

**State of Iowa Unified State Plan
under the Workforce Innovation
and Opportunity Act**

FY2020 – FY2023

Iowa Unified State Plan, FY2020 – FY2023

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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Table of Contents

Overview.....	5
I. WIOA State Plan Type.....	7
II. Strategic Elements.....	8
Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis.....	8
State Strategic Vision and Goals.....	63
State Strategy.....	66
III. Operational Planning Elements.....	74
State Strategy Implementation.....	74
State Operating Systems and Policies.....	102
IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.....	148
V. Common Assurances.....	149
VI. Program-Specific State Plan Requirements for Core Programs.....	151
Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs Activities and Assurances.....	151
Wagner-Peyser Act Program and Agricultural Outreach Plan.....	175
Adult Education and Family Literacy Program Activities and Assurances.....	201
Vocational Rehabilitation Program Activities and Assurances.....	228
Department for the Blind Program Activities and Assurances.....	297
VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs.....	348
Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs.....	348
Appendix 2: Organizational Charts for the Core Programs.....	354

Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State’s workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development 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 job-seekers 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 Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under 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-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the 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, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (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.))¹
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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,

¹ 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 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.

- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, *Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements*. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.² States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

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, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. **Yes**

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

Indicate which Combined State 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, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (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**

² Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

- 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 program³ (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 to support economic growth. 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

³ The Reentry Employment Opportunities Program (REO), formerly the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO), is referred to by its original name (RExO) in this document. This name change is a recent decision that was not incorporated into WIOA.

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

Methodology & Metadata: The Workforce Needs Assessment Survey is an employer based survey that collects information about job vacancies, retirement data, demands for workers and skills required/lacking in the workforce, and benefit information. Employers in Iowa with 5 or more employees were invited to participate in the survey.

2008 survey was mailed to individual business locations.

- Each business location completed the survey.

2016 and 2018 surveys were mailed to individual businesses.

- If they had multiple locations, the business was allowed to group locations within the same county together.

Key Highlights:

Health Care & Social Assistance was the top industry (28.8% in 2008, 30.4% in 2016, and 21.6% in 2018) for job vacancies reported by respondents. Though it has been the top reported industry for reported job vacancies, it is also the industry with the largest decline (-7.1% from 2008 to 2018 and -8.8% from 2016 to 2018) in the total job vacancies reported. Manufacturing has been among the top 3 in each of the reported years and has shown the largest increase in overall job vacancies reported (9.8% from 2008 to 2018 and 7.3% from 2016 to 2018). Construction was among the lower to middle portion of vacancies reported but showed the second highest increase from 2008 to 2018 (3.5%), followed by Accommodation & Food Services (2.3%).

Organizations That Reported Having Job Vacancy			
	2008	2016	2018
Reported Having Vacancies	26.40%	28.20%	35.20%

Percent of Total Reported Job Vacancies by Industry					
	2008	2016	2018	2008 to 2018	2016 to 2018
Agriculture, Forestry, & Mining (NAICS 11 & 21)	0.70%	1.40%	1.20%	0.50%	-0.20%
Utilities (NAICS 21)	0.70%	0.20%	0.20%	-0.50%	0.00%
Construction (NAICS 23)	3.60%	5.40%	7.10%	3.50%	1.70%
Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33)	9.90%	12.40%	19.70%	9.80%	7.30%
Wholesale & Retail Trade (NAICS 42 & 44-45)	10.00%	8.20%	8.70%	-1.30%	0.50%
Transportation & Warehousing (NAICS 48-49)	4.30%	3.30%	5.10%	0.80%	1.80%
Information (NAICS 51)	1.00%	0.80%	0.90%	-0.10%	0.10%

Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate Insurance (NAICS 52)	4.00%	3.20%	2.10%	-1.90%	-1.10%
Professional Services (NAICS 54)	3.20%	2.80%	2.60%	-0.60%	-0.20%
Management Services (NAICS 55)	3.50%	0.10%	0.30%	-3.20%	0.20%
Administrative & Waste Services (NAICS 56)	7.40%	6.00%	7.80%	0.40%	1.80%
Education Services (NAICS 61)	6.20%	5.30%	5.40%	-0.80%	0.10%
Health Care & Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	28.70%	30.40%	21.60%	-7.10%	-8.80%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (NAICS 71)	1.80%	1.10%	1.60%	-0.20%	0.50%
Accommodation & Food Services (NAICS 72)	8.40%	13.90%	10.70%	2.30%	-3.20%
Personal Services (NAICS 81)	3.30%	3.70%	3.50%	0.20%	-0.20%
Public Administration & Government (NAICS 92)	3.30%	1.90%	1.40%	-1.90%	-0.50%
Top 3 Occupational Categories					
Bottom 3 Occupational Categories					

Key Highlights:

The number of jobs reported in the Production category has nearly doubled from 2008 to 2018 (8.8% in 2008 to 16.9% in 2018) taking it from the 5th highest reported job vacancies to the most job vacancies reported by respondents. Healthcare job categories (Healthcare Practitioners & Technical and Healthcare Support) are the top two categories reported in 2008 and show the largest declines in total job vacancies reported (-3.8% & -4.1% from 2008 to 2018 and -3.8% & 2.9% from 2016 to 2018).

Organizations That Reported Having Job Vacancy			
	2008	2016	2018
Reported Having Vacancies	26.40%	28.20%	35.20%

Percent of Total Reported Job Vacancies by Occupational Category					
	2008	2016	2018	2008 to 2018	2016 to 2018
Architecture & Engineering	1.50%	1.90%	1.70%	0.20%	-0.20%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	2.00%	1.00%	1.60%	-0.40%	0.60%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2.90%	3.00%	3.60%	0.70%	0.60%
Business & Financial Operations	3.30%	2.50%	2.30%	-1.00%	-0.20%
Community & Social Service	3.10%	3.20%	2.30%	-0.80%	-0.90%
Computer & Mathematical	2.00%	1.10%	1.60%	-0.40%	0.50%

