

Disability Access Committee State Workforce Board Regional Workforce Board

March 2019

Local office committees continue to meet despite regional structure changes. The local committees are taking the lead in identifying a plan for workforce integration continuum model, which training and overview was provided through WINTAC. Local offices are collaborating with local teams to identify where they are currently at on the self-assessment scale and where they want to be at twelve months from now. Iowa's work in this area was featured in national news through WINTAC as a promising practice. The work of the committee continues to focus on program and physical accessibility, training videos on a variety of employment service practice, and how to improve the customer service experience for an individual with a disability at our one-stop centers.

As we improve linkages and develop strategies influencing service and outcomes, we are demonstrating a close link to the Future Ready Iowa Initiative. The local involvement of leadership teams led by IVRS and IDB management staff is critical to not only visibility, awareness and education of topics related to disability, but aligned to positively impact employment. Close collaboration is occurring with IWD leadership on the implementation of action steps related to the work of the Committee. The Disability Access Committee is one of four committees through the state workforce board. Current steps being identified include: an update of the leadership membership roster, compliance with all open meeting regulations, tracking of the data per office for the Integration Continuum Model, sharing of promising practices from each office, changing of forms and communication to reflect encouragement to be inclusive of required partners going beyond the state core partners, publishing of training videos and finding further ways to link with Future Ready Iowa to enhance value.

December 2017

WIOA plans continue to be implemented across the state through work occurring at state, regional and local levels. IVRS is actively participating in this through leadership on the Disability Access Committees, and with voting representation on the state workforce board and our regional workforce boards.

The Disability Access Committee has completed physical access surveys at all sites with the exception of the Des Moines site, which just moved into a new location the later part of November 2017. Eight regional boards have hosted consumer focus groups to gather additional consumer feedback on service delivery issues. It is hoped our remaining twelve sites will be able to move forward also with completion of the focus groups. All surveys have been shared with state workforce staff and they will now be taking the lead in communicating with local landlords on implementation. These surveys should have been discussed at the local board level, received approval at the local board level and then forwarded to the state offices. This process helps maintain open communication for those local officials representing the regions. Implementation for problem areas related to the survey will be the responsibility of the Regional IWD Operations Manager who will be the primary point of contact with landlords. The local committee will follow-up at later dates to monitor progress and remaining issues.

Consumer focus groups, if not completed, should still be carried out. Feedback and efforts should be summarized and sent to Page Eastin with the Iowa Client Assistance Program. This is an effort to engage stakeholders and attempt to obtain user feedback on customer service

and physical/program accessibility issues. The Disability Access Committee posted a [checklist](#) on the shared web link.

The statewide committee is providing guidance on curriculum training that will begin to address basic customer service and understanding of resources related to disability and attempt to capitalize on partnerships with IVRS and IDB at the local levels. This training will be initiated through the Disability Resource Coordinators (DEI) and shared across regions. This will include a couple of different stages including completion of a survey on comfort levels that will be sent from the state level, as well as integration of customer service and disability related knowledge at the service level. Once completed, the local committees will be able to address further communication and gaps that are identified.

The State Workforce Board had their first meeting in November 2017 with the new make-up of participants. The Board now has approximately 35 voting members. In September 2017, the Department of Labor conducted a review of Iowa's implementation of the WIOA and provided a written report with recommendations/mandates. DOL has mandated that substantial changes be made to the internal infrastructure of workforce service delivery in Iowa in order to effectively implement WIOA. DOL has determined that Iowa must redesign local workforce boards including the number, scope, operation and structure of those boards. DOL has determined the current structure is not in compliance with WIOA or federal law and in order for Iowa to be compliant, significant changes to the current structure must be made within the next few months. A workgroup has been formed to address these challenges with recommendations to be made by early spring, 2018.

March 2016

The State Workforce Board accepted the recommendations of the Disability Access Committee and approved the formation of the Committee and the formation of Regional Board Committees. The State Workforce Board Disability Access Committee consists of the following:

Disability Access Committee Member	Affiliation
David Mitchell, Chairperson	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS)
Keri Osterhaus, Vice Chairperson	Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB)
Rosemary Thierer	Iowa Department on Aging (IDA)
Page Eastin	Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR)
Alex Harris	Iowa Department of Education, Adult Education and Literacy Program (AEL)
Ben Humphrey	Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)
Shelly Chandler	Iowa Association of Community Providers
Barrett Rogness	Business
Duhvall Veasley	Former Recipient of Services
Tai Tomasi	Disability Rights Iowa (DRI)
Ashlea Lantz	Griffin Hammis Associates

Steps were taken to communicate with the Regional Workforce Center Boards to educate them on the roles of the local Disability Access Committee and to encourage solicitation of local members. Immediate goals were related to physical and program accessibility issues at the One

Stop Centers with the long-term goal of collaborative partnering to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities at the One Stop Centers.

The following steps were communicated with timelines identified:

1. Assign staff to each location
2. Staff coordinate schedules and complete the ADA-Checklist (By December 15, 2016)
3. Staff send the completed checklist to Page Eastin who will complete the report
4. Reports will be sent to the appropriate contacts at IWD for review
5. The Regional Disability Access Committees will review and develop a transition plan utilizing the provided resources
6. The transition plan will be posted for public input
7. We will follow up at the times identified in the transition plan to monitor progress

Delays occurred due to Regional Board meetings and that each board had to approve and accept Committee membership nominees.

