, IVRS recruited one qualified rehabilitation counselor from a diverse background. The IVRS Administrator also serves on the Drake University Rehabilitation Counseling Advisory Board and an IVRS Resource Manager is a contract faculty member. These connections facilitate access to potential students and assist in organizing field work experience to help students prepare for a career in vocational rehabilitation.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

IVRS established personnel standards that are consistent according to state guidelines and are reviewed by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. The academic degree standard for VR counselors remains a Master’s Degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, or a closely related major emphasis. Within our previous RSA In–Service training grant, if a successful candidate did not have a rehabilitation counseling degree, he/she must agree to complete such classes or Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling within a reasonable period of time from the date of hire. This placed a burden on the agency in finding qualified applicants for our rural offices. Our new policy reflects the goal of hiring Master Degree Rehabilitation Counselors or in a closely related field and removes the CRC requirements. The agency will continue to provide and support individual training for staff as identified by their individual performance plans.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

State personnel standards for supervisors and resource managers in the Rehabilitation Services Bureau are similar. Rehabilitation Associates provide case–management assistance increasing the counselors' capacities to perform in their core functioning areas. The education, experience, and special requirements for Rehabilitation Associate classification include graduation from an accredited college or university with major coursework in a human services related area; or an equivalent combination of education and experience substituting full–time human service work experience for the required education (thirty semester or equivalent hours equals one year) to a maximum substitution of two years.. Two counselors who do not have master's degrees were hired between October 1978 and March 1979, and are or will be eligible to retire in the next 5 years. IVRS hired two new counselors who did not meet the qualifications for sitting for the CRC and supported those two counselors in their efforts to pick up additional coursework during the reporting period. Several factors influence the ability to hire persons with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. For some positions, the job description determines the skills needed to do the job. In the review of applicants, the agency looks not only at academic degrees held, but their ability to perform the job duties of a specific opening. Some candidates with prior experience in community rehabilitation programs, school systems, or personnel organizations have the desired skills and contacts to place individuals with disabilities into employment. In many rural areas, qualified candidates with master's degree are quite limited. In those cases, individuals with related degrees are considered for vacancies. As positions become vacant, the supervisor determines if some of the case management duties can be performed by a Rehabilitation Associate, freeing up time for the Rehabilitation Counselor to provide counseling and employer development services, as well as approving all eligibility determinations and employment plans. IVRS Rehabilitation Counselors Rehabilitation Associates and Rehabilitation Assistants are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. IVRS has a strategic plan involving increased business involvement with collaborative and unified efforts at integrating a continuum of services with our State Core Partners. This is a key part of the WIOA Unified Plan efforts. These strategies will enhance IVRS's ability to have personnel understanding the 21st century employment needs.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The agency does provide and support professional career development training which can either be provided internal or external to the agency.

IVRS is certified through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification to provide approved continuing education hours for applicable coursework. Training activities focus on knowledge or understanding of rehabilitation topics, customer service, development and demonstration of new levels of skills, and organizational change projects that enhance the achievement of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

IVRS staff has the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars, concentrated training activities to improve skills in working with specific groups of individuals with disabilities, and individual or group staff development activities designed to enable staff to acquire special skills. New supervisors enroll in the Supervisory Certificate program offered through the Iowa Department of Administrative Services—Human Resources Enterprise. All supervisors attend Management Team sessions to update them on leadership and supervisory issues.

IVRS anticipates considerable training needs for FFY17 and beyond in order to fully implement the key components of WIOA. As a result IVRS has reached out to the National Institute on Disability to assist with the collaborative development of the Integration Plan with workforce partners and the essential training needed as it pertains to the integrated case management concept. IVRS also is identifying key training components that are critical for skill development in staff to implement: PETS, Section 511, Comprehensive Eligibility and Plan Development.

In addition to formal training, participation in leadership roles in teams that address Strategic Planning build capacity of staff at all levels to develop services that meet the needs of agency job candidates. Through these activities, they begin developing skills needed to increase capacity at the local level to improve consumer outcomes. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau leads the development of these topics based upon priority as it relates to the strategic planning needs of the Bureau.

There are ongoing opportunities for staff to indicate training needs. One section of the annual performance evaluation of all staff relates to training needs that have been identified for that individual. The individual is then given an opportunity to become involved in training to improve that performance area. Staff also request agency support to attend conferences and workshops pertaining to areas of development that are identified in annual evaluation conferences.

Current support was provided to any staff expressing interest in attending the Disability Employment Initiative Conference, the Association of Persons Supporting Employment First, the Iowa Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Training, On With Life Brain Injury Conference, and the Ethics Series sponsored by the University of Iowa Rehabilitation Program. Over a 120 staff participated in these types of training programs during the 2015 federal fiscal year.

The annual performance evaluation system for rehabilitation counselor and rehabilitation associates is designed to ensure that a strong emphasis is placed on issues that relate to the provision of quality services to vocational rehabilitation clients, especially those with the most significant disabilities. Evaluations that mainly assess the number of individuals closed as rehabilitated have been revised to incorporate quality review results. Individualized evaluation looks at ways of emphasizing a staff member's strengths and helping them improve in their areas of need. The RSB Bureau regularly conducts training in IVRS field offices on case review standards and policy changes, many of which relate to assessment, eligibility determination, plan development, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology. The RSB Bureau has undertaken an innovative change to further influence professional development in future years through organizing

staff structure in the assignment of Resource Managers to regional area offices. This provides a central point of contact to support the area office supervisor in the delivery of information, training and quality assurance initiatives. Formal staff development sessions also support implementation of goals and priorities in the State Plan with respect to Cultural Diversity, coordination with Workforce partners, services to deaf and hard of hearing job candidates, retention of job candidates to successful rehabilitation, changes in the Supported Employment model and services to high school students transitioning to adult life

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The agency routinely uses the latest research and pilot projects to update training programs in areas such as ADA, assistive technology, mental illness, learning disabilities, Autism, and head injury/traumatic brain injury. IVRS is the lead agency with the Employment First Initiative and staff as well as partners has access to a myriad of customized employment training webinars.

IVRS also provides training on policy, motivational interviewing, benefits planning, and when new initiatives and issues arise, training is developed and provided by the Rehabilitation Services Bureau. Standing committees exist to help disseminate information on a regular basis in the areas of Motivational Interviewing, Business development and engagement, benefits planning and assistive technology. These trainings continue to focus on providing staff adaptive skills in providing service delivery to a changing population need involving collaboration with Unified State Planning Goals, Individuals with increased functional limitations and barriers to employment as well as an emphasis on our aging population. These efforts also have a strong point of emphasis on our pre–employment transition services for youth engagement. In 2016, a Request for Proposal was submitted through the state contracting process for a training provider that will provide benefits planning training to 36 VR staff to expand the VR capacity to provide outreach and consultation related to benefits planning. This will expand VR current efforts and we will continue to be able to collaborate with existing benefit planners in the state to provide improved access. This training and follow–up will occur thru 2017.

IVRS management staff attended training in 2014/2015 for the Family Medical Leave Act, Interview to Hire and Discipline, Grievance and the Contract training.

A strategic goal for the agency during this plan, is to revise staff positions to focus on a position which would: Analyze agency development needs; Recruit agency team needs; Create and provide opportunities for staff to develop technical and personal skills; Onboard new team members with a focus on agency culture, policy and procedure; Assist in developing professional development for staff; Communicate professional standards for all staff; Improve agency recruitment and retention; and Develop and maintain relationships with area colleges/universities with rehabilitation programs. This position is not currently available in the agency and due to federal funding changes, the agency in–service training program was eliminated from federal funding.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

IVRS contracts with interpreters to provide manual communication for individuals who are deaf when that is the preferred mode of communication. IVRS staff also contract with language interpreters when an individual speaks a language other than English. This may be done through a state agency, through a private agency, as well as the use of CTS LanguageLink, which is part of the State's Master Agreement. Collaboration continues with the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa and the Iowa School for the Deaf on suggestions to improve service delivery for this population. IVRS maintains an agreement with the Iowa Department for the Blind to convert training materials into large print or Braille format for trainees with visual impairments and learning disabilities. All training materials are provided in the preferred means of communication, including Braille, large print, disk, or closed caption. IVRS, through the work of our SRC representative and Iowa Client Assistance Program, has made available an orientation video for outreach purposes which is completed in American Sign Language.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

IVRS and the DE have an agreement to provide joint training for staff to receive common information and skill development pertinent to students with disabilities. This includes the Summer Institute, as well as locally IVRS staff/management and the local education agencies and area education agencies enter into conversations regarding how they will work together to support the goals of students in transition. In these discussions, planning occurs on how to develop the core competencies of staff, how to expand on staff capacities, and what actions will achieve student outcomes. Often this does require participation locally in training and cross training of staff on language, services, etc. Information from the Community Conversations relative to the feedback from businesses was incorporated so that services from IVRS to the students are more job–driven in nature. Discussions on section 511 have only just begun and will continue to be an area of planning for the future. IVRS has a close working relationship with the bureau responsible for Special Education within the Iowa Department of Education. During the FFY 2015, 35% of the IVRS caseload was referred by the secondary school partners. The RSA Wallpaper identified IVRS as the number one state for percentage of students in transition on the caseload. IVRS counselors participate in IEP meetings and provide information and referral services to high schools in regard to students that are on waiting lists that are not being served. Pre–Employment Transition Services are being expanded to potentially eligible students as well as to those students in eligible status. IVRS and some school districts are participating in local initiatives to provide continuity in students' transition from high school to either post–secondary education or employment. In these initiatives, joint training is provided to IVRS staff and school personnel so that resources of each entity can be appropriately utilized for improved student outcomes. IVRS staff serving secondary schools in the past completed, in partnership with the school, a Collaborative Transition Vision Analysis, which measures IVRS and school interactions. This has been modified as the feedback and analysis showed that these results were opinions and rarely supported by the facts. As a result, the State Team (Collaboration Outcomes for Students), are identifying data points through the shared dashboard that will enable districts and VR offices to evaluate the effectiveness of their services and the impact on outcomes. The results of this information will then influence the local plans, the training, and the service delivery to achieve better outcomes for students with disabilities transitioning from school to post school work or learning environments. While IVRS has demonstrated a commitment to students in transition, and has achieved a high level of connecting

students in transition with IVRS, IVRS currently struggles with documenting staff time to support the 15% budget allocation toward PETS. IVRS has sought out consultation from the National Disability Institute to determine how to effectively document that 15% is being spent on PETS without continuing to be disruptive of the counselors and staffs workflow. IVRS believes that staff are under reporting due to being overwhelmed with all the requirements for documentation of time, which is perceived secondary to their commitment to delivery service. Without finding solutions, IVRS will find itself in the unfortunate position of having to find “projects” to financially support which only drains more finances away from service delivery and does nothing to relieve counselors of the burden of increased documentation that does not add value to the lives of the students served.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

IVRS provided the following information to SRC members at each meeting:

Administrative report financial overview rehabilitation services update state plan and independent living update legal update the Iowa client assistance program (ICAP) report

SRC members are also provided detailed updates related to IVRS progress on state plan goals, objectives and strategies. the current SRC structure consists of three sub–committees which include outreach, finance and planning and evaluation. additional activities and/or information shared by IVRS with SRC members included:

Workforce innovation and opportunity act – WIOA; community conversations; services to special populations; satisfaction surveys; community rehabilitation provider rate structure; collaborative initiatives; employment first; disability employment initiative; employer's disability resource network; making the grade; ticket to work/partnership plus; value stream mapping; veterans; transition alliance programs; national disability employment awareness month; skills training opportunities; project search; Walgreens retail employees with disabilities initiative (REDI) and memorandum of agreement signed between IVRS and the Iowa department of human services which outlines roles and responsibilities in serving youth under age 24 who require supported employment services.

The SRC has reviewed practices, customer satisfaction; the results of the community conversations, the quality assurance data, and labor market information as well as agency data. an area recognized that demonstrates a disconnect with the unified plan, is that the top businesses in Iowa that hire people with disabilities does not connect with the top businesses in need of labor and which provide the middle skill opportunities. as a result, IVRS recognized that there is a need to expand our work with the businesses that hire for the middle skill jobs by connecting our job candidates through strong counseling and guidance to provide direction and planning as well as training opportunities that connect with these middle skill employers. through career pathways connections and apprenticeship trainings IVRS will be able to encourage job candidates to seek out and obtain employment i the middle skills industries. IVRS will also continue to try and expand the business contracts where IVRS embeds a diversity/retention specialist in businesses. currently one contract exists where IVRS funds the salary of such a person employed by unity point health services, which is in the top industry sectors to be targeted.

IVRS has continued to demonstrate improvement and positive impact on previous existing Standards and Indicators. We consistently review annual data results and derive strategies to impact employment outcomes. This is the fourth consecutive year that IVRS exceeded federal employment standards. The review of this data and the strategic plan that has been in place is being revised to reflect the new opportunities provided by WIOA. The State of Iowa adopted the National Governor's

Association Policy Academy vision, goals, and objectives to drive the work of the Unified State Plan, with adaptations to complement system development. This information was reviewed with the State Rehabilitation Council on August 5, 2015. The reason for adopting the NGA Policy Academy work was to align the talent pipeline so that all workforce partners and organizations focusing on creating a Future Ready workforce would operate and implement actions that would systemically impact the economic future of Iowa and the income levels of all Iowans. This focus is extremely critical to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) because individuals with disabilities historically have earned less than their non–disabled counterparts. The strategies being identified should also positively impact the labor market participation rate for individuals with disabilities. 44.8% of Iowans with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 64 years are employed. This percentage places Iowa among the top states with the highest employment rates of people with disabilities. There is tremendous opportunity to continue positively influencing the number of individuals with disabilities participating in the labor market. This plan should positively impact those numbers so we see an expanding labor market participation rate for individuals with disabilities. IVRS incorporated into the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment specific assessment activities to better inform the State Rehabilitation Council of the work that had been done and the opportunities for future planning. The following are the strategies used in compiling sufficient information to create a road map for change:

1. Community Conversations/Public Meetings – After the authorization of the WIOA, IVRS began holding “Community Conversations” as part of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment to gain stakeholder input regarding the agency’s implementation of WIOA as well as identify opportunities to improve the system for individuals with disabilities seeking employment. These conversations were held in 25 communities around the State of Iowa, with a diversity of stakeholders including but not limited to: business and industry managers/owners; educators; administrators in post–secondary education; community rehabilitation programs; state workforce partners; Chamber of Commerce representatives; mental health providers; department of corrections representatives; disability support staff in various industries; case managers; county funding representatives; extension offices; and individuals with disabilities. The conversations identified, from the perspective of business and industry, the important issues to engage employers; ideas to develop new or alternative programming for “Earn and Learn” opportunities; and the resources available in the communities visited. These conversations have proven essential to the development of IVRS plans for WIOA implementation related to: • What strategies and issues would better engage business and industry in developing strong partnerships to create opportunities for persons with disabilities • What programmatic changes and implications are there to more fully integrate “earn and learn” opportunities for persons with disabilities? • What are the resources already available in the community that could be better aligned to achieve maximum employment opportunities? The diversity of discussion and ideas from all involved were gathered and then follow–up meetings were held where participants worked on various content areas. There was more interest from the participants to develop engagement strategies for business and industry than any other content area. Consequently the Business Development Resource Manager for IVRS brought these individuals together by providing “Business Panels” where all organizations can learn what it is business wants and needs in their employees. Participants also learned what it is that is screening individuals out from employment with a company. In the Cedar Rapids Area Office that is co–located with Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), joint planning among the core partners impacted the content and quality of information presented in a job seeking skills workshop presented at the One–Stop. This is one example of many where the local follow–up meetings produced changes in how programming was provided, or the quality of the programming offered. As a result organizations are using this information to improve their services and trainings for individuals with disabilities so they will be stronger candidates for jobs that are available in the Iowa economy. The following are topics that were identified in the Community Conversations that have prompted the need for follow up in

system design and application: Work readiness training that will enhance the confidence levels and work habits of individuals with disabilities; Transition planning for students to develop job skills for in–demand employment that may not require advanced education. Parent/family involvement to facilitate success. Work experiences in integrated competitive work environments that allow students to “earn and learn”. Businesses marketing to other businesses on the value of a diverse workforce. Support systems developed for job candidates. Progressive Employment opportunities developed to fill employment/skill gaps. Partners educated on services available from each partner to avoid duplication; Job seeking skills training re–developed with business input on necessary changes The following are the strategies that IVRS is in the process of developing and executing according to the feedback received: Develop a stronger and more business focused work readiness training for job seekers; Determine skill levels and necessary training to meet business needs. Advance progressive employment strategies as a resource for staff. Develop and implement business focused earn–and–learn opportunities, Improve linkages to career pathways and business sectors, Infuse business information and the need for “middle skill” sets when working with students and teachers in transition efforts. Encourage increased business engagement 2. Value Stream Mapping – During the week of March 2, 2015, a collaborative venture that involved IVRS, the Department of Education Adult Education, Iowa Workforce Development, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Human Rights, Iowa Economic Development, DMACC, NICC, a representative of Visiting Nurses, and the Pella Corporation was held to complete a Value Stream Mapping. The goal of Value Stream Mapping included a review of processes between WIOA core partners to refine procedures to better align systems. The issues identified by the mapping exercise included the following: Reduce duplication, identify barriers to collaboration, and increase collaboration of all partners at the one–stops. Focus on workforce training beyond entry–level skills and achieving postsecondary awards/credentials. Identify barriers to participant referrals or access to appropriate service providers within the one– stop system. Identify integration opportunities and data sharing on assessment information among workforce partners. Reduce duplication of services among various partners. Develop knowledge of all partners regarding roles and responsibilities. New strategies for addressing issues identified by Value–Stream Mapping recommended: Integrate one–stop services (remove duplication and increase communication among partners); Incorporate middle skills training and learn–and–earn models into system. Develop a common intake and referral process for all partners; Develop a system for universal assessment and sharing results among agencies; Provide professional development to program staff on integration within a one–stop system; Co–enroll common customers in appropriate educational programs; Develop data–sharing capability among all agencies. Develop a data–sharing system that contains a common eligible training provider list; Braid funds to better utilize resources efficiently. The information from the mapping event was used in the development of sub committees for the plan so that those committees would develop strategies and plans on how to improve the alignment of the workforce partnership. 3. Customer Satisfaction – In considering the IVRS Customer Satisfaction Survey results gathered over the course of the past few years, IVRS entered into a partnership with Dr. Groomes from Oakland University in Michigan to analyze the survey questions to assure the results to effectively measure satisfaction of services received from the Agency and enhance the SRC and IVRS’ understanding of the Customer Satisfaction Survey results. During this process, Dr. Groomes met with IVRS staff around the state to gather information regarding service delivery allowing her to get an understanding of what quality looks like in terms of service delivery. She explained the process of Value Chain Analysis and helped redesign the Customer Satisfaction Survey. In the new survey the SRC asks more probing questions which will provide better analysis of customer satisfaction and allow the council to discern the impact of those results.

During FFY15, there has been an increase in survey responses that will give IVRS more accurate data to not only understand current satisfaction in service delivery but also explore ways to improve services to job candidates of IVRS. The data points in the survey show that IVRS receives positive

responses on the questions in relation to quality of work with job candidates closed successfully. Those who are not closed successfully shared that IVRS is not providing the quality of work that the survey asks about. For individuals who did not have a successful outcome, IVRS is receiving responses that can assist in analyzing the current service delivery process and identify areas for improvement. IVRS is implementing Motivational Interviewing training with all staff. Eight specific customer satisfaction survey results identified a discrepancy of greater than 25% for respondents who exited VR services unsuccessful. These questions were shared with the IVRS Motivational Interview Team and strategies will be developed in efforts to change the results of the data and impact employment outcomes. There are some concerns with the survey data that need to be refined. In some cases, the questions are worded in a way that may allow a respondent to answer with a negative response due to the fact that they did not get what they wanted, even if what they wanted was not allowed based on federal or state policies. In these cases, IVRS will need to determine if there is a better way to ask the question or if the case record should be reviewed to see if staff acted in compliance with regulations, which may have contributed to the job candidate's displeasure. Through the process of this pilot, IVRS will be able to gain a better understanding of the quality of services that are provided through the perspective of IVRS job candidates. The goal will be to use this data to impact change at the local level so that individuals who work with IVRS see the value in our services and know that they have a voice in improving and advancing the work that IVRS provides to people with disabilities. In conjunction with the Mapping Event, the statewide Community Conversation Meetings and follow–up meetings to implement changes at the local level, and the Customer Satisfaction Survey data, the State Rehabilitation Council was provided sufficient information to provide guidance to IVRS on key decision points of the WIOA.

Earlier information was discussed regarding the IVRS approach to working with Community Rehabilitation Providers in the delivery of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment. Referrals and outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services has continued to increase and expand during each of the past three years. This has been driven by Employment First efforts occurring across state systems as well as increased collaboration and partnering with community providers, Iowa Medicaid and our state workforce system. A continued expansion of assistive technology resources that are available to VR Job Candidates will also be a resource as services for this population expand.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Thus far in FFY 2016, IVRS is achieving the 2.1 standard and indicator (which is established at .80) by achieving .860 on this indicator. In FFY 2016 the performance on this indicator was.840. Unfortunately, the service rate for minorities in FFY 2015 was .585, while the service rate for non-minorities was.696. Iowa's population is 90% Caucasian and the low numbers of minorities significantly impact the performance on this indicator yearly.

Under the WIOA plan partners will identify duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system and draft policies and collaborative agreements to maximize resources that foster a more unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services

IVRS local managers participate on a number of boards in their areas and network with civic organizations and churches in an attempt to not only identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, but also to identify support systems to enhance and assist the individual in their rehabilitation process. IVRS has a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa school for the deaf which focuses on services for that population. Previous goals were developed as a result of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and outlined strategies to increase the representation of clients with deafness and hearing loss, as well as work group members developing best practices for this population to serve as a model for the rest of the state. The rehabilitation services bureau chief served on a state policy group addressing the education and vocational needs for individuals who are deaf or had hearing loss and strategies are in place through the state to develop regional academies to move the services closer to where the job candidates live and work. outreach to individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals who have been unserved or underserved relates to services to individuals with disabilities who are minorities. the IVRS caseload statistics indicate that minority representation exceeds minority representation in the population. IVRS met currently identified standards and indicators from RSA including the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities. This will continue to be a focus of service efforts. opportunities will be developed to identify strategies for these groups through our service delivery for the potential eligible and pre– employment transition services.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

IVRS has been involved with the Iowa school for the deaf and the department of education in working toward a more unified plan of serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing in secondary schools at their local education agency. there have been some movements toward developing a center in Charles City as a test site, but currently only the extended services are provided. IVRS also has an agreement with the Iowa school for the deaf to provide a VR counselor at least 20 hours per week. this agreement simply allows the ISD to purchase more time from IVRS because it is a smaller school and typically would only have a VR counselor on the campus one time per month. this agreement that is designed to give a small school more contact from the VR program has demonstrated that it has increased the number of students who have applied for and receive services from IVRS. when the project started IVRS had only 3 individuals on the caseload from the ISD. in the last two years this has increased to 17 and 11 respectively. increasing the time spent on the ISD campus not only gives students more access to the VR counselor but enhances the relationships between the students and IVRS as the counselor has become more of an integral person on campus and is able to work with the potentially eligible this year.

The SRC also recognized during the last CSNA that individuals with disabilities who are 55 and older have unique barriers to employment beyond simply their disability. as a result of the CSNA where

clients of IVRS recommended that IVRS develop a specific program for this population, The SRC agreed that IVRS should enter into an agreement with the department of aging. as a result, IVRS counselors are working in collaboration with AAA staff to provide wrap–around services. employment specialists partner with the IVRS counselor to assist in identifying job goals, resources in the communities, and businesses that are open to hiring older workers.

The AAA contract started in FFY 2014 and had 90 individuals referred to the program with seven placements. due to that being the first year of the program, the focus involved getting individuals referred to the program. so far in the current fiscal year there have been 102 referrals made to the program, an additional 22 placements, and 8 successful closures.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

IVRS has not tracked data on the individuals referred to and referred from the one–stop workforce development system. with the new RSA 911 data reporting requirements this is being added to the electronic case management system.

On August 5, 2015, IVRS shared the changes in legislation specific to VR and presented the continuum of services model and how IVRS is an integrated and core partner with the “Iowa works” partnership comprised of the Iowa workforce development and workforce innovation opportunity core partners. In that meeting, an overview of the legislative changes were shared with local managers from those entities along with the Iowa vocational rehabilitation services model designed specific to the integration of individuals with disabilities in workforce and community organizations. These managers came together to discuss and plan the integration and service delivery at the local level. the exciting aspect of the new legislation is how all prior disability legislations create a system of support and change. in the past, a person with a disability had no other alternatives but to receive services from IVRS because, while the ADA had been enacted, organizations still sent individuals with disabilities to “VR” because “they serve people with disabilities.” This has proven to be an unsustainable system as resources have reduced, services were duplicated, and demand has escalated. In addition, the legislation no longer segregates disability, but it is a normal aspect of life and as such all organizations must work toward full and comprehensive inclusion in the provision of services to persons with disabilities. Therefore, IVRS presented the “new” model of service delivery which allows IVRS staff to provide the expertise on how to serve individuals with disabilities, while making sure that only those individuals who truly require VR services to be successful are recruited into the caseload. Now instead of recruiting individuals early just because they “have a disability”, VR staff will use the existing legislation to assist organizations and businesses on how to meet their legal responsibilities by providing expertise to them in a manner that actually achieves a seamless system of service. (see figure below on community organization)

WIOA provides IVRS the opportunity to work smarter not harder; to serve those we are mandated to serve in a comprehensive manner while still giving guidance and technical expertise to those who would benefit but do not require intensive services. this continuum of service model propels “disability” into the community wide experience requiring all organizations and entities to create systems that work to achieve outcomes for all individuals. as a result, if the system and service works for people with disabilities it will work for everyone. perhaps for the first time in disability history, disability truly becomes mainstreamed within the organizations and common experiences in the community.

Integration in this manner allows IVRS staff to provide guidance and technical expertise to the system and organizations so they continue to change and evolve into a sophisticated system serving all individuals. in this manner, IVRS no longer becomes the entity to which people with disabilities must go to be successful. instead IVRS works to support an existing system, guides those systems in how they can more effectively serve people with disabilities, and creates within IVRS new services and supports that the individual cannot obtain from the existing system of service delivery.

As individuals with disabilities access all services and supports within the community as a natural aspect of living, learning and working, disability becomes part of the mainstream and is no longer segregated to specialized programming. Those individuals who still require specialized programming find a highly skilled system available to them that use existing structures and programs in a way that enhances their success and maximizes resources without duplicating services.

All Iowans could benefit from financial support in any aspect of their life. Individuals with disabilities are no different and as such should access that support through the same channels, organizations, and resources available to every individual in the state of Iowa. However, when the disability itself results in a serious need in order to prepare for or obtain employment there may be a financial burden due to the costs associated with disability. The IVRS staff must ask themselves “what does this person require from IVRS in order to become successfully employed?” If the answer is they only require tuition assistance but they have the skills to research employment options on their own, perform a self–directed work search, and can manage the disability and do not require accommodations both in training and at work, then this individual could be successful accessing the services and supports in the community at large (i.e. IWD, FAFSA, public transit, etc.) therefore, this individual would receive services through the community organizations and IVRS would provide the technical consultation necessary to ensure the service and system understands disability and how to make sure the person has equal access, programmatic, and physical accessibility to be successful. In this manner IVRS staff will provide the system development guidance but then provide direct services to those individuals with disabilities who require intensive services. Those intensive services that would be provided through a case services record include, but is not limited to: counseling and guidance, physical and mental treatment, training to include supported employment through college training as required by the goal and the IPD, job search and work readiness assistance, job placement and employer development, and services needed in order to achieve the IPE competitive integrated work goal

During meetings at the local level with Iowa workforce managers, IVRS learned that IWD staff would find it exceedingly valuable for IVRS counseling staff to assist them in learning how to interact with people with disabilities in an accessible format. indeed, IWD voiced a need for IVRS to provide suggestions and ideas on how to create a system that is accessible and infuses the expertise of IVRS into their programs. Further discussions with the IWD managers included ideas on collaborative strategies in serving youth with disabilities. In some of the planning, IWD staff will accompany IVRS as we progress to develop local plans with local education agencies on more effectively serving students with disabilities that are eligible or potentially eligible. In some areas of the state, the discussions center on creating a youth center to better relate and align services specific to youth. Through this model of service delivery, IVRS’ staff shares their expertise in improving the workforce system so that it works for all individuals with a disability and then provides direct service to those who require more intensive services to achieve their employment outcomes.

Between May and August of 2015, IVRS and IWD engaged in four pilot implementation designs where the local offices identified application and referral strategies that provided information on complementary data–sharing opportunities. In addition these pilots stimulated discussion on how to

wrap services around the mutual job seeker in order to create a more seamless system of support. Unfortunately, the Iowa workforce development representative assigned to these projects decided to step down from his state level position and no other person was assigned to the projects. as a result. The only projects that continued to remain focused on the pilot discussions were those in his managerial territory (Sioux city and Carroll.) then in December, 2015, the IVRS supervisor assigned to the Carroll office retired thereby delaying progress in the pilot in that area office.