Construction & Extraction	3.20%	5.00%	7.60%	4.40%	2.60%
Education, Training & Library	3.50%	3.20%	5.30%	1.80%	2.10%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0.80%	1.50%	0.70%	-0.10%	-0.80%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	7.00%	12.90%	11.80%	4.80%	-1.10%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	9.90%	9.90%	6.10%	-3.80%	-3.80%
Healthcare Support	12.40%	11.20%	8.30%	-4.10%	-2.90%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	4.50%	3.70%	4.70%	0.20%	1.00%
Legal	0.30%	0.30%	0.20%	-0.10%	-0.10%
Life, Physical & Social Science	1.00%	0.40%	0.30%	-0.70%	-0.10%
Management	3.50%	2.90%	2.10%	-1.40%	-0.80%
Military Specific	0.00%	0.00%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
Office & Administrative Support	9.60%	5.00%	4.40%	-5.20%	-0.60%
Personal Care & Service	2.40%	4.50%	3.90%	1.50%	-0.60%
Production	8.80%	12.10%	16.90%	8.10%	4.80%
Protective Service	2.00%	0.90%	1.10%	-0.90%	0.20%
Sales & Related	7.20%	6.90%	5.40%	-1.80%	-1.50%
Transportation & Material Moving	9.10%	5.20%	6.90%	-2.20%	1.70%
Unknown	0.00%	1.70%	1.10%	1.10%	-0.60%
Top 5 Occupational Categories					
Bottom 5 Occupational Categories					

ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

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

Methodology & Metadata: The Workforce Needs Assessment Survey is an employer based survey that collects information about job vacancies, retirement data, demands for workers and skills required/lacking in the workforce, and benefit information. Employers in Iowa with 5 or more employees were invited to participate in the survey.

2008 survey was mailed to individual business locations.

- Each business location completed the survey.

2016 and 2018 surveys were mailed to individual businesses.

- If they had multiple locations, the business was allowed to group locations within the same county together.

Key Highlights:

Health Care & Social Assistance and Wholesale & Retail are the top 2 industries in every reported year with future plans to expand their payrolls, but they are also among the industries with the largest declines in expectations of expanding their payrolls in 2018. Transportation & Warehousing, though among the bottom of the industries reported to be expanding their payrolls in the future, nevertheless had the highest increase in expectations of expanding their payrolls in 2018.

Future Plans For Expansion					
	2008	2016	2018		
Expand	10.10%	11.00%	13.70%		
Downsize	6.70%	1.90%	1.60%		
Remain Stable	83.20%	87.10%	84.70%		
Timeframe for Expansion					
	2008	2016	2018		
Within 1 year	71.50%	63.90%	66.60%		
1-2 years	21.50%	27.50%	24.80%		
2-3 years	3.40%	6.70%	7.00%		
More than 3 years	2.30%	1.90%	1.60%		
Planned Expansion by Industry					
	2008	2016	2018	2008 to 2018	2016 to 2018
Accommodation & Food Services	4.50%	5.60%	5.20%	0.70%	-0.40%
Administrative & Waste Services	6.50%	4.30%	5.30%	-1.20%	1.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Mining	1.90%	1.30%	1.40%	-0.50%	0.10%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	0.70%	1.10%	1.20%	0.50%	0.10%
Construction	11.40%	11.40%	12.40%	1.00%	1.00%
Educational Services	1.70%	1.10%	0.80%	-0.90%	-0.30%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	6.70%	7.40%	6.60%	-0.10%	-0.80%
Health Care & Social Assistance	14.90%	16.30%	15.30%	0.40%	-1.00%
Information	1.60%	2.40%	1.20%	-0.40%	-1.20%
Management	1.00%	0.10%	0.40%	-0.60%	0.30%
Manufacturing	12.50%	10.90%	11.50%	-1.00%	0.60%

Personal Services	5.20%	5.90%	5.90%	0.70%	0.00%
Professional & Technical Services	9.20%	10.60%	11.70%	2.50%	1.10%
Public Administration	1.20%	0.60%	0.70%	-0.50%	0.10%
Transportation & Warehousing	3.90%	4.50%	6.70%	2.80%	2.20%
Utilities	0.70%	0.30%	0.30%	-0.40%	0.00%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	16.40%	16.20%	13.40%	-3.00%	-2.80%
Top 3 Occupational Categories					
Bottom 3 Occupational Categories					

IOWA STATEWIDE PROJECTIONS (2016 - 2026)

2016			2026		
NAICS	Estimated	Projected	Total	Percent	
Industry Description	Code	Employment	Employment	Growth	Change
Total All Industries (Nonag)	000	1,718,305	1,875,175	156,870	9.1%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	621	57,200	71,805	14,605	25.5%
Administrative and Support Services	561	64,195	77,355	13,160	20.5%
Educational Services	611	177,200	189,785	12,585	7.1%
Food Services and Drinking Places	722	101,220	110,445	9,225	9.1%
Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	671	144,200	153,065	8,865	6.1%
Specialty Trade Contractors	238	50,750	59,205	8,455	16.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	541	51,735	60,150	8,415	16.3%
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	522	44,610	52,915	8,305	18.6%
Social Assistance	624	35,765	43,280	7,515	21.0%
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	524	44,195	51,020	6,825	15.4%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	623	55,470	61,480	6,010	10.8%
Truck Transportation	484	30,370	35,505	5,135	16.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	551	19,035	23,580	4,545	23.9%
Hospitals	622	65,920	70,325	4,405	6.7%
Warehousing and Storage	493	13,830	17,190	3,360	24.3%
Food Manufacturing	311	52,365	55,515	3,150	6.0%
Construction of Buildings	236	17,090	19,635	2,545	14.9%
Food and Beverage Stores	445	41,900	44,445	2,545	6.1%
Accommodation	721	20,690	23,225	2,535	12.3%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	441	23,245	25,750	2,505	10.8%
General Merchandise Stores	452	34,895	37,135	2,240	6.4%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional Organizations	813	30,165	32,350	2,185	7.2%

