



*Finding solutions. Generating success.*

January 15, 2021

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is asked to submit a report of its outreach efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities.

2019 Iowa Acts chapter 135, as extended by House File 2643: *For purposes of optimizing the job placement of individuals with disabilities, IVRS shall make its best efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant disabilities and most significant disabilities. By January 15, 2021, the division shall submit a written report to the general assembly on the division's outreach efforts with community rehabilitation program providers.*

IVRS has continued efforts to create and maintain partnerships with 65 Iowa community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in 2020. IVRS continued efforts to promote and encourage collaboration by reaching out to CRPs, external vendors and other service providers. This includes developing a collaborative partnership with the Iowa DD Council to expand CRP's participating in the Employment First Pilot Project in the geographic regions of Des Moines, Ames, Cedar Rapids and Dubuque. It also includes a contracted effort with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment hosted by our State Rehabilitation Council. That work provided nine webinars on topics of professional interest to our providers, professional staff and constituents. The result of this focus has contributed positively to enhancing partnerships, in addition to maintaining a focus on competitive, community employment-related options for Iowans with disabilities.

IVRS has a dedicated staff position performing the outreach activities in collaboration with our CRPs. In addition, IVRS has a proactive plan that includes training and ongoing collaboration with long-term support providers to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities continue to be successful with the employment design customized through the efforts of this employment partnership. Local IVRS offices have implemented regular routine meetings with the individual, parents and guardians, CRP providers and long-term support providers.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on provider services including their ability to support staff in the provision of on-site services needed for job development, job placement and supported job coaching. A number of providers have closed or delayed service operations related to employment



*Finding solutions. Generating success.*

services. Other providers are no longer serving previously covered geographic areas and some lack trained staff to provide employment services. In order to support our CRP capacity issues, IVRS has reached out to individual providers to support rural locations and areas that currently have no CRP coverage. IVRS has also reached out to CRPs to provide virtual employment services in order to prevent knowledge and skill regression during any employment gaps.

This is demonstrated in the numbers below for 2020, which is significantly lower than in past years.

FFY	Amount Expended to CRP's	Number of Job Candidates with CRP Services
2020	\$2,274,001	1,689
2019	\$3,738,006	2,269
2018	\$3,754,427	2,228
2017	\$3,363,602	2,010
2016	\$2,961,365	1,871
2015	\$2,836,035	1,432
2014	\$1,845,630	988

The 2020 numbers are not final as authorizations and claims for the FFY 20 are not resolved. IVRS has continued to see a decrease in number of services provided to our adult caseload, primarily due to the attention and focus on transition and pre-employment transition services required by the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act. IVRS is now serving close to 9,000 more potentially eligible students than ever before with the change in federal legislation.

The employment outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services through our community rehabilitation providers decreased from 346 successful employment outcomes to 290. This is not reflective of the quality of services, but an overall change in the numbers being served and less providers participating due to the pandemic. As well as fewer job candidates identifying interest in participating in community service delivery. The data demonstrates an increase of average hourly wage earned going from \$11.94 to \$12.53.

IVRS provided financial support to 44 different Occupational Skills training programs, authorizing services for 260 job candidates totaling \$424,016 for FFY 20. A signal of positive growth is the increase to 260 individuals served



*Finding solutions. Generating success.*

from 240 the past year, but the overall cost expenditure decreased from \$688,144.60. This was due to the nature of the occupational skill training programs being accessed by our job candidates. Our CRPs are integral to the success of these training efforts to meet the business skill gap.

IVRS implemented a variety of in-service, webinar, on-site and video conference training opportunities available to CRPs throughout the year, as well as performance data specific to each partner. Vendor data is shared annually by IVRS with providers to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, promote transparency for purchased services, and provide a statewide basis for comparisons and quality assurance improvement. IVRS included additional data points related to time in supported employment, the rehabilitation rate, hours worked and dollars earned. Data was shared across systems to provide an opportunity to review outcome quality to set standards and review the effectiveness of office and CRP collaboration. The data measures are the same standards IVRS is held accountable to with federal reporting. All CRP providers were contacted and received specific communication and outreach from IVRS staff. These conversations occurred fall and winter of 2020 and are critical to continuing efforts to identify innovative strategies dealing with work environment caused by the pandemic.

IVRS will continue to collaborate and proactively respond to the demands of an ever-changing job market to fulfill our mission and effectively provide the necessary services to help individuals with disabilities achieve full integration into community employment.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Mitchell, MS, CRC  
IVRS Administrator