Our goal is for all individuals with disabilities to access services through the workforce development partners. Similar to the multi-tiered system of support designed in education, IVRS anticipates that 80% of the individuals with disabilities can be successful accessing the programs and services provided by Iowa workforce development with no specialized service needed because the staff has received basic training and etiquette in working with individuals with disabilities. IVRS can provide technical assistance to those partners so that they can be effective in serving individuals with disabilities and making sure their programs and services are accessible. 20% of the job seekers may require more intensive services due to disability related needs. These individuals are referred to and recruited by Iowa vocational rehabilitation services. Iowa vocational rehabilitation services will provide extension of the workshops offered by IWD for all individuals with disabilities by infusing information on how to request an accommodation, how to manage the disability at work, etc. Only those individuals who require more intensive job support and service to become employed will be recruited into the IVRS caseload. All other individuals with disabilities will be served by the one–stop center, with technical consultation provided by IVRS staff to enhance success of accessibility to the system.

Throughout the state of Iowa IVRS is co–located in most locations. In the Davenport area office, IVRS is not co–located because the one–stop needed the space that IVRS housed for the promise jobs staff and so IVRS was asked to move out of the center. the management of both IWD and IVRS are working collaboratively on creating a solid partnership that will advance the vision of the integration model described above. In Dubuque, IVRS has never been co–located but IVRS is exploring how to connect with the center so that workshops and programs can be accessible and recruit individuals who need and require IVRS services. IVRS has a number of branch offices and IWD has agreed that staff can travel to the IVRS office to provide workshops and other related type programs. In Ames, for example, IVRS has an office and the regional manager for this area inquired about having IWD staff use space in the IVRS Ames office to provide workshops and connect with IVRS staff. IVRS will make available to IWD this space as we have requested additional square footage to make sure we can accommodate the IWD partnership.

Integration in the one stop programmatically allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops, and services with IWD staff trained by IVRS, and others with expertise on serving people with disabilities, on: how to work with individuals with disabilities; when to involve technical assistance from IVRS to ensure accessibility; when to consider a reasonable accommodation and the legal implications of the ADA; what factors would identify a need to refer the job candidate with a disability to IVRS; what technology, data elements and referral processes will allow both agencies to exchange information without duplicating data input; what supports are needed by individuals with disabilities to access programs and services through IWD; how might staff work collectively to achieve outcomes for all individuals with disabilities. Integration in the one–stop may include joint staff meetings, may require technical assistance from IVRS on how job candidates with disabilities participate in video modeling and other services. The focus of integration is how to support the job seeker to achieve employment with available services and supports from the entire one–stop team; and involvement in IVRS services only when necessary and essential to the job seeker’s success.

The following is further description regarding how various programs could work in concert to support the job seeker and the business. This will be a continued focus as we implement identified strategies in this plan.

As the job seeker walks into the one–stop center the IWD staff greet the individual and learn about the needs and desires for employment. together the IWD staff, promise job staff, IVRS staff, and the adult education and literacy representatives evaluate and create a plan with the job seeker to train for and obtain competitive integrated employment. If the job seeker does not have a disability, IVRS would not be involved. but, those individuals with disabilities would access all the services and programs available through the IWD programming with IVRS providing consultation and technical assistance on how to be successful. this “wrap around service” concept ensures that the barriers to employment are addressed by the system instead of the individual and creates a more seamless system of support. Staff work together identifying what services and resources are available to the individual as an IWD participant. When the job candidate is recruited into the IVRS caseload, IVRS becomes the primary manager of the case working in concert with the other programs identifying accommodations and supports that all partners provide for access, while IVRS funds those individualized services and support needs based on the individual plan for employment (IPE) developed with the eligible IVRS job seeker. IVRS and IWD staff creates a braided service that no longer “hands off” the individual between programs but they work together to achieve common outcomes. IVRS connects with career pathway trainings, NCRC, adult education, and literacy by referring the individual to the appropriate program consistent with the IVRS job seekers job goal. IVRS provides technical assistance to those programs on specific accommodation needs when applicable. IVRS coordinates the IPE with the other partner’s plans for employment creating a “short term” to “long term” employment plan that creates opportunities for self–sufficiency and middle skills development of the individual.

While IVRS provides training to the one–stop center staff on disability and disability etiquette, the one-stop center staff provides training to IVRS staff on the available services so that IVRS job candidates’ access all that is available to enhance their marketability for the business community. The lack of knowledge and training on programs, services and supports as well as how the systems can work together currently prevents the systems from working effectively. This training and on-going service development is essential to a fully integrated system. therefore if the one-stops create a “resource team” that acts similar to a sector board for business, but only this team is the resource for the one-stop partners the system could be developed such that there are points of contact within the system that act as the intermediary to coordinate for special circumstances and needs.

Providing an integrated service system for employers can be accomplished similar to following the model developed by the workforce partnership in Burlington. This model ties in the community college, the special services and supports of IVRS, adult education, TANF, career pathways, etc. It provides industry the resources and supports they need and want, without involving extra unnecessary contacts and services not required. It provides a streamlined system for recruitment and retention assistance to meet their skill and labor shortage needs. in rural areas where there isn’t a workforce office, IVRS can take the lead in developing the system and involve and invite workforce to travel out when those meetings with business occur so that workforce development uses their resources wisely and avoids unnecessary travel and duplication. The community conversations has already started to develop this system with IVRS being the point of contact in communities where IWD is not located and the businesses are advising VR of what they want and VR is involving the appropriate partners to the table.

Iowa self–employment program – self-employment is a vocational option that may be considered as part of an individual's informed choice. IVRS will be partnering with Iowa workforce and the Iowa department of economic development on providing technical assistance to individuals who seek self-employment as their job goal. A program for self–employment has been developed under an agreement between Iowa vocational rehabilitation services (IVRS) and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB). It is available to active candidates of IVRS or IDB who are able to become self-sufficient by establishing, expanding, or acquiring a small business. IVRS employs two full–time business staff that specializes in assisting job candidates with a vocational goal of self–employment. before investing time and money into a self–employment venture, the candidate must complete an in-depth study about the business they intend to start. the IVRS/IDB counselors and the candidate, guided by the technical assistance of the IVRS business development specialists, will outline a plan of action to help explore: an individual's qualifications and skills; the entrepreneurial idea; determination of the feasibility of the business idea; and facilitate business plan development should the idea demonstrate promise. Iowa economic development, Iowa small business development centers, Iowa job centers and the service corps of retired executives (score) are organizations that can help with preliminary exploration of business ventures, and services available through Iowa workforce development may also provide additional education. IVRS and IDB provide the financial assistance to start a business to their respective job candidates with matching dollars provided by the job candidate. When the candidate is served by both agencies, IVRS and IDB coordinate the services and the plan. The data below demonstrates the number of successful businesses supported that remained in business two years post the opening of the business. successful closures demonstrate:

FFY 2012 had 39 successful businesses in operation and files closed successfully averaging $11.10/hr. at 29 hours per week. FFY 2013 had 54 successful businesses in operation and files closed successfully averaging $15.75/hr. at 31 hours per week. FFY 2014 had 38 successful businesses in operation and files closed successfully averaging $13.65/hr. at 31 hours per week. 2015 had 49 successful businesses in operation and files closed successfully averaging $13.74/hr. at 29 hours per week.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Continuum of Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities:

IVRS following the leadership of the Department of Education will serve the potentially eligible using the Multi–tiered System of Supports. With this model it is anticipated that the majority of students under an IEP or 504 will receive the pre–employment transition services, develop their transition plan toward post–secondary living, learning and working and not require intensive services to effectively transition. Following this model, IVRS will then serve those students who require intensive services in the caseload. One of the Objectives in our Iowa plan is to assist all Iowa youth in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from K–12 into the workforce. IVRS is developing a plan for a continuum of services which will not only focus on how students in secondary education infuse career pathway opportunities in their academic and vocational studies, but also create more awareness and immersion into STEM opportunities so as to encourage greater skill development and self-sustaining plans for employment. This continuum will create a strategic plan so that all students with disabilities find access and support necessary to achieve their post school outcomes, regardless of the severity of the disability. This continuum of services will act as a model by which communities will be assessed to determine gaps, weaknesses, and strengths of service delivery.

It then will provide guidance to the RSB Management to: determine additional projects needed; occupational skills programs that should be developed with CRPS; development of Third Party Cooperative Agreements for expanded and new programs and projects; and utilize existing programs and projects by creating connections for a systems change approach to services Upon development of this vision and plan, IVRS' cooperative agreements will be developed along with infusion of STEMS and career pathways to implement this comprehensive system. This vision and plan would then be used as part of the gap analysis process to determine: what is actively provided and producing outcomes for students; what is missing; what needs to be revised to support a continuum of services; and what structures will encourage the development of interest in STEM careers; what are best practices to encourage competitive integrated employment; and how to improve utilization of career pathways at the secondary level. IVRS has had a long tradition of serving students with disabilities to impact their post–school working outcomes. The Transition Alliance Programs developed in 1997 have withstood the test of time. These programs are located in specific areas of the State of Iowa under collaborative agreements with specific school districts to provide what is now called "pre–employment transition services." The outcomes demonstrate strong success in relationship to employment and wages earned in comparison to, not only students with disabilities, but the students not on an IEP who move into working opportunities after graduation (data source: Indicator 13, Iowa DE.) IVRS currently has 9 Transition Alliance Programs (TAPs) across the State of Iowa. Through these 9 TAPs, IVRS collaborates with secondary education school districts to provide expanded services to students and youth with disabilities. Of the nine TAP sites, four began after FFY 2012 and one after FFY 2014. Data from 2012 could not be collected as the IVRS system for data collection was not accurate at the time resulting in unreliable data. 2015 data is not complete as only 3 quarters have been completed; however, data shows we have increased the number of students with disabilities who are served each year. For students connected to a TAP program, the team may decide that while the student has completed their coursework at the high school level they still have unmet needs related to their IEP in the areas of living, learning and working. In this situation, a student may opt to remain on their IEP to continue receiving one–on–one supports in these areas. The IEP is monitored by staff working in the TAP program and the goals are more functional in nature, or focused on real–world skills to assist them in transitioning successfully into the world of work. If a student decides he or she wants to try one or two college courses but it is uncertain as to whether or not he/she can be successful at that level, the school district may exercise the post–secondary option to assist the student. As part of the TAP, , the school district funds the cost of the courses, books, tuition and any fees associated with these classes. The TAP staff monitors the student while in college and goals may be written into the IEP related to success at the college level. TAPs are then able to provide intensive services to the student to help the student be more successful in their college classes. After successful completion of one semester at college, the team reconvenes to review the student's progress. If the student has successfully passed the coursework and wishes to continue with more classes, the school exits them from their IEP and the student can apply for financial aid, request IVRS assistance, and practice budgeting skills to cover the costs of future coursework. If the student is not successful, they stay on their IEP to continue to receive supports, but the school does not fund further classes and the focus is on employability skills. FFY 2014: 86 successful closure, 34 average hours worked per week, $9.44 average hourly wage, 816 Active participants, with a 85% rehabilitation rate. FFY 2015: 103 successful closure, 35 average hours worked per week, $9.93 average hourly wage, hours worked is 34 average per week. Active participants was 1,172 (possibly starting Freshman year), with a 76% rehabilitation rate. During these years there were three new TAPs started, which impacts the overall numbers since it takes time for a TAP to obtain outcomes and develop the program. Making the Grade IVRS has also added an after–school work program, "Making the Grade", which is a work readiness, work experience program to provide services to students with disabilities who are juniors and seniors to obtain and maintain summer and after-school paid work opportunities. Making the Grade (MTG) is a contract that IVRS just started in 2015 which is collaboration among IVRS, a

local Community Rehabilitation Provider, and a local school district. There are seven sites that have been selected to participate in this contract, serving ten communities. The goal of the contact is to get paid work experience for students with disabilities while they are still in high school to prepare them for competitive, integrative employment once high school is completed. Students referred to the program are those who need assistance in getting paid work experience which may not be available to them due to their disability. Because MTG just started, CRPS are in the process of getting the referrals from the schools and IVRS so that they can begin to work on JSST and job placement. This collaborative agreement is new, and only began in the summer of 2015, so preliminary data is limited, but it is indicative of the types of strategies that IVRS employs to impact student outcomes. As agency staff reviewed data, it was identified that the MTG might be modified in future years to enhance service delivery for those individuals with the most significant disabilities. This effort would provide work readiness and work place learning opportunities to students who are MSD with a focus to provide opportunities so as to bypass extended evaluation after graduation. While initially the MTG projects were focused on any student who was under an IVRS IPE, current feedback from the providers was that students who require more intensive, supported employment services require additional attention to facilitate community employment instead of extended evaluation. These job candidates could be served by the current service structure for Making the Grade, but by clarifying potential outreach and service options it may enhance those job candidates being identified to participate MTG will clearly identify options for providing greater work related experiences to this most significantly disabled population with the expectation that these individuals will be employed in the community and avoid extended evaluation services after graduation. Another objective of our Iowa Plan is to engage Iowa's youth in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self–directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Development of Pilot Projects – WIOA Pilots –IVRS consistently considers the use of pilot projects prior to full and comprehensive roll out of new initiatives and programs. Using pilot projects IVRS then develops new and expanded services making changes to the pilots based on the outcomes and results achieved. IVRS in conversations with the One–Stop and WIOA Youth programs on a pilot project to initiate youth services, or a youth center. The intent is to increase communication and collaboration between the schools, IVRS, and other core agencies under the WIOA legislation guidelines. If this pilot project is successful, this model could then be utilized statewide. The focus of the pilot project is to collaborate on providing PETS activities to students with disabilities and provide information and referral to youth with disabilities that may hear about the youth center. IVRS staff had meetings with key partners in the local school districts and AEA as well as through the WIOA,, Iowa Works, and Wagner-Peyser agencies to discuss the WIOA legislation; provide information on Potentially Eligible and PETS; and to determine what services are available within these entities to prevent duplication of services. In addition, the meetings served as a forum to allow these other entities to educate IVRS on their needs and how best to communicate with their staff. From these meetings, IVRS has learned that the entities are most interested in having a traveling team that would travel to each school district to provide services to students with disabilities.

The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a contract between IVRS and the Department of Human Rights to provide services to students with disabilities. Generally about 45 students are referred to the program each year to go through a week–long experience at Iowa State University where they work on job goals and experience life away from home. Students are referred to the YLF to get experience in career–planning, self–advocacy, job seeking skills training (JSST), and life skills. Each student is expected to exit YLF with a vocational goal to work on with their IVRS counselor upon returning home. IVRS' local offices are exploring the delivery of this service more locally in the summer months.

As IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model, gaps and weaknesses within the system will be identified. Together with the Department of Education and through the local planning efforts, educators and rehabilitation professionals will more effectively connect students with opportunities after high school. Infusing employer led, job–driven, models into the continuum model; and expanding upon those programs and services that produced outcomes in the past, IVRS with partners will achieve results for students and youth in transition. IVRS anticipates not only the expansion of Third Party Cooperative Agreements, but also creating more opportunities through an analysis of the current systems and needs. These new opportunities, using existing programs and services, will minimize duplication and instead better define how the systems work effectively together to achieve outcomes. The following summarizes the coordination of services for students in transition:

Systematic analysis and development of a continuum of services model for students and youth in transition; . Development of trainings for parents, educators, and rehabilitation professionals on effective practices; . Development of local and state plans to maximize resources and minimize duplication; Coordination of services within WIOA partnerships to expand opportunities for students/youth with disabilities; . Expansion of third party cooperative agreements to create a seamless system of services and supports; . Development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key community partnerships to infuse opportunities within existing structure and reduce/eliminate duplication; . Infusion of current practices, programs, services, plans, etc., to create the system of continuous service delivery that achieves a seamless system of transition.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

IVRS has been a leader in the employment first initiative and as a result more and more individuals who would have been placed in sheltered workshops have been obtaining employment at their level of employability, evidenced by the supported employment data that shows a significant increase in individuals successfully placed into employment. as a result throughout the state of Iowa many of the community rehabilitation programs are beginning to or have moved away from providing extended employment. As they transition into full community employment they still have buildings on which they must pay a mortgage and they have business services and contracts with businesses that they must fulfill their obligation. As a result, many of the CRPS are moving forward with a reverse integration. This model hires people who do not have disabilities as employees of their CRP to perform the work that is described in their business services contracts. They also then have some of their job candidates who would have been in extended employment work alongside the non–disabled worker performing the same work. all of the workers receive minimum wage or higher, depending upon the contract, and the individuals with disabilities receive the same compensation sitting alongside a person who does not have a disability. A minimum of 51% of the workforce that is performing on the business services contract do not have disabilities. As a result they have produced a competitive integrated work environment that serves the business. IVRS has agreed to support this business services model as long as it remains to be a competitive integrated work environment.

This is a priority of the state rehabilitation council and has been the driving force behind the Iowa employment first efforts as well as the changes occurring in the IVRS menu of service manual and delivery and partnership with the Iowa department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid system. Through the work of the Iowa governance group, safe data was identified that can be shared among state programs for the benefit of facilitating service delivery and a primary focus of the group was supporting employment outcomes occurring in competitive, community integrated employment

settings. IVRS work with our community rehabilitation programs is essential to making this happen. we have been a collaborative partner with the Iowa association of community providers and their executive director is a key member of the Iowa employment first leadership team.

Most recently IVRS has found that many of the CRPS have moved toward a “reverse integration model” because they have their building but cannot provide segregated employment. IVRS has enlisted the advice of the national institute on disability to provide guidance to IVRS on whether or not this meets the competitive integrated work standards since:

1. The CRPS are paying the person with a disability at least minimum wage, which is the same wage for the work performed by the non-disabled peer; 2. the location of the building is in the community among other businesses; 3. the co-workers comprise at least 51% of the workforce performing the job.

IVRS will continue to participate in the Iowa employment first efforts, which has a clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant barriers to employment access competitive, community integrated employment at the level meeting the optimum needs and interests of the job candidate. The Iowa Development Disabilities Council, the Disability Rights of Iowa. the Iowa Association of Community Provides, and our State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. These efforts are closely linked to service delivery strategies with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

The Iowa coalition for integrated employment is a current initiative that brings together a diverse set of stakeholders representing all levels of service and interest in employment options for Iowans with disabilities. ICIE is the result of a five–year grant awarded by the administration on intellectual and developmental disabilities. The grant contracted with five demonstration projects in an educational environment, in addition to coordinating resources with Iowa’s employment first initiative to support six community rehabilitation provider demonstration projects.

ICIE includes a base consortium of representatives from the DD council, the Iowa department of education, Iowa vocational rehabilitation services, and the department of human services to improve systems so that Iowa youth with disabilities have fully integrated and competitive work opportunities. the overall goal of ICIE has been to improve systems so that Iowa youth with developmental disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, have fully integrated, competitive work, regardless of where they live in the state. ICIE has been a key collaborator with innovative braiding of funding to expand financial and technical assistance areas specifically related to employment first and the delivery of supported employment services in Iowa. This is enhanced by a committed and diverse group of private, state and families of individuals with disabilities that make up the employment first leadership team in Iowa.

The disability and employment initiative through IWD/DOL has also been a key collaborator and partner in increasing employment outcomes. the DEI project has enhanced communication and awareness through their local projects with an integrated resource team, financial literacy strategies and benefits planning.

Vendor data of d-code results is shared annually in a report out provided by IVRS to internal staff and employment service providers (CRPS). the intent of this report out is to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, and promote transparency for purchased services.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

IVRS and the department of education have entered into a memorandum of agreement on how IVRS and education will work collaboratively to serve students in transition. IVRS has a counselor assigned to every high school and college in the State of Iowa. The agreement stipulates that when IVRS and the local education agency are working together with a student because the parents and the student agree to working with IVRS, IVRS and the LEA will jointly deliver the pre–employment transition services. The agreement recognizes the roles and responsibilities of each organization and the financial obligations. The agreement recognizes the expertise each entity brings to the transition of students with disabilities. The LEA will provide or pay for job coaching when a student requires the service in order to learn a job because instruction on developing knowledge and skills is the responsibility of education. IVRS' expertise is in the knowledge of work, work services and business relationships. IVRS therefore is responsible for job development and employer development to assist a student in obtaining employment. However there are areas of overlap such as work experiences and as a result the IVRS Area Offices are working with their local education agencies on developing an implementation plan. The plans identify that the work of transition in pre–employment transition services is the responsibility of both entities; and there is limited capacity of both entities to deliver all the services nor is it necessary to be duplicative. Therefore, at the local level the schools and IVRS and workforce partners that IVRS introduce to the transition planning team discuss the essential components of pre–employment transition services and coordinate who will do which activity based upon the capacity and supports available.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

In FFY15, IVRS determined 5,855 individuals eligible for services. IVRS anticipates being able to serve up to 13,500 in FFY16.

On a weekly basis, IVRS removes all individuals on the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list. As of October, 2015, IVRS had 1,159 individuals with Significant Disabilities and 609 individuals in the Others Eligible Category on the Waiting List.

Currently IVRS is not able to serve all categories on the waiting list. In May of 2012, IVRS opened the waiting list to all individuals who were MSD. At that time, IVRS staff were notified that: "Beginning today May 11, 2012 consumers that are determined to have Most Significant Disabilities will move directly into services. MSD consumers will not be placed on a waiting list. The Budget Team has decided to no longer restrict the movement of MSD consumers into services. Consumers with Significant Disabilities and Others Eligible consumers will continue to be placed on waiting lists for services."

IVRS currently releases the names of individuals for whom services could be initiated on a weekly basis. This allows IVRS to become more efficient in caseload management techniques and anticipate service provision. The budget team meets on the goals for release on a monthly basis and the Administrative Services Bureau Chief reviews this weekly taking into consideration the budget sustainability model and the Rehabilitation Services Bureau field capacity, which is gathered through discussions occurring at the Budget Team.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Based on current projections, we believe that approximately 13,500 individuals will receive services from IVRS in 2016. The numbers are based on the representation in the current caseload. Actual outcomes may vary. IVRS continues to evaluate this data monthly in budget team and may see changes in outcomes Additional information on the number of individuals served per priority level is in the regarding Order of Selection.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

IVRS funded supported employment services for 242 individuals in FFY15, using both Part B Title VI funds and Part B Title I funds. Total Supported Employment expenditures were $1,031,044 of which $240,674 came from Part B Title VI funds. IVRS estimates that it will serve approximately 372 clients in Supported Employment during FFY16. Funding will again come from a combination of Part B Title VI funds and Part B Title I funds.

Segregated Employment Outreach – IVRS is working with the National Disability Institute to obtain guidance on the provisions related to this population. IVRS has received feedback regarding a need to provide increased outreach and training to individuals receiving services in segregated facility based employment settings. IVRS is implementing strategies in collaboration with the Iowa Client Assistance Program and Disability Rights Iowa to develop marketing and education packets that can be provided to individuals, families, case managers and providers regarding service delivery focused on community integrated positions. The packets will be disseminated through on–site visits and sheltered 14c providers across the state. The visits will be facilitated by VR staff, Human Rights staff and DRI staff in efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of VR services and community employment options. Communication is also occurring with the Iowa Department of Education, local school districts and community providers regarding service delivery for students in high school who have the most significant disabilities and have traditionally been tracked for segregated employment. Service delivery options are being identified which will involve collaborative service delivery and partnering between VR, School staff and our Community Rehabilitation Providers which will provide opportunities for community employment assessment and feed information into the potential development of an individualized employment plan.

IVRS estimates that 242 individuals will be served in supported employment during Fiscal Year 2016. Currently, there are 44 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPS) available to provide services under a contract established with IVRS, in addition to over 20 that accept standardized payments derived from prior agreements. The State Unit accepted new expenditure rates that each CRP submitted to outline their costs of providing specific items on the Menu of Services. The Menu of Services items are used so that instead of having a package of services, individualized services are able to be purchased on behalf of each job candidate's needs. It is the responsibility of the counselor and job candidate to determine which of the unbundled services the job candidate requires, and which the counselor/agency may be able to provide directly. Only those that are needed and cannot be provided by the agency are purchased. Additional services were added to the Menu of Services this year that include Discovery and Customized Employment. As part of the FFY15 State Plan, IVRS completed the mandatory Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to determine the current needs of Iowans with disabilities, as well as assess the services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs. During the prior CSNA, the roles that service providers fell under were reviewed by a consortium consisting of individuals from a variety of Iowa organizations. This group included representatives from the Department of Human Services Bureau of Long–Term Care, Policy Analyst staff from Medicaid Enterprise, sub–group members of the IVRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee, and supporting staff from the Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE). This group was tasked with re–evaluating practices related to service delivery for individuals receiving Supported Employment Services (SES) in Iowa. Various changes to the original SES process were implemented to address issues such as accessibility, consistency, paperwork redundancies and a lack of understanding of various SES "systems."

IVRS will continue to fine–tune service delivery processes designed to contribute to an increase in understanding, improve relationships, and ultimately result in better outcomes for individuals receiving SES. Making this a reality will require ongoing communication and collaboration between all systems in the delivery of SES for individuals in Iowa. Refining current SES processes, coupled with enhancing both communication and collaboration from SES providers are established as primary priorities going forward. IVRS' staff is making a concerted effort to connect with current and potential partners, provide mutually–beneficial/joint training(s), and facilitate ongoing opportunities for dialogue. A continued focus is on increasing work hours and wages to enhance self–sufficiency. Flexibility is needed for job candidates with disability factors that indicate fewer hours, as well as

those with the ability to increase work hours and become self–sufficient. If disability factors indicate a reduced number of hours, supported employment services are provided and before a case record is closed successfully the area office supervisor reviews the case to ensure it meets the job candidates stated goals, skills, IPE and functional capacity. Continuing goals for individuals receiving supported employment services include increasing the average number of hours worked and client wages, and decreasing dependence on public support. The State Unit recognizes that Title VI, Part B funds are only a supplement to the regular Title I funds. By the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year the State Unit typically has exhausted its Title VI, Part B dollars and is spending Title I dollars for supported employment. IVRS is making an effort to partner with various government entities including the Department of Human Services Medicaid Waiver program to ensure that adequate funding will be available to pay for supported employment. Efforts to blend and braid funds, as well as establish uniform payment systems among state partners continues to be viewed as IVRS priority areas going forward.

IVRS will improve meaningful, sustained employment for supported employment consumers and reduce the number of individuals who repeat the process due to inadequate placement or supports. Outcomes for Supported Employment services were analyzed over the past several years. Alignment with Medicaid waiver funding occurred and system consistency will be developed as this is implemented over the next year. Iowa is undergoing significant changes with managed care and this will create additional need for training and close collaboration to ensure work effectiveness. The new rate structure will allow IVRS and the Department of Human Services to collaborate with funding to assure that CRPS are adequately reimbursed for the range of services available from each agency. Implementation of new payment points and the development of Customized Employment services have occurred. Supported Employment Services with a focus on competitive, integrated employment is supported by IVRS.

Across the nation, Employment First is a declaration of both philosophy and policy stating that Employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. In 2011–13, the State of Iowa received a grant to focus on Employment First initiatives, customized employment strategies and alignment of service delivery systems, and funding for those services across state systems. IVRS was the lead agency for the subsequent Employment First Project which outlined three initial goals:

. Identify a unified cross–agency rate structure that promotes and incentivizes integrated employment, . Identify and train community service providers and their related partner/disability service professionals in the implementation of customized employment techniques, . Improve communication and collaboration among state departments related to Employment First principles.

EF opportunities are continuing to draw attention to Iowa and facilitate changes in our systems. Community, integrated employment is the ultimate goal for all Iowans. Iowa's efforts have been greatly enhanced through the collaboration occurring between the Employment First Leadership Team, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment/Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Disability Employment Initiative. In accordance with EF, Iowa is committed to strengthening employment services for people with disabilities, improving customer service, and breaking down artificial barriers. The adoption of EF has involved changes in both policy and service provision in Iowa. Specific focus was on changing the employment culture of Iowa with an emphasis on community integrated employment. Community Provider organizations participated in pilot efforts to transform their organizations to become high achieving employment providers.

Leaders from state programs are focused on coordinating career and employment services between state partners to support community, integrated employment options for individuals with the most severe disabilities. IVRS continues to have a primary focus on provider transformation, training, capacity building, and establishing a shared vision for community, integrated employment. The EF philosophy helped to provide a framework to build upon and establish a common purpose to unite forces in Iowa. For the past three fiscal years IVRS realized an increase in the number of individuals served through supported employment services. As a result this increase produced an increase in the number of job candidates served through the Employment First initiative and through the formal supported employment services.

The traditional model of Supported Employment Services (SES) involved upfront planning regarding identification of employers in the community at which a job candidates could find placement. That model involved more emphasis on the placement and evaluation of performance at a job site rather than actual training requirements. When considering the reason for IVRS recidivism rates, an interdisciplinary team analyzed SES and recognized that a significant lack of formalized training impacted outcomes. As such, a paradigm shift emerged to significantly enhance training of professionals and job candidates alike. The following table shows a summary of successful outcomes for job candidates who received supported services.