Gasoline Stations	447	22,060	24,175	2,115	9.6%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	237	12,930	14,635	1,705	13.2%
Repair and Maintenance	811	16,385	17,810	1,425	8.7%
Support Activities for Agriculture	115	3,495	4,860	1,365	39.1%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	930	55,185	56,515	1,330	2.4%
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	713	15,930	17,235	1,305	8.2%
Wood Product Manufacturing	321	8,790	10,085	1,295	14.7%
Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents	425	7,605	8,870	1,265	16.6%
Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Investments	523	4,840	5,915	1,075	22.2%
Chemical Manufacturing	325	11,105	12,120	1,015	9.1%
Machinery Manufacturing	333	38,115	39,125	1,010	2.6%
Real Estate	531	9,615	10,615	1,000	10.4%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	423	30,140	31,085	945	3.1%
Personal and Laundry Services	812	12,135	13,010	875	7.2%
Health and Personal Care Stores	446	9,270	10,100	830	9.0%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	336	15,460	16,275	815	5.3%
Waste Management and Remediation	562	3,460	4,080	620	17.9%
Support Activities for Transportation	488	3,645	4,250	605	16.6%

iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

State of Iowa 2016-2026 Occupational Projections Summary

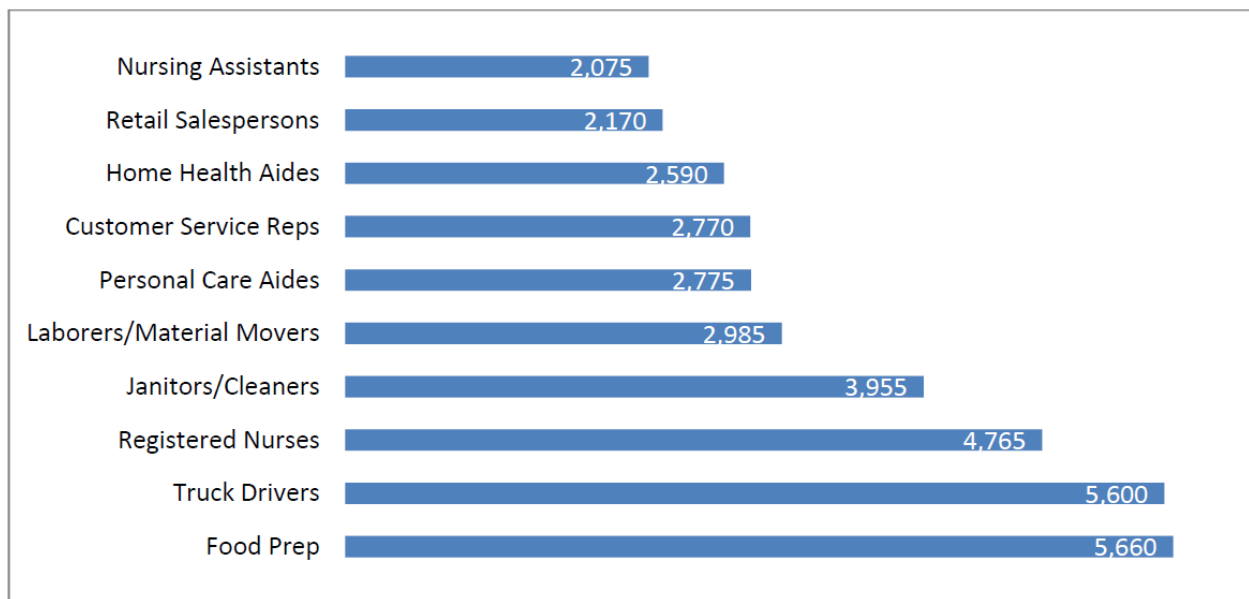
Iowa's occupational employment is expected to increase by 8% from 2016 to 2026 (or .8% annually). Job growth will vary across major occupational groups depending on the industry. Service-providing occupations are generally expected to outperform goods-producing occupations. This is reflected in both employment change and growth rates.

Major occupational groups expected to grow at or faster than the state annual average (.8%) are Business/Financial (1.4%); Computer/Mathematical (1.5%); Architecture/Engineering (1.2%); Life, Physical, and Social Science (1.1%); Community and Social Service (1.7%); Legal (1.2%); Education (.9%); Healthcare Practitioner (1.4%); Healthcare Support (1.7%); Food Prep (.9%); Building/Grounds Maintenance (1.4%); Personal Care (1.4%); Construction (1.3%); Installation,

Maintenance, and Repair (.9%); and Transportation/Material Moving (1%). Growing less than the state average include Management (.5%); Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (.6%); Protective Service (.5%); Sales (.6%); Office/Administrative (.4%); Farming, Fishing, and Forestry (.2%); and Production (.2%) major occupational groups. Several major 2016-2026 occupational trends follow in this report.

Iowa’s Occupations with the Largest Projected Job Growth, 2016-2026

Iowa’s top 10 occupations expected to have the largest employment growth for 2016-2026 will account for 35,345 (or 23%) of the projected 154,730 new jobs. The major occupational groups of Transportation/Material Moving; Food Prep; Healthcare; Office/Administrative; Personal Care; and Sales will account for most of the new jobs as shown below.



Iowa’s Occupations with the Largest Projected Job Declines, 2016-2026

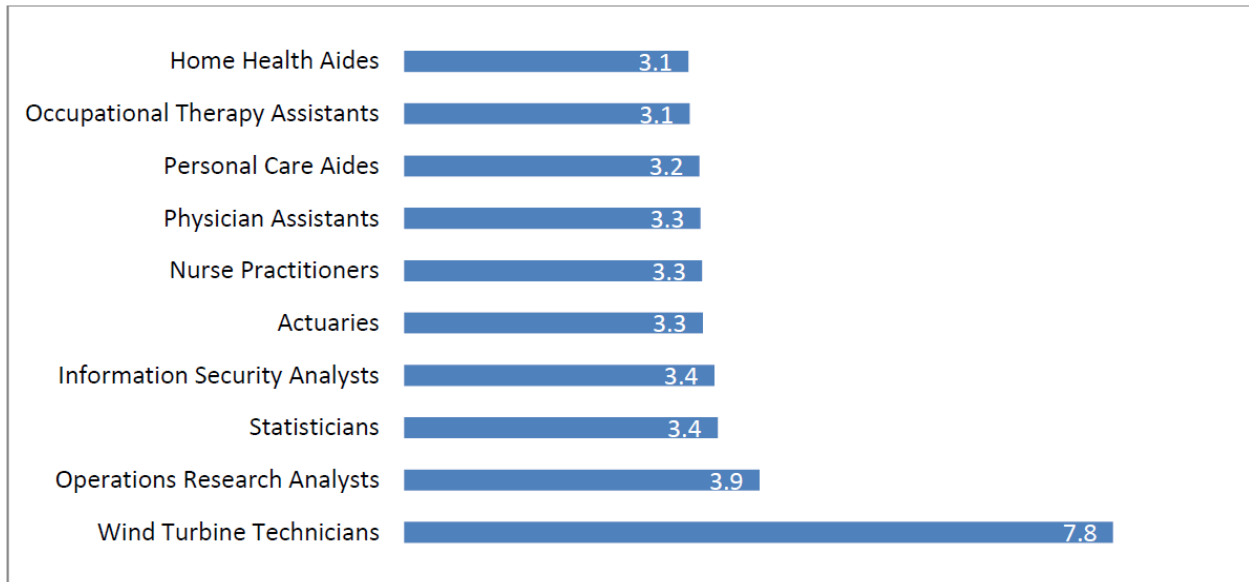
Iowa’s top 10 occupations expected to have the largest employment declines for 2016-2026 will account for 6,355 (or 55%) of the projected 11,525 lost jobs. The Office/Administrative and Production occupational groups will make up the bulk of these jobs as shown below.

