

2019 SRC Annual Report

Iowa State Rehabilitation Council

Advising IVRS on a Future Ready Iowa Workforce

Message From the SRC Chair

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) have continued to collaborate on how we can continue empowering and employing Iowans with disabilities, as well as providing a much needed workforce across the state. I am extraordinarily proud of the impact that IVRS continues to make in the lives of thousands of Iowans, the feedback that they're willing to head and implement, and the example that they are able to set for the rest of the country.

Our council would not be what it is without the dedication of its members. This year was no different in that we were able to welcome some new faces as well as thank some for their unwavering support over the years. Members finishing their term in 2019 included Dennis Bruce, VR recipient and small business owner who served on the SRC for one year. Dennis gave great insight into collaborating with small businesses and partnership opportunities. We also will be saying goodbye to Page Eastin, previous Client Assistance Program Representative and Iowa Workforce Development Representative. Page has served on the SRC for 5 years and brought an unwavering passion and knowledge to the position. She certainly will be missed. However, we also welcomed two new members in 2019. Amy Dutton, UNI Director of Small Business Development Center and Richard Phelan, an experienced Business and Industry representative and active community member in the Clinton, Iowa area.

Previously the SRC has challenged IVRS to look for opportunities to collaborate internally and encourage cross-organizational communication regarding best practices. This year they took that feedback and held a statewide transition conference that allowed counselors, TAP workers, and community partners to get together and discuss strategies to streamline processes and learn from one another. The SRC heard positive feedback about the experience and we are hopeful that these types of opportunities will continue. In addition to this conference, IVRS has been intentional with their efforts to reach job candidates within the deaf community. Such initiatives have included: community roundtables, education and training for field staff, the hiring of a deaf VR counselor, and partnering with colleges to train ASL users as VR Counselors. Finally, the SRC was able to witness firsthand how IVRS is becoming known as a role model agency across the country. Their innovative practices and approach was showcased during our November meeting where RespectAbility hosted a webinar featuring IVRS staff members discussing successful business engagement and disability hiring. Listening to the success stories of some of our job candidates and the dedication of our staff left those in attendance and watching the webinar across the country inspired.

Over this year the SRC was able to hear from a multitude of IVRS staff, listen to their ideas, and make policy recommendations that we feel will make meaningful change. In this Annual Report you will read about these policy recommendations as well as the return Iowans receive on their investment in IVRS. As you can see, IVRS has been forging ahead to enable and empower Iowans with disabilities enter or return to competitive, integrated employment. Looking forward, 2020 has us entering the 100th year of public vocational rehabilitation services and marks the 30th anniversary of the ADA. I am confident that our IVRS will continue to be innovative and dedicated champions for Iowans with disabilities helping them realize and achieve their employment dreams. As the chair of the SRC I could not be more proud of the work that they continue to do and how willing they are integrate our collective feedback.

Alex Watters

Message From the Administrator

2020 is the 100th year of the public VR program and provides an excellent opportunity for us to ReThink VR performance. This is driven by the work of our SRC members who are engaged in providing the agency guidance, direction and vision regarding how we can continue to demonstrate quality employment outcomes for those individuals we are serving, including our business partners.

IVRS is a leader in the employment for individuals with disabilities, but we strive for continued quality improvement. The SRC helps up do that through their work in identifying strategic initiatives.

As we “vision” future years, four key principles are being integrated into our thought process with the goal of enhancing our ability to be at “The Intersection of disability expertise and business intelligence!”

Principle #1: Innovating Solutions to achieve greater access to and use of vocational rehabilitation services. Our goal is to achieve the most effective outcomes for our customers.

Principle #2: Building Careers and Retaining Talent in America’s workforce by investing expertise and resources to benefit our customers.

Principle #3: Customizing Services and Expertise that provide flexible supports and services. We accomplish this through specialized strategies to meet the workforce goals of our customers.

Principle #4: Leading and Engaging in Collaborative Strategies with our partners who are working with us to achieve greater collective impact at all system levels (national, state, and local).