2012: 148 job candidates, earned an average of $7.79/hr., working 19 hours per week

2013: 150 job candidates, earned an average of $7.85/hr., working 18 hours per week

2014: 252 job candidates, earned an average of $8.12/hr., working 20 hours per week

2015: 333 job candidates, earned an average of $8.39/hr., working 19 hours per week

Over the course of time the number served in supported employment has increased and the average hourly wage also is increasing. This may be due to the impact that some cities around the state have a higher minimum wage than the Federal rate, and is the standard by which the case is evaluated in meeting the minimum wage standard.

The data above not only reflects the job candidates on the IVRS caseload who successfully achieve an employment outcome in an integrated, competitive work setting; but also those who first began their employment journey through the Employment First Initiative. The individuals who participated in the Employment First Initiative were from our most vulnerable and disabled population, many of whom had never worked in a competitive integrated environment. Some participated in progressive employment, first exploring their interests and sometimes starting with volunteer work; while others moved into an employment setting learning skills through a customized employment experience that created an opportunity of success for them. The data for 2015 reflects a significant increase that is a testament to the IVRS relationships with community rehabilitation organizations and the success of the Employment First initiative. IVRS anticipates that this service will expand and even greater numbers will be served as the integration and continuum of services model is infused.

As discussed earlier in this document, IVRS added an after–school work program, “Making the Grade”, which is a work readiness, work experience program to provide services to students with disabilities who are juniors and seniors to obtain and maintain summer and after–school paid work opportunities. Students referred to the program are those who need assistance in getting paid work experience which may not be available to them due to their disability. This collaborative agreement is new, and only began in the summer of 2015, so preliminary data is limited, but it is indicative of

the types of strategies that IVRS employs to impact student outcomes and support the expectations of section 504.

In FY15, IVRS is coordinating service delivery support to seven Project Search programs, six of which are funded as part of an Occupational Skills training program. There are specific requirements for Project Search programs, as well as ongoing supports costs, however the success of this program remains undisputed. Project Search has particular relevance under WIOA and each state's legal obligation to create a systematic plan to help people with disabilities to get jobs. Currently, Iowans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are benefiting from seven Project Search program sites. They are located within health care facilities throughout the state, such as Unity Point and Mercy Hospitals in Des Moines, St Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Mercy Medical Center in Mason City, Lucas Hospital in Chariton; and in other industries such as Hy–Vee stores. The IVRS continuum plan will incorporate Project Search as well as create additional programming opportunities for the most significantly disabled population.

Project Search Placement Results: IVRS has one Project Search designed on the traditional model of High School, VR, CRP and Business. This Project Search is a partnership with Mercy Medical Center, Easter Seals of Central Iowa, Des Moines Public Schools and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

DMPS Project SEARCH, Performance Measure: Within three months of successfully completing Project SEARCH, 50% of students will obtain competitive employment.

FFY14: Six of twelve students from the 2013–2014 class were placed within three months of completing Project SEARCH (50%).

FFY15: Eight out of twelve students from the 2014–2015 class were placed during FFY15 (67%).

Performance Measure: Project SEARCH will achieve a 60% rehabilitation rate.

FFY14: Rehabilitation Rate 67%

FFY15: Rehabilitation Rate 67% (Average hours per week = 32.75; Average wages per hour = $10.04)

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

IVRS plans to serve 4,847 individuals who are MSD under title i with an average service cost of $918/case. 8,465 individuals who are SD will be served at an average service cost of $919/case. In 2009, IVRS was serving all categories and as a result 188 individuals who are others eligible remain on the caseload and will be serviced this year at a service cost of $923/case.

For Title VI of the Supported Employment Program, we anticipate serving 372 individuals.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

Each month IVRS removes individuals from the SD waiting list as the agency serves all individuals who are MSD as they go directly into service. There haven't been any other's eligible removed from

the waiting list since 2009. Currently, individuals who are SD remain on the waiting list for approximately 3 months before being released into services. There are currently 247 individuals on the SD waiting list, and 631 individuals on the OE waiting list.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

Individuals who are MSD are served under Title I, at an estimated cost of $4,451,913, with an average service cost of $918. Individuals who are SD are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of $7,775,346, with an average service cost of $919. Individuals who are OE who have been on the caseload since 2009 are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of $173,612, with an average service cost of $188. 371; MSD served under Title VI cost $240,674.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

SRC Policy Recommendations:

IVRS administration continues to update SRC members with changes proposed under WIOA legislation. IVRS has and will solicit input and request a vote from the SRC prior to policy changes. IVRS is represented on the statewide steering committee discussing the implementation of WIOA in Iowa, and has been a contributor in writing the Unified State Plan.

In June 2015, the State Rehabilitation Council was provided information on the proposed rules and the impact this may have on policy changes. during that meeting the SRC agreed to the possible policy revisions related to: the continuum of services model; serving the potentially eligible, transition components, and pre–employment transition services; compliance processes with Section 511; the infusion of the competitive integrated employment language; changes to the IPE timeframes; and job– driven employer development. They also agreed that certain provisions should not be adopted until the regulations are published to ensure that the policy conforms to those provisions as well as avoiding unintended consequences.

IVRS and the SRC agreed that no action would be taken on serving individuals at risk of losing their job for placement directly into service. Only job candidates that had been placed into employment and require post- employment services would be served in this capacity. at this time individuals who are at risk of losing their job and who have never been served by IVRS must go through the eligibility process and go on a waiting list if they do not meet the priority of service category being served. This may change once the regulations are authorized. Another policy that they determined should not be developed was the 4-year follow-along for supported employment. It was determined that this should remain the responsibility of the long term funding sources and currently IVRS has an agreement with the department of human services that this is their responsibility.

The SRC and IVRS discussed the implications to employers and IVRS related to provisions of the dream act. It was agreed that individuals who have permission to participate in training and work in the United States due to approval by the dream act, may receive services and achieve placement by the date of the expiration on their approval. This is consistent with IVRS policy and RSA regulations that states there is no durational requirement for residency and the individual simply must be available and able to work. if the individual obtains permission to remain in the United States after the expiration date the individual and IVRS may amend the IPE beyond the expiration date.

In November, 2015, the Unified Plan components were discussed, along with the results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment at the SRC meeting. Input regarding the proposals by IVRS was sought from and provided by the SRC. During the meeting the SRC discussed the results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the implications for policy related to the key components of the WIOA. The following summarizes the recommendations as a result of the CSNA:

1. Potentially eligible students – it was recommended and IVRS agreed that the pre–employment transition services that would be provided to students with disabilities on the caseload would also enhance the skill sets of students who are potentially eligible. In addition, IVRS will primarily serve those who are potentially eligible by meeting with whole groups of students, but would serve individual potentially eligible students if their class schedule does not allow them to participate in classes. 2. Iowa workforce development integration – it was recommended and IVRS agreed that IVRS would have staff involved in and supportive of the instructional classes, service teams, and business services so that individuals with disabilities may gain access and that the workforce programs and services will provide the appropriate accommodations. The continuum of services model as it related to integration with the workforce partners was also discussed and approved.

3. Competitive integrated employment – it was recommended and agreed to by IVRS that the policy related to competitive integrated employment demonstrate a strong emphasis on progressive employment and creating customized employment opportunities for the most significantly disabled youth. During the March 2016 meeting, the school plan for students covered under section 511 was discussed and agreed to by the SRC. Clarification on responsibilities for those in segregated employment has been sought from the consultants with the technical assistance centers. However until clarification is obtained, the SRC recommended that IVRS support competitive integrated work through reverse integration offered by an community rehabilitation program. 4. job–driven model of training – it was recommended that the unified plan should emphasize the job–driven model of training through an informed choice process that respects the unique choices of individuals with disabilities. Discussions on the implementation of stem projects will continue after the rehabilitation services bureau develops the comprehensive system of continuum of services model. 5. Employer relations – it was recommended by the SRC and IVRS agreed that the unified plan should reflect the participation of IVRS on sector partnerships, as well as the fact that IVRS staff must still work to provide placement opportunities to individuals based on job matches and the more intensive service needs required by the job candidates.

The state rehabilitation council has been involved throughout the year in the discussions of the unified state plan. They have been supportive and voted to adopt the goals identified in the unified state plan

Goal 1: Iowa’s employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and future ready workers. In discussions through the unified plan we agreed that more work with employers to help them understand how to attract and retain qualified individuals with disabilities in their workforce was essential to the economic success of Iowa’s businesses.

Strategy – therefore, IVRS will work with employers to develop the skills in hiring people with disabilities and provide an accessible and welcoming work environment to them. Actions – IVRS will participate on and even chair some of the sector partnerships so that businesses have the expertise available to them in creating opportunities for persons with disabilities. Measure – IVRS will increase the number of business accounts in the area offices.

Goal 2: all Iowan’s will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation. in discussions with the unified planning team and the SRC we discussed the need to bridge the gap between the occupations that job candidates of IVRS pursue and the businesses that have labor demands for middle skill industries. The USP recognized that this goal was about the development of the labor pool and as such strategies needed to correspond. Strategy – IVRS staff will work with leas to understand the middle skills gap, the programs available to students to be employed in middle skill industries, and career pathways that will lead to the middle

skill industries. IVRS will in partnership support stems trainings to achieve higher employment expectations. Strategy – IVRS will counsel job candidates on labor market information and the opportunities available with appropriate training. Strategy – IVRS will counsel job candidates in apprenticeships and post-secondary trainings on skill development, work readiness, and job search skills so they can become employed once completion of the training. Measure – IVRS will increase the number of job candidates pursuing training in middle skill and stems occupations through pilot projects that if successful are expanded. Measure – IVRS will increase partnerships with businesses so that job candidates are part of the future ready applicant pool available to them.

GOAL 3: Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner. the discussion in the unified planning meetings recognized that this goal was the development of the workforce development system so that it was accessible and accommodated to all individuals with barriers. Strategy – IVRS will implement the integration and coordination of service model so that the workforce partnership is an accessible and accommodated system of supports that leads to successful participation on the part of the job candidate. Strategy – development of the electronic case management system so that data can be shared across systems to evaluate the system and the programs. Strategy – IVRS will provide expertise to the workforce partners so that job candidates in those programs can access services and achieve success without the need of IVRS intensive services. Strategy – IVRS and the workforce partners will develop a case management protocol so that the primary service is the case manager at the time of service delivery, while the other services are in support of the program. Measure – increase in number of individuals with disabilities achieve employment as a result of an accessible service delivery system. Measure – quality assurance demonstrates that individuals with disabilities on the IVRS caseload require intensive services in order to be successfully employed.

IVRS employs two assistive technology counselor specialists who work with the local offices in identifying assistive technology that can enhance an individual's ability to live and work. The second position was just filled in the fall of 2015 and reflected the need for additional expansion and capacity in that area. These two positions will be instrumental in developing the workforce system into an accessible system, providing accommodations and supports to individuals with disabilities, and providing technical expertise to business and industry in hiring people with disabilities.

The IVRS at staff received an increase in referrals for assistive technology evaluations from one year to the next, with a slight decline in 2015. The IVRS program demonstrated that 100% of the individuals referred were able to benefit from assistive technology as recommended to them to expand their employment opportunities.

The above data suggests that IVRS continues to expand opportunities with the use of assistive technology for the job candidates, and that the rehabilitation rate ranges from 76% to 79% depending upon the respective year. Further analysis may provide ideas to staff on how to consider services to increase outcomes for the most significantly disabled population.

Staff from the Iowa program for assistive technology (IPAT) based at the university of Iowa also provides updates on assistive technology issues. The IVRS assistive technology counselor specialists are available to consult with staff when job candidates require more intensive assistive technology services. This role also includes an emphasis on developing working relationships that contribute to the referral process for individuals with disabilities to programs or activities. In addition, IVRS expectations require that this role involves a continual exploration of new and innovative technologies that become available to help in service to customers. IVRS is also able to partner with the Easter Seals of Iowa assistive technology program with a specific focus on assistive technology needs of rural job candidates

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

In addition to the above information regarding the priority that IVRS has placed on supported employment, IVRS provides supported employment services to an eligible individual with a most significant disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for whom competitive and

integrated employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive and integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability.

Supported employment is competitive employment in an integrated setting consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. many supported employment plans include the need for customized employment, and the IVRS menu of services that allows for the purchase of services from CRPS has been updated to include the provision of customized employment.

The eligible individual, the counselor, and when appropriate, other extended service providers will jointly plan supported employment services. Supported employment services shall be provided by other agencies, organizations, employers, or other available sources with whom cooperative arrangements will be made. Comparable services and benefits will be used to the maximum extent appropriate. Services will be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY INCLUDE:

An assessment of the need for supported employment; the provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site; job development and placement; social skills training; regular observation or supervision of the individual. follow–up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; facilitation of natural supports at the work site; and; any other service necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

These services will be provided for a period of time that will not exceed twenty–four (24) months, except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and their supervisor closely monitor the quality of services throughout the duration of their provision to insure that services are appropriate, timely, cost–effective, and of the same quality as those services provided under title i. many individuals who are served in supported employment are funded by the title i program because there is insufficient funding under Title VI.

Students and youth who are under 24 years of age, and who may have not previously been referred to IVRS for services but historically the lea referred them into a CRP for extended employment will also be provided pre–employment transition services that includes supported employment and possibly customized employment. When the lea and IVRS are working together with a student they have a joint responsibility of service delivery, which has been discussed elsewhere in this plan. IVRS recognizes the department of education's policy that parents and students have a right to determine their own futures and may not desire to work with IVRS. in those situations, the leas are responsible for the services delivery and documentation as it pertains to section 511.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

Community conversations were held across the state this past year and information was shared with the State Rehabilitation Council. This is outlined in that section of the State Plan.

Igniting economic development with a skilled workforce and best educated student population in the nation will achieve a Future Ready Iowa that supports and facilitates Iowa Governor Branstad's goals for state agencies:

• Goal 1: The State of Iowa will create 200,000 new jobs

• Goal 2: State of Iowa families will realize a 25% increase in their family incomes

• Goal 3: State of Iowa youth will be afforded the best education in the nation

• Goal 4: State of Iowa government costs will be reduced by 15%

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is an instrumental agency to support the vision for the State of Iowa and also achieve the goals established by Governor Branstad. Through the various services, supports, and programs, IVRS will increase the income levels of Iowa families not only through direct services to our job candidates who are eligible and have an individual plan for employment written, but also for the thousands of job seekers and youth who are seeking employment and in need of a more accessible system to support them. For the workforce development system this means creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligning government programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business and develops a skilled and ready workforce.

To achieve the prosperity supported by world–class talent educated with Iowa's values and work ethic, Iowa's government is responding with the workforce development system of the future no longer constrained by the legislation of past decades. Through implementation of career pathways and infusing sector strategies across systems, IVRS is committed to serving the underserved and unserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location. By expanding the use of technology, coordinating and collaborating on service delivery by aligning services and supports across systems, Iowa's government will work more efficiently and effectively. Thereby the model being advanced incorporates and aligns all systems, infusing Vocational Rehabilitation into each as an intensive service for only those individuals who are significantly and most significantly disabled, while providing guidance and expertise to the integrated system whole to serve all individuals with disabilities to better prepare a skilled workforce.

At the Governor's Job Summit on October 17, 2013, Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds recognized the extraordinary work of businesses and job candidates with disabilities in striving to achieve a fully engaged workforce. Major employers and successful job candidates with disabilities all praised the work of creating connections with an untapped labor pool and business. Governor Branstad connected his work in focusing on the needs of business, streamlining state government,

and touted the work as evidence of continuing to reform the work of government to make it better and stronger in responding to the needs of business. IVRS' job candidates and the relationship IVRS has created with key businesses in both urban and rural communities highlighted the impact that citizens with disabilities can have on their community when connected with businesses so they can be self–sufficient entrepreneurs and workers dedicated to the economic vitality of the company for which they work.

This Job Summit was an important "kick off" event to not only focus on employment for individuals with barriers, but also highlighting for business and industry the hidden talent pool they are missing out on when they fail to consider a person with a disability. This "lead–in" to the Future Ready Iowa aligned the work of IVRS with the National Governor's Association (NGA) Policy Academy on the Talent PIPEline.

d. University Collaborations

In the Memorandum of Understanding that IVRS has with the Board of Regents, the Regents universities are required to provide accommodations that allow an individual with a disability to have access to their programs, while IVRS strives to provide the necessary services and supports to achieve success. With the new integration model this will become more critical as fewer students will be participating in IVRS just to get the "VR scholarship for people with disabilities" and more of the seriously disabled will be served who also require disability–specific services to be successful.

The University of Iowa REACH Program (Realizing Educational and Career Hopes) facilitates the development of career interest and opportunities for Iowa residents with learning and cognitive disabilities through specialized coursework. REACH assists students with disabilities to access academic programs, enhance social development, and increase independent living opportunities with the ultimate goal of gainful employment outcomes. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has partnered and collaborated with the University of Iowa and REACH since the start of this program in 2008.

IVRS staff works with the UI REACH career staff in developing the career interests and opportunities for Iowa residents eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Nineteen individuals eligible for IVRS were provided financial assistance to participate in REACH in FFY15. In FFY16, IVRS will continue to provide financial support for REACH, in addition to ongoing counseling, guidance, and placement assistance to these individuals. The data from REACH shows that employment is obtained within six months of exiting Reach by 68% of the job candidates (FFY 14), which is a significant increase from the baseline year of 2010 that was 44%. The data is not completely clean however because many of the students do return to their home community and IVRS then provides funding for supported employment from which they obtain employment. But the post-secondary experience does add value to the students as approximately 36% of the students are living independently (FY 14). National data from the Pew Research (2012) shows that 44% of young millennials, ages 18–24 years old, are living at home, while 64% of all millennials ages 18–31 are living at home.

e. Project Search Options:

In FY15, IVRS is coordinating service delivery support to seven Project Search programs, six of which are funded as part of an Occupational Skills training program. There are specific requirements for Project Search programs, as well as ongoing supports costs, however the success of this program remains undisputed. Project Search has particular relevance under WIOA and each state's legal obligation to create a systematic plan to help people with disabilities to get jobs. Currently,

Iowans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are benefiting from seven Project Search program sites. They are located within health care facilities throughout the state, such as Unity Point and Mercy Hospitals in Des Moines, St Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Mercy Medical Center in Mason City, Lucas Hospital in Chariton; and in other industries such as Hy–Vee stores. The IVRS continuum plan will incorporate Project Search as well as create additional programming opportunities for the most significantly disabled population.

Project Search Placement Results:

IVRS has one Project Search designed on the traditional model of High School, VR, CRP and Business. This Project Search is a partnership with Mercy Medical Center, Easter Seals of Central Iowa, Des Moines Public Schools and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

DMPS Project SEARCH, Performance Measure: Within three months of successfully completing Project SEARCH, 50% of students will obtain competitive employment.

FFY14: Six of twelve students from the 2013–2014 class were placed within three months of completing Project SEARCH (50%).

FFY15: Eight out of twelve students from the 2014–2015 class were placed during FFY15 (67%).

Performance Measure: Project SEARCH will achieve a 60% rehabilitation rate.

FFY14: Rehabilitation Rate 67%

FFY15: Rehabilitation Rate 67% (Average hours per week = 32.75; Average wages per hour = $10.04)

IWD Business Service Representatives (BSR's) provide job seeking skills training and other curriculum steered towards youth and already travel to each school in this area. The idea is that IVRS, and other core program staff will travel along with the BSR's to school districts within the region. They would coordinate with teachers during teacher planning time to determine how to provide PETS activities to groups of potentially eligible students within each school. IVRS would focus on disability and accommodations training to assure students receive information in IVRS' area of expertise. The core agencies would also focus on providing information in the other PETS areas, to assure potentially eligible students are receiving information that allows them to receive the guidance they need to successfully enter the workforce. While the traveling team is in the school, students with disabilities will have the opportunity to speak with the team about their needs, and referrals could occur with the agency appropriate for that individual's needs.

2. The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a contract between IVRS and the Department of Human Rights to provide services to students with disabilities. Generally about 45 students are referred to the program each year to go through a week–long experience at Iowa State University where they work on job goals and experience life away from home. Students are referred to the YLF to get experience in career–planning, self–advocacy, job seeking skills training (JSST), and life skills. Each student is expected to exit YLF with a vocational goal to work on with their IVRS counselor upon returning home. IVRS' local offices are exploring the delivery of this service more locally in the summer months.

1. Post– Secondary Credential Attainment – Community colleges throughout the state often collaborate with IVRS when determining whether a student with a disability will be granted accommodations. IVRS is often an integral part of this process with IVRS staff providing guidance to job candidates on completing the request for accommodations. When a Student Accommodation Request (SAR) is not available, or more information is necessary, the college will contact IVRS to determine if more information can be obtained. In these situations, with a signed release of information, IVRS provides the eligibility face sheet to the college. This allows the college's Disability Services' staff access to not only the job candidate's limitations but also the diagnoses used to make the job candidate eligible for IVRS services. This document serves as a starting point, should the college need additional information. The diagnosis is on the IVRS Face Sheet and includes the name of the doctor that can be contacted for follow up and additional documentation.

IVRS has long tradition of encouraging job candidates with disabilities to further their education in an industry–recognized credential program area, evidenced by the number of individuals pursuing a post–secondary education across the past four federal fiscal years:

FFY2012 3982 IVRS job candidates pursued post–secondary credentials, 34% of total caseload

FFY 2013 4006 IVRS job candidates pursued post–secondary credentials, 32% of total caseload

FFY 2014 3873 IVRS job candidates pursued post–secondary credentials, 32% of total caseload

FFY 2015 3651 IVRS job candidates pursued post–secondary credentials, 30% of total caseload

Perhaps even more important to consider than mere attendance is credential attainment. The following table shows an analysis of the percentage of IVRS job candidates who achieved a post–secondary credential by the time the case was closed. The data shows that between 46% (FFY12) and 55% (FFY14) of those who obtained employment increased their education by case closure (the data excludes high school students). . This data was achieved by comparing the level of education at application for services to the level of education attained by case file closure. The information below shows the number of individuals who achieved a higher level of education while receiving services followed by the percentage this number represents of total cases closed during that fiscal year.

Individuals Who Achieved an Academic Credential by Case Closure:

FFY 2012 1715 of 3701 (46.3%) case closed achieved an academic credential by case closure

FFY2013: 1837 of 3736 (40.2%) cases closed achieved an academic credential by case closure.

FFY2014: 2094 of 3806 (55%) cases closed achieved an academic credential by case closure.

FFY2015: 2157 of 4121 (52.3%) cases closed achieved an academic credential by case closure

Significant in the discussion on preparing a Future Ready workforce is that 50% of the active IVRS caseload achieved educational attainment by the time the file was closed. At this time IVRS only collects data on certain post–secondary credentials. By FFY 17, IVRS will add additional fields into the case management system to track attendance in or attainment of additional credentials besides the common, formal college level degrees including data fields for training received that lead to

industry–specific credentials as required by WIOA. This information is important in the analysis of training that prepares individuals for middle skills jobs that do not require a post–secondary degree.

IVRS currently tracks the retention rate for job candidates in college. Each IVRS staff member assigned to a college case load is required to meet a retention rate so that job candidates who start in a program have the supports to complete the program. The table below shows the percentage of job candidates in a post–secondary training program who were retained in their program of study.

FFY12: 75% of the cases in college were retained and continued their education.

FFY13: 58% of the cases in college were retained and continued their education.

FFY 14: 63% of the cases in college were retained and continued their education.

FFY 15: 59% of the cases in college were retained and continued their education.

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Because IVRS has not collected this data in prior years, nor does it have a trend to examine related to the data, IVRS was only able to extract the data by going back in time and considering one quarter in time. As a result the data reported below is simply a snapshot and therefore not target measures. Instead IVRS will monitor performance over the next year to obtain a trend line for the quarters and then determine performance targets and they will be submitted by 10/30/18.

Regarding specific WIOA Performance Measures:

WIOA Performance Measures 1–3:

IVRS does not currently collect 2nd quarter wage information. IVRS plans to get the wage information from IWD but it has not been built in the IVRS case management system as this is a new RSA requirement. We were able to go back and review data from 214, which is reported below.

WIOA Performance Measure 4:

IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the effectiveness in serving employers. We are working with our State Rehabilitation Council as well as Core Partners to develop a coordinated data collection system.

WIOA Performance Measure 5:

IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the education level of program participants except at application and closure. On a quarterly basis, IVRS will be collecting as a RSA911 requirement the education level obtained throughout the participation in the program. RSA has not sent final requirements for collecting this data.

IVRS reviewed data in efforts related to identifying WIOA Performance Measures for the second and fourth quarters of future years. To do this we went backwards and reviewed data from 2014, which will serve as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data which is being collected through a project with IWD.

Based on the date generated by this methodology, at this point in time IVRS will continue to evaluate and develop the baseline for these performance measures and then within two years request to negotiate performance targets that appear appropriate. At this juncture the data is only a snap shot of performance and trends must first be established.

Performance Indicator

465 In Unsubsidized Employment after ? quarter after exit

912 Total Number of people exiting

50.99% of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit from program

50.99% of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit from program

$4731 Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The percentage of participants who obtained a recognized post–secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program. A participant who has obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is only included in this measure if the participant is also employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized post–secondary credential within 1 year from program exit

275 / 912 – 30.15%

Unified Plan Strategy: Implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision–making. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) require core agencies to develop an integrated system that can be used as a common application for services across the workforce delivery system as well as a tool for common data reporting. OMB 1820–0508 outlines revisions to the RSA–911 State–Federal Program for Vocational Rehabilitation Case Service Record and OMB 1205–0NEW provides guidance related to data collection required by section 116(d) of the WIOA including 1) State Performance Report (data by entities that administer WIOA core programs, 2) Local Area Performance Report for Title I, Subtitle B programs, and Eligible Training Provider Performance Report for Title I programs. Although these new reporting requirements significantly expand the amount of data collection required by the agency, they also provide an opportunity for Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to move out of silos and identify ways the agencies can collaborate to provide a seamless electronic system to provide Iowa's citizens access to information about services available to them through the core programs and the ability begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet—even from the comforts of

their own homes. First, IVRS technology staff must assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness is data collection, analysis, case management and reporting.

The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) is an internal case management system that is owned, maintained, and updated by IVRS. The original concept of IRSS was the development of an interactive, intuitive system designed to meet agency needs for case management, financial management, contract management, vendor management and reporting. After many years of development and scale–backs on the scope of the project, IRSS was put into use in October, 2008. The system that was deployed at that time was developed to meet the data collection and financial needs of the agency. Limited reports were developed and included in the initial deployment to assist with case management. Shortly following implementation, the IVRS IRSS Priority Management Team (PMT) was formed and charged with the responsibility of developing improvements to the IRSS Case Management System to meet the financial, case management and reporting needs of the agency and move the system closer to the original concept. Representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau and Administrative Services Bureau, in collaboration with IT developers and project managers, develop the projects and business rules for all IRSS development.

Over the past seven years, many improvements have been made to the system, including major projects to financial processing for Disability Determination Services, and batch processing of Ticket–to–Work data and revisions to streamline data entry and make IRSS more efficient. The IRSS PMT Committee has also been assigned the task of moving the agency to a paperless case management process to meet, considering the development timeframes for past changes to reporting requirements, the requirement changes to the RSA–911 Case Service Record Report in 2013 took several months of development and testing and extensive training with field staff. Proposed changes to the RSA–911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements will dominate IRSS development over the next several months and, as previously stated, will require much collaboration with IT staff in the other core programs. Significant changes in reporting requirements include:

- Reporting quarterly on open and closed cases rather than annually on closed cases;
- Collection of data related Pre–employment Transition Services for potentially eligible students;
- Compilation of financial data to assure Title I and Title IV expenditures meet the provisions of WIOA;
- Data collection and reporting after the date of exit;
- Development of a common application for all core WIOA programs including upload and download of common data;
- Determination of what data can be collected from other core WIOA programs through a common data dashboard and data elements that need to be added to IRSS or maintained outside of IRSS and imported through batch processes.

The IRSS PMT Committee is awaiting final reporting requirements from RSA. Implementation of the new quarterly reporting requirements is slated for FFY17. Once reporting requirements are finalized, development to meet the new requirements will be targeted for a completion date of 10/1/16.

Along with data required for federal reporting purposes, placeholders for other data that will be useful in measuring the effectiveness of the VR program will also developed into IRSS, for instance, involvement in third–party contract programs. However, not all data used to measure the

effectiveness of the program will be developed into the Iowa Rehabilitation Services (IRSS) Case Management System. Data collection sources maintained outside of IRSS includes:

- Transition Alliance Program (TAP) matrixes
- Making the Grade matrixes
- Iowa TIER for PETS and other transition data
- Department of Education Data Dashboard (in development)
- Iowa Career Pathways Dashboard (in planning stage)

Another initiative underway to minimize the burden of data collection across core agencies includes development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The work of this team in in its infant stages, but the team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the system.

Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, is also in the beginning stages of developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways. The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

- Identification and information on high–demand jobs;
- Pathways to high–demand jobs;
- Information on training including internships and apprenticeships;
- College and career planning information;
- Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information;
- Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The public dashboard is slated as Phase 1 development. Phase 2 includes development of an executive dashboard that can be used for analysis and as an evaluative tool by core programs. Measurements such as job placement data, job creation in high–paying jobs, increased family income, increased career counseling in secondary and post–secondary, and focus on STEM fields have been identified as target areas.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Evaluation; the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA have not been determined. IVRS and the WIOA partnership is using this first year to determine our baseline after which we plan on developing performance targets. IVRS did a “point in time” comparison on the

performance measures by looking at a period of time in the prior year and then determining that baseline. At that juncture our performance targets were discussed with our partners. on some of the targets we performed better than our partners and on others we performed more poorly. So collectively we are examining our performance and will establish targets after we have time to collect data and identify a baseline. This plan has been developed with discussions with the SRC and reflects their interests. This plan also reflects the work of the CSNA and the various data points and quality information so that the actions of IVRS can respond to and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in the state of Iowa.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

IVRS will support individuals to achieve competitive integrated work through a variety of strategies that meet the needs and individual goals of the job candidate to include: development and access in career pathways; creation and inclusion in stems activities; placement in competitive integrated work environments operated under the business services model of a community rehabilitation program; providing services to students in transition both through intensive service provision when necessary but also through the pre–employment transition services for potentially eligible; expansion of business immersion contracts that support businesses and place individuals with disabilities; expansion of transition alliance programs; continued serving of individuals who are in the united states on a visa so that employment is achieved by the time they are required to leave the united states; continued development of business services that focuses on the development of work readiness skills as identified in the community conversations; integration and support of the workforce development system to create access and achieve more outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

IVRS has been examining our time accountability in pre–employment transition services and have not been meeting our documentation requirements. This appears strange since IVRS is rated number 1 in the nation in connecting students with disabilities to IVRS. The most recent RSA wallpaper document identified IVRS at almost 70% and yet the allocation of 15% of funds, which can only be allocated by demonstrating time documentation by staff, is far below expectations. Some of this has been due to be overly careful in what is documented by staff to just the sheer volume of documentation and staff forget to document it when they are busy working with the students and documenting their case notes.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

On a weekly basis, IVRS removes all individuals on the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list. As of October, 2015, IVRS had 1,159 individuals with Significant Disabilities and 609 individuals in the Others Eligible Category on the Waiting List. Individuals are placed on the waiting list at eligibility determination based upon their application date. Individuals are removed from the waiting list based upon eligibility priority with those who Most Significantly Disabled receiving priority, than those are Significantly Disabled and then Others Eligible.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

Currently IVRS is not able to serve all categories on the waiting list. In May of 2012, IVRS opened the waiting list to all individuals who were MSD. At that time, IVRS staff were notified that: "Beginning today May 11, 2012 consumers that are determined to have Most Significant Disabilities will move directly into services. MSD consumers will not be placed on a waiting list. The Budget Team has decided to no longer restrict the movement of MSD consumers into services. Consumers with Significant Disabilities and Others Eligible consumers will continue to be placed on waiting lists for services."

IVRS currently releases the names of individuals for whom services could be initiated on a weekly basis. This allows IVRS to become more efficient in caseload management techniques and anticipate service provision. The budget team meets on the goals for release on a monthly basis and the Administrative Services Bureau Chief reviews this weekly taking into consideration the budget sustainability model and the Rehabilitation Services Bureau field capacity, which is gathered through discussions occurring at the Budget Team. Decisions are based upon staff capacity and our Financial Sustainability Model.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

For Priority Category 1 we are planning to serve 4,847 individuals. It is estimated that 835 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services and 752 will exit without employment after receiving services. The anticipated cost of these services is $4,519,533. For Priority Category 2, it is anticipated 8,465 individuals will be served with 1,456 exiting with employment after receiving services. 966 will exit without employment after receiving services. And the cost of services will be $7,893,447. For Priority Category 3, it is anticipated 188 individuals will be served and 32 will exist with employment and 9 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be $176,249.

The number of closures for each Priority Category is based on actual numbers from the prior year. The number of individuals IVRS is planning to serve is based on the size of the caseload and the percentage of job candidates within each Priority Category. The cost of services is based on the

projected year's case expenditures based on the prior year's actual expenditures. Our management team meets on a monthly basis to discuss case flow projections, budget expenditures, and initiatives impacting service delivery flow. On a weekly basis, decisions are made regarding the waiting list release, which is based upon budget and case management decisions regarding field capacity and projected case expenditure.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

The times within which goals are to be achieved are for Priority 1, 35.2 months, Priority 2, 44.4 months and Priority 3, 84.7 months.

The time frame goals are projected figures based on the average actual months it took from application to closure from the prior year in each Priority Category.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is an eligibility program based on the nature and function of the individual's disability as it pertains to preparing for, obtaining maintaining, and advancing in employment. Only a qualified rehabilitation counselor or a supervisor has the authority to determine if a person is eligible for services and which priority category to which they are assigned. In order to make an accurate decision on eligibility IVRS requires receipt of medical, psychological, or psychiatric records, and statements from the individual with the disability concerning the disability impact, to provide verification of the disability and the nature and extent of the disability on the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. Students in transition (age 21 and under) and youth in transition (age 24 and under) may provide documentation of their disability by submitting their Individual Education Plan (IEP). This document is then used by the IVRS counselor to complete the RSA Coding Rubric. IVRS staff may request a statement from the school psychologist that reports a job candidate as demonstrating a "pattern of behavior consistent with (intellectual disability, learning disability), but this is not required if the rubric is completed. According to the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title I – The Rehabilitation Act, if a state vocational rehabilitation program cannot serve all eligible individuals who apply it must develop a waiting list for services based on the significance of the disability. The following provides definitions of the waiting list categories:

• "Individual with a disability means an individual (i) Who has a physical or mental impairment as identified by the RSA Coding; (ii) Whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and (iii) Who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services." (34 CFR 361.5(b)(28)) • An individual who meets this definition and who requires only one service for a duration of six months or less is considered as meeting the priority for services category 6, "Other's Eligible"(OE). • Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 2 or fewer functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services category 4, "Significantly Disabled" (SD). • Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 3 or more functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services category 2, "Most Significantly Disabled" (MSD). • Services over an extended period of time is defined as by nature and extent of the service, not due to lack of action or time delay by the VR agency or staff. The determination of eligibility requires that

a qualified rehabilitation professional employed by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) perform a comprehensive analysis of the disabling conditions, impediments to employment, and justification of why the individual requires services from IVRS to be successfully employed within 60 days of application for services. When such determination cannot be made during that timeframe, an extension must be approved by the individual with a disability and when appropriate the guardian or parent. This extension must identify the specific date by when the decision will be made. The decision of eligibility should be completed within 10 working days of having received the medical information that allows for said decision to be made. The priory of service may be increased and updated at later dates as more medical information is received. As such an eligibility justification is a process for the rehabilitation counselor to learn about the individual's presenting disability and gain understanding of the implications. Through a process of analysis the rehabilitation counselor must consider the impact of the disabling conditions upon the person's ability to work, and then synthesize the information to determine if the individual can be successful with IVRS simply providing technical assistance and consultation to existing systems or if the individual requires intensive services to be successful in employment. A thorough process of developing an understanding from the individual's point of view, analyzing the information and synthesizing it in relationship to IVRS requirements and then determining the priority of service and service needs involves: a. gather information that describes the individual's disability and the difficulty the individual is having in gaining access to services and supports to be successful in employment; b. analyze the information in relationship to the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain, and advance in employment and how the individual can access services and supports that exist to more fully understand the implications of the individuals disability upon employment; c. consider those impediments that have been identified to determine the seriousness on the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain or advance in employment as well as the timeframe required to successfully complete services and obtain employment that could not otherwise be obtain from other organizations; d. determine the priority for services by examining the seriousness and evaluating if the serious impediment has implications in preparing for, obtaining, maintaining or advancing in employment and the specialized services and supports that are necessary for the individual to be successful. There may be times when a period of Trial Work is necessary to determine if the individual can indeed achieve successful employment. Trial work allows the rehabilitation professional to deliver any of the services available to any individual who is deemed eligible, with the sole purpose of determining if the individual can benefit from services because it is not entirely clear due to the severity of the individual's disability. An individual cannot be determined as "ineligible due to disability too severe" without having first participated in a program of trial work. During a program of trial work the rehabilitation professional delivers services to explore the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations given appropriate supports. Such experiences are of a sufficient variety and over a sufficient period of time (at most a period of four years but not less than 18 months) to determine the eligibility of the individual. In providing the trial experiences the rehabilitation professional shall provide the individual opportunities to try different employment experiences, and may include supported employment, and the opportunity to become employed in the competitive integrated work environment. Trial work is part of the assessment process for eligibility when it is deemed necessary. An individual must be seriously disabled or most seriously disabled to participate in trial work. "Clear and convincing evidence – means that IVRS shall have a high degree of certainty before it can conclude that an individual is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. The "clear and convincing" evidence standard constitutes the highest standard used in our civil system of law and is to be individually applied on a case by case basis. The term "clear" means unequivocal. For example the use of an intelligence test result alone would not constitute clear and convincing evidence. Clear and convincing evidence may include a description of assessments, situational assessments, supported employment assessments, reports from service providers who have concluded that they would be unable to meet the individual's needs due to the severity of the individual's disability and/or impediments. The demonstration of clear and convincing evidence must

include, if appropriate, a functional assessment of skill development activities with any necessary supports in real life settings." Under limited circumstances if an individual with a disability cannot take advantage of trial work experiences or if options for trial work experiences have been exhausted and IVRS cannot make the determination of eligibility then IVRS must conduct an extended evaluation to make the determination. During the extended evaluation period, IVRS services must be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with informed choice and the rehabilitation needs of the individual. During the extended evaluation IVRS counselors must develop a written plan for providing services to make the determination. An individual who has a disability as determined eligible for Social Security benefits shall be considered to be an individual with a significant disability and presumed to be eligible for IVRS services, provided that individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. Individuals who are seeking homemaker and unpaid family worker (and other similar uncompensated occupations) are referred to the Independent Living Program for services. Individuals receiving social security benefits due to a disabling condition, who are seeking employment in a competitive integrated environment, are presumed to benefit in terms of an employment outcome. If after the individual is informed that the purpose of the VR program is to achieve an employment outcomes in the competitive integrated environment, and the individual completes the application process, IVRS considers that to be sufficient evidence of the individual's intent to achieve an employment outcome and no additional demonstration on the part of the applicant is required. Rehabilitation counselors consider the seven functional capacity areas for employment; if there are systems, organizations, laws, and supports that already exist for the individual to access for success; and the seriousness of the impediment that requires the intensive services from IVRS. The following are examples of when the impediment is considered serious but is not an all–inclusive list: Mobility: unable to drive without modifications or specialized training; unable to ambulate without adaptive equipment or personal assistance; unable to climb one flight of stairs or walk 100 yards without pause on a permanent basis; unable to drive due to a physical impairment; unable to access public transportation due to a physical impairment.

Self–Care: Unable to live without supervision impacting one's ability to obtain or maintain employment; unable to plan activities of daily living without personal assistance or rehabilitation technology as required for employment; unable to perform activities of daily living without personal assistance or rehabilitation technology as required for employment; requires an extended period of time beyond the norm to prepare oneself for work due to physical or emotional impairments; requires assistive technology to perform essential daily living skills.

Self–Direction: unable to adjust to new work conditions, new work routines, or new work expectations without personal assistance, specialized training, or an extended transition period; unable to concentrate on the job for minimal periods of time in order to make appropriate work related decision, to problem–solve effectively on the job, and/or to complete multi–step work tasks without being easily distracted as a result of the disabling condition or medications prescribed that treat the condition; unable to make routine decision that would affect work tasks and work performance without structured intervention, personal assistance or specialized training; unable to learn from the consequences of poor decision–making on the job which results in repeated job loss for long periods of unemployment.

Work Skills: unable to learn new work tasks, learn appropriate work behaviors and skills, and/or organize work functions on the job without direct intervention or specialized training; unable to utilize previous job training and skills because of disability–related impediments and retraining that is required; will require rehabilitation technology on a permanent basis in order to perform resume job

skills; requires compensatory strategies, created by a third party, such as visual cues, illustrations, color–coding, numbering in order to complete work tasks.

Work Tolerance: unable to perform sustained work activity for 2 or more hours without rest on a permanent basis beyond what is allowed for a regular work shift; requires a permanently modified work schedule or work environment for disability related needs; unable to perform job tasks that require repetitive motion without modifications to the work environment in order to maintain employment; cannot work around chemicals, dust or fumes without having a serious reaction; unable to work around environment extremes such as temperature changes, noise or visual stimuli without aggravating the disability and causes a reduction in stamina; unable to demonstrate the psychological stamina to work a full–time job due to the disability.

Interpersonal Skills: unable to establish or maintain appropriate interactions with coworkers and supervisors without specialized training and/or personal assistance; unable to establish or maintain appropriate interactions with coworker and supervisors without prescribed medication; unable to maintain current or future employment due to documented history of job loss resulting from on the job interpersonal problems; demonstrates a serious lack in maintaining appropriate eye contact, understanding visual cues and personal work space to the point it creates discomfort on the part of the person with whom the interaction occurs.

Communication: unable to perform/understand written communications in the workplace without accommodation or interventions; unable to perform/understand oral communication in the workplace without accommodations or interventions; unable to perform functional communications required for completing job applications and participating in interviews without accommodations or interventions; unable to speak or understand individuals without accommodations or interventions; demonstrates job loss due to failure to communicate effectively, which caused misunderstandings and extreme difficulty in the work environment

The job candidate and the qualified rehabilitation professional together learn about and explore the job candidate's disability through a process of assessment, discussion, and functional evaluation. The decision is made as soon as the first documentation of priority is possible, but it may be changed to a higher priority category as additional information is received. The counselor will explain the decision to the job candidate and provide the job candidate with opportunities to provide more information. Further testing and evaluation may be done to determine the appropriate category and additional material may be provided to the counselor to be used in a reconsideration of the category placement decision. The job candidate may request mediation or appeal of the counselor's decision, and the Iowa Client Assistance Program may help with that request. IVRS' staff informs the job candidate of the timeframe by when mediation or an appeal must be requested. When determining the priority for services the counselor must ascertain how the functional impediment impacts the job candidate in seven critical areas: mobility, work tolerance, work skills, self–direction, self–care, communication, and interpersonal skills. The manifestation of the disability must be the cause of the impediment and functional limitations and cannot be a function of environmental factors or choices made by the job candidate. The impact of the functional limitation must be manifested in different ways in order for it to be considered a separate disabling condition.

As of February, 2016, IVRS has 664 individuals on the Significantly Disabled category and 628 Others Eligible. This totals 1,292 individuals on a waiting list. This is 124 less than December, 2015 and 396 less than twelve months ago. This fluctuates depending upon the frequency of referrals, but efforts are being made to provide access to services. A partnership has occurred with our One Stop Partners and individuals are being referred for One Stop services at the time of being placed on the

waiting list. (Referrals occur any time, but this is one where we specifically attempt to make it happen)

Data in the State of Iowa as reported by Respectability in February, 2015 “identified of the 176,576 working age people with disabilities in Iowa, fully 46/5% of them are now employed. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation. There are approximately 14,500 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20. Each year a quarter of them will age out of the school system. There remains a 35.7 percentage point gap in the labor force participation rate between people with and without disabilities in Iowa. The strategies being outlined in the Iowa plan are designed to leverage capacities of our CORE partners and others and effectively utilize the limited funding streams available to maximize employment for all Iowans including Iowans with disabilities.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

N/A

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

IVRS estimates that 242 individuals will be served in supported employment during Fiscal Year 2016. Currently, there are 44 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPS) available to provide services under a contract established with IVRS, in addition to over 20 that accept standardized payments derived from prior agreements.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

IVRS maintains a close working relationship with our Secondary Schools and our adult service providers associated with Supported Employment and extended long–term supports. An MOA was developed with the Department of Education specifying roles and responsibilities for service delivery and funding for secondary school youth and a MOA with the Department of Human Services/Medicaid identifies the necessity of long term extended supports through Medicaid or by natural supports.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

The State Unit accepted new expenditure rates that each CRP submitted to outline their costs of providing specific items on the Menu of Services. The Menu of Services items are used so that instead of having a package of services, individualized services are able to be purchased on behalf of each job candidate’s needs. It is the responsibility of the counselor and job candidate to determine which of the unbundled services the job candidate requires, and which the counselor/agency may be able to provide directly. Only those that are needed and cannot be provided by the agency are purchased. Additional services were added to the Menu of Services this year that include Discovery and Customized Employment. As part of the FFY15 State Plan, IVRS completed the mandatory Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to determine the current needs of Iowans with disabilities, as well as assess the services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs. During the prior CSNA, the roles that service providers fell under were reviewed by a consortium consisting of individuals from a variety of Iowa organizations. This group included representatives from the Department of Human Services Bureau of Long–Term Care, Policy Analyst staff from Medicaid Enterprise, sub–group members of the IVRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee, and supporting staff from the Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE). This group was tasked with re–evaluating practices related to service delivery for individuals receiving Supported Employment Services (SES) in Iowa. Various changes to the original SES process were implemented to address issues such as accessibility, consistency, paperwork redundancies and a lack of understanding of various SES “systems.” IVRS will continue to fine–tune service delivery

processes designed to contribute to an increase in understanding, improve relationships, and ultimately result in better outcomes for individuals receiving SES. Making this a reality will require ongoing communication and collaboration between all systems in the delivery of SES for individuals in Iowa. Refining current SES processes, coupled with enhancing both communication and collaboration from SES providers are established as primary priorities going forward. IVRS' staff are making a concerted effort to connect with current and potential partners, provide mutually–beneficial/joint training(s), and facilitate ongoing opportunities for dialogue. A continued focus is on increasing work hours and wages to enhance self–sufficiency. Flexibility is needed for job candidates with disability factors that indicate fewer hours, as well as those with the ability to increase work hours and become self–sufficient. If disability factors indicate a reduced number of hours, supported employment services are provided and before a case record is closed successfully the area office supervisor reviews the case to ensure it meets the job candidates stated goals, skills, IPE and functional capacity. Continuing goals for individuals receiving supported employment services include increasing the average number of hours worked and client wages, and decreasing dependence on public support. The State Unit recognizes that Title VI, Part B funds are only a supplement to the regular Title I funds. By the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year the State Unit typically has exhausted its Title VI, Part B dollars and is spending Title I dollars for supported employment. IVRS is making an effort to partner with various government entities including the Department of Human Services Medicaid Waiver program to ensure that adequate funding will be available to pay for supported employment. Efforts to blend and braid funds, as well as establish uniform payment systems among state partners continues to be viewed as IVRS priority areas going forward.

The MOA with our Medicaid Provides clearly identifies a priority by IVRS to serve youth with disabilities. The leveraged funding between our state systems has provided flexibility in determining funding streams with IVRS taking a lead role for those under the age of 23.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

GOAL 1: All of Iowa's workforce will represent the continuum of a most advanced, diverse, skilled, and Future Ready workers in the nation.

IVRS will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of and possibly expand upon the cooperative agreements, the Integration and Continuum of Services model, the service delivery structure in working with students and youth. Methods that will be used in the evaluation of progress include but are not limited to: customer satisfaction data, quality assurance data, and performance on common performance measures and key standards and indicators, and targeted outcomes and efficiencies. This information will continue to inform IVRS management about service delivery issues, performance patterns, and provide opportunities for improved data analysis. IVRS has been and continues to be an organization that focuses on results, continuous improvement, and research to improve systems and programs to achieve outcomes. Continued use of pilot projects is seen as a key to inform development and expansion of initiatives is embraced.

The implementation of new service delivery strategies with our education partners involves pre–employment transition services as well as services for the potentially eligible. These services will enhance outreach and impact service delivery. Our collaborative partnership with Iowa Medicaid will provide opportunities to align state funding and expand service delivery given limited capacity of our state partners. Our continued collaboration with our workforce partners will align service strengths for expanded service to all Iowans with IVRS focused on the supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Iowa has received technical assistance support through the Office of Disability and Employment Policy for the fourth year in a row. Iowa was an original pilot project and is now recognized as a leader in the provision of Employment First practices. Their Administrator was identified as and Employment First Ambassador and has provided guidance to other states with strategies regarding the implementation of Employment First practices. The continued focus of community provider transformation efforts, the Community of Practice Webinars and continued participation with Subject Matter Experts as identified by ODEP and the Department of Labor will provide opportunities for continued expansion and improved service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities focused on competitive, community integrated employment.

A continued barrier for service delivery is the timely delivery of benefits planning services for individuals and families with the most significant disabilities. This is also contributed to by the lack of information that gets to families through early education and secondary school programming. Strategies are being implemented through the delivery of Pre–Employment Transition Services, IVRS benefits planning services and Employment First principles. Continued efforts need to occur in communicating work incentives, impact of work, and integrating these discussions into employment planning. These efforts have resulted in improved employment planning, better job candidate engagement, and will positively impact employment outcomes. Each of the 13 IVRS offices have

assigned staff to provide benefits planning services and benefits counseling. Staff assigned to IVRS college settings are adept in using work incentives to help address a beneficiary's needs through school until the completion of their work goals. IVRS has issued a training request for service to a vendor to provide Benefits Planning to as many staff as possible so there are broad groups of staff able to assist and respond to this growing need.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

Unified Plan Strategy: Provide workers with the skills, work–based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed to secure and maintain self–sustaining employment so that ALL Iowans work to their fullest potential.

IVRS employs two Assistive Technology Counselor Specialists who work with the local offices in identifying assistive technology that can enhance an individual's ability to live and work. The second position was just filled in the fall of 2015 and reflected the need for additional expansion and capacity in the AT area.

The IVRS AT staff received an increase in referrals for assistive technology evaluations from one year to the next, with a slight decline in 2015. The IVRS program demonstrated that 100% of the individuals referred were able to benefit from assistive technology as recommended to them to expand their employment opportunities.

Staff from the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) based at the University of Iowa also provides updates on assistive technology issues. The IVRS Assistive Technology Counselor Specialists are available to consult with staff when job candidates require more intensive assistive technology services. This role also includes an emphasis on developing working relationships that contribute to the referral process for individuals with disabilities to programs or activities. In addition, IVRS expectations require that this role involves a continual exploration of new and innovative technologies that become available to help in service to customers. IVRS is also able to partner with the Easter Seals of Iowa Assistive Technology Program with a specific focus on assistive technology needs of rural job candidates Primary Assistive Technology expenditures include: Computer parts, Glasses, Hearing Aids, Home Modifications, Rehabilitation Technology Devices/Services, and Vehicle Modifications. In 2015, 257 job candidates received documented AT services at a total cost of $837,566. 197 of these job candidates were closed successfully in employment and 51 were closed unsuccessful after receiving services. The above data suggests that IVRS continues to expand opportunities with the use of assistive technology for the job candidates, and that the rehabilitation rate ranges from 76% to 79% depending upon the respective year. Further analysis may provide ideas to staff on how to consider services to increase outcomes for the most significantly disabled population.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

Unified Plan Strategy: Identify duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system and draft policies and collaborative agreements to maximize resources that foster a more unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services

IVRS local managers participate on a number of boards in their areas and network with civic organizations and churches in an attempt to not only identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, but also to identify support systems to enhance and assist the individual in their rehabilitation process. IVRS has a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa School for the Deaf which focuses on services for that population. Previous goals were developed as a result of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and outlined strategies to increase the representation of clients with deafness and hearing loss, as well as Work Group members developing Best Practices for this population to serve as a model for the rest of the state. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau Chief served on a state policy group addressing the education and vocational needs for individuals who are deaf or had hearing loss and strategies are in place through the state to develop regional academies to move the services closer to where the job candidates live and work. Outreach to individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals who have been unserved or underserved relates to services to individuals with disabilities who are minorities.

The IVRS caseload statistics indicate that minority representation exceeds minority representation in the population. IVRS met currently identified Standards and Indicators from RSA including the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities. This will continue to be a focus of service efforts. Opportunities will be developed to identify strategies for these groups through our service delivery for the potential eligible and pre–employment transition services.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

Unified Plan GOAL 2: ALL Iowa youth will be afforded the best educational and career opportunities in the nation.

Gaps and weaknesses within the system will be identified as IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model. Together with the Department of Education and through the local planning efforts, educators and rehabilitation professionals will more effectively connect students with opportunities after high school. Infusing employer led job–driven, models into the continuum model; and expanding upon those programs and services that produced outcomes in the past, IVRS with partners will achieve results for students and youth in transition. IVRS anticipates not only the expansion of Third Party Cooperative Agreements, but also creating more opportunities through an analysis of the current systems and needs. These new opportunities, using existing programs and services, will minimize duplication and instead better define how the systems work effectively together to achieve outcomes. The following summarizes the coordination of services for students in transition:

• Systematic analysis and development of a continuum of services model for students and youth in transition; • Development of trainings for parents, educators, and rehabilitation professionals on effective practices; • Development of local and state plans to maximize resources and minimize duplication; • Coordination of services within WIOA partnerships to expand opportunities for students/youth with disabilities; • Expansion of third party cooperative agreements to create a seamless system of services and supports; • Development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key community partnerships to infuse opportunities within existing structure and reduce/eliminate duplication; • Infusion of current practices, programs, services, plans, etc., to create the system of continuous service delivery that achieves a seamless system of transition.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

This is a priority of the State Rehabilitation Council and has been the driving force behind the Iowa Employment First efforts as well as the changes occurring in the IVRS Menu of Service Manual and delivery and partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid System. Through the work of the Iowa Governance Group, safe data was identified that can be shared among state programs for the benefit of facilitating service delivery and a primary focus of the group was supporting employment outcomes occurring in competitive, community integrated employment settings. IVRS work with our community rehabilitation programs is essential to making this happen. We have been a collaborative partner with the Iowa Association of Community Providers and their Executive Director is a key member of the Iowa Employment First Leadership Team.

Most recently IVRS has found that many of the CRPS have moved toward a business transformation model because they have their building but cannot provide segregated employment. IVRS has enlisted the advice of the National Institute on Disability to provide guidance to IVRS on whether or not this meets the competitive integrated work standards since:

1. The CRPS are paying the person with a disability at least minimum wage, which is the same wage for the work performed by the non–disabled peer; 2. The location of the building is in the community among other businesses; 3. The co–workers comprise at least 51% of the workforce performing the job.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Unified Plan Strategy: Implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision–making.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) require core agencies to develop an integrated system that can be used as a common application for services across the workforce delivery system as well as a tool for common data reporting. OMB 1820–0508 outlines revisions to the RSA–911 State–Federal Program for Vocational Rehabilitation Case Service Record and OMB 1205–0NEW provides guidance related to data collection required by section 116(d) of the WIOA including 1) State Performance Report (data by entities that administer WIOA core programs, 2) Local Area Performance Report for Title I, Subtitle B programs, and Eligible Training Provider Performance Report for Title I programs. Although these new reporting requirements significantly expand the amount of data collection required by the agency, they also provide an opportunity for Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to move out of silos and identify ways the agencies can collaborate to provide a seamless electronic system to provide Iowa's citizens access to information about services available to them through the core programs and the ability begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet—even from the comforts of their own homes. First, IVRS technology staff must assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness is data collection, analysis, case management and reporting.

The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) is an internal case management system that is owned, maintained, and updated by IVRS. The original concept of IRSS was the development of an interactive, intuitive system designed to meet agency needs for case management, financial management, contract management, vendor management and reporting. After many years of development and scale–backs on the scope of the project, IRSS was put into use in October, 2008. The system that was deployed at that time was developed to meet the data collection and financial needs of the agency. Limited reports were developed and included in the initial deployment to assist with case management. Shortly following implementation, the IVRS IRSS Priority Management Team (PMT) was formed and charged with the responsibility of developing improvements to the IRSS Case Management System to meet the financial, case management and reporting needs of the agency and move the system closer to the original concept. Representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau and Administrative Services Bureau, in collaboration with IT developers and project managers, develop the projects and business rules for all IRSS development.

Over the past seven years, many improvements have been made to the system, including major projects to financial processing for Disability Determination Services, and batch processing of Ticket–to–Work data and revisions to streamline data entry and make IRSS more efficient. The IRSS PMT Committee has also been assigned the task of moving the agency to a paperless case management process to meet future needs.

Considering the development timeframes for past changes to reporting requirements, the requirement changes to the RSA–911 Case Service Record Report in 2013 took several months of development and testing and extensive training with field staff. Proposed changes to the RSA–911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements will dominate IRSS development over the next several months and, as previously stated, will require much collaboration with IT staff in the other core programs. Significant changes in reporting requirements include:

? Reporting quarterly on open and closed cases rather than annually on closed cases; ? Collection of data related Pre–employment Transition Services for potentially eligible students; ? Compilation of financial data to assure Title I and Title IV expenditures meet the provisions of WIOA; ? Data collection and reporting after the date of exit; ? Development of a common application for all core WIOA programs including upload and download of common data; ? Determination of what data can be collected from other core WIOA programs through a common data dashboard and data elements that need to be added to IRSS or maintained outside of IRSS and imported through batch processes.