Iowa’s Fastest Growing Occupations, 2016-2026

Iowa’s top 10 occupations expected to have the largest percentage of employment growth for 2016-2026 are primarily in the Installation, Maintenance, and Repair; Computer/Mathematical; and Healthcare major occupational groups with Wind Turbine Technicians leading the way as shown below. In conjunction with strong growth, occupational employment levels are to be reviewed in determining the largest number of job openings.

Occupation# of Jobs: Executive Secretaries & Executive Admin Assistants-1,550; Team Assemblers-1,355; Secretaries & Admin Assistants, Ex Legal, Medical, & Executive-1,125;

Assemblers & Fabricators, All Other-525; Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers-345; Cooks, Fast Food-315; Postal Service Mail Carriers-295; Electrical & Electronic Equipment Assemblers-295; Correctional Officers & Jailers-290; Word Processors & Typists-260.



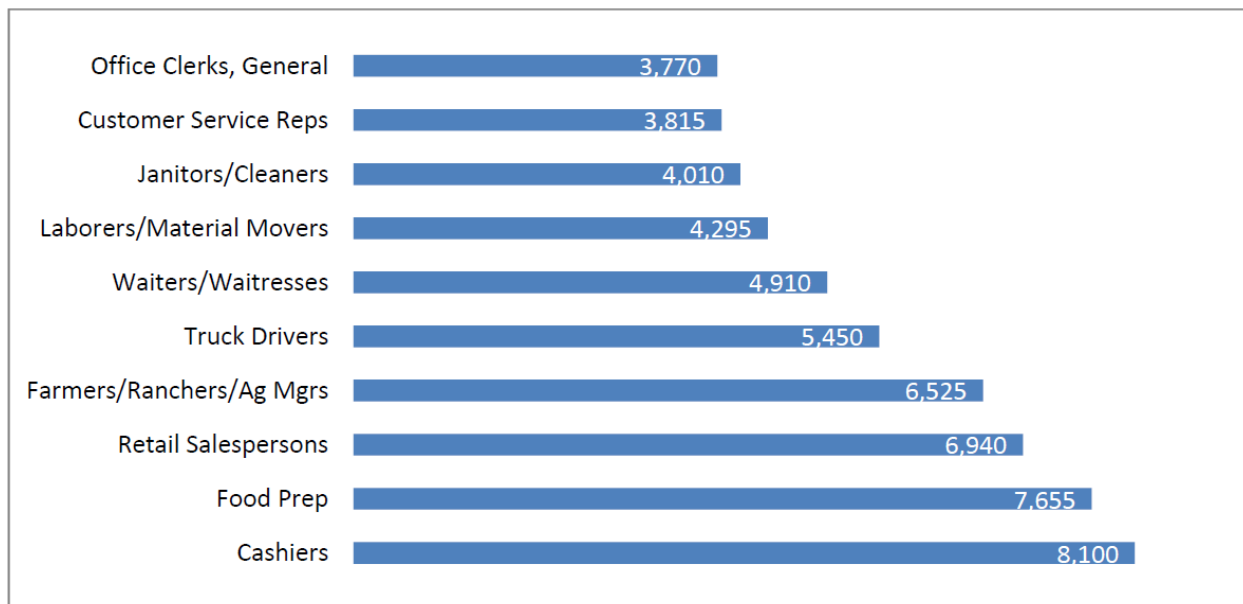
Iowa's Fastest Declining Occupations, 2016-2026

Iowa expects occupations in the Office/Administrative; Postal Service; and Production major occupational groups to have the largest percentage of employment declines for 2016-2026 as shown below. Employment costs, competition, technological change and other economic factors may contribute to deteriorating industry employment. While such occupations may be considered a source for employment, careful thought should be given to training time and costs.

Occupation% Change: Word Processors & Typists-3.2; Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers-1.9; Prepress Technicians & Wkrs-1.9; Mill/Plane Machine Setters & Operators, Metal & Plastic-1.8; Foundry Mold & Coremakers-1.8; Postmasters & Mail Superintendents-1.7; Electrical & Electronic Equipment Assemblers-1.7; Reporters & Correspondents-1.6; Data Entry Keyers-1.6; Computer Operators-1.5; Structural Metal Fabricators & Fitters-1.5.

Iowa's Occupations with the Most Annual Openings, 2016-2026

Iowa's top 10 occupations expected to have the most annual openings for 2016-2026 will account for 55,470 (or 25%) of the projected 220,605 total openings. The major occupational groups of Sales; Food Prep; Management; Office/Administrative; and Transportation/Material Moving will account for the most openings as shown below.



Source: Labor Market and Workforce Information Division, Iowa Workforce Development

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.⁴ This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups⁵ in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes-

i. Employment and Unemployment

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

Methodology & Metadata: Laborshed data is survey data collected from residents of the State of Iowa who are between the ages of 18 and 64, regarding work experience. This is supply-side data. Employment status is self-identified and is not restricted by Federal/BLS guidelines. The 2008 and 2016 analyses are based upon 6,000 total survey respondents each. The 2018 analysis is based upon 4,045 total survey respondents.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

Key Highlights:

The 2018 Statewide Laborshed survey shows that nearly 78 percent of respondents are employed and over 10 percent identified themselves as unemployed. This is a 1.1 percentage point increase over 2008 and a 2.9 percentage point increase over 2016. The percentage of the unemployed that also reported they are likely to accept employment if given the opportunity has steadily increased from 63.5 percent in 2008 to 72.1 percent in 2018. A larger percentage of those interviewed in 2016 and 2018 identify as a homemaker as compared to those interviewed in 2008. Approximately 40 percent of the homemakers interviewed would likely accept employment if provided the right opportunity.