We accomplish those principles through a daily effort to consistently apply our guiding principles:

- Demonstrate teamwork and cooperation among staff, customers, and partners
- Responsive to the unique needs and goals identified by our JC’s
- Openly communicate with clarity and consideration
- Demonstrate compassion and respect for all
- Value continued improvement and learning
- Operate with trust and integrity
- Results Driven

The SRC members play a critical role in helping provide direction, support and engagement through the delivery of our mission and vision. This past year they hosted a legislative reception at the end of January, 2019 on the coldest day of the year, but the employment success stories warmed everyone’s heart. Julie, a job candidate, shared the value of work, after forty years of sheltered work experience and now is successfully employed in a competitive integrated setting through Kwik Star. The SRC also participated in a live webinar broadcast to a national audience on Iowa Business Services and how those services are pushing employment outcomes forward. The work of our SRC committees have provided further direction in helping the agency integrate members in the work we do. Their recommendations also led to a statewide transition conference for VR staff.

Our SRC members are actively engaged and are critical to the structure and framework being developed in visioning and ReThinking VR performance.

Thank you to each member for sharing their time and talents with IVRS.

David Mitchell

Quick Facts

- Approximately 96.4 percent of successful IVRS Job Candidates remain in Iowa – working, paying taxes, and contributing to their communities.
- A total of 2,110 IVRS Job Candidates obtained employment in the 2018 program year.

SRC Committee Members

DENNIS BRUCE*
Business, Labor and Industry
Linn County

NICOLE CLEVELAND
Disability Advocacy
Woodbury County

RANDELL DAVIS
Disability Advocacy
Mahasaka County

KIM DREW
IA Dept. of Education
Polk County

AMY DUTTON
Disability Advocacy
Grundy County

PAGE EASTIN*
IA Workforce Development
Polk County

PAMALA FITZSIMMONS
Business, Labor and Industry
Marion County

GARY MCDERMOTT
Statewide Independent Living Council Clinton
County

DR. MONALISA MCGEE
Disability Advocacy
Ringgold County

RICHARD PHELAN
Business, Labor and Industry
Clinton County

MARI REYNOLDS
Parent, Training & Information Center of Iowa
Polk County

DARYN RICHARDSON
Community Rehabilitation Program
Pottawattamie County

KYLE ROED
Business, Labor and Industry
Black Hawk County

LISA SCHNEIDER
Client Assistance Program
Dallas County

SCOTT TURCZYNSKI, VICE-CHAIR
Business, Labor and Industry
Polk County

BRIAN WARNER
Vocational Rehab Counselor
Cerro Gordo County

ALEX WATTERS, CHAIR
Vocational Rehabilitation Client
Woodbury County

*List includes all individuals who were active SRC members at any time during calendar year 2019

Purpose of the Council

Quote “Working Together so all can work”

The State Rehabilitation Council continues to provide guidance, direction and recommendations to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS).

IVRS staff and SRC members share the common goal of "empowering individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society." Authorized under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, State Rehabilitation Councils provide individuals with disabilities and representatives from the community with a partnership role in the state's rehabilitation program.

What We Do

The SRC meets quarterly and performs several functions as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amendments under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, and the SRC by-laws.

STATE PLAN, STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

The SRC works in partnership with IVRS, utilizing the data gathered to develop state goals and priorities in the development of the State Plan and Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION:

The council hosts an annual reception at the Iowa State Capitol as an opportunity for SRC members to connect personally with legislators to highlight IVRS activities and successes.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS:

The SRC oversees customer satisfaction surveys to help determine how well IVRS is meeting consumer needs and find ways to improve future services. Satisfaction results are reported to SRC members at each meeting for ongoing feedback.

The State Rehabilitation Council has two standing committees:

VR Service Delivery Committee

Responsible for customer satisfaction survey, SRC Annual Report, and reviewing and making recommendations regarding agency policy issues.

Outreach Committee

Responsible for gathering input and recommendations on the State Plan and annual State Plan amendments, the legislative reception, position papers,

ADVOCATE

We represent the voice of IVRS consumers and stakeholders. We are committed to the employment of people with disabilities and the vocational rehabilitation process.

ASSESS

We review consumer surveys, public input, and data provided by IVRS to identify issues, needs, and strengths of IVRS services.