The IRSS PMT Committee is awaiting final reporting requirements from RSA. Implementation of the new quarterly reporting requirements is slated for FFY17. Once reporting requirements are finalized, development to meet the new requirements will be targeted for a completion date of 10/1/16.

Along with data required for federal reporting purposes, placeholders for other data that will be useful in measuring the effectiveness of the VR program will also developed into IRSS, for instance, involvement in third–party contract programs. However, not all data used to measure the effectiveness of the program will be developed into the Iowa Rehabilitation Services (IRSS) Case Management System. Data collection sources maintained outside of IRSS include:

? Transition Alliance Program (TAP) matrixes ? Making the Grade matrixes ? Iowa TIER for PETS and other transition data ? Department of Education Data Dashboard (in development) ? Iowa Career Pathways Dashboard (in planning stage)

Another initiative underway to minimize the burden of data collection across core agencies includes development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The work of this team in in its infant stages, but the team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own

development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the system.

Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, is also in the beginning stages of developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways. The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

Identification and information on high–demand jobs; Pathways to high–demand jobs; Information on training including internships and apprenticeships; College and career planning information; Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information; Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The public dashboard is slated as Phase 1 development. Phase 2 includes development of an executive dashboard that can be used for analysis and as an evaluative tool by core programs. Measurements such as job placement data, job creation in high–paying jobs, increased family income, increased career counseling in secondary and post–secondary, and focus on STEM fields have been identified as target areas.

Regarding specific WIOA Performance Measures:

WIOA Performance Measures 1–3: IVRS does not currently collect 2nd quarter wage information. IVRS plans to get the wage information from IWD but it has not been built in the IVRS case management system as this is a new RSA requirement. We were able to go back and review data from 214, which is reported below.

WIOA Performance Measure 4: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the effectiveness in serving employers. We are working with our State Rehabilitation Council as well as Core Partners to develop a coordinated data collection system.

WIOA Performance Measure 5: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the education level of program participants except at application and closure. On a quarterly basis, IVRS will be collecting as a RSA911 requirement the education level obtained throughout the participation in the program. RSA has not sent final requirements for collecting this data.

IVRS reviewed data in efforts related to identifying WIOA Performance Measures for the second and fourth quarters of future years. To do this we went backwards and reviewed data from 2014, which will serve as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data which is being collected through a project with IWD.

Based on the date generated by this methodology, at this point in time IVRS will continue to evaluate and develop the baseline for these performance measures and then within two years request to negotiate performance targets that appear appropriate. At this juncture the data is only a snap shot of performance and trends must first be established. IVRS did attempt to establish baseline data from looking at past quarters. Performance indicators for % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program were 465 with the total number of people exiting to be 912. This was the same data gleaned from the % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after exit from the program.

The median earnings was $4731 (second quarter after exit). The % of participants who obtained recognized post-secondary credentials or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalency during participation was 275 at the second quarter after exiting the program.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Unified Plan GOAL 3: Iowa will improve the structure, accessibility and administration of workforce delivery systems across the state.

On August 5, 2015, IVRS shared the changes in legislation specific to VR and presented the continuum of services model and how IVRS is an integrated and core partner with the “Iowa Works” partnership comprised of the Iowa Workforce Development and Workforce Innovation Opportunity core partners. In that meeting an overview of the legislative changes were shared with local managers from those entities along with the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Model designed specific to the integration of individuals with disabilities in workforce and community organizations. Together these managers came together to discuss and plan the integration and service delivery at the local level. The exciting aspect of the new legislation is how all prior disability legislations create a system of support and change. In the past, a person with a disability had no other alternatives but to receive services from IVRS because, while the ADA had been enacted, organizations still sent individuals with disabilities to “VR” because “they serve people with disabilities.” This has proven to be an unsustainable system as resources have reduced, services were duplicated, and demand has escalated. In addition, the legislation no longer segregates disability, but it is a normal aspect of life and as such all organizations must work toward full and comprehensive inclusion in the provision of services to persons with disabilities. Therefore, IVRS presented the “new” model of service delivery which allows IVRS staff to provide the expertise on how to serve individuals with disabilities, while making sure that only those individuals who truly require VR services to be successful are recruited into the caseload. Now instead of recruiting individuals early just because they “have a disability”, VR staff will use the existing legislation to assist organizations and businesses on how to meet their legal responsibilities by providing expertise to them in a manner that actually achieves a seamless system of service. (see figure below on Community Organization)

WIOA provides IVRS the opportunity to work smarter not harder; to serve those we are mandated to serve in a comprehensive manner while still giving guidance and technical expertise to those who would benefit but do not require intensive services. This continuum of service model propels “disability” into the community wide experience requiring all organizations and entities to create systems that work to achieve outcomes for all individuals. As a result, if the system and service works for people with disabilities it will work for everyone. Perhaps for the first time in disability history, disability truly becomes mainstreamed within the organizations and common experiences in the community.

Integration in this manner, allows IVRS staff to provide guidance and technical expertise to the system and organizations so they continue to change and evolve into a sophisticated system serving all individuals. In this manner, IVRS no longer becomes the entity to which people with disabilities must go to be successful. Instead IVRS works to support an existing system, guides those systems in how they can more effectively serve people with disabilities, and creates within IVRS new services and supports that the individual cannot obtain from the existing system of service delivery.

As individuals with disabilities access all services and supports within the community as a natural aspect of living, learning and working, disability becomes part of the mainstream and is no longer segregated to specialized programming. Those individuals who still require specialized programming find a highly skilled system available to them that uses existing structures and programs in a way that enhances their success and maximizes resources without duplicating services.

All Iowans could benefit from financial support in any aspect of their life. Individuals with disabilities are no different and as such should access that support through the same channels, organizations, and resources available to every individual in the State of Iowa. However, when the disability itself results in a serious need in order to prepare for or obtain employment there may be a financial burden due to the costs associated with disability. The IVRS staff must ask themselves “what does this person require from IVRS in order to become successfully employed?” If the answer is they only require tuition assistance but they have the skills to research employment options on their own, perform a self–directed work search, and can manage the disability and do not require accommodations both in training and at work, then this individual could be successful accessing the services and supports in the community at large (i.e. IWD, FAFSA, public transit, etc.) Therefore, this individual would receive services through the community organizations and IVRS would provide the technical consultation necessary to ensure the service and system understands disability and how to make sure the person has equal access, programmatic, and physical accessibility to be successful. In this manner IVRS staff will provide the system development guidance but then provide direct services to those individuals with disabilities who require intensive services.

However, first and foremost in considering if the individual should be recruited into IVRS services is the impact of the disability on the individual’s ability to access and navigate the services available to all individuals. This indeed is the defining action on if the individual not only should be recruited, but requires IVRS services. Intensive service(s) needs are as broad and varied as there are disabilities and impact of disabilities on employment.

During meetings at the local level with Iowa Workforce Managers, IVRS learned that IWD staff would find it exceedingly valuable for IVRS counseling staff to assist them in learning how to interact with people with disabilities in an accessible format. Indeed, IWD voiced a need for IVRS to provide suggestions and ideas on how to create a system that is accessible and infuses the expertise of IVRS into their programs. Further discussions with the IWD Managers included ideas on collaborative strategies in serving youth with disabilities. In some of the planning, IWD staff will accompany IVRS as we progress to develop local plans with local education agencies on more effectively serving students with disabilities that are eligible or potentially eligible. In some areas of the state, the discussions center on creating a youth center to better relate and align services specific to youth. Through this model of service delivery, IVRS’ staff share their expertise in improving the workforce system so that it works for all individuals with a disability and then provides direct service to those who require more intensive services to achieve their employment outcomes.

Between May and August of 2015, IVRS and IWD engaged in four pilot implementation designs where the local offices identified application and referral strategies that provided information on complementary data–sharing opportunities. In addition these pilots stimulated discussion on how to wrap services around the mutual job seeker in order to create a more seamless system of support. Unfortunately the Iowa Workforce Development representative assigned to these projects decided to step down from his state level position and no other person was assigned to the projects. As a result, the only projects that continued to remain focused on the pilot discussions were those in his managerial territory (Sioux City and Carroll.) Then in December, 2015, the IVRS supervisor assigned to the Carroll office retired thereby delaying progress in the pilot in that area office.

Our goal is for all individuals with disabilities to access services through the workforce development partners. Similar to the multi–tiered system of support designed in education, IVRS anticipates that 80% of the individuals with disabilities can be successful accessing the programs and services provided by Iowa Workforce Development with no specialized service needed because the staffs have received basic training and etiquette in working with individuals with disabilities. IVRS can provide technical assistance to those partners so that they can be effective in serving individuals with disabilities and making sure their programs and services are accessible. 20% of the job seekers may require more intensive services due to disability related needs. These individuals are referred to and recruited by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services will provide extension of the workshops offered by IWD for all individuals with disabilities by infusing information on how to request an accommodation, how to manage the disability at work, etc. Only those individuals who require more intensive job support and service to become employed will be recruited into the IVRS caseload. All other individuals with disabilities will be served by the One–Stop center, with technical consultation provided by IVRS staff to enhance success of accessibility to the system. Throughout the State of Iowa IVRS is co–located in most locations. In the Davenport Area Office, IVRS is not co–located because the One–Stop needed the space that IVRS housed for the Promise Jobs staff and so IVRS was asked to move out of the center. The management of both IWD and IVRS are working collaboratively on creating a solid partnership that will advance the vision of the integration model described above. In Dubuque IVRS has never been co–located but IVRS is exploring how to connect with the center so that workshops and programs can be accessible and recruit individuals who need and require IVRS services. IVRS has a number of branch offices and IWD has agreed that staff can travel to the IVRS office to provide workshops and other related type programs. In Ames, for example, IVRS has an office and the Regional Manager for this area inquired about having IWD staff use space in the IVRS Ames office to provide workshops and connect with IVRS staff. IVRS will make available to IWD this space as we have requested additional square footage to make sure we can accommodate the IWD partnership. Integration in the One Stop programmatically allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops, and services with IWD staff trained by IVRS, and others with expertise on serving people with disabilities, on: how to work with individuals with disabilities; when to involve technical assistance from IVRS to ensure accessibility; when to consider a reasonable accommodation and the legal implications of the ADA; what factors would identify a need to refer the job candidate with a disability to IVRS; what technology, data elements and referral processes will allow both agencies to exchange information without duplicating data input; what supports are needed by individuals with disabilities to access programs and services through IWD; how might staff work collectively to achieve outcomes for all individuals with disabilities. Integration in the One–Stop may include joint staff meetings, may require technical assistance from IVRS on how job candidates with disabilities participate in video modeling and other services. The focus of integration is how to support the job seeker to achieve employment with available services and supports from the entire One–Stop team; and involvement in IVRS services only when necessary and essential to the job seeker's success. The following is further description regarding how various programs could work in concert to support the job seeker and the business. This will be a continued focus as we implement identified strategies in this plan. As the job seeker walks into the One–Stop center the IWD staff greet the individual and learn about the needs and desires for employment. Together the IWD staff, Promise Job staff, IVRS staff, and the Adult Education and Literacy representatives evaluate and create a plan with the job seeker to train for and obtain competitive integrated employment. If the job seeker does not have a disability, IVRS would not be involved. But, those individuals with disabilities would access all the services and programs available through the IWD programming with IVRS providing consultation and technical assistance on how to be successful. This "wrap around service" concept ensures that the barriers to employment are addressed by the system instead of the individual and creates a more seamless system of support. Staff work together identifying what services and resources are available to the individual as an IWD participant. When the job candidate is recruited into the IVRS caseload, IVRS

becomes the primary manager of the case working in concert with the other programs identifying accommodations and supports that all partners provide for access, while IVRS funds those individualized services and support needs based on the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) developed with the eligible IVRS job seeker. IVRS and IWD staffs create a braided service that no longer “hands off” the individual between programs but they work together to achieve common outcomes. IVRS connects with Career Pathway trainings, NCRC, Adult Education and Literacy by referring the individual to the appropriate program consistent with the IVRS job seekers job goal. IVRS provides technical assistance to those programs on specific accommodation needs when applicable. IVRS coordinates the IPE with the other partner’s plans for employment creating a “short term” to “long term” employment plan that creates opportunities for self–sufficiency and middle skills development of the individual. While IVRS provides training to the One–Stop center staff on disability and disability etiquette, the One–Stop center staff provides training to IVRS staff on the available services so that IVRS job candidates’ access all that is available to enhance their marketability for the business community. The lack of knowledge and training on programs, services and supports as well as how the systems can work together currently prevents the systems from working effectively. This training and on–going service development is essential to a fully integrated system. Therefore if the One–Stops create a “Resource Team” that acts similar to a Sector Board for business, but only this team is the resource for the One–Stop partners the system could be developed such that there are points of contact within the system that act as the intermediary to coordinate for special circumstances and needs. Providing an integrated service system for employers can be accomplished similar to following the model developed by the Workforce Partnership in Burlington. This model ties in the community college, the special services and supports of IVRS, adult education, TANF, Career Pathways, etc. It provides industry the resources and supports they need and want, without involving extra unnecessary contacts and services not required. It provides a streamlined system for recruitment and retention assistance to meet their skill and labor shortage needs. In rural areas where there isn’t a workforce office, IVRS can take the lead in developing the system and involve and invite workforce to travel out when those meetings with business occur so that Workforce Development uses their resources wisely and avoids unnecessary travel and duplication. The Community Conversations have already started to develop this system with IVRS being the point of contact in communities where IWD is not located and the businesses are advising VR of what they want and VR is involving the appropriate partners to the table.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

Service delivery efforts are based upon guidance from the State Rehabilitation Council, our State Rehabilitation Plan, Our Strategic Plan, EDRN (business feedback) and our Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Innovative strategies are consistently being addressed by our bureau management team in efforts to minimize duplication, expand service delivery options, increase capacity, while reducing costs all the while being contained in a limited budget environment. To achieve results, the IVRS team has opportunities to exercised innovation and creativity in the delivery of rehabilitation services.

IVRS will continue to participate in the Iowa Employment First efforts, which has a clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant barriers to employment access competitive, community integrated employment at the level meeting the optimum needs and interests of the Job Candidate.

The Iowa Development Disabilities Council, the Disability Rights of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community Provides and our State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. These efforts are closely linked to service delivery strategies with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Throughout this plan IVRS communicated the strategies in working with various populations, partnerships, job candidates, businesses, and staff to create equitable access to individuals with disabilities. The initiatives identified, the plans in progress, and the work of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau focused on achieving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Throughout the document it is clear that the strategies currently employed and new strategies that will be developed as a result of continued quality improvement efforts will focus on and achieve goals and priorities established by the CSNA and the Unified State Plan. Reader is referred to each of those sections as the answers to this section are explained accordingly.

IVRS will also integrate promising practices and strategy recommendations that are developed from the work being provided by the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities as established under Section 609 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Section 461 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. The Committee has been tasked with three areas: 1) Ways to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities or other individuals with significant disabilities; 2) The use of certificate program carried out under Section 14 (C) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the employment of individuals with Intellectual or developmental disabilities and 3) Ways to improve oversight of the use of such certificates.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

Of significance to IVRS, is the work occurring in the Transition Sub–Committee (recommendations focused on early work experience, high expectations, and changes to the general education program), Marketplace Dynamics Sub–committee (considering the demand–side to employment focused on high growth industries, Federal Contract Compliance, and Tax incentives), and the Capacity Building Sub–committee (training/certifications for professionals helping individuals access competitive integrated employment, coordination of employment services within waiver programs, service delivery to increase effectiveness) There are also sub–committees for Complexity and Needs (Funding, measures, data sharing, 14C reform) and Ability One reform.

IVRS will review emerging practices and identify ways to integrate recommended practices and strategies into service delivery. Emerging practices and recommendations will be discussed with our State Rehabilitation Council and with our leadership team for potential implementation. These ideas will provide opportunities for innovation and expansion of current processes and will identify national emerging practices.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

IVRS is working not only on the state leadership team, but on work groups addressing accessibility from a program and physical aspect, for service delivery programs which include the VR Services Program, the State Supported Employment Services Program and our Work Force Partners. IVRS maintains a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa Client Assistance Program and Disability

Rights Iowa for working through identified barriers for access and participation in needed programming for individuals with disabilities.

The identified barriers related to equity of access for persons with disabilities stems from various systemic issues such as: historically a person with a disability has been told to go to VR by the workforce partners for employment related services rather than striving to achieve accessibility within those systems. Under WIOA planning, IVRS will provide consultation, technical expertise, and technology assistance to design and implement an accessible workforce system and then provide direct service delivery when because of disability, additional employment services and supports are required. This will require system-wide staff training to improve understanding that disability is part of the human experience. Training is fundamental as person first language is a key to the successful implementation of the continuum of service model being planned.

A barrier to implementation of Section 511 of WIOA is continued education and coordination with our education partners. Many school districts are still considering the provisions of Section 511 as what they must do to prove that the student should be placed with a community rehabilitation program at sub-minimum wage. Efforts are occurring across systems to inform local education agencies and Area Education Agency staff on Section 511 to understand with the proper supports, encouragement and services, students with the most significant disabilities can be employed at their optimal level in competitive, community integrated settings. We are collaborating together to find the supports and services to design an employment system which the student can have a successful employment career.

Internally, IVRS has experienced a steep learning curve for VR staff in implementing the provisions of WIOA. The intensive service model being planned has created a lack of understanding regarding the provisions of services and accessing individuals who are potentially eligible for pre-employment transition services. Distinguishing individuals who require intensive VR services and understanding an Employment First philosophy has been a barrier and will continued to be addressed through additional training and communication internally and with our partners.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

IVRS is a collaborative partner in the development of the Iowa Unified Plan and have staff on a variety of work groups moving towards common definitions and measures for meeting the achievement of agreed upon goals. IVRS fully expects to be able to demonstrate the ability to meet and exceed established goals and implement strategies for success. We will be using our data metrics system for analysis as well as measuring the success of a number of innovative projects that have been implemented during the last year including but not limited to: • State Mapping Team Project • Regional Board Career Pathway/Sector Board strategies • PETS • Potentially Eligible student population • Employment Services Contract with Iowa Department of Aging • Medicaid aligned funding agreement • IWD pilot projects • Making the Grade contracts • Unity Point Contract • Collaborative Transition Protocol changes • Assistive Technology Specialist expansion IVRS invested in technology in efforts to expand the effectiveness of work staff and increase capacity for service delivery. This included trial use of remote technology such as iPhones, laptops, and iPads. It also included the use of Dragon Naturally Speaking software, which provides opportunities to allocate staff positions from a central typing pool to field offices where they have an opportunity to provide increased clerical and office support. IVRS is restricted from expanding FTE positions due to limited budget capacity and meeting Department of Management guidelines. So these strategies are implemented in efforts to continue with service delivery improvement.

IVRS will improve meaningful, sustained employment for supported employment consumers and reduce the number of individuals who repeat the process due to inadequate placement or supports. Outcomes for Supported Employment services were analyzed over the past several years. Alignment with Medicaid waiver funding occurred and system consistency will be developed as this is implemented over the next year. Iowa is undergoing significant changes with managed care and this will create additional need for training and close collaboration to ensure work effectiveness. The new rate structure will allow IVRS and the Department of Human Services to collaborate with funding to assure that CRPS are adequately reimbursed for the range of services available from each agency. Implementation of new payment points and the development of Customized Employment services have occurred. Supported Employment Services with a focus on competitive, integrated employment is supported by IVRS.

Across the nation, Employment First is a declaration of both philosophy and policy stating that: Employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. In 2011–13, the State of Iowa received a grant to focus on Employment First initiatives, customized employment strategies and alignment of service delivery systems, and funding for those services across state systems. IVRS was the lead agency for the subsequent Employment First Project which outlined three initial goals:

Identify a unified cross–agency rate structure that promotes and incentivizes integrated employment, Identify and train community service providers and their related partner/disability service professionals in the implementation of customized employment techniques, Improve communication and collaboration among state departments related to Employment First principles. EF opportunities are continuing to draw attention to Iowa and facilitate changes in our systems. Community, integrated employment is the ultimate goal for all Iowans. Iowa's efforts have been greatly enhanced through the collaboration occurring between the Employment First Leadership Team, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment/Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Disability Employment Initiative.

In accordance with EF, Iowa is committed to strengthening employment services for people with disabilities, improving customer service, and breaking down artificial barriers. The adoption of EF has involved changes in both policy and service provision in Iowa. Specific focus was on changing the employment culture of Iowa with an emphasis on community integrated employment. Community Provider organizations participated in pilot efforts to transform their organizations to become high achieving employment providers. Leaders from state programs are focused on coordinating career and employment services between state partners to support community, integrated employment options for individuals with the most severe disabilities. IVRS continues to have a primary focus on provider transformation, training, capacity building, and establishing a shared vision for community, integrated employment.

The EF philosophy helped to provide a framework to build upon and establish a common purpose to unite forces in Iowa. For the past three fiscal years IVRS realized an increase in the number of individuals served through supported employment services. As a result this increase produced an increase in the number of job candidates served through the Employment First initiative and through the formal supported employment services.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

IVRS met and exceeded federal standards and indicators and was an active partner in collaborating with state planning goals. Communication across all systems and stakeholders, variance in federal rule regulations, expectations of constituents and stakeholder groups that are sometimes mixed goals, staff capacity, training, and financial resources all impact effective, quality service implementation. As an agency, we have a strategic plan which is coordinated with our state plan and becoming integrated into our unified plan. These efforts will continue to enhance service delivery. We also continue to prioritize the use of technology in various modes in efforts to develop effective case management strategies and improve access to services. Common data collection systems focused on program goals and measures also take time and take resources away from service delivery.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The traditional model of Supported Employment Services (SES) involved upfront planning regarding identification of employers in the community at which a job candidates could find placement. That model involved more emphasis on the placement and evaluation of performance at a job site rather than actual training requirements. When considering the reason for IVRS recidivism rates, an interdisciplinary team analyzed SES and recognized that a significant lack of formalized training impacted outcomes. As such, a paradigm shift emerged to significantly enhance training of professionals and job candidates alike. Supported Employment Service Outcomes have continued to increase over the last three years with 2015 reflecting 333 outcomes at $839/hour and working 19 hours/week. This compares to 148, $7.79/hour and 19 hours/per week in 2012. Each progressive year, IVRS has demonstrated improvement.

The data above not only reflects the job candidates on the IVRS caseload who successfully achieve an employment outcome in an integrated, competitive work setting; but also those who first began their employment journey through the Employment First Initiative. The individuals who participated in the Employment First Initiative were from our most vulnerable and disabled population, many of whom had never worked in a competitive integrated environment. Some participated in progressive employment, first exploring their interests and sometimes starting with volunteer work; while others moved into an employment setting learning skills through a customized employment experience that created an opportunity of success for them. The data for 2015 reflects a significant increase that is a testament to the IVRS relationships with community rehabilitation organizations and the success of the Employment First initiative. IVRS anticipates that this service will expand and even greater numbers will be served as the integration and continuum of services model is infused.

As discussed earlier in this document, IVRS added an after–school work program, “Making the Grade”, which is a work readiness, work experience program to provide services to students with disabilities who are juniors and seniors to obtain and maintain summer and after–school paid work opportunities. Students referred to the program are those who need assistance in getting paid work experience which may not be available to them due to their disability. This collaborative agreement is new, and only began in the summer of 2015, so preliminary data is limited, but it is indicative of the types of strategies that IVRS employs to impact student outcomes.

Vendor data of D–code results is shared annually in a Report Out provided by IVRS to internal staff and employment service providers (CRPS). The intent of this Report Out is to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, promote transparency for purchased services, and provide a statewide basis for comparisons. Beginning in 2014, IVRS also reported specific outcomes from the Occupational Skill Training Programs being provided by the Community Rehabilitation partners.

Report Out data is provided to Iowa CRPS that shows:

? The number of IVRS job candidates who received D–code services; The dollar amount of services IVRS purchased from CRPS; The number of successful employment outcomes obtained from the

individuals provided a service; The number of case closures not resulting in an employment outcome from the individuals provided a service; the average hours worked; the average hourly rate earned from the successful employment outcomes; the financial costs of d–code services for cases closed; An average cost per successful employment outcome; Recidivism rates for job candidates who return to IVRS for services.

Report Out information also compares state averages from all community partners, along with the SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) category related to the successful employment outcomes. Report Out conversations are encouraged between IVRS staff and partners to solicit ideas and perceptions that can help influence service delivery and contribute to improved outcomes for employment success.

The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment is a current initiative that brings together a diverse set of stakeholders representing all levels of service and interest in employment options for Iowans with disabilities. ICIE is the result of a five–year grant awarded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The grant contracted with five demonstration projects in an educational environment, in addition to coordinating resources with Iowa's Employment First initiative to support six community rehabilitation provider demonstration projects.

ICIE includes a base consortium of representatives from the DD Council, the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Human Services to improve systems so that Iowa youth with disabilities have fully integrated and competitive work opportunities. The overall goal of ICIE has been to improve systems so that Iowa youth with developmental disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, have fully integrated, competitive work, regardless of where they live in the state. ICIE has been a key collaborator with innovative braiding of funding to expand financial and technical assistance areas specifically related to Employment First and the delivery of supported employment services in Iowa. This is enhanced by a committed and diverse group of private, state and families of individuals with disabilities that make up the Employment First Leadership Team in Iowa.

The Disability and Employment Initiative through IWD/DOL has also been a key collaborator and partner in increasing employment outcomes. The DEI project has enhanced communication and awareness through their local projects with an Integrated Resource Team, financial literacy strategies and benefits planning.

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau (RSB) started efforts to educate parents, teachers, Department of Education Administrators and others on Section 511. These discussions actually began during the Community Conversations, where for the first time Administrators learned that their "agreements" with CRPS would need to be discontinued effective July, 2016. RSB is also working on webinars and other materials for staff and educators to focus on competitive integrated employment so they are prepared for provisions of Section 511.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Factors impeding achievement of goals include alignment of funding and service delivery across service systems, secondary school transition programming that does not always support competitive community integrated employment, expectations of family, students, and service providers, financial disincentives for employment, transportation access, lack of wrap around supports to meet all needs of job candidates, and capacity of staff to serve all who need services.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Performance accountability continues to be addressed through the establishment of baseline data specific to program services as well as review of previously discussed strategic plan objectives.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

IVRS has not had a specific budget line item for Innovation and Expansion monies. Programming has been developed to meet immediate needs as well as trial projects for future success. Examples of I & E activities included funding for the Travel and interpreter costs for State Rehabilitation Council members to attend meetings. Contracts with local school districts to fund Transition Alliance Projects; Contracts with the Iowa Department of Human Rights to fund the Youth Leadership (YLF) for high school students with disabilities; a Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging, the Making the Grade pilot projects and the Iowa School for the Deaf contract are other examples.

Regarding funding support of the Unified State Plan, IVRS continues to support the infrastructure of the One–Stop Centers where IVRS is co–located. In all One–Stops, IVRS is working toward providing IVRS staff assistance in the delivery of workshops so that individuals with disabilities who require specialized services and supports due to the disability will have an IVRS staff person involved in their instruction. This involvement, an in–kind expense, may include accommodations as well as IVRS staff providing more one–on–one instructional services. Regardless of the need, the goal is to achieve accessibility for the individual with a disability. IVRS will support the One–Stop Centers according to the percentage requirements outlined in WIOA each year.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

As previously discussed under evaluation and reports for Supported Employment, IVRS has made substantial increase in referrals, participation and purchase of services with our community rehabilitation provides in the area of SES. Data reflect an expanded array of services is being provided with an increase in numbers of job candidates being served. Quality benchmarks, such as length of time in service, outcome measures are being collected through the CRP Report Card and are shared. This information also influences informed choice options as job candidates make decisions on which providers they want to work with. IVRS's involvement with Employment First efforts and the leveraged resources of working with the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment and the Disability Employment Initiative enhanced the scope and outreach of program efforts. Significant changes have occurred with the alignment of funding and the Menu of Services that have expanded to reflect the services needed for enhanced customized and supported employment services.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

This is outlined in the MOA with our Medicaid partners and is specified at the time of agreement with the Individual Plan for Employment. Training has occurred with community rehabilitation providers, VR staff and case managers in efforts to have a smooth, seamless system. Work still needs to occur with all staff across systems to ensure gaps in extended services are eliminated. DHS/Medicaid are rolling out a managed care system which will continue to provide opportunities for communication and identification of system change that is needed to improve the timing of extended service delivery.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Name of designated State agency

Full Name of Authorized Representative:

Title of Authorized Representative:

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

_____

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant’s Organization **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code.

Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **Yes**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,
A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND
II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is an independent consumer–controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

Not applicable.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

Not applicable.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Not applicable.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not applicable.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

The Iowa Department for the Blind cooperates with numerous regional and community agencies and organizations that are not required partners of the statewide Workforce Investment system. Many of these regional and community agencies have entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Workforce Investment partners, including the Department. Cooperative activities include providing and receiving training regarding eligibility and services; making and receiving referrals and providing follow–up; and sharing applicable information regarding mutual clients. In addition, the Department participates in the following efforts:

Governance Group. The Iowa Department for the Blind is a signatory of the Governance Group Memorandum of Agreement. The Governance Group, organized in 1998, includes administrative personnel from the Iowa's Developmental Disability Council, the Office of Persons with Disabilities – Department of Human Rights, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services, Workforce Development, Department of Education, Department on Aging and the Department for the Blind. The purpose of the Governance Group is to ensure that partner agencies deliver quality employment services to individuals with disabilities by addressing the barriers to collaborative efforts that their varying policies and procedures can create. Through projects sponsored by this group, Department staff have worked collaboratively with staff from the Veteran's Administration, Iowa's Medicaid Buy–in program known as the Medicaid for Employed Persons with Disabilities Program, Iowa's Economic Development Authority, and Social Security's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance grant program.