The following are minute meeting notes from the State Disability Access Committee Meeting in October 2016:

Reviewed One-Stop Certification Under WIOA Memorandum. Summary comments are we are challenging the One Stop System partners to "Think like a system not like a program. Line and integrate service delivery into a seamless service center."

Committee structure was reviewed as well as our mandate from the Iowa Workforce State Board. This is an opportunity to consider trainings and materials for our regions to help achieve their local access goals. Our areas of emphasis were determined to be:

1. Physical access to One-Stop and other partner agencies. (Every door is the right door)
2. Programmatic accessibility – goal is for them to establish road map for the local region. The how to – promising practices – accessing services and engaging businesses regarding how to
3. Do we have the tools to provide the services – help them identify and respond to this question?
4. What are their training needs to positively impact customer service for all customers including those with the most significant barriers to employment?

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services have 40 plus field offices with some being co-located with partner agencies. All IVRS offices have been surveyed and an accessibility plan is in place. These assessments were facilitated by Page Eastin and each local VR office and IDB office should have staff available to assist with One Stop Physical assessment surveys.

It was discussed as waiting lists continue and there are program efforts to serve the most significantly disabled by targeted agencies, the One Stop Centers will have a different customer make-up entering their doors. What resources and needs can be identified to ensure we can adequately provide services to this changing population?

We need to establish a base line. This will occur with an initial assessment survey identifying physical access needs. A tool will also be developed to get One Stop Centers discussing program accessibility issues as well as service training needs.

To determine gaps, we will use ADA standards, and there will be identified expectations communicated to the Regional Boards regarding their need to: Establish local disability access committee, Conduct accessibility study (this can be done by Page Eastin in conjunction with VR and IDB counselors and local Workforce representative – many of these have already been completed so it will be a matter of communicating the report and asking for the local team to prioritize an action plan if the survey has been completed), develop local regional plan regarding where their high impact priorities were identified, develop tool and feedback regarding the customer experience, and develop a tool to assist in assessing program accessibility.

We need to gather feedback from the local boards and help them identify training if gaps are identified in customer service and disability/barriers to employment area.

There are 15 local boards and we will want to establish disability access committees for each local area.

A discussion focused on customer service areas regarding how individuals feel comfort or lack of comfort in approaching people as well as approaching conversation topics. The group felt strongly that service providers should have a strong customer service focus and that the customer experience should be the center of our efforts as we move forward. The customer experience that helps an individual knock down the walls/barriers to get through the program, cutting through the stigma and is done in a respectful manner that provides value to the customer and gets them to come back is the desired vision/outcome.

We should be focused on the customer – keep their stories as our common goal – how do we help the person move forward? Is this the system you want your family member to receive services from? Through this work, we should continue to see a cultural/attitude shift that promotes positive customer service. This should be integrated into professional service delivery.

We discussed the idea of a mentoring program regarding youth and or adults that would have interest. Mentors for us should be the customer and we need to understand their experiences to be in a better position to provide assistance. There was a discussion regarding involving civic organizations that could be tied to mentoring. This could be focused on after completion of the accessibility goals.

IWD and IVRS is planning some joint/collaborative training for the spring/summer of 2017 and Dave mentioned that he would discuss the customer service perspective told by the consumer as an agenda item. This could serve as one example of integrating the customer story into training.

The US DOL shared documents related to equal access for federal contractors – and the value of contractors talking to contractors regarding their experience in working with individuals who have disabilities. This could be an opportunity for the EDRN (Employer Disability Resource Network) to develop a session on business talking to business about success and experiences.

Timeline:

Ben and Dave will work on sending out initial communication to the Regional Boards to be completed by November 11, 2016.

We will gather information already completed to be shared with Regional Boards on Accessibility issues by November 11, 2016.

Regional Boards will be asked to form their committees and have them in place by January 1, 2017.

Surveys should be completed for new One Stop Centers by March 31, 2017.

Priority Action Plans focused on physical accessibility issues will be completed by May 2, 2017.

Program accessibility tool will be shared with Regional Committees by January 29, 2017.

Post plans and actions for visibility to all by December 1, 2016. (through IWD website)

Establish expectations and communicate report out process to Regional Committees – through Regional Board and Committee structure by January 1, 2017.

We want to establish expectations for full office One Stop Centers and affiliate service centers and providers. Recognizing that this is a longer-term strategic plan, but it will be important to

communicate the long-range vision as a big picture and then build momentum through accomplishing our identified steps and priorities. Still need to clarify steps regarding how do we anticipate receipt and parameters of reports and help them understand the big picture of the work that is occurring.

The dates mentioned are still estimates and will be further flushed out prior to formal communication.

Next Meeting dates: Will be scheduled in the spring of 2017 to update Committee Members on progress and development of local boards and physical access surveys. Communication updates will be sent to committee members as relevant, but the next on-site meeting will be spring 2017.

The dates were best estimates and we are confirming that all committees have been established by the end of March 2017 and the accessibility studies are underway with completion by May 2017.