The percentage of those interviewed between the ages of 18 and 24 who identified themselves as employed has decreased by 2.9 percentage points between 2016 and 2018 while during the same time period the percentage identifying as unemployed increased by 4.5 percent points. The top reasons for unemployment among this group, for each year analyzed, was “to continue/further education.”

Of those interviewed who reported Spanish as the primary language spoken in their household, a greater percentage identified themselves as unemployed in 2018 (24.2%) than in either of the other years examined (2008 and 2016).

The percentage of those who identified as unemployed for 1-year or longer (i.e. long-term unemployed) decreased significantly over the three years examined, from 84.5 percent in 2008 to 41.6 percent in 2018. The top reason for unemployment among this group was “disability issues” for all three years, though the percentage identifying this reason decreased each year.

Among respondents that identify themselves as a veteran the employment and unemployment percentages in 2016 and 2018 were fairly stable. The top reason for being unemployed identified among this group was “disability issues” in both 2016 and 2018. Comparing this veteran population to the overall population: a smaller percentage of veterans are unemployed. For example, in 2018, 9.5 percent of veterans identified as unemployed compared to 11.1 percent of all of those interviewed regardless of veteran status. Additionally, in 2018, a greater percentage of veterans (10.8%)—ages 18-to-64—identified that they are retired compared to 4.4 percent that identified as retired across the entire group of respondents.

Self-Reported Employment Status:	Percentage Point Change				
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Employed	83.1%	74.1%	77.7%	-5.4%	3.6%
Unemployed	10.0%	8.2%	11.1%	1.1%	2.9%
Homemaker	3.5%	8.0%	6.8%	3.3%	-1.2%
Retired	3.4%	9.7%	4.4%	1.0%	-5.3%

				Percentage Point Change	
Likeliness to Change or Accept Employment by Employment Status:				2008- to-2018	2016- to-2018
	2008	2016	2018		
Employed	28.5%	27.0%	24.0%	-4.5%	-3.0%
Unemployed	63.5%	68.4%	72.1%	8.6%	3.7%
Homemaker	47.6%	42.1%	39.4%	-8.2%	-2.7%
Retired	23.3%	25.7%	25.8%	2.5%	0.1%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-24					
Self-Reported Employment Status:				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008- to-2018	2016- to-2018
Employed	71.3%	71.7%	68.8%	-2.5%	-2.9%
Unemployed	24.1%	22.8%	27.3%	3.2%	4.5%
Homemaker	4.6%	5.5%	3.9%	-0.7%	-1.6%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED SPANISH AS PRIMARY LANGUAGE					
Self-Reported Employment Status:				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008- to-2018	2016- to-2018
Employed	75.5%	85.0%	63.6%	-11.9%	-21.4%
Unemployed	17.0%	5.0%	24.2%	7.2%	19.2%
Homemaker	7.5%	7.5%	12.2%	4.7%	4.7%
Retired		2.50%			
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED BEING UNEMPLOYED					
Long-Term Unemployed, Among those that reported they were unemployed these percentages represent the portion that reported being unemployed for greater than 1 year					
	2008	2016	2018		
	84.5%	50.9%	41.6%		
LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (GREATER THAN 1 YEAR)					

Top Reasons for Unemployment	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Disability Issues	60.0%	55.3%	50.5%	-9.5%	-4.8%
Health Reasons	17.6%	14.6%	19.8%	2.2%	5.2%
Employer Layoff/Downsizing/Closure	5.3%	17.1%	14.3%	9.0%	-2.8%
To Continue/Further Education	4.1%	1.6%	7.7%	3.6%	6.1%
Family Reasons	7.3%	13.0%	6.6%	-0.7%	-6.4%
Fired from Previous Employment	0.8%	1.6%	4.4%	3.6%	2.8%
Personality Conflicts with Employer/Coworkers	1.6%	0.0%	4.4%	2.8%	4.4%
Lack of Job Opportunities	5.7%	2.4%	1.1%	-4.6%	-1.3%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED AS A VETERAN					
Employment Status	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
					2016-to-2018
Employed	*	72.2%	76.1%		3.9%
Unemployed	*	9.0%	9.5%		0.5%
Homemaker	*	2.9%	3.6%		0.7%
Retire	*	15.9%	10.8%		-5.1%
*vet status not asked in 2008 survey					

ii. Labor Market Trends

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

Methodology & Metadata: Laborshed data is survey data collected from residents of the State of Iowa who are between the ages of 18 and 64, regarding work experience. This is supply-side data. Employment status is self-identified and is not restricted by Federal/BLS guidelines. The 2008 and 2016 analyses are based upon 6,000 total survey respondents each. The 2018 analysis is based upon 4,045 total survey respondents.

Key Highlights:

Overall, employed respondents of the Laborshed survey identify Wholesale & Retail Trade, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Education as the top industries of employment. The portion of

employed respondents working in the Wholesale & Retail Trade industry increased for each year analyzed. Conversely, the portion of employed respondents working in the Manufacturing and Education industries decreased by each year analyzed. Between 2016 and 2018, the greatest increase in the portion of the employed was in the Construction industry which increased by 2.9 percentage points. Over the same time period, the Transportation, Communications, & Utilities industry experienced the greatest percentage decrease, from 7.5 percent in 2016 to 6.1 percent in 2018.

Among the younger group of respondents (ages 18-24), the greatest portion of the employed are working in the Wholesale & Retail Trade industry; this was true for each year analyzed. However, between 2016 and 2018 the portion employed in this industry fell by 11.5 percentage points while those employed in Manufacturing grew by 4.0 percentage points over the same time period.

In 2018, the Construction and Manufacturing industries were the top industries of employment among those who reported Spanish as their primary language.

Among the unemployed survey respondents, the Wholesale & Retail Trade industry formerly employed the largest portion of this group for each year analyzed. For those that identified themselves as a veteran, the Manufacturing industry was the top employer in both 2016 and 2018; and between 2016 and 2018 manufacturing increased by 3.1 percentage points.