Youth Leadership Program (YLF). Together with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Office of Persons with Disabilities, the Department sponsors and participates in the Youth Leadership Forum. The YLF is a five–day leadership training program for Iowa high school youths with disabilities. Held every summer on the Iowa State University campus, it gives participants an opportunity to share information on choosing careers; learn about the history of disability culture; use assistive technology for independence; identify existing barriers to personal and professional success; develop a "Personal Leadership Plan" to deal with barriers; and interact with peers.

Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE): The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE) is an initiative to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders that represent all levels of service and interest. The goal of the Coalition is to improve existing state systems so that Iowa youth with disabilities have increased opportunities and resources for fully integrated, competitive employment, regardless of where they live in the state. The Department's Vocational Rehabilitation Program supervisor represents the Department on the Coalition. This effort is funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

NFB–NEWSLINE: The Department contracts with the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa to make more than 330 local and national newspapers (including the Des Moines Register) available to Iowans through a telephone–based interface with a computerized system. This project provides

ready access to local and national job listings, magazines, TV listings, and information from government agencies and organizations of and for the blind.

Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind and Print Handicapped (IRIS). The Department partners with IRIS to assist Iowans who cannot access print information. This service allows access to a number of resources including information about career topics, employment opportunities and training events available from newspapers, magazines, and other sources by radio.

National Library Service: The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has a cooperative agreement to serve as a regional library from the National Library Service. The service allows access to print and book materials not available to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired through their local, school, or college libraries.

Interlibrary Loan Programs: The library has cooperative agreement with the State Library of Iowa and Iowa libraries to participate in the statewide Interlibrary Loan program, borrowing and lending books. The library also maintains cooperative agreements with libraries and Instructional Materials Centers around the country to participate in an Interlibrary Loan program, borrowing and lending books.

The Employer's Disability Resource Network (EDRN). This employer development team is a collaborative group of state, federal and local partners who are working together to identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities. The EDRN seeks to increase employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout the state. Members of this group include staff from the Department, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Economic Development Authority, U.S. Small Business Administration, Department of Human Rights – Office of Persons with Disabilities and Office of Deaf Services, Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Easter Seals of Iowa, Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa, Department of Education and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant program. Members of this group have presented and provided resources and assistance to employers and employer organizations throughout the state. In addition, the EDRN provides Iowa employers with access to qualified job applicants and are available to provide employers with information and support related to retaining quality employees who experience a disability.

Institutions of Higher Education: The Department continues the memoranda of understanding (MOU) with Board of Regents institutions of higher education and in the State. This MOU provides for the coordination of services for clients of the Department who are students at one of the universities. It addresses the responsibilities of each party under the laws that address services for each.

It states that the Board of Regents Universities is responsible for the provision of reasonable accommodations that allow access to the classroom and university programs, and that the Department is responsible for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. The agreement addresses financial responsibilities of the parties and dispute resolution methods. The Department has similar agreements with community colleges within the state.

Ticket to Work: The Department participates in the Ticket to Work program and utilizes the reimbursement process for recipients of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance who are vocational rehabilitation clients seeking employment.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

IDB will work toward developing a cooperative agreement with state programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology is funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living. IPAT, the statewide assistive technology program for Iowans, is a program of the Center for Disabilities and Development at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. The Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center receives funding through a grant from the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology, based out of the University of Iowa. This program also has provided information, referral, and assistive technology for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowan's who are blind or visually impaired.

The Iowa Department for the Blind maintains a team of rehabilitation technology specialists who are trained in assistive technology for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The Iowa Department for the Blind also has a team of independent living rehabilitation teachers who are also trained in assistive technology to assist and individual to meet their independent living needs. IDB does partner to provide trainings and events about assistive technology to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired and to trainers of assistive technology devices. The IDB also partners with IVRS to ensure clients being served have access to information and training on assistive technologies.

Currently the IDB does not have a formal cooperative agreement with these programs. IDB will explore the development of such formal agreements. IDB will continue to refer individuals to the IPAT program and to the Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center when services needed are outside of the scope of services IDB can provide. IDB will also continue to partner with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center to provide devices for youth with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs. IDB will continue to partner with these programs to provide assistive technology services to clients.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

The USDA Rural Development office in Iowa administers business–cooperative, housing, and community programs. These programs provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to rural residents and businesses targeting rural communities. These programs are aimed at creating or preserving jobs; promoting a clean rural environment; improving access to decent housing and community facilities; and ensuring essential community facilities are available to rural residents, such as health care clinics, fire and rescue facilities, and more.

As part of their technical assistance efforts, the Iowa Rural Development office provides information to disabled Iowans. The Department will provide technical assistance to the Rural Development staff in Iowa as necessary.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The Iowa Department for the Blind is working with our Regional Workforce Development Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in the provision of services to out-of-school youth. The IDB refers individuals to Iowa Workforce Development for information regarding benefits planning, labor market information, assessment information, in addition to trainings, assistance with job search activities and a variety of other services available through the local one-stop centers. IDB is working

with each region to provide information, training, and technical assistance to our one-stop partners to become accessible to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB will continue to partner with each local one-stop to ensure out-of-school youth who are blind and visually impaired are able to access their services. The IDB is participating in the development and implementation of local and state level agreements with our workforce partners who are serving out-of-school youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

Not Applicable.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Since 2006, the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Braille School (Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired – IESBVI), and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) have been working collaboratively under the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including students who with the most significant disabilities. Under this system, staff can exchange information about their services and approaches in order to create effective working relationships which will enhance educational and transition outcomes.

IDB vocational rehabilitation counselors collaborate with educators, parents, and other service providers on an ongoing basis, to assure that students who are blind or visually impaired and have additional disabilities, will receive high quality education and rehabilitation services. The IDB collaborates with individuals and entities statewide related to education and transition needs of students who are blind, deaf–blind, or visually impaired with and without additional disabilities. IDB connects with the IESBVI administrators; the Iowa Department of Education; the ASK Family Resource Center; the Special Education Advisory Panel; the Deaf–Blind Advisory Committee; teachers of the visually impaired (TVI); orientation and mobility specialists (OMS); educators in local school districts and area education agencies; Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and students and their families or guardians.

The IDB transition specialist is a member of the State of Iowa’s Special Education Advisory Panel and also participates as a member of the Deaf–Blind Advisory Committee which informs Iowa’s Deaf–Blind Project. The transition specialist and other IDB staff reach out to TVI’s and OMS with a focus of building partnerships and collaboration. The VR counselors connect with TVI’s and OMS in group settings, present at IESBVI training events, and communicate on an individual basis with educators.

In addition, VR counselors are active team members at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at school districts throughout Iowa. IDB counselors provide information about the IDB so that students and their families understand the vocational rehabilitation process and can make informed choices when applying for vocational rehabilitation services and making decisions about training and career options following high school completion.

VR counselors encourage transition–age youth and their families to apply for services as early as age 14 as established by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Once an application is complete, eligibility must be determined. The counselor assists a student in the development of his/her Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days of eligibility determination for VR services. VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work–based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take

place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided.

Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important strengths to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or visually impaired.

IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one–on–one assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. IDB staff attend IEP meetings at the request of the team and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. IDB technology specialists have implemented a program in which they provide a monthly webinar about assistive technology for TVIs, para–educators, and other education professionals. By mid–2016, the IDB will be launching a similar webinar series for teens.

IDB and IESBVI are working together to provide information and training to K–12 students and their families at annual Spring Vision Conferences. In addition, each entity is providing the other with training. For example, IDB will provide IESBVI staff with training and information about vocational rehabilitation at their annual Summer Institute as well as their annual Fall Vision Conference. IESBVI is providing IDB with training about the educational processes during a quarterly staff in–service meeting.

IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for the transition students in integrated settings.

Referrals: The commitment to collaboration and partnership resulted in the development of a standard statewide referral procedure. In Iowa, Area Education Agencies (AEAs) coordinate all services for children with disabilities. AEA personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) provide vision–related IEP services to those students who are blind or visually impaired.

TVIs submit completed statewide referral forms for all students, starting as early as age 14 and who are receiving vision–related services. Upon the receipt of a referral form, the IDB referral specialist will follow up with the student and his/her family to gather additional information and will then assign the student to a VR counselor. The counselor will schedule a time to meet with the student and parent(s) or legal guardian to finalize necessary paperwork which is followed by eligibility determination. The next step is to partner with the student to determine his/her goals and develop a plan (IPE – Individual Plan for Employment) identifying the services needed to reach those goals.

The Department coordinates its services with the Iowa Braille School and AEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation.

The Instructional Materials Center (IMC) within the Library serves students in two principal ways. Its primary function is to provide textbooks and educational materials to students from kindergarten through college. Its secondary function is to help students find resources for research projects.

Itinerant vision teachers or other school personnel contact the IMC with requests for books for students in grades K–12. The IMC will produce the materials in–house or secure a vendor to produce the needed material. The IMC can provide recorded textbooks and Kurzweil files to reading disabled students. These requests can be made by students, parents, teachers, or Area Education Agency personnel. College students or vocational trainees may also request course materials from the IMC. Both students and educational staff have access to the library's collection.

The Library has a contract with the Iowa Department of Education to assist Iowa in meeting the NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards) requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Library provides training to TVIs and other school personnel regarding accessible formats, Braille and use of accessible technology for reading.

Advisory Committee: The IDB's transition specialist serves on the Advisory Committee for the Iowa Deafblind Services Project. The committee consists of families, students, consumers, and collaborative partnerships with Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Braille School, Iowa School for the Deaf, Regents Universities, and Deaf Services Commission. The committee was established to meet the needs of deaf–blind children by providing assistance via training efforts and by providing information on research and practices for the purpose of educating deaf/blind individuals from birth through age 21.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP): The Department's transition specialist serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel, which discusses outcomes and policies related to students and youth in special education, including students in transition. The purpose of IDB involvement is to connect with schools and providers for transition, provide guidance on policy development and strategies for student outcomes, while also providing information that impacts the most significantly disabled students/youth as it pertains to Section 511 of WIOA.

Expanded Core Curriculum: In 2008, the state legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a core curriculum for educating students in Iowa. The Core Curriculum defines essential concepts and skills that K–12 students should learn. An Expanded Core Curriculum was included in this legislation for students with disabilities. The Expanded Core Curriculum is not an alternative to the Core Curriculum. Instead, the Expanded Core Curriculum identifies additional concepts and skill sets that students with disabilities must be taught in conjunction with the Core Curriculum. These additional areas are accessing assistive technology, career education, compensatory skills, independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills, recreation and leisure skills, self–determination skills, social interaction skills, and visual efficiency skills.

Several of the IDB transition programs are designed to support the student's IEP with regard to the Expanded Core Curriculum. For example, a summer program for transition clients focuses on career exploration and development by having participants talk with a Human Resources supervisor, tour different businesses, and learn job–seeking skills, such as appropriate appearance for the workplace. A program on college preparation will have clients residing on a college campus and learning how to hire drivers and readers, work with the registrar's office and disability services, order books in alternative media, and more. Students who are blind or visually impaired also have the opportunity to participate in specialized IDB programs for children and youth. IDB collaborates with educators to develop programs based on the needs of clients.

IDB–Sponsored Programs: The Iowa Department for the Blind LEAP Program is dedicated to providing meaningful and high quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and visually impaired transition–age youth from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for blind and

visually impaired Iowa youth to develop the confidence and skills necessary for seamless transitions to life after high school. The focus of LEAP is to motivate and assist youth in high school to: learn skills for independence and workplace readiness; explore careers and educational opportunities; learn to advocate and take charge of their future, and; prepare for the future through work–based learning experiences in integrated settings.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act require IDB and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide five Pre–Employment Transition Services. The services include: job exploration counseling, work–based learning and work experiences in competitive integrated employment, counseling on post–secondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self–advocacy. Services are provided. The expected outcome of all IDB sponsored programs is employment in integrated competitive employment. The pre–employment transition services were the basis for the development of the IDB LEAP concept.

The Summer LEAP Academy is an eight week residential program that provides training to blind and visually impaired high school students with regard to independent living skills and specific non–visual techniques in the areas of technology, cane travel, Braille and other communication, home management and industrial arts. There is a focus on self–advocacy and other life skills as well as job readiness and career–related topics. In addition to the classes, students participate in fun and challenging activities to develop positive attitudes about blindness and vision loss and equip them with the confidence to believe in themselves and their abilities.

Ready–Set–Go is a four–day summer conference for high school students, held on a college campus. The post–secondary prep program is an opportunity for students who are blind or visually impaired and planning on or thinking about attending college, community college, training programs or going straight to work after high school. The conference focuses on life skills in the areas of self–determination and advocacy, problem–solving, time–management, organization, communication, socializing, locating and taking advantage of resources, transportation, and accessing information. Alternative techniques of blindness (Braille, orientation and mobility, use of assistive technology and other alternative ways to accomplish tasks) are a key focus of the conference.

The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a great opportunity for high school students with disabilities to increase self–confidence by building skills in the areas of leadership, self–advocacy, self–determination, independence, and responsibility. The annual five–day leadership training program is held at Iowa State University in Ames and is provided by the Office of Persons with Disabilities in partnership with IDB and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). IDB transition students who have participated in the Forum have gained life–long advocacy, leadership and independent living skills in addition to a network of support from their YLF experiences. Several have returned to the Forum as staff and mentors.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are offered at least twice per school year. Blind and visually impaired high school students from across Iowa participate in the theme–based retreats and work on building disability–related skills as well as skills in areas such as job readiness, job interviewing, communication, orientation and mobility, technology, team–work, time–management, social behavior, advocacy, peer interaction, problem solving, etc. The retreats also provide a means for students to step out of their comfort zones to increase confidence and positive attitudes about blindness.

The Braille Challenge is an annual event sponsored by the IDB and IESBVI, provides opportunities for students in grades 1 to 12 to test their Braille skills in reading, writing, spelling and

comprehension. Top finishers in the various age brackets advance to other competitions. The Challenge brings students and families together from across the state of Iowa where new connections and friends are made every year. The competition inspires many blind and visually impaired students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff takes this opportunity to provide outreach and training to parents, students, and support systems about the importance of students developing workplace readiness, self–advocacy and blindness skills.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

The Department has a formal interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE). Through this agreement, the DE and the IDB agree to collaborate in providing: •Consultation and technical assistance to assist local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post–school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services. •Support for transition planning provided by LEAs, AEAs, and the IDB for students with disabilities including the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDB staff will develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each IDB eligible individual prior to the individual's graduation. The individual, parents, educators and IDB staff will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with each other. The individual's preferences, interests and skills will serve as the basis of employment goals. •Coordination to ensure that transition services are provided by qualified personnel as defined in Iowa Administrative Code 281—41.8(256B,34CFR300), Iowa Administrative Code 111—2.1(216(B), and other relevant state requirements. •Support for early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts will include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. The DE will assist in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or visually impaired should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process. The Department will continue to review and revise the agreement with the Iowa Department of Education to develop procedures and mechanisms to meet the needs of students who are blind and visually impaired.

All of the Iowa Department for the Blind's programs for students who are blind or visually impaired, including students who are deaf–blind and those who have the most significant disabilities, continue to be reviewed in efforts to meet the needs of current clients and potentially eligible individuals. Programs are designed so that all youth who want to attend are able to attend, including providing necessary supports to allow equal opportunity and engagement in activities.

The Department is reviewing and will be adjusting the service delivery system to allocate 15 percent of the federal allotment for the provision of pre–employment transition services to students with disabilities prior to exit from secondary education. The Department is working to develop a mechanism to track the provision, coordination, arrangement and purchase of pre–employment transition services provided by the Iowa Department for the Blind.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

VR counselors encourage transition–age youth and their families to apply for services as early as age 14 as established by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Once an application is complete, eligibility must be determined. The counselor assists a student in the development of his/her Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days of eligibility determination for VR services. VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work–based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The Iowa Department of Education, hereafter referred to as DE, and the Iowa Department for the Blind, hereafter referred to as IDB, for the purpose of implementing the requirements of 34CFR 361.22(b), enter into the following interagency agreement. The DE and the IDB are designated state lead agencies in executing the provisions of this agreement.

The DE and the IDB agree to collaborate in providing:

Consultation and technical assistance to assists local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.

Support for transition planning provided by LEAs, AEAs, and the IDB for students with disabilities including the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDB staff will develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each IDB eligible individual prior to the individual's graduation. The individual, parents, educators and IDB staff will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with each other. The individual's preferences, interests and skills will serve as the basis of employment goals.

Coordination to ensure that transition services are provided by qualified personnel as defined Iowa Administrative Code 281—41.8(256B,34CFR300), Iowa Administrative Code 111—2.1(216(B), and other relevant state requirements.

Support for early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts will include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. The DE will assist in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or visually impaired should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process.

Financial responsibilities: The DE and IDB shall be responsible for the costs they incur in carrying out this agreement. The IDB agrees to provide for the costs of materials describing available IDB programs and services.

Amendment: This agreement may be amended in writing upon mutual consent of the DE and the IDB.

Term of the agreement: This agreement is effective upon execution by the DE and the IDB and shall remain in effect until it is terminated by either party upon written thirty (30) day notice to the other party.

The Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Department of Education are working to revise the current agreement to more fully define the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

Provided in Section A.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Department does not have long–term cooperative agreements in place with private non–profit VR service providers. However, the Department has utilized such entities on a case–by–case basis. For instance, BLIND, Inc. in Minneapolis, MN and the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO has provided orientation and adjustment training and job search services to our clients. While the Department has its own Orientation Center, the needs of some clients may be better addressed at an alternative center; this decision is based on client informed choice.

Because the number of blind and visually impaired Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPS) is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define potential services, outcomes, and costs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPS receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa. IDB works collaboratively with CRPS when the service is necessary for the client to meet their training and employment goals. Agreements entered into with any organization will require that assessment and career development activities occur in integrated work settings in the community.

In these cases, agreements are developed with the identified CRP to deliver the necessary service. The client and VR Counselor may identify a private provider that best addresses his or her specific VR needs. In these instances, the Counselor issues an authorization for the services. The provider is required to submit periodic reports on progress to the Counselor. The Counselor may continue to authorize for services until the services have been completed, the provider demonstrates progress is not being made, or the client finds that services are not addressing needs. Evidence of these arrangements can be found in individual case files.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Because the number of blind and visually impaired Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define supported employment services, outcomes, and costs. The Department enters into cooperative agreements with providers of supported employment when specific clients are identified as needing those services. When appropriate, supported employment services and extended services are paid for through county services under the Medicaid Waiver programs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPS receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa.

The Department may also make arrangements with other private entities to provide supported employment and extended services as the need arises. Other private entities may include employers, family members, and individuals contracted to provide these services. Natural supports and county services are the most often used services for extended support services.

The Department is adjusting the service delivery system to allocate 50 percent of the supported employment grant allotment for the provision of pre–employment transition services to youth with the most significant disabilities. In addition, these funds may be used to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

It is IDB's goal to have an expansive number of employer relationships throughout the state of Iowa in order to increase our ability to provide quality career development, job search and job placement services to our clients. Through the successful development and management of employer relationships, IDB is better able to meet the employment needs of our clients. IDB focuses attention on strategic employer development in order to provide services and benefit to both employers and IDB clients. The IDB employs three Employment Specialists whose primary customers are employers within their areas of coverage. Employment Specialist's key role is to engage employers and cultivate mutually beneficial relationships through strategic employer development. IDB recognizes that high quality relationships will increase effectiveness at assisting clients in reaching their employment goals while at the same time meet the needs of employers. Employment Specialists develop and deliver services that are based upon the various identified needs of businesses including: applicant screening and assessment, job analyses, job accommodations, and on–the–job training plans. In addition, delivering diversity awareness trainings and interpreting and explaining policies, rules, regulations, and laws. In particular, Employment Specialist provide assistance in addressing employers' needs through compliance in meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 503 and other workplace requirements, employer incentives and worksite modifications; these services are specifically designed to support business growth and increase employment opportunity for persons with disabilities, including persons with the most significant disabilities. Employment Specialists and other VR staff are engaged with the WIOA state and local boards, are members of employer groups, and participate in business networking and human resource organizations as available in their area.

The Department Rehabilitation Technology Specialists provide systems evaluation and equipment setup services for organizations such as Nationwide Insurance, Unity Point, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and CenturyLink. We work with clients at the job site and assist during onboarding training sessions. Specialists are able to demonstrate assistive technology, answer questions related to blindness and assistive technology, and provide resources and information to assist the employer in meeting their business needs.

The library provides services to employers by producing accessible materials needed by employers for staff, new employees, and the public. The library also provides training to community public libraries to assist in serving those within their communities who need accessible materials and information.

Through participation in the Employer's Disability Resource Network (EDRN), Employment Specialists work collaboratively with other state, federal and community partners to identify, develop, and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. Employment Specialists connect with employers on a national level through involvement in the National Employment Team (NET). Participation in NET allows Employment Specialists to learn about employment opportunities and career development resources, in addition to addressing employer hiring needs, providing information regarding disability awareness, retention assistance, accommodations, and other support services.

Employers and hiring staff are invited to tour the Iowa Department for the Blind; having the opportunity to learn about the resources available, understand the capabilities of persons who are blind, and see demonstrations of potential accommodations and techniques a person who is blind may use in an employment setting. The Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center provides prevocational, nonvisual adjustment–to–blindness training to vocational rehabilitation clients. Students participating in this training learn nonvisual techniques, develop a positive attitude about blindness, and build self–confidence. Through tours given by center students, employers see the techniques blind people use for traveling with the long, white cane, taking and reading Braille notes, using computers with speech, cooking, and operating power tools, in addition to being able to ask questions about blindness. Students also participate in a jobs class where they work toward their chosen careers, which can include informational interviewing, job shadowing, submitting applications for employment, determining accommodations for a job and networking with employers in the community.

The BEP works with eligible individuals who are interested in self–employment to manage their own businesses — operating vending machines, road side vending sites, and/or snack bar/catering services.

Entrepreneurs are provided with a considerable amount of training before they manage a business. This is supplemented by ongoing training to promote independent entrepreneurship in all business areas including hiring and managing employees, inventory control, ordering, pricing, scheduling, maintaining and repairing equipment, payroll, and business accounting.

The IDB partners with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) on the Iowa Self Employment program which is available to clients of both agencies. The program assists individuals to explore the option of becoming self–sufficient through the self–employment. Business Development Specialists provide technical assistance to clients to assist them in reaching this goal if determined appropriate. Through the program, clients can access Iowa Economic Development, Iowa Small Business Development Centers, Iowa Job Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Iowa Workforce Development to gain additional training or assistance in developing their business plans. The Department encourages and assists clients to develop connections and mentors with other individuals, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired, who have established successful businesses.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is dedicated to providing high quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and visually impaired youth across the state of Iowa. Transition services, including pre–employment transition services, are necessary to the successful employment of students and youth who are blind. IDB emphasizes the need for students and youth who are blind to build and strengthen skills in alternative techniques, assistive technology, and disability related skills training, work readiness skills, and self–advocacy skills. The IDB strongly believes that quality training and increasing independence and confidence, is essential to the success of transition aged youth in post–secondary environments.

The Department begins working with students at the age of 14 to provide necessary services. An essential goal is for all transition students to have paid work experience in competitive integrated employment prior to graduating high school. In an effort to meet this goal, IDB works with employers to align job training programs and work–based learning experiences, in addition to assisting with

necessary accommodations. Employment Specialists focus on developing relationships with employers for the purpose of creating work experience opportunities, including on–the–job trainings, internships, and paid work experiences. These relationships are also beneficial in providing employers with an understanding and experience of hiring individuals who are blind.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides pre–employment transition services to youth by facilitating opportunities for job shadowing, work experience, work assessment and on–the–job training.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is dedicated to assisting clients to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Department will continue to explore potential for cooperation and collaboration with the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act. The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired. Other mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The goal of the Governance Group is to strengthen employment services for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowans with the most significant disabilities. To accomplish this goal, collaboration and coordination of career and employment services must occur among the partners and among their local offices in support of community-based integrated employment. The following are the strategies the IDB and other partners are implementing to meet the goal. The IDB works with other Operations Team members to identify and assess barriers to collaboration at all levels of service delivery. The IDB maintains communication among state and local offices to solicit state-level and local input on collaboration issues. The partners continue to solicit information and recommendations from local offices and from Partners at the State level about policies and procedures that hinder collaboration or cause systemic barriers to eligibility standards, information dissemination, funding streams, reimbursement rates, or data collection and measurements. When appropriate, the Partners develop new guidelines to be shared at the local levels. The IDB also works with Partners to resolve collaboration issues, promote innovative policies, procedures, and practices in service delivery and communicate those to local partners.

The partners have determined that the indicator of success is the increased inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforces of local communities. In a data snapshot of Partner agencies, there was an increase in community employment. The Partners will continue to review this information and revise the measures as we move forward with WIOA. The Partners also recognized in 2014, that there are 110,000 Iowan's who might benefit from SSA disability benefits planning services. Some of these individuals are served by a variety of agencies. The Department for the Blind is focused on services being provided in the community, in integrated and competitive environments. Due to the state's shift of services from facility-based to community-based placements, there will be a need for

increased individuals needing benefits planning. Partner agencies have begun to determine the feasibility of establishing a benefits planning network that will identify approved training opportunities for Iowa benefits planners, to provide technical assistance to trainers, and to develop referral processes for SSA recipients not currently connected to the service delivery system.

