

## Iowa Intermediary Network

**February 2019**

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Work-Based Learning Grant A key partner in promoting and expanding Iowa Intermediary Network activities has been the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). IVRS plays a variety of roles that complement Iowa's vision for the future. The vision for this state agency, within the Iowa Department of Education, is "to work for and with individuals who have disabilities to achieve their employment, independence, and economic goals."

Toward this end, IVRS Administrator David Mitchell worked with staff at the Iowa Department of Education in 2016 to establish a new set of coordinators within each regional intermediary network. The focus of the IVRS and Iowa Department of Education efforts was to establish a program to help connect students with disabilities, between the ages of 16 and 21, to work-based learning opportunities. The result of this collaborative initiative has been very promising, as the numbers below testify.

Using funds from IVRS, 14 community colleges in Iowa employ at least one additional staff member as a coordinator to specifically provide services to high school students who have disabilities. These services include internships; job shadows; workplace readiness and other training; student and teacher tours/ externships; postsecondary opportunities; and competitive integrated employment.

In the first year of the program (2017), this joint initiative provided services in 113 high schools, serving almost 2,400 students from special education classrooms in Iowa. In 2018, there were 121 high schools being served. The number of students who are provided work based learning experiences through this initiative are anticipated to reach upwards of 3,400

**3/7/17**

The following information was shared in the February edition of a newsletter published by the Iowa Department of Education, Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation:

### [IVRS Awards Grants to Expand Work-Based Learning Opportunities](#)

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The purpose of the IVRS IN program is to help meet the vision of a future-ready Iowa that prepares individuals for dynamic careers and lifelong learning, meets employer needs, grows family incomes and strengthens communities. The IVRS IN program provides for a team member from the community college to expand vocational rehabilitation capacity providing excellent pre-employment transition services to high school students with disabilities in designated districts, which will help prepare the students to enter employment or additional post-secondary training following secondary school graduation. Students will have the opportunities to learn about work readiness skills, career pathway opportunities and expand work-based learning providing increased opportunities for employment in a chosen career field. The Intermediaries will work collaboratively with IVRS counselors and with other center partners to provide the career readiness and career exploration services to districts where gaps are identified. Services may include career exploration, job shadows, plant tours, career day

experiences, job seeking skills training, and understanding local labor market information and training opportunities that will lead to placement in those careers.

Fourteen of the fifteen community college regions are participating. We are estimating 102 secondary school districts are directly involved with over 2900 students with disabilities being impacted. Trainings have included on-site meetings with the IN's, along with joint field meetings in the area offices.

**9/20/16**

IVRS developed a grant opportunity in an effort to expand work based learning opportunities in Iowa. Published in September of 2016 the following proposal was sent to our area community colleges with their existing intermediary networks. The Iowa Department of Education has sponsored the Intermediary Networks and additional information from those efforts can be found [here](#).

IVRS is not duplicating those efforts, but providing complimentary programming to expand capacity to meet unmet needs for students with disabilities.