ADVISE

We advise IVRS on policies, service delivery and outcomes, providing recommended action where process improvement may be needed.

Council Recommendations

IVRS services are intended to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to pursue and advance in the same high-quality jobs and high demand careers as persons without disabilities. Towards that end, the SRC recommended that IVRS continue to expand to connect with business and industry. IVRS staff are currently creating linkages with the business community in a manner that strengthens informed choice of the individual with a disability and develops the labor pool needed by Iowa's business community. IVRS is also placing a concerted effort on transition services for students with disabilities by establishing connections in each Iowa high school. A final recommendation from the SRC involves IVRS facilitating ongoing training to staff and partners to complement the Employment First philosophy and increase positive outcomes for Iowans served by IVRS.

Recommendations made by Service Delivery Committee August 2019

Section 511

Increase efforts to provide career counseling, career exploration and employment supports to individuals working in sub-minimum wage settings.

Outreach & Information

Increase the visibility of IVRS by creating opportunities for individuals to learn about VR services. This might include more:

- Panel Discussion
- Outreach videos
- Focus Groups
- Reverse Job Fairs
- Video Resumes

Referral Process

Form a work group to review and revise the referral process.

Job Candidate & Counselors

- Describe what is the purpose VR and the history of the organization with handouts
- Consider adding an employment retention program. Have counselors submit work improvement plans.
- Reduce eligibility steps and timetables by empowering counselors streamline the process.
- Eliminate hardcopy paperwork by going to cloud base software as quickly as possible.
- Involve hiring companies as team approach with counselors and candidates for onboarding successful employing practices.

IVRS Roles and Responsibilities

ABOUT IVRS

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is a state and federally funded program dedicated to assisting Iowans with disabilities obtain successful employment. Eligible individuals receive counseling and guidance in choosing a vocational goal consistent with their interests and abilities.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

- Medical and psychological assessment
- Technological assessment
- Vocational assessment
- Counseling and guidance
- Transition services for students
- Physical and/or mental restoration services that may include therapy, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.
- Special adaptive equipment or devices
- Training for employment
- Occupational tools, equipment or licenses
- Entrepreneurship/Self-Employment
- Personal assistance
- Supported Employment
- Job coaching
- Job placement
- Follow-up after placement to assist with work and employer satisfaction

WHERE IS IVRS LOCATED?

- IVRS has 13 Area Offices, 15 Branch Offices and 10 Service Units across Iowa
- <https://ivrs.iowa.gov/ivrs-office-locations>

IVRS Guiding Statements

Our Mission

We provide expert, individualized services to Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support.

Our Motto

Finding Solutions. Generating Success.

Our Vision

To Make a Positive Difference For Every Person, One Person at a Time.

Our Guiding Principles

We are responsive to the unique needs and goals identified by individuals with disabilities.

We demonstrate teamwork and cooperation among staff, customers and partners.

We operate with trust and integrity.

We demonstrate compassion and respect for all people.

We value continued improvement and learning.

We openly communicate with clarity and consideration.

We are results driven.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has a positive impact on linking our youth with disabilities to career pathways!

Twenty-nine percent of IVRS referrals come from Iowa School Districts

LOCAL SCHOOL PLANS

IVRS staff assigned to high schools across the state hold collaborative meetings to develop annual Local School Plans. Local School Plans outline the services provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA), IVRS and other community partners. The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) and IVRS have partnered together to develop a Local School Planning Guide to assist local teams with developing meaningful plans. In the spring of 2020, regional workshops will be held to train local school planning teams on this guide and provide technical assistance with teams developing quality Local School Plans.

905 students were successfully employed, working 30 hours/week with an average earnings of \$12.21 / hour.