The Department for the Blind participates in activities with other Partner agencies to cooperate as well as involve community partners, families and education in implementing an Employment First approach. The Department of Human Services and IDB have not developed a formal agreement at this time. IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired. Other mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement at this time. IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired and require mental health services. Mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement at this time. IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The Iowa Department for the Blind has in place a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ascertain and meet the training needs of its professional and paraprofessional staff, as well as new employees. The Iowa Department for the Blind management staff collects and compiles data to review personnel needs and to plan training and development activities for all staff. Managers review monthly reports that identify caseload activity related to referrals, applications, services, cases open and closed, and employer contacts. Managers also have access to several automated reports generated by the Department’s case management system to review cases, pending referral and interview activities, and progress toward agency goals. Management staff use these reports to predict caseload activity and personnel needs. By rule, all employees are to receive an annual performance evaluation from their supervisor. Training needs are discussed then, and the employee is encouraged to offer recommendations and address concerns. All new employees must go through training in the orientation center for the blind. Employees develop non–visual skills that their clients will need and use for employment and independence. However, more importantly, this training addresses the misconceptions held by most of society to raise the expectations of blind people and provides an understanding of the positive attitude about blindness that governs the entire agency. Annual surveys are conducted with staff to ascertain their training needs. In February, 2016, a Department–wide survey provided the opportunity for staff to express needs for training and development opportunities. Responses identified needs for training related on a broad range of topics, including training related to meeting the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. IDB will continue to assess the needs of staff and provide training to ensure that the needs of clients are met. Direct vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are provided by the field operations unit and by the adult orientation and adjustment center. Staffing in these two areas is as follows: Field operations: three supervisors, eight vocational rehabilitation counselors, one transition specialist, three employment specialists, nine rehabilitation teachers, five rehabilitation technology specialists, and three support personnel. Adult orientation and adjustment center: one program administrator and five orientation center teachers. In addition to the field operations and orientation center staff the library has 18 employees who provide prevocational, educational, and vocational materials or services to clients. The Department’s Randolph–Sheppard program has three employees to administer the business enterprises program. The Department expects to process approximately 134 applications and serve 525 eligible individuals during 2017. The ratio of all field operations and orientation center staff to individuals served is 38 to 525, or approximately one to 14. The ratio of vocational rehabilitation counselors to individuals served is 8 to 525, or approximately

one to 66. A total of eight field operations and orientation center staff will meet retirement eligibility criteria in the next five years. Replacement of departing staff is consistent with expected staffing needs for the next five years. Row Job Title Total positions Current vacancies Projected vacancies over the next 5 years 1 Supervisors 3 0 0 2 vocational rehabilitation counselors 8 1 2 3 Transition Specialist 1 0 0 4 rehabilitation teachers 9 1 3 5 employment specialist 3 1 0 6 rehabilitation technology specialists 5 0 1 7 support personnel 3 0 2 8 orientation center program administrator 1 0 0 9 orientation center teachers 5 1 1

ii. The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs. Section I.

iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs. Section I.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

The University of Iowa and Drake University offer graduate degree programs in vocational rehabilitation counseling rehabilitation administration. Both programs offer graduates the ability to work in the field of rehabilitation counseling and/or in mental health counseling. The following is a table that represents the 2015/2016 academic year: Row Institutions Students enrolled Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA Graduates from the previous year 1 University of Iowa (MA) Rehabilitation Counseling 23 0 7 13 (5 RSA–sponsored) 2 Drake University; (M.S.) Rehabilitation Counseling, Rehabilitation Administration 36 0 21 14 (13 RSA–sponsored)

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel Recent hires are participating in the Department's certification process as defined in sub rule 111–2.1(2) of the Iowa Administrative Code. All remaining staff, including all VR counselors, meets the highest requirements in the state applicable to their profession. No significant factors exist which adversely affect the Department's ability to hire qualified staff. Therefore, no short–term or long–term strategies are necessary to address such factors. Because all Department staff already meet the highest standards in the state, no funding is necessary to implement a retraining plan. The agency actively works with the two Rehabilitation Counseling programs in Iowa and recruits from graduate programs and through a variety of list serves to reach qualified personnel. During the past year, IDB supervised practicum and intern students in the Rehabilitation Counseling programs to provide them with field work exposure to the state rehabilitation agency. In an attempt to address the recruitment of personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities, hiring practices to assure consideration of applicants from diverse backgrounds, IDB actively attempts to recruit from a wide variety of sources including the Iowa State hiring system, Iowa Workforce Development, various list serves, and through local, state and national consumer organizations. Communication with staff continues on the importance of working with our diverse client basis from a service delivery perspective, but also from a staff recruiting basis. The screening process is equitable to all applicants. Screening is done through the use of a rubric and the top scoring applicants are interviewed. Applicants are selected from the top scorers. Specific consultation has occurred with our Iowa Department of Administrative Services in efforts to expand recruitment from non–traditional sources.

ii. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development B. Personnel Development, Section I.

iii. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development B. Personnel Development, Section I.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The Department's plan for recruitment and training of qualified personnel is based on the highest standards in the state for VR counselors. The Department actively recruits persons who are blind or disabled, and persons from minority backgrounds. Recruitment efforts include: • Employment announcements are posted on Iowa's state employment opportunities web site. Exceptions can occur with regard to steps required by the collective bargaining agreement or in the event the position is merit exempt. • Promotion of experienced and qualified personnel from within the agency, including personnel who are blind. • Participation in internship opportunities for students of rehabilitation counseling and placement. The Department's plan for retention of qualified personnel includes ongoing training opportunities for all staff; provision and support of assistive technology for staff who are blind or disabled; encouragement and support for personnel desiring advanced degrees; and opportunities for advancement within the organization. The Department does not discriminate in any way in its recruitment and hiring practices or in its administration and supervision practices against individuals who are from minority backgrounds or who have disabilities.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.18(c) of the Act, the Department for the Blind has defined and implemented personnel standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors based on state approved and recognized certification requirements promulgated under the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act. The following standards for VR counselors are based on the highest entry–level degree needed under the existing state certification requirements codified in sub rule 111–2.1, Iowa Administrative Code: 2.1(2) Service specialist for the blind 2 and senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor). Certification shall be required of all vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Department. a. At the time of hire into the position, an individual holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and one year of work experience shall be granted provisional certification. Exceptions regarding education and experience can only be made by the Commission for the Blind upon the recommendation of the director. Provisional certification shall be recognized for a maximum period of 18 months. b. An individual may obtain full certification

as a vocational rehabilitation counselor by demonstrating competency in the following areas. 1. Knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the Department's positive philosophy of blindness. 2. Knowledge of the Department's programs. 3. Skills in career planning and development. 4. Knowledge of placement techniques and practices. 5. Knowledge of occupational information, job site evaluation, and job analysis. 6. Knowledge and development of alternative techniques of blindness. 7. Knowledge of rehabilitation technology services. 8. Knowledge of disability and related issues. 9. Advocacy. 10. Case management. 11. Adjustment to blindness counseling. 12. Assessment of consumer needs. 13. Public education and outreach. 14. Teamwork and problem solving. c. An individual holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, who has been employed by the Department as a service specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) for a minimum of six months on the date this rule is finalized, shall be considered to be a fully certified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as long as the individual maintains unbroken employment with the Department in that classification. These standards, which are the highest in the state, ensure that the professional personnel needed within the Department to carry out the vocational rehabilitation program are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. All of the professional staff at the Department meet, or are working toward meeting, these standards. To maintain standards, personnel must participate in ongoing training through the Department.

Plan to Retrain or Hire Personnel to Meet Standards:

Evaluation of recruitment practices is based on the Department's ability to hire and train qualified personnel. These practices will continue to be evaluated as additional hiring becomes necessary. Since all staff currently meets the highest standards within the state, no retraining program is in place.

As a general practice, the Department does not hire individuals who do not meet the established personnel standards for the services specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) positions. In the event an individual is hired who does not meet the Department's personnel standards that individual would be expected to meet those standards within an established time period. The Department would devise a schedule by which the individual must report on progress and by which time period he or she must meet the standards. Failure to meet the standards within the established time period would result in termination or reassignment.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Refer to previous sections.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with Section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Department actively assesses the training needs of all employees. The employee performance evaluation document is used to review an employee's performance and to identify training needs. In addition to annual individual performance reviews, the Department surveys the staff annually to determine the training or resources they require to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively. Vocational rehabilitation employees have participated in the following training activities: • Quarterly in–service training activities focus on improving knowledge and understanding of rehabilitation topics, development and demonstration of new skill levels and organizational change projects that enhance achievement of employment outcomes for blind individuals. • Performance and Development Solutions (PDS) courses are provided by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services / Human Resources Enterprise on a wide range of general topics and transferable job skills. • In–house training in classroom settings and one–on–one is made available to all employees depending upon the need. Retention of qualified personnel is addressed through CEU credit for staff training, as well as opportunities for expanding skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. Leadership development and capacity–building opportunities are offered through personnel development seminars available to staff including management certifications and continuous quality improvement certification courses. Some management employees have attended the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. Employees are encouraged to participate in professional organizations such as the National Rehabilitation Association and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind in leadership roles.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Employees acquire information about current research by participating in professional conferences, attending training on a variety of topics, and through professional publications, such as the Journal of Rehabilitation, the Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness, and Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) publications. Employees are asked to submit reports on conference findings to the Department's training grant administrator and their supervisor. These reports include summaries of significant issues or findings, assessments of the conference's information to their work, and an evaluation of the value of conference to other staff. Further, employees who have attended conferences or training sessions provide updates on results of research or new information to others at the in–service meetings.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The Department uses outside interpreters for individuals who are not proficient in English or who use sign language. Employees are routinely counseled on how to locate qualified interpreters. Independent contracts are established as needed to obtain services from individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. Contracts have included, but are not limited to American Sign Language, including Tactile Signing for Deaf–Blind individuals, Spanish, Vietnamese, Burmese, Swahili and others according to the needs of applicants and eligible individuals. The Department maintains a contract with Deaf Services Unlimited to provide communication services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Braille is an integral part of the training that all professional personnel receive.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Department pursues the following activities to coordinate the system of personnel development with personnel development activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): • Maintains an interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE) which defines the roles and responsibilities of both agencies regarding transition activities. (see attachment 4.8(b)(2)). • The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Braille School, and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) work collaboratively under the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired. Under this system, employees exchange information about their services and approaches in order to create effective working relationships. A standard referral procedure was developed as a result of this collaboration. Area education agencies (AEAs) personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing individual education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) provide vision–related IEP services to those students who are blind or visually impaired. The TVI must refer all students who are receiving vision–related services to one of two statewide vision system’s regional directors prior to the development of the student’s transition IEP or no later than age fourteen. Through this collaborative effort and referral system, the Department is able to effectively coordinate its services with the Iowa Braille School and the AEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

Through the American Community Survey (ACS), the prevalence of disability in Iowa can be compared with national data. Iowa demonstrates lower prevalence of disability, including blindness and visual impairment across all ages. Regarding the 2014 ACS, 11.37% Iowans reported having a disability, compared to 12.64% nationally. The age range for reported disability also was lower than national averages. This pattern held for people who reported visual disabilities in Iowa, where 5.01% of all Iowans reported having a visual disability (versus 6.68% nationally), and 14.59% of all people with disabilities reporting a visual disability (versus 18.52% nationally.

When considering the population of people with the most significant disabilities and most likely to benefit from supported employment, the best source of secondary data available is that which derives from the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA reported that, in 2014, 10.40% of working age Iowans said they had a disability. Of these respondents, 42.95% indicated they were employed (as compared with 83.45% of respondents who did not have disabilities). Among people SSA identified as having a visual disability, 51.04% reported being employed.

SSA also identified those people who were working age and were receiving SSI and/or SSDI benefits. Among all working age Iowans with disabilities, 18.27% were receiving benefits, of which 2.17% of the total recipients were blind or visually impaired. Of the total recipients, 69.93% were working age individuals with disabilities, and 2.33% of working age disability recipients where individuals who were blind or visually impaired.

The working age individuals who are receiving disability benefits are the individuals who can most readily be described as those with the most significant disabilities and most likely to benefit from supported employment. Given SSA numbers, this means there are 35,824 working age individuals with disabilities in Iowa, of whom 836 are blind or visually impaired.

If the number of individuals considered most significantly disabled is expanded to include all blind or visually impaired individuals who are 64 or younger, the number increases to 1,042. This would include anyone under the age of 18. Data collection for age cohorts is projected to be modified for upcoming surveys to address changes in legislation regarding transition.

Demographic data, informant interviews and survey responses identified a need to provide increased supports to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals who are deaf–blind and those with multiple disabilities and barriers to employment. Needs for people with the most significant disabilities were identified in the area of pre–employment transition services, assistive technology services, training in Braille, keyboarding, technology, home and personal management, orientation and mobility, advocacy and adjustment to blindness counseling. Client and counselor survey data also identified the need for more career exploration and work experience

opportunities for students and youth with the most significant disabilities. The Department will build a network of qualified rehabilitation teachers throughout the state and work with CRPS, IWD, IVRS, and other core partners to improve training and services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who are minorities the following activities were completed: Comparisons were made between the representations of minorities in Iowa to the representation of minorities in the Department's closure data. Employment outcome measures comparing minority clients to non–minority clients were also reviewed.

As the following table shows, the Department's client population is somewhat more diverse than Iowa's population. Table 1: Representation by Race/Ethnicity – Iowa & Dept. for the Blind Race / Ethnicity Iowa's Population Case Closures (FY2011–2015) Percentages Case Closures (FY2011–2015) Counts White 91.3% 86.43% 586 Black/African American 2.9% 8.55% 58 Hispanic or Latino 5% 2.06% 14 Asian 1.7% 1.47% 10 American Indian or Alaska Native 0.1% 0.15% 1

As the percentages above show, the Department's four–year closure data indicates an under–representation of Hispanics given Iowa's population. Closure data also shows over–representation among African American Iowans. Establishing employment trend data for minorities who have applied for VR services from the Department is made difficult by the small numbers they represent in the caseload. For example, while clients of Hispanic or Latino origin make up 2.06 percent of the case closures, the total number of these clients closed in four years is 14. With such a small population, the slightest change in numbers can cause a significant change to percentages. To obtain trend data, staff aggregated the minority closures into one group. Therefore, employment trend data was examined by comparing the non–minority population (White) to the minority population (Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and American Indian). In addition, trend data was established using four years of closure data (FY2011–2015). The total number of minority cases closed is 83; the total number of non–minority cases closed is 586. The rate of employment after services for non–minority clients is 80.07 percent compared to 73.56 percent for minority clients. In addition, minorities have a higher rate of status 30 closures (closed after being found eligible with no plan or no services provided) and a higher rate of status 08 closures (closed prior to eligibility rate) than non–minorities. Table 2: Closure Outcomes by Minority / Non–Minority Status Rehabilitation Rate Status 30 Rate Status 08 Rate Minorities 67.14% 11.76% 19.61% Non–Minorities 76.79% 8.11% 14.26%

While the rehabilitation rate for minorities is lower, the unemployment rate for minorities in Iowa shows that minorities do experience unemployment at a higher rate than non–minorities in the general population. The three–year ACS survey showed that the unemployment rates for African American Iowans was 14.9%, Hispanics at 9.1%, American Indian or Native Alaskan at 13.9%, and Asians at 4.5% compared to 5.2% for white Iowans. The Department seeks to ensure that all clients, regardless of race or ethnicity, achieve an employment outcome that is commensurate with their skills, abilities, and choice. Another concern may be that minority clients are closed before eligibility or before a plan or services is delivered at a higher percentage than non–minorities. Focus groups with Hispanic people with disabilities found that they tend to enter rehabilitation services from different referral sources than white clients. While white clients enter either through schools or medical practices, Hispanic people with disabilities tend to enter through regional Workforce Centers or community agencies that specialize in serving people who do not have English as their primary

language. To address this difference, the Department will improve its outreach to IWD regional centers and the Adult Basic Education programs that provide English as second language training programs.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program the following activities were completed: Identifying individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved by the VR program is problematic because no data exist to differentiate between individuals who are not receiving services because they are not being served from individuals who do not want to receive services.

The closest approximation to this projection is to identify people with disabilities who live in poverty according to the ACS and Community Participation Survey (CPS), and make the assumption that they are not being served but would benefit from services.

In Iowa, the 2014 ACS and CPS combined surveys were used to determine the number of people living in poverty. This analysis found that there were 344, 894 individuals who said they had a disability, of whom 50,308 said they were blind or visually impaired. Considering only those who are working age (18 to 64) these people total 172,777 individuals with any disability, and 24,260 individuals who are blind or visually impaired. A total of 27.10% of the individuals who indicated they had a disability live at 125% of poverty or lower, and 19.90% indicate they live at the poverty level or lower. The poverty rates for people who said they were blind or visually impaired was slightly higher, at 28.21% and 21.03% respectively.

Other individuals who report they have a disability, but do not live in poverty may include those who are employed or choosing not to receive services. Regarding the number of people with disabilities in Iowa who are employed, that percentage is 42.95% and for employed people who indicate they are blind or visually impaired it is 51.04%, but no data exist to disaggregate their income. SSA and Department of Labor data suggest that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is declining, as is the number of applications for SSDI. Other reports indicate, however, that people with disabilities are overrepresented in jobs that pay less than average wages, which has been a consistent concern of the National Federation of the Blind. No secondary data exist to extrapolate the number of people who are blind or visually impaired who are unemployed but not seeking employments.

Focus groups with people currently receiving services from the Iowa Department for the Blind found that some who were employed were underemployed (still living below 125% of poverty), and some were long–term unemployed. Under the State Unified Plan, better data regarding this issue should become available through collaboration with other agencies that collect employment data.

It is feasible that the number of unserved or underserved people who are blind or visually impaired may be among the people with less formal education. In Iowa, there are 317,542 people with disabilities age 25 and over, of whom 47,155 are blind or visually impaired. Of these, 78,433 of all people with disabilities and 11,647 of people who are blind or visually impaired have less than a high school degree. Among those with no more than a high school degree, the numbers are 108,917 and 16,174. Among those with some college or an Associate’s degree, the numbers are 83,831 and 12, 449. Among those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher, the numbers are 46,361 and 6,885. This suggests that 41.00% of all people with disabilities have more than a high school diploma and 60.70% of people who are blind or visually impaired have more than a high school diploma. At the

Bachelors or higher level of formal education, the percentages are 14.60% and 26.40%. To improve the wages of people who are blind or visually impaired, focusing on improving the level of formal education is important, but they are succeeding at a higher rate than people with other disabilities.

Community Rehabilitation Program and One–Stop center staff have indicated that they lack experience in serving people who are blind or visually impaired and requested more training on working with these individuals. Client and counselor surveys have also indicated that community providers often hold lower expectations of the potential for employment and the capabilities of blind individuals. In addition, clients have reported that One–Stop center and other community service providers are often uncertain of techniques and methods to use when serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Until our One–Stop and community partners are trained, equipped and confident in providing services to our clients, they may not be the best option for providing job search and job placement services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities. The Department will develop and provide trainings to these providers and one–stop partners to increase comfort and competence in providing their services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system the following activities were completed:

Iowa Department for the Blind works with multiple state agencies to coordinate services for consumers. The most services are provided to consumers who are living in or near poverty. Focus groups with IDB consumers who were living in or near poverty identified the following agencies as also providing services. Among members of the statewide workforce development system, the coordinating agencies were, (1) educational institutions including secondary and postsecondary providers, (2) Iowa Workforce Development, (3) Iowa Temporary Assistance for Needy Families including food stamps and free/reduced lunch, (4) health care providers, and (5) community rehabilitation programs.

Structurally, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services does not serve people who are blind or visually impaired, but there are some individuals who are co–enrolled. Participants in focus groups voiced the following concerns regarding the other partnering agencies: 1.a. K–12 educational institutions received services through the Iowa Braille School and services were provided in an appropriate and effective manner. Interviews with Iowa Braille School personnel identified the process by which services are provided and the area for future planning includes improved transitions from the youth they serve to the vocational services of IDB. 1.b. Postsecondary educational institutions received uneven marks from focus group participants. All participants were concerned about policies, procedures, practices and resources related to accessibility. Of special concern was the lack of timely information regarding changes in plans such as class cancellations. Follow–up focus groups with postsecondary personnel identified the promising practice of an compute app they developed that provided auditory guides and resources that could be used to improve access to services. 2. Iowa Workforce Development received poor marks from participants due to accessibility concerns. Follow–up focus groups with IWD personnel indicated they needed more timely and ongoing training in how to make their services available to people from IDB because they were not sufficiently prepared to provide accessible services. 3. Iowa TANF services and food stamps were reviewed in the same manner as was IWD. The physical, procedural, and interpersonal approach used,

especially by Department of Human Services personnel was not satisfactory. Training and accessibility assessments are needed to ensure IDB consumers can access services successfully. 4. Health care providers were criticized in a similar manner. Accessibility was uneven, with some providers offering excellent assistance and others being unprepared to offer accessible services. Word of mouth among people who were blind or visually impaired identified the best providers, but not all of them took Medicaid, so additional outreach and training by IDB is warranted. 5. Community rehabilitation agencies also need training and technical assistance in serving IDB consumers. The quality of services was uneven with some agencies providing excellent services while others seemed unable to understand how to address the training and employment barriers related to blindness.

The survey of IDB consumers identified a similar pattern. Consumers tended to be satisfied with IDB services, but were less satisfied when they sought services from other agencies (other than K–12 schools). Collaboration across agencies needs improvement and is intended to be addressed under the Statewide Unified Plan.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre–employment transition services or other transition services the following activities were completed: This section examines whether persons in a particular age group are an unserved or underserved population. Comparisons were made between the representations of age groups in Iowa to the representation of age groups in the Department's closure data. Employment outcome measures by age group were also reviewed. Among the working population in Iowa, persons aged 14–24 represent the largest age group (18.94%), followed closely by 45–54 age group (17.71%). The median age in Iowa is 38. Iowa's Statewide Vision System, which coordinates the work of Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Specialist itinerant services, reports that 515 students were being served. The ACS survey estimates for visual difficulties in Iowa by age are as follows: Table 3: ACS Estimates of Visual Difficulties by Age Group Estimated with Visual Difficulty Percentage of Total Population 5 – 17 2,879 0.55% 18–34 4,646 0.69% 35–64 19, 079 1.03%

Persons aged 45–54 represent the largest age group in the VR case closure data, followed by persons aged 35–44 and then 14–24. Older individuals are represented a bit higher in the Department's VR caseload in comparison to their representation in the state. As the ACS survey data show, blindness and vision loss occurs more frequently among the older population groups. Therefore, the Department's case closure data demonstrate that it is serving the age groups in proportion to Iowa's population. The Iowa minority population is changing as the white population ages and the minority population is younger. A total of 15.8% of white Iowans are age 65 and older, while only 3.88% of minority Iowans are in that age range. A total of 23.3% of white Iowans are age 17 and under, while 36.49% of minority Iowans are in that age range. A review of data from cases closed between FY2011 and FY2015 shows that young adults are not closing as successfully after receiving services as their older counterparts. Table 4: Employment Rate after VR Services by Age at Application Total Cases Closed After Receiving Services (FY2011 thru FY2015) Percentage Employed After Receiving Services 14–24 109 64.22% 25–34 71 69.01% 35–44 120 74.17% 45–54 137 78.10% 55–64 94 88.30% 65–74 29 93.10% 75+ 12 75% As recent unemployment data show the experience of younger clients seeking work is similar to that experienced by their sighted peers. Data from the 2010 Current Population Survey show that all young Iowans experience more difficulty

in finding employment than older adults. Table 5: Iowa Unemployment Rate by Age Group Unemployment Rate 16–19 16.4% 20–24 9.2% 25–34 6.4% 35–44 4.7% 45–54 5.1% 55–64 4.2% 65+ 2.7% Many factors contribute to the employment status of young adults, including work experience, availability of entry–level jobs, educational attainment, and skills. Certainly, the impact of the recession on this population as well as the 45–54 age groups has been greater than on other age groups. One positive sign is that those clients aged 14 – 24 at application tend to be placed in full time jobs at a higher rate than other age groups. Clients aged 45 – 54 at application have seen a steady decrease in percentage of full–time employment since 2008. (Refer to the heading "Trends in Employment, Earnings, and Hours" below for more information.).

However, the Department needs to continue focusing on young adults to ensure they attain the work experience they need in order to be successful later in life, particularly in this difficult and competitive labor market.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

There are 144 Community Rehabilitation Programs in Iowa and IDB works with 14, primarily for employment services. A survey of IDB counselors indicated that 100% of them considered CRPS to need training in promoting supported employment and pre–employment services. They also reported that CRPS were unaware of the alternative techniques that could be used to engage in employment and often did not know how to provide training materials and other resources in formats that were accessible to people who were blind or visually impaired. The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, which has worked closely with CRPS for several years, facilitated meetings with IDB counselors and clients to discuss best practices in the delivery of customized employment services. Those discussions resulted in determining that CRPS also need training in the area of customized employment.

Client and counselor survey results have identified that community providers lack awareness about blindness and the alternative techniques and potential accommodations for those who are blind or visually impaired. While CRPS can be a resource in addressing the needs of students, youth, and people with the most significant disabilities for career exploration and work experience, they need training to increase their comfort and competence in providing these services. The Department will work with community rehabilitation providers, center’s for independent living, and independent contractors to provide clients with the training and supports they need within their own community.

Because people who are blind or visually impaired live in specific geographical areas, IDB can target those CRPS that are most likely to service our clients and provide training to them. IDB counselors indicate that, as well as providing training in the employment strategies listed above; these agencies also need training in cross–agency collaboration and improving the employment expectations of clients and their families.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

According to a report provided by the Iowa Braille School (December, 2015) there are 114 students who are receiving services or consultation based on vision loss in school grades six through eight.

There were 116 students receiving services in school grades nine through twelve. Approximately 35 percent of those students are in the Des Moines metro and surrounding area. Other students are throughout Iowa, with more than five students in the following counties: Des Moines, Woodbury, Pottawattamie, Dubuque, Linn, Johnson, and Clinton. Forty of Iowa's counties are reported to not have any students identified as receiving services and other counties. Forty-four counties have between one and four students receiving services. This number does not include students who may have additional disabilities including vision loss who are not receiving services.

It is estimated that in the next year, the number of students that will be referred through the IESBVI referral process will be approximately 85 students. Fifty–eight individuals are currently listed in the IDB transition database and 113 individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 are currently receiving vocational rehabilitation services (eFORCE, February, 2016).

The Department's closure data shows those with higher educational attainment close more successfully after receiving services than those with less education. Clients whose educational attainment is greater than a high school diploma close successfully at a high rate: Associates degree 71.17%; Bachelor's degree 86.84 percent; and Master's degree: 90.20%. The employment rate after services for those with a high school education is 73.91%.

As the table below shows, the median income for clients is lower than their counterparts in Iowa's general population. A client's work experience, type of employment, and the presence of public support all impact the weekly earnings the client achieves. While this is true of all people with disabilities across the nation, it offers evidence to use with schools to better engage them in career and transition planning.

Table 6: Median Earnings by Educational Attainment Educational Attainment Iowa ACS Estimate Dept. for the Blind Status 26 Closures (2011–2015) High school graduate (includes equivalency) $26,606 $12,938.20 Some college or associate's degree $31,038 $22,769.65 Bachelor's degree $42,147 $26,992.73 Graduate or professional degree $55,245 $47,364.15

When examining the unsuccessful closure statuses of clients, applicants to the program are more likely to be closed before a plan is developed than closed as unemployed after a plan is developed. This is the case regardless of the educational attainment of clients and suggests barriers to the referral, intake, IPE planning process. These findings suggest that transition career services and pre–employment transition services are not sufficiently coordinated with school IEPs and they are not prepared to transition to adult services. The survey of counselors found that school special education teachers often do not notify the counselors of upcoming IEP meetings and that, upon review of those IEP, career planning across adult service agencies are not well developed.

Career and transition and planning services tend not to be provided by teachers of the visually impaired because they do not have curricula to address this area. Providing such training to these teachers, and obtaining better information to counselors regarding upcoming IEP meetings were viewed by counselors as ways to reduce the number of people closed before an IPE is developed.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's three–year American Community Survey, Iowa has an estimated 2,755 Iowans between the ages of 5 and 17 who have vision difficulties. According to the same survey, there are an estimated 24,620 Iowans between the ages of 18 and 64 who have visual difficulties. The Department estimates approximately 525 individuals will receive services under title I of the Act in FY 2016. Approximately 30 individuals will concurrently receive services under title VI, part B of the Act.

The ratio of applicants and eligible individuals served to vocational rehabilitation counselors will be 66 to one. The current staffing level does enable IDB to provide core services to clients.

When numbers of referrals increase, the Department identifies ways to effectively streamline processes to enable the staff to continue meeting client needs. Budgetary considerations and state regulations that limit personnel per state agency prevent us from changing our staffing to any great extent. Services are monitored to assure that all core services are provided and that all Services are monitored to assure that all core services are provided and that all active Individualized Plans for Employment are carried out in full. The Department is not under an order of selection and will be able to serve all applicants and eligible individuals. During the next five years, it is projected that the number of individuals served including those with most significant disabilities, will neither increase nor decrease significantly from the current level. Costs of services provided under title I of the Act are estimated at $7,038,379. Costs for supported employment services under Title VI, Part B of the Act are estimated at $57,000. Category Title I or Title VI Estimated Funds Estimated Number to be Served Average Cost of Services Title I $7,038,379 525 $13,406 Title VI $57,000 30 $1,900 Totals $7,095,379 555 $12,784

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

IDB is not under an order of selection.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

IDB is not under an order of selection.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1. IDB is not under an order of selection.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is an independent consumer–controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council. A Board of Commissioners governs IDB and works together with the agency Director to develop and agree to annual goals and priorities. The mission of IDB is to "Empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently." The Department recognizes the need to improve services to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired across all agencies and organizations in the state. Through participation in workgroups related to the development of the Unified State Plan, the Iowa Department for the Blind has collaborated with other core partners to develop the State's vision and goals, based on the Governor's economic goals, Iowa's NGA Talent PIPEline Goals, and Core Partner agency and stakeholder feedback.

Unified State Plan Vision Iowa's workforce delivery systems will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa – a PIPEline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries. In alignment with the National Governor's Association Talent PIPEline vision and goals, this unified plan will ensure individuals are prepared for dynamic careers through an emphasis on lifelong learning while meeting the needs of employers. Iowa's workforce delivery system will assist more Iowans to become Future Ready by attaining the "new minimum" of high–quality education, training, and work readiness by bringing together education, rehabilitation, workforce, and economic development resources and ensuring that all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system. Future Ready Iowans will be ready to meet the employment challenges of today and into the future so that ALL Iowans work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Unified State Plan Goals Goal I: Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers. Goal II: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation. Goal III: Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Iowa Department for the Blind Goals and Priorities

The Iowa Department for the Blind's mission is to empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently. The responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities, to achieve high quality, competitive integrated employment. The Department will work with Iowa's workforce system to increase the employment of such individuals in the competitive labor market through participation in job–driven training and provision of necessary supports.

In order to assist the state to meet the goals of the Unified State Plan and to meet the needs of Iowans who are blind and visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities, the Iowa Department for the Blind, after reviewing the current comprehensive statewide needs assessment has identified the following major goals:

IDB Goal 1: Iowa employers will become more aware of the Iowa Department for the Blind and the pool of advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers the department can provide access to.

IDB Goal 2: All Iowans who are blind or visually impaired and require VR services to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment receive them.

IDB Goal 3: All individuals who are successfully closed employed will have found employment that aligns with their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and places them on their desired career pathway.

IDB Goal 4: The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

IDB Goal 5: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired.

In addition to the goals, and necessitated by emerging circumstances, the Iowa Department for the Blind will focus on the following additional priorities:

Priority 1: Implementation of WIOA with regard to Pre–employment transition services and Supported Employment.

Priority 2: On–going need for the professional development of all staff providing direct services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Priority 3: Integration of a new case management system to allow for the tracking of requirements under WIOA.

Priority 4: Increase outreach efforts to individuals from minority backgrounds.