Industry of Employment	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Wholesale & Retail	12.4%	13.9%	15.3%	2.9%	1.4%
Healthcare	14.2%	15.8%	15.2%	1.0%	-0.6%
Manufacturing	15.9%	13.9%	13.3%	-2.6%	-0.6%
Education	13.1%	12.0%	11.8%	-1.3%	-0.2%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	7.00%	9.50%	8.20%	1.2%	-1.3%
Construction	5.90%	4.40%	7.30%	1.4%	2.9%
Professional Services	4.60%	6.90%	7.20%	2.6%	0.3%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	7.00%	7.50%	6.10%	-0.9%	-1.4%
Government & Public Administration	5.70%	6.20%	5.90%	0.2%	-0.3%
Personal Services	4.30%	5.60%	4.60%	0.3%	-1.0%
Agriculture	5.90%	3.50%	4.40%	-1.5%	0.9%
Entertainment & Recreation	1.30%	0.80%	0.70%	-0.6%	-0.1%

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-24

Industry of Employment	Percentage Point Change				
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Wholesale & Retail	27.1%	41.1%	29.6%	2.5%	-11.5%
Healthcare	10.1%	12.2%	13.9%	3.8%	1.7%
Manufacturing	11.5%	5.6%	9.6%	-1.9%	4.0%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	5.4%	5.6%	8.1%	2.7%	2.5%
Education	4.7%	7.2%	7.7%	3.0%	0.5%
Professional Services	7.4%	6.1%	6.7%	-0.7%	0.6%
Agriculture	4.1%	3.9%	5.3%	1.2%	1.4%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	4.7%	5.0%	4.8%	0.1%	-0.2%
Construction	7.4%	3.2%	4.8%	-2.6%	1.6%
Personal Services	7.4%	6.7%	3.8%	-3.6%	-2.9%
Government & Public Administration	0.0%	1.7%	3.3%	3.3%	1.6%
Entertainment & Recreation	4.1%	1.7%	2.4%	-1.7%	0.7%
Active Duty Military	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.4%	0.0%
Other	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	-4.7%	0.0%

SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED SPANISH AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Industry of Employment	Percentage Point Change				
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Construction	12.5%	6.3%	20.0%	7.5%	13.7%
Manufacturing	42.5%	25.0%	20.0%	-22.5%	-5.0%
Personal Services	0.0%	6.3%	15.0%	15.0%	8.7%
Wholesale & Retail	5.0%	18.7%	15.0%	10.0%	-3.7%
Healthcare	10.0%	12.5%	10.0%	0.0%	-2.5%
Professional Services	7.5%	6.3%	10.0%	2.5%	3.7%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	0.0%	3.1%	5.0%	5.0%	1.9%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	7.5%	0.0%	5.0%	-2.5%	5.0%
Active Duty Military	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Agriculture	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-3.1%
Education	5.0%	15.6%	0.0%	-5.0%	-15.6%
Entertainment & Recreation	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	-2.5%	0.0%
Government & Public Administration	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-3.1%
Other	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	-7.5%	0.0%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS UNEMPLOYED					
Former Industry of Employment				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Wholesale & Retail	21.8%	23.5%	29.8%	8.0%	6.3%
Manufacturing	21.2%	15.4%	13.8%	-7.4%	-1.6%
Construction	10.6%	7.2%	11.3%	0.7%	4.1%
Healthcare	11.0%	16.5%	9.1%	-1.9%	-7.4%
Professional Services	5.5%	8.7%	9.1%	3.6%	0.4%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5.5%	4.6%	5.7%	0.2%	1.1%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	5.8%	7.0%	5.7%	-0.1%	-1.3%
Personal Services	3.6%	4.3%	5.4%	1.8%	1.1%
Education	3.8%	5.2%	4.7%	0.9%	-0.5%
Government & Public Administration	2.2%	3.7%	2.7%	0.5%	-1.0%
Agriculture	3.1%	1.7%	2.0%	-1.1%	0.3%
Entertainment & Recreation	1.5%	2.2%	0.7%	-0.8%	-1.5%
Active Duty Military	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%
Other	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	-4.3%	0.0%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED AS A VETERAN					
Industry Regardless of Current Employment Status				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Manufacturing	*	17.7%	20.8%	*	3.1%
Wholesale & Retail	*	13.6%	14.4%	*	0.8%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	*	14.7%	12.6%	*	-2.1%

Government & Public Administration	*	16.0%	12.0%	*	-4.0%
Construction	*	7.6%	9.0%	*	1.4%
Healthcare	*	7.9%	7.8%	*	-0.1%
Professional Services	*	6.5%	6.1%	*	-0.4%
Education	*	4.9%	5.8%	*	0.9%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	*	4.6%	5.1%	*	0.5%
Personal Services	*	4.3%	4.4%	*	0.1%
Agriculture	*	1.4%	2.0%	*	0.6%
Active Duty Military	*	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%
Entertainment & Recreation	*	0.8%	0.0%	*	-0.8%
Other	*	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%
*vet status not asked in 2008 survey					

Key Highlights:

Overall, employed respondents of the Laborshed survey identify Office & Administrative Support, Management, Production, and Education, Training & Library as the top occupational groups. Between 2016 and 2018, the greatest increase in the portion of the employed was in the Construction & Extraction occupational group which increased by 2.0 percentage points. Over the same time period, the Office & Administrative support occupational group experienced the greatest percentage decrease, from 17.3 percent in 2016 to 12.8 percent in 2018.

Among the younger group of respondents (ages 18-24) the greatest portion of the employed are working in the Office & Administrative support occupational group. The other top occupational groups of employment, for each year analyzed, are Sales, Production, and Food Preparation & Serving.

In 2018, the Transportation & Material Moving and Production occupational groups were the top groups of employment among those who reported Spanish as their primary language. Between 2008 and 2018, the portion of those employed in a Production occupation fell by 24.5 percentage points.

In 2018, among the unemployed survey respondents, the Office & Administrative support occupational group represents the largest portion of what occupation type this group was formerly employed within.

For those that identified themselves as a veteran, the Production occupational group was the top area of employment in both 2016 and 2018.