PY	Potentially Eligible Students Served	Transition Students Served	Total Transition Students Served	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	7,149	3,720	10,656	905	30	\$12.21

Quote “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” –Helen Keller

IVRS continues to collaborate with LEAs, CRPs and other community partners to provide Pre-ETS to potentially eligible (PE) and IVRS eligible students across the state. As gaps and needs are identified by the local school planning teams, discussions are occurring to determine how teams can fill these gaps. The following provides a brief description of the current initiatives occurring in multiple school districts:

Making the Grade (MTG)

Students in this program participate in Pre-ETS activities to teach and reinforce the skill sets and habits necessary to be successful on the job. Students are placed in paid work-based learning experiences in the community to assist with skill building necessary for their future career.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 204

Project SEARCH

The goal for each student participant is competitive integrated employment. The program provides real-life work-based learning experiences combined with workplace readiness training in employability and independent living skills to assist students with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 68

Intermediary Networks (INs)

The program through delivery of Pre-ETS prepares students with disabilities for the workforce by connecting students, the education system, business and the community through relevant, work-based learning activities across all 16 career clusters, with specific emphasis on Science Technology Engineering Math.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 3,044

Transition Alliance Program (TAP)

Collaborative program developed between IVRS and school districts. TAP services are provided through a collaborative service coordination model, which includes Pre-ETS, with the ultimate goal of obtaining competitive integrated employment.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 3,604

Juvenile Re-entry System (JReS)

The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR), Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP), is overseeing the Juvenile Reentry Task Force (JRTF) in the development and implementation of the juvenile justice reentry system. IVRS has been an active partner in this process for implementation of Pre-ETS in these alternative educational settings.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 213

Transitioning to Employment & Advocating for Myself (TEAM)

Collaboration between Easter Seals, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Des Moines Public Schools. The focus of TEAM is developing and providing Pre-ETS to students who are attending high school within Des Moines Public Schools. TEAM staff collaborate with IVRS Staff, and DMPS Work Experience Coordinators to provide expanded services.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 35

Innovative Learning Project

This is a collaborative project between IVRS, Boone Community School District and iJAG focused on a work-based learning continuum of awareness, exploration and training in partnership with a variety of employers and higher education institutions. Students in this program participate in various Pre-ETS activities.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED FFY19: 516

Business Services

Business Partners – The Other Customer

TEMPLETON RYE — has stepped up into a highlighted business. Templeton, Iowa has approximately 300 people residing there and has partnered with IVRS to hire part time help. This means that some of candidates from the most severely disabled category were able to gain employment. A career! Not only have they hired multiple candidates, they recognize the value these individuals bring AND as an additional benefit, are funding a ride share so these individuals can get to work! In less than a couple months, 4 individuals were hired in a modified job and 1 was recently promoted to a full time skilled worker.

LA QUINTA in Altoona opened it's doors on July 11, 2019. Ashlee Cummings, Business Consultant for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), had been on hand —not only to refer qualified job candidates — but also to help provide training prior to opening.

Five IVRS job candidates were referred and are now employed at the new hotel in housekeeping, front desk and as a breakfast attendant.

Cummings is embedded on-site to help train staff to prepare for the opening, facilitate

CVS PHARMACY has been “Business of the Year” for several years with the National Employment Team. Iowa was able to make a connection and set up a webinar for all VR staff. Our staff will go through the application process, the virtual job try out and learn who was “hired” and who is “out”. This real life hands on experience will help our staff with the business intelligence needed to help Iowans past the barriers of the application and into a healthcare career.

THE LABORER’S UNION has been a solid partner of the IVRS business services team. The partnership began with a meet and greet then a hand’s on experience for staff. Now we are building that partnership into the school districts. The laborer’s union will offer the classroom & on the job training for students and adults interested in registered apprenticeships. There is no charge to the participant; in fact, they are paid to attend the training. They are currently working with students in several districts and 4 high school students & 2 adults have been offered the apprenticeship opportunity.

Success

Meet IVRS Counselor Kensie Channon

In February 2018 the SRC Service Delivery subcommittee proposed recommendations after reviewing IVRS data on disability types. Data comparing rehabilitation rates assessed the need to address specific populations which included Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Issues: Staff Serving the Deaf Community are not fluent in ASL; Shortage of ASL Interpreters in Iowa; Unsuccessful closures increased

Recommendations: Identify Area Offices with higher numbers of Deaf Iowans and add ASL selective to job postings; Offer continuing education training for select staff to learn ASL; Training for Staff on cultural competency

IVRS 2019 PY efforts to improve services to individuals who are Deaf include:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Round Table
- Assistive Technology advancements
- Expanded education of field staff
- Increased collaboration between Iowa School for the Deaf, Iowa Department of Education and IVRS
- Hiring Rehabilitation Counselors who are Deaf and partnering with colleges to train ASL users as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Joining IVRS on September 16, 2019 as a Rehabilitation Counselor in the Des Moines Area Office was Kensie Channon. Kensie is a native Deaf Iowan from the Des Moines Area and a Vocational Rehabilitation recipient. Active in her community, Kensie is a member of a number of organizations outreaching to the Deaf Community in Des Moines and across Iowa.