The Iowa Department for the Blind will continue to work with current standards and indicators knowing that the state's common performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA are currently being developed and will greatly change the standards currently used for vocational rehabilitation.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

Refer to: l. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Refer to: l. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

Refer to: l. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Refer to: I. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

Refer to: I. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

At present, the Iowa Department for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection. Policy and procedures continue to be reviewed should it ever be imminent.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

Not applicable.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

Not applicable.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

Not applicable.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

Not applicable, the IDB is not under an order of selection.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

Not applicable. The IDB is not under an order of selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

The Department's supported employment goal is that all blind and visually impaired Iowans who require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive integrated employment receive them. The Department expects to receive $57,000 in title VI, part B funds in 2016. These funds are intended to be used solely for supported employment services. At least 50% of the title VI funds will be used to provide pre–employment transition services to eligible youth with the most significant disabilities. Funds will be distributed according to the needs of eligible individuals for whom supported employment services are deemed to be appropriate.

Supported employment services will be purchased on an individual basis and customized for each individual's situation. Because the need for supported employment services is likely to exceed the funds allocated for them under title VI, part B, funds from title I will be used to supplement the costs of supported employment services that are listed on an individual's supported employment individualized plan for employment (IPE). A lack of title VI, part B funds will not restrict or prohibit the inclusion of supported employment services on an IPE or the purchase or delivery of such services when they are needed.

The Department continues to develop relationships with community rehabilitation providers and educational partners to obtain referrals for career exploration and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals. The Department promotes competitive and integrated employment for individuals receiving supported employment services. Policy will be changed to allow for the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities up to 4 years as well as increasing extended services from 18 to 24 months as stated in the WIOA. Customized Employment has been added as a vocational rehabilitation service option.

Supported Employment services are currently being provided to 22 clients; it is feasible that the number served in 2017 will be 30 individuals. As part of the State Plan, IDB completed the mandatory Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to determine the current needs of Iowans with disabilities, as well as assess the services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs. The Department has found that Community Rehabilitation programs are often unaware of the alternative techniques a person who is blind may use in accomplishing a job task. This lack of information and training can lead to a lack of appropriate placements in competitive and integrated employment.

During the timeframe that this state plan covers, the Department will monitor the number of individuals receiving supported employment services, taking into consideration the WIOA requirements to expend 50 percent of the total grant on youth with most significant disabilities. The Department is also exploring Customized Employment and work based learning opportunities. The Department will partner with Community Rehabilitation Organizations to generate referrals for individuals who can benefit from competitive integrated employment in their communities.

The Department will also provide training and resources to community rehabilitation programs to assist them in meeting and understanding the needs and capabilities of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

Refer to n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds, section 1.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Refer to n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds, section 1.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

In order to assist the state to meet the goals of the Unified State Plan and to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind, several strategies were identified.

WIOA Goal 1: Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and future ready workers.

IDB Goal 1: Iowa employers will become more aware of the Iowa Department for the Blind and the pool of advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers the department can provide access to. Strategy 1: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with Iowa businesses. Measure: The number of business relationships developed. The number of services provided to businesses Strategy 2: IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. Measure: The number of partnerships with employers developed that create or expand work experience, internship, on–the–job training, and employment opportunities for Iowans who are blind and visually impaired. Strategy 3: IDB will build intra–agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. Measure: The number of individuals who obtain employment and whose cases are closed successfully rehabilitated.

WIOA Goal 2: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation.

IDB Goal 2: All Iowans who are blind or visually impaired and require VR services to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment receive them. Strategy 1: Actively engage the community to increase awareness of the mission, vision, and services available to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired and how to access them. Measure: Number of referrals to the Iowa Department for the Blind. Strategy 2: Outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. Measure: Number of referrals received through the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Strategy 3: All eligible individuals will have well–developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education & training plans needed to achieve their career goal. Measure: Number of individuals successfully employed in competitive and integrated employment. Strategy 4: We will advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible youth will have well–developed individualized education plans that align with their career goals. Measure: Number of students who have IEP goals aligned with their career goal. Strategy 5: Assist all youth who are blind or visually impaired in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from school to work. Measure: Number of students receiving pre–employment transition services prior to high school graduation. Strategy 6: Prepare Iowa's youth to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce. Measure: Number of students participating in paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Strategy 7: Engage Iowa's youth in the career path development process using creative,

progressive, and self–directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Measure: Percentage of students that have IEP goals that aligns with their career path interests.

IDB Goal 3: All individuals who are successfully closed employed will have found employment that aligns with their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and places them on their desired career pathway. Strategy 1: IDB will ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and the activities they engage in will align with career pathway. Measure: Percentage of services provided that align with the IPE goals. Strategy 2: IDB will promote participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. Measure: Percentage of successfully closed cases who acquired skill gains toward credential or employment. Strategy 3: IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Percentage of successful employment in competitive integrated work settings.

WIOA Goal 3: Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless, and integrated manner.

IDB Goal 4: The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Strategy 1: IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. Measure: Results of satisfaction survey data, tracking key points in the delivery of services. Strategy 2: IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Number of collaborations that result in a relationship with employers. IDB Goal 5: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired. Strategy 1: Conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers. Measure: Number of community rehabilitation providers contacted in areas of high density clients.

Strategy 2: Provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Measure: Number of individuals participating in trainings.

Priority 1: Implementation of WIOA with regard to Pre–employment transition services and Supported Employment. Outcome: Appropriate changes are made in policies and procedures. Priority 2: On–going need for the professional development of all staff providing direct services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Outcome: Trainings provided to meet the needs of staff providing direct services. Priority 3: Integration of a new case management system to allow for the tracking of requirements under WIOA. Outcome: Tracking mechanisms will be established. Priority 4: Increase outreach efforts to individuals from minority backgrounds. Outcome: Establishment of relationships with entities serving individuals from minority backgrounds.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

The Department for the Blind provides assistive technology services and assistive technology devices to its clients as the needs are identified through each stage of the rehabilitation process. Through provision of services outlined in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), IDB provides intensive training to individuals in the area of assistive technology including the use of screen

magnification, screen–reading software, audio software and devices so that individuals who experience blindness or low vision can quickly be prepared to be able to participate in experiences and gain skills and credentials needed to obtain and maintain self–sustaining employment.

IDB Rehabilitation Technology Specialists work collaboratively with clients, training providers, and employers to identify and implement any technology needed for the individual to be able to participate in experiences or gain skills or credentials necessary to obtain and maintain self–sustaining employment. IDB is working to increase the number of technology trainers to ensure that the agency can respond statewide in a timely manner to critical assistive technology skill development needs to enable clients to be job–ready.

The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – Career Resource Center provides technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment. Provision of talking book players, loaner devices to test out equipment, and training equipment is also provided to clients statewide.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

Like other blind agencies, self–referral is the most commonly recorded referral source. Many applicants have heard about the Department through community organizations and family or friends who have attended a presentation or previously received services. Therefore, outreach events must be varied and frequent. The Department's Communication Specialist coordinates marketing, outreach, and public education efforts. These outreach activities include traditional approaches such as open house events, community based trainings, vision loss resource fairs, print and radio interviews, distribution of informational materials, tours of the Department, and presentations to employers, community services organizations, schools, self–help groups, and more. These events reach over 6,000 people annually. In addition to these traditional outreach approaches, the Department utilizes social media such as its web site, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook to promote its services and philosophy of blindness, maintain contact with constituents in the field, and communicate with community partners. With the addition of a dedicated intake specialist to the IDB team, all referrals are processed efficiently through a common gateway back to the Department.

As part of its marketing efforts, materials have been updated and reprinted for these target populations: Families & Friends, Service Providers, Healthcare Professionals, Community Organizations, Businesses, and Educators. The brochures contain information that is relevant to its intended audience about the Department's main services: Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living and the Library. The information developed for these audiences is also available on the Department's web site. Hispanic language versions of many of these brochures are now available to serve that segment of the population and have been circulated through community outlets.

In addition to direct contact with the public, we utilize other providers throughout the state to assist us in promoting the Department. Through its involvement with statewide Workforce System partnerships and the statewide Governance Group, the Department has established a network of referral sources to tap into populations who may not be directly contacted by the Department or may not initially believe or realize the Department is a resource for them.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

The Iowa Department for the Blind continues to work with school districts and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI) to increase and expand services for students. The Department is working with the IESBVI to increase referrals of students at the age of 14. Ninety days prior to the transition IEP (no later than age 14) students are informed about Vocational Rehabilitation services available through the IDB by an IESBVI representative. Releases to share information are also gathered. The Department receives the referral and begins attempting to contact the family and student to assist them in the application process. The emphasis to serve youth and students with disabilities increases the need to collaborate with community rehabilitation providers in the provision of pre–employment transition services in order to increase the competitive integrated employment outcomes. Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or visually impaired. One area of need often identified with students who are blind and visually impaired is a lack of understanding and ability to use assistive technologies. In effort to meet this need, the IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one–on–one assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. IDB staff attends IEP meetings and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. IDB technology specialists have implemented a program in which they provide a monthly webinar about assistive technology for TVIs, para–educators, and other education professionals. By mid–2016, the IDB will be launching a similar webinar series for teens.

IDB and IESBVI are working together to provide information and training to K–12 students and their families at annual Spring Vision Conferences. In addition, each entity is providing the other with training. For example, IDB will provide IESBVI staff with training and information about vocational rehabilitation at their annual Summer Institute as well as their annual Fall Vision Conference. IESBVI is providing IDB with training about the educational processes during a quarterly staff in–service meeting. The Department transition specialist works closely with the transition and family services coordinator for IESBVI; these individuals regularly discuss programs, potential referrals, processes, collaboration opportunities and potential improvements to transition programs and services. These efforts are all designed to improve communication, training, and knowledge among transition teams working with blind and visually impaired students. The Department continues to work to build relationships within communities across the state in efforts to connect students in high school with VR services. IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for the transition students in integrated settings. IDB has also developed an internal Youth Employment Services team to bring together the different divisions of the agency to further discuss ways to improve and expand VR services. IDB has also developed several programs to expand the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services, to students who are blind or visually impaired.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The Department utilizes CRPS throughout Iowa when necessary for job coaching, assessments, training, or placement in supported employment. As the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment demonstrated, a small percentage of the Department's clients access services from the CRPS. Our small pool of clients makes it difficult to build models of on–going collaboration. Developing individualized services with the CRP as the need arises is the approach the Department has found works best for the client and the CRPS. Also, because few CRP personnel have extensive experience in working with blind individuals, the Department works closely with CRP staff as necessary to ensure the client receives training and other services that appropriately addresses any additional impairment the client may have as well as the client's blindness or vision loss.

The IDB participates as a member of the Governance Group in activities designed to enhance employment services for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowans who are blind and visually impaired. This partnership engages in systems-change initiatives that impact the coordination of employment services to Iowans with disabilities. IDB participates in these efforts to ensure that the employment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those individuals who have the most significant disabilities have the opportunity to work in integrated, community-based, competitive employment settings.

IDB recognizes that we must assist CRPS in the state to increase their knowledge and skills in the provision of services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB will build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired. We will conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers throughout the state of Iowa. IDB staff will provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

The Iowa Department for the Blind will continue to work with current standards and indicators knowing that the state's common performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA are currently being developed. Once the final regulations are published, the Department will review, evaluate and implement the performance expectations.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Iowa Department for the Blind continues to participate with the state's One–Stop System partners on the strategic planning for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including developing strategies to improve access to individuals participating in programs and trainings through One–Stop Centers and partner agencies. The Department also collaborates with other community agencies to ensure that their programs are accessible to clients who are blind or visually impaired.

The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The following strategies are used to assist the state workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities:

- IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers.

- IDB will build intra–agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports.

- IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments.

- The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

- IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system.

- IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments.

The Iowa Department for the Blind strategies were designed to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind. The strategies used will be reviewed annually and progress will be measured.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The following are the strategies being used by the Iowa Department for the Blind to achieve the goals and priorities established by the State:

- Build mutually beneficial partnerships with Iowa businesses. Measure: The number of business relationships developed. The number of services provided to businesses

- IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. Measure: The number of partnerships with employers developed that create or expand work experience, internship, on–the–job training, and employment opportunities for Iowans who are blind and visually impaired.

- IDB will build intra–agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. Measure: The number of individuals who obtain employment and whose cases are closed successfully rehabilitated.

- Actively engage the community to increase awareness of the mission, vision, and services available to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired and how to access them. Measure: Number of referrals to the Iowa Department for the Blind.

- Outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. Measure: Number of referrals received through the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

- All eligible individuals will have well–developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education & training plans needed to achieve their career goal. Measure: Number of individuals successfully employed in competitive and integrated employment.

- We will advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible youth will have well–developed individualized education plans that align with their career goals. Measure: Number of students who have IEP goals aligned with their career goal.

- Assist all youth who are blind or visually impaired in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from school to work. Measure: Number of students receiving pre–employment transition services prior to high school graduation.

- Prepare Iowa's youth to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce. Measure: Number of students participating in paid work experiences prior to high school graduation.

- Engage Iowa's youth in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self–directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Measure: Percentage of students that have IEP goals that aligns with their career path interests.

- IDB will ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and the activities they engage in will align with career pathway. Measure: Percentage of services provided that align with the IPE goals.

- IDB will promote participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. Measure: Percentage of successfully closed cases who acquired skill gains toward credential or employment.

- IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Percentage of successful employment in competitive integrated work settings.

- IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. Measure: Results of satisfaction survey data, tracking key points in the delivery of services.

- IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Number of collaborations that result in a relationship with employers.

- Conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers. Measure: Number of community rehabilitation providers contacted in areas of high density clients.

- Provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Measure: Number of individuals participating in trainings.

The Iowa Department for the Blind strategies were designed to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind. The strategies used will be reviewed annually and progress will be measured.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

The Department will utilize the following strategies in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve VR services to blind and visually impaired Iowans under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

Statewide Independent Living Council: The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. The Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent nonprofit corporation whose Council Members are appointed by the Governor, and a majority of whom are persons with disabilities. Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the SILC has the responsibility to plan for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in Iowa, and to promote the development of a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living and the Department work in collaboration in many ways. Collaborate in many ways to include heading up system change; that is help to organize people with disabilities to demand their civil rights, and fight against discrimination. Many of the freedoms and physical accommodations that people with and without disabilities enjoy today would not otherwise exist such as curb cuts, lifts on buses, elevators at metro transit stations, the passage of 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. At the Department, they work in collaboration with us when we host

Vision Loss Resource Fairs, they help to get information out regarding our Community–Based Trainings, and they refer individuals with severe vision loss or who are blind. Overall, we collaborate to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability.

Iowa Self Employment (ISE) Program for Persons with Disabilities: The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department. The Iowa Self–Employment program exists to provide quality, expert, client–centered services to Iowans with disabilities that embrace diversity, promote successful business ownership and result in self–sufficiency and economic development. This program partners with the Iowa Department for the Blind and its clients to offer entrepreneurial assessment, market feasibility assessment, business plan development, business financial and technical consultation as well as business augmentation support. While self–employment is not for everyone, for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, ability to analyze markets and make good decisions, and where needed financial stability in order to access financing if that is necessary, this program is one to consider as a source to facilitating an individual from under or unemployment to gainful employment.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

Primary barriers that have been identified that relate to the equitable access to and participation of individuals who are blind and visually impaired in the IDB VR program and the IDB Supported Employment Services Program include transportation, technology, and availability. The Department for the Blind is reviewing current staffing levels in efforts to increase the presence of the Iowa Department for the Blind in local communities. We plan to have an eighth VR counselor in the field by the end of the year. In addition, we have domiciled an additional two employment specialists in areas that do not currently have a VR team member domiciled. The Department has been strategically domiciling positions throughout the state, to increase our presence and availability of staff to provide and coordinate VR services.

IDB Vocational Rehabilitation clients have historically not used the one-stop centers due to inaccessibility of technology and programs. The programs identified as inaccessible were computer training, resume writing, and assessments to assist in determining skill level and career options. Technology used in the one-stop centers was not accessible to persons needing magnification or screen reading software. Staff would provide reader service in some locations; however this minimized an individual's ability to be independent in their job search. Community partners have indicated a lack of knowledge on how to assist individuals in accessing services. One-stop center staff have shared that they needed training on how to provide services specific to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with most significant disabilities (cognitive disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities, deaf-blindness).

The Department is working with our local one-stop partners and other training providers, in addition to employers and community service providers to increase access to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB has been conducting accessibility consultations with a variety of these entities to assist them in becoming more accessible. IDB also provides technical assistance, training and resources to these entities. IDB plans to refer to our workforce and other partners more as we move forward in improving the delivery of VR services.

Transportation was identified as the primary need for individuals who are blind or visually impaired in Iowa. The regional transit systems are not available in every area, have limited availability, and are expensive. The lack of transportation services creates a dependence on others and is a major cause of concern for the participants whose goal is to be independent in their community. The Department is working with local agencies to identify transportation options. The Department is also working to develop trainings that can be conducted through technology such as webinars. IDB does often meet with clients in their home due to transportation barriers. When these barriers are addressed, rehabilitation teachers are also introduced to the client to assist them in learning alternative techniques related to orientation and mobility and methods for accessing transportation. IDB will continue to assist clients in addressing their transportation needs and in discovering methods of overcoming that barrier to accessing VR services.

Finally, IDB has experienced a number of changes in our staff over the last few years. We are continuously assessing the need for additional training regarding WIOA requirements, delivery of services, understanding of supported employment services, and increased levels of partnerships and agreements with our partners. The need for additional training in the delivery of services to individuals with the most significant needs has also been identified by staff and we are working with community partners to provide additional training to our staff. In doing this, we have found new opportunity to provide cross-training to various community partners as well, increasing not only ability for our partners to serve clients, but a greater awareness of the needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The Iowa Department for the Blind is reviewing the goals established for the FY 2016 State plan. The Department is transitioning to goals and strategies that will align with the Unified State Plan goals. The below goals were approved for the FY 2015 State Plan.

VR Goal 1: All blind and visually impaired Iowans who require Vocational Rehabilitation services to obtain or retain employment receive them. Strategy: Continue utilizing the long–range marketing and outreach plan developed in 2009 to increase awareness of and referrals to the Department. Measure: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Number of Referrals Compared to Previous Year. • Percentage of New Referrals to Re–referrals. • Percentage of Referrals Aged 14 to 64. • Number of Applications Compared to Previous Year.

Results: In FY 2014 1168 referrals were provided to the Iowa Department for the Blind. In FY 2015, this number went down to 945. The Department identified that there were several internal methods used to refer a client to VR services. The Department has changed this practice and is no longer counting all library patrons as referrals to the VR program; this has caused the referral number to decrease over the past year and this number will continue to be watched. Approximately 52% of referrals to the agency in FY 2015 were individuals who had been listed in the case management or library system prior. Approximately 36 % of referrals were of individuals between the ages of 14 and 64. In FY 2014 the Department took 428 applications, in FY 2015 that number increased to 564.

The Iowa Department for the Blind hosts a number of annual events that provide information about services offered by the Department each year. These events include the annual Braille Challenge, the legislative open house, and White Cane Safety Day events. The Department emphasizes the vocational rehabilitation program and the youth transition programs at each event, ensuring individuals are aware of the importance of early involvement in vocational rehabilitation services and the programs offered through the Department.

The Department continued to conduct a number of outreach events throughout the state, with staff presenting information about IDB services. Events such as the vision loss resource fairs, participation in transition fairs and events, and corporate and local government fairs and resource fairs have provided an opportunity for IDB staff to share a wide array of information about services. At all of these events, feedback is sought from attendees for follow–up and possible referrals. Department staff continues to welcome potential clients, interested professionals, and the general public to the IDB for tours that highlight available services.

VR Goal 2: All blind and visually impaired transition age youth and young adults experience employment outcomes that are commensurate with those of older blind and visually impaired Iowans.

Strategy: Utilize part–time employment placements as performance measures for Youth VR Counselors and provide Job Seeking seminars designed specifically for clients attending post–secondary school. Measure: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Percentage of individuals aged 14–24 at application who close successfully employed after services. • Number of transition age youth and young adults placed in part–time employment for the purposes of obtaining work experience. (In these instances, the case will remain open until the employment goal has been achieved.)

Results: Eighty–six percent of individuals who were between the ages of 14 and 24 at application successfully closed their cases in FY 2015. Of those individuals who successfully closed their cases, seventy four percent had been placed in part–time employment for the purpose of work experience. The Department has set a goal that all clients have paid work experiences prior to graduation. In FY 2015, 91% of students graduated from high school with paid work experiences. One of the reasons for not meeting this goal is due to late application for vocational rehabilitation services. Another reason is due to parent or family member preference that the students not pursue employment during high–school and rather focus on education requirements.

Counselors work with schools and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired to refer students at an earlier age so that career exploration, work experiences, work readiness skills, independence skills and advocacy skills can be developed prior to exit from secondary schools. Outreach and trainings to parents, schools and educators are being developed to work toward this goal.

VR Goal 3: All blind and visually impaired Iowans achieve the highest quality of employment outcome that is commensurate with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Strategy 1: Provide a longer period for job stabilization before closure in cases where a client is working toward achieving more hours, and require additional documentation for cases closing in employment at less than twenty hours per week. Strategy 2: Ensure all clients receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income have the opportunity to receive individualized benefits counseling from a certified Benefits Planner.

Measures: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Percentage of Full–time Closures (32 Hours or more per week). • Average Hours Worked per Week at Closure. • Average Hourly Wages at Closure. • Percentage of SSI & SSDI beneficiaries receiving benefits planning services. Results:

In FY 2015, 54% of clients successfully closing their cases were working 32 or more hours per week. The average hours worked per week at the time of closure was approximately 30 hours. Average wage was $16.39 per hour. Twenty–eight percent of clients who were SSI and SSDI beneficiaries received benefits counseling services. Twenty–six percent of clients worked less than 20 hours per week; of those, 64% reported more than one disability and 36% were individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Counselors and other department staff have identified a need for increased training and education in working with persons with multiple disabilities; in particular persons with cognitive disabilities, mental illness, and brain injuries. Counselors are also working to identify community providers who are competent in working with persons who are blind and visually impaired, including individuals with the most significant disabilities.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Refer to previous section.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

SE Goal: All blind and visually impaired Iowans who require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive employment receive them.

Strategy: Research new procedures for managing supported employment cases and develop strategic plan for supported employment services.

Measures: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward this goal: • Number of closed individuals who had supported employment services on their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). • Percentage of individuals who close successfully employed after receiving supported employment services • Percentage individuals with identified secondary disabilities who close successfully employed after services. Results: In fiscal year 2015, five individuals who received supported employment services closed their cases. Of these individuals, four were closed successfully employed after receiving services. These individuals worked 20 hours or less; employment was in integrated competitive employment settings. Forty–nine percent of cases closing successfully employed after services reported having secondary and tertiary disabilities.

Counselors have developed a work group that is developing strategies to identify individuals with secondary and tertiary disabilities who may require supported employment. The number of individuals receiving supported employment services has grown over the last year and counselors will continue to find ways to ensure clients who can benefit from these services receive them.

The following table shows the Department’s performance on the Standards and Indicators for the last five years.

Performance Indicator RSA Standard FFY 11 Outcome FFY 12 Outcome FFY 13 Outcome FFY 14 Outcome FFY 15 Outcome

1.1: Number of Individuals with Employment Outcomes Equal or exceed 77 82 99 84 101

1.2: Individuals Receiving Services under an Individualized Plan for Employment and Percentage with an Employment Outcome 68.9% 77.67% 78.71% 77.68% 70.59% 76.5%

1.3: Competitive Employment Outcomes as a Percentage of all Employment Outcomes 35.4% 90.00% 87.42% 86.74% 85.71% 85.15%

1.4: Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities as a Percentage of all Individuals with Significant Disabilities 89% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100%

1.5: Ratio of Average VR Wage to State Wage as a Percentage 59% 80.30% 87.70% 85.90% 86.33% 82.45%

Average Hourly Rate $14.56 $18.81 $15.04 $17.05 $16.28

1.6: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes Reporting Own Income as Primary Source of Support at Application and Closure 30.4% 17.36% 26.62% 31.21% 32.43% 35.22%

2.1: Access to Services for Minorities: The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non–minority backgrounds. .80 .823 1.109 .95 .86 .659

The Department routinely performs well on the Standards and Indicators. However, the Department did not meet Indicator 2.1 in FFY 2015. The Department will be reviewing and implementing strategies to ensure that outreach to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is done in efforts to serve these individuals.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

The Department did not meet Indicator 2.1 in 2015. The Department does not typically close more than 100 cases per year, thus are not often measured by this indicator. The Department will be reviewing and implementing strategies to ensure that outreach to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is done in efforts to serve these individuals. IDB has also investigated the use of state contracts and other businesses to provide language services to individuals with limited English speaking abilities. The Department recognizes that individuals with minority backgrounds often enter VR services through regional Workforce Centers or community agencies that specialize in serving people who do not have English as their primary language. To address this difference, the Department will improve outreach to IWD regional centers and the Adult Basic Education programs that provide English as second language training.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

This plan is filed at a transitional period for standards and indicators in vocational evaluation; the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA have not been determined.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

The Department will utilize the following strategies in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve VR services to blind and visually impaired Iowans under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Statewide Independent Living Council: Pursuant to the existing state plan for independent living the Department allocated $7,799 from title I funds and $9,123 from part B funds in FY 2015. The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. The Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent nonprofit corporation whose Council Members are appointed by the Governor, and a majority of whom are persons with disabilities. Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the SILC has the responsibility to plan for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in Iowa, and to promote the development of a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living and the Department work in collaboration in many ways. Collaborate in many ways to include heading up system change; that is help to organize people with disabilities to demand their civil rights, and fight against discrimination. Many of the freedoms and physical accommodations that people with and without disabilities enjoy today would not otherwise exist such as curb cuts, lifts on buses, elevators at metro transit stations, the passage of 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. At the Department, they work in collaboration with us when we host Vision Loss Resource Fairs, they help to get information out regarding our Community–Based Trainings, and they refer individuals with severe vision loss or who are blind. Overall, we collaborate to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability. Iowa Self Employment (ISE) Program for Persons with Disabilities: The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department. In fiscal year 2015, $27,652 was used to support individuals in self–employment through this program. The Iowa Self–Employment program exists to provide quality, expert, client–centered services to Iowans with disabilities that embrace diversity, promote successful business ownership and result in self–sufficiency and economic development. This program partners with the Iowa Department for the Blind and its clients to offer entrepreneurial assessment, market feasibility assessment, business plan development, business financial and technical consultation as well as business augmentation support. While self–employment is not for everyone, for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, ability to analyze markets and make good decisions, and where needed financial stability in order to access financing if that is necessary, this program is one to consider as a source to facilitating an individual from under or unemployment to gainful employment.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

The Department provides supported employment services to an eligible individual with a most significant disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for whom competitive and integrated employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive and integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Supported employment is competitive employment in an integrated setting consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The eligible individual, the counselor, and when appropriate, other extended service providers will jointly plan supported employment services. Extended supported employment services shall be provided by other agencies, organizations, employers, or other available sources with whom cooperative arrangements will be made. Comparable services and benefits will be used to the maximum extent appropriate. Services will be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice. Supported employment services may include: • An assessment of the need for supported employment; • The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site; • Job development and placement • Social skills training; • Regular observation or supervision of the individual • Follow–up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; • Facilitation of natural supports at the work site; and, • Any other service necessary to achieve an employment outcome. These services will be provided for a period of time that will not exceed twenty–four (24) months, except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment. Vocational rehabilitation counselors and their supervisor closely monitor the quality of services throughout the duration of their provision to insure that services are appropriate, timely, cost–effective, and of the same quality as those services provided under Title I.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

Refer to previous section.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Name of designated State agency

Full Name of Authorized Representative:

Title of Authorized Representative:

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

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Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR Part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant’s Organization **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Richard L. Sorey**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Richard L. Sorey**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(A) is an independent State commission**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **Yes**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,
A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND
II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

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* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	61.00	64.00	61.00	65.00
Dislocated Workers	65.00	65.00	66.00	66.00
Youth	68.00	70.00	61.00	70.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	63.00	63.00	61.00	63.00
Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	60.00	63.00	61.00	64.00
Dislocated Workers	65.00	65.00	66.00	66.00
Youth	67.00	67.00	61.00	67.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	61.00	64.00	61.00	65.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,100.00	4,100.00
Dislocated Workers	5,500.00	5,500.00	5,600.00	5,600.00
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,600.00	4,600.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 3

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	60.00	65.00	56.00	65.00
Dislocated Workers	63.00	63.00	63.00	63.00
Youth	58.00	58.00	26.00	58.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	43.00	43.00	44.00	44.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

TABLE 7. COMBINED FEDERAL PARTNER MEASURES

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Employment 2nd Quarter	40.00		41.00	
Employment 4th Quarter	50.00		51.00	
Median Earnings 4th Quarter	4,100.00		4,200.00	
Credential Attainment	20.00		21.00	
Measurable Skill Gains	20.00		21.00	

User remarks on Table 7

APPENDIX 2. OTHER STATE ATTACHMENTS (OPTIONAL)

Appendix 2: Organizational Charts for Core Partners

https://www.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.Iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/documents/Organizational%20Charts%202015.03.pdf