Occupational Group of Employment	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Office & Administrative Support	13.8%	17.3%	12.8%	-1.0%	-4.5%
Management	15.5%	10.0%	11.2%	-4.3%	1.2%
Production	13.4%	9.4%	9.1%	-4.3%	-0.3%
Education, Training, & Library	7.8%	8.8%	9.0%	1.2%	0.2%
Sales & Related	6.5%	6.4%	7.6%	1.1%	1.2%
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	5.5%	7.6%	7.0%	1.5%	-0.6%
Business & Financial Operations	4.4%	6.5%	6.6%	2.2%	0.1%
Construction & Extraction	4.2%	2.9%	4.9%	0.7%	2.0%
Transportation & Material Moving	5.1%	5.5%	4.6%	-0.5%	-0.9%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	4.1%	3.8%	4.2%	0.1%	0.4%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	3.6%	3.4%	3.5%	-0.1%	0.1%
Healthcare Support	2.6%	2.0%	3.3%	0.7%	1.3%
Architecture & Engineering	1.8%	2.0%	2.3%	0.5%	0.3%
Computer & Mathematical Science	1.5%	3.2%	2.2%	0.7%	-1.0%
Community & Social Services	1.5%	2.5%	2.2%	0.7%	-0.3%
Personal Care & Service	2.2%	2.3%	1.9%	-0.3%	-0.4%
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2.3%	1.6%	1.8%	-0.5%	0.2%
Protective Service	0.8%	1.2%	1.5%	0.7%	0.3%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Related	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	-0.1%	0.0%
Legal	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.5%
Military Specific	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-24					
Occupational Group of Employment	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Office & Administrative Support	12.3%	18.9%	14.9%	2.6%	-4.0%
Sales & Related	9.4%	15.4%	11.9%	2.5%	-3.5%

Production	9.4%	7.4%	10.8%	1.4%	3.4%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	14.5%	15.4%	10.3%	-4.2%	-5.1%
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	4.3%	4.6%	6.7%	2.4%	2.1%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	4.3%	3.4%	5.7%	1.4%	2.3%
Transportation & Material Moving	6.5%	4.6%	5.2%	-1.3%	0.6%
Personal Care & Service	4.3%	4.6%	4.6%	0.3%	0.0%
Construction & Extraction	6.5%	1.7%	4.1%	-2.4%	2.4%
Architecture & Engineering	2.2%	1.1%	4.1%	1.9%	3.0%
Management	7.2%	2.4%	3.6%	-3.6%	1.2%
Education, Training, & Library	2.9%	2.9%	3.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Healthcare Support	6.5%	5.1%	3.1%	-3.4%	-2.0%
Business & Financial Operations	2.2%	1.1%	2.1%	-0.1%	1.0%
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2.9%	4.6%	1.5%	-1.4%	-3.1%
Protective Service	0.7%	1.7%	1.5%	0.8%	-0.2%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	0.7%	1.1%	1.5%	0.8%	0.4%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Related	0.7%	0.6%	1.5%	0.8%	0.9%
Computer & Mathematical Science	0.7%	0.6%	1.1%	0.4%	0.5%
Community & Social Services	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	-0.3%	0.0%
Legal	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	-0.1%
Military Specific	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED SPANISH AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE					
Occupational Group of Employment				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Transportation & Material Moving	13.2%	12.9%	23.5%	10.3%	10.6%
Production	42.1%	16.1%	17.6%	-24.5%	1.5%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	0.0%	3.2%	11.8%	11.8%	8.6%
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	2.6%	3.2%	11.8%	9.2%	8.6%
Architecture & Engineering	0.0%	3.2%	5.9%	5.9%	2.7%
Business & Financial Operations	0.0%	3.2%	5.9%	5.9%	2.7%
Construction & Extraction	15.8%	6.5%	5.9%	-9.9%	-0.6%

Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	0.0%	6.5%	5.9%	5.9%	-0.6%
Management	0.0%	3.2%	5.9%	5.9%	2.7%
Office & Administrative Support	10.5%	12.9%	5.9%	-4.6%	-7.0%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Related	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	-2.6%	0.0%
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	7.9%	6.5%	0.0%	-7.9%	-6.5%
Community & Social Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Computer & Mathematical Science	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Education, Training, & Library	2.6%	9.7%	0.0%	-2.6%	-9.7%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-3.2%
Healthcare Support	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Legal	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-3.2%
Military Specific	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Personal Care & Service	2.6%	6.5%	0.0%	-2.6%	-6.5%
Protective Service	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sales & Related	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS UNEMPLOYED					
Former Occupational Group of Employment				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Office & Administrative Support	10.8%	14.4%	12.5%	1.7%	-1.9%
Production	19.3%	11.4%	11.8%	-7.5%	0.4%
Sales & Related	7.8%	9.0%	11.8%	4.0%	2.8%
Construction & Extraction	9.6%	5.7%	9.8%	0.2%	4.1%
Transportation & Material Moving	6.3%	6.3%	9.0%	2.7%	2.7%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	7.2%	7.7%	8.0%	0.8%	0.3%
Management	8.0%	6.1%	6.5%	-1.5%	0.4%
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	4.5%	4.4%	6.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Business & Financial Operations	3.7%	3.7%	4.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	5.9%	4.6%	4.3%	-1.6%	-0.3%
Healthcare Support	3.7%	4.2%	3.8%	0.1%	-0.4%
Computer & Mathematical Science	1.5%	2.2%	3.3%	1.8%	1.1%

Personal Care & Service	2.2%	2.8%	2.3%	0.1%	-0.5%
Education, Training, & Library	1.1%	3.3%	1.3%	0.2%	-2.0%
Protective Service	0.6%	1.5%	1.3%	0.7%	-0.2%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.9%	1.3%	1.0%	0.1%	-0.3%
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	2.8%	5.7%	1.0%	-1.8%	-4.7%
Architecture & Engineering	1.5%	0.9%	0.8%	-0.7%	-0.1%
Community & Social Services	1.1%	2.4%	0.8%	-0.3%	-1.6%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	0.4%	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%	-0.6%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Related	0.7%	1.3%	0.0%	-0.7%	-1.3%
Legal	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.4%	0.0%
Military Specific	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED AS A VETERAN					
Occupational Group Regardless of Current Employment Status				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Production	*	14.9%	14.0%	*	-0.9%
Transportation & Material Moving	*	14.6%	11.8%	*	-2.8%
Construction & Extraction	*	3.6%	10.8%	*	7.2%
Office & Administrative Support	*	9.9%	7.9%	*	-2.0%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	*	9.9%	7.5%	*	-2.4%
Management	*	9.9%	7.5%	*	-2.4%
Sales & Related	*	2.7%	6.8%	*	4.1%
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	*	4.2%	5.7%	*	1.5%
Education, Training, & Library	*	3.3%	5.0%	*	1.7%
Business & Financial Operations	*	4.5%	3.9%	*	-0.6%
Protective Service	*	3.0%	3.6%	*	0.6%
Architecture & Engineering	*	1.8%	3.2%	*	1.4%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	*	2.7%	3.2%	*	0.5%
Computer & Mathematical Science	*	5.1%	2.2%	*	-2.9%
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	*	0.9%	1.3%	*	0.4%
Community & Social Services	*	0.9%	1.1%	*	0.2%
Healthcare Support	*	0.5%	1.1%	*	0.6%