Kensie grew up on the eastside of Des Moines with hearing parents and her deaf brother – ‘her biggest blessing.’ VR services began for Kensie while in high school and followed her through as she continued to achieve her educational goals, obtaining her Master of Arts in Social Work from Gallaudet University. While a VR Recipient she had a counselor who was Deaf and a counselor who was Hard of Hearing and she described this as the best part of her IVRS services – Kensie shared, “To have the connection, it takes more than just getting it. Similar backgrounds with language and culture will make the journey more effective.” After graduation, with guidance, Kensie found herself with the opportunity to provide the same services she received from IVRS, by becoming a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor serving individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Initiatives are underway to find qualified counselors to serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population, recently the University of Iowa (UI) received a \$1 million grant to train students who know American Sign Language to be Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The grant will pay the tuition and living stipend of students for the four semesters they are at the UI and taking courses to become a qualified Rehabilitation Counselor. In 2019, IVRS sent two VR Counselors to a month-long summer academic certificate program at Western Oregon University, aimed to improve awareness of the deaf culture. Deaf Iowans Against Abuse partnered with IVRS to host Deaf, Deaf World an event that illustrates the cultural experience of what it might be like for individuals to live in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing world.

According to the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau there are 117,723 Iowans reporting an inability to hear conversations or a serious hearing loss. Currently across Iowa there are 5 IVRS Counselors who are either Deaf or are receiving education and training to serve Iowa’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. IVRS is also requesting the Iowa Legislator to approve the hiring of 3 additional positions targeted to serve this population.

By the Numbers

Vocational Rehabilitation is an investment in Iowa

- A Total of 2,110 VR Iowans with disabilities obtained employment in the 2018 program year.
- Approximately 96.4 percent of successful VR job candidates remain in Iowa – working, paying taxes, and contributing to their communities.
- A total of 676 VR job candidates were receiving public support for living expenses (SSI,SSDI, TANF, General Assistance) and after receiving services, they are now employed and of those, 97 now support themselves, a savings of \$900,276 annually for the state.

The Investments pays off!

Iowans with disabilities served by IVRS in PY 2018 have an estimated income of \$41.4 million annually. This reflects growth of over \$26.6 million from increased employment and over \$6.3 million from increased earnings.

Agency-wide

PY	Potentially Eligible Students Served	Job Candidates Served	Total Job Candidates Served	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	7,149	16,805	23,954	2,110	28	\$12.45
2017	4,726	17,514	22,240	2,090	29	\$12.09
2016	1,918	17,779	19,697	2,230	30	\$12.03
2015	222	17,654	17,876	2,283	31	\$11.84

Veterans

PY	Veterans Referred	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	160	40	30	\$14.22
2017	178	49	31	\$14.93
2016	194	48	33	\$12.87
2015	194	63	33	\$14.10

LEARN MORE

IVRS JOB CANDIDATE APPLICATION

ivrs.iowa.gov/agency-services/apply-services

IVRS BUSINESS SERVICES

ivrs.iowa.gov/business-services

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

ivrs.iowa.gov/partners/state-rehabilitation-council

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITIES ACT

www.doleta.gov/wioa/

REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

rsa.ed.gov/

NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS

www.ncsrc.net/

Contact SRC

CONTACT US

CALL: 515-281-6731

E-MAIL: lori.buske@iowa.gov

ATTEND A MEETING

SRC meets quarterly in Des Moines. Meetings are open to the public, with schedules available at:

<https://www.iowa.gov/general/public-meetings>

BECOME A MEMBER

Contact us for more information or complete an application at:

<https://talentbank.iowa.gov/>

State Rehabilitation Council

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