Military Specific	*	3.0%	1.1%	*	-1.9%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	*	0.5%	0.7%	*	0.2%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Related	*	1.2%	0.4%	*	-0.8%
Legal	*	0.5%	0.4%	*	-0.1%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	*	0.9%	0.4%	*	-0.5%
Personal Care & Service	*	1.5%	0.4%	*	-1.1%

iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

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

Methodology & Metadata: Laborshed data is survey data collected from residents of the State of Iowa who are between the ages of 18 & 64, regarding work experience. This is supply-side data. Employment status is self-identified and is not restricted by Federal/BLS guidelines. The 2008 and 2016 analyses are based upon 6,000 total survey respondents each. The 2018 analysis is based upon 4,045 total survey respondents.

Key Highlights:

Overall, 76.6 percent of employed respondents in 2018 have an education beyond high school. This is an increase of 9.9 percentage points since 2008. Nearly 40 percent of this group has a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

Between 2008 and 2018, employed respondents between the ages of 18-24 had a 10.6 percentage point increase in the portion of those with an education beyond high school, and between 2016 and 2018, those respondents had a 7.1 percentage point increase.

Among the employed respondents that reported Spanish as their primary language, 42.9 percent reported an education beyond high school in 2018. This was a 25.4 percentage point increase over 2008. The percentage of those that reported a Bachelor’s degree among this group has increase for every year analyzed.

In 2018, 50.0 percent of unemployed respondents reported having an education beyond high school. Within this group, 12.6 have an Associate’s degree and over 10 percent have a Bachelor’s degree. However, the percentage of unemployed with an education beyond high school fell by 10.1 percentage points between 2016 and 2018.

Nearly three-fourths (73.0%) of those who identified themselves as a veteran reported an education beyond high school in 2018. This is only 3.6 percentage points less than the overall employed respondents.

Education	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Education Beyond High School	66.7%	77.1%	76.6%	9.9%	-0.5%
Trade Certification	3.6%	3.8%	3.1%	-0.5%	-0.7%
Vocational Training	2.4%	2.5%	1.7%	-0.7%	-0.8%
Associate Degree	14.1%	17.4%	17.7%	3.6%	0.3%
Bachelor's Degree	19.2%	23.9%	25.6%	6.4%	1.7%
Master's/PhD/Professional Degree	10.6%	12.7%	11.6%	1.0%	-1.1%
EMPLOYED SURVEY RESPONDENTS, AGES 18-24					
Education	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Education Beyond High School	54.2%	57.7%	64.8%	10.6%	7.1%
Trade Certification	1.3%	4.4%	2.3%	1.0%	-2.1%
Vocational Training	0.7%	0.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.9%
Associate Degree	12.4%	17.6%	18.3%	5.9%	0.7%
Bachelor's Degree	8.5%	8.2%	13.6%	5.1%	5.4%
Master's/PhD/Professional Degree	2.6%	1.6%	1.4%	-1.2%	-0.2%
EMPLOYED SURVEY RESPONDENTS, PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPANISH					
Education	2008	2016	2018	Percentage Point Change	
				2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Education Beyond High School	17.5%	52.9%	42.9%	25.4%	-10.0%
Trade Certification	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vocational Training	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Associate Degree	5.0%	17.6%	9.5%	4.5%	-8.1%
Bachelor's Degree	2.5%	2.9%	9.5%	7.0%	6.6%
Master's/PhD/Professional Degree	5.0%	14.7%	9.5%	4.5%	-5.2%
UNEMPLOYED SURVEY RESPONDENTS					

Education				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Education Beyond High School	53.4%	60.1%	50.0%	-3.4%	-10.1%
Trade Certification	5.2%	3.3%	4.0%	-1.2%	0.7%
Vocational Training	2.0%	2.2%	1.3%	-0.7%	-0.9%
Associate Degree	11.1%	11.2%	12.6%	1.5%	1.4%
Bachelor's Degree	10.3%	15.2%	10.1%	-0.2%	-5.1%
Master's/PhD/Professional Degree	3.7%	5.5%	2.7%	-1.0%	-2.8%
VETERAN SURVEY RESPONDENTS					
Education				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Education Beyond High School	*	74.9%	73.0%		-1.9%
Trade Certification	*	4.2%	6.3%		2.1%
Vocational Training	*	1.6%	1.7%		0.1%
Associate Degree	*	18.8%	13.7%		-5.1%
Bachelor's Degree	*	18.6%	17.7%		-0.9%
Master's/PhD/Professional Degree	*	10.6%	9.7%		-0.9%
*vet status not asked in 2008 survey					

iv. Skill Gaps

Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

Methodology & Metadata: Laborshed data is survey data collected from residents of the State of Iowa who are between the ages of 18 and 64, regarding work experience. This is supply-side data. Employment status is self-identified and is not restricted by Federal/BLS guidelines. The 2008 and 2016 analyses are based upon 6,000 total survey respondents each. The 2018 analysis is based upon 4,045 total survey respondents.

Key Highlights:

Among those respondents that are employed and likely to change employment for a different opportunity, 34.7 percent are either currently in training or desire additional training for

opportunities in the workforce (in 2018). This is a reduction of 3.6 percentage points over 2016 and 16.8 percentage points over 2008. For those unemployed and likely to accept an employment opportunity, 20.1 percent are either in training or believe they need additional training (in 2018). This is 5.5 percentage points less than in 2016 and 12.9 percentage points less than in 2008.

In 2018, among the employed likely to change employment, the top type of training that is of interest is “on-the-job” training. The percentage increased for this type of training by each year analyzed. Among the unemployed and likely to accept employment the top type of training is “pursuing a college degree.”

For the 18-24 year-olds (also employed and likely to change employment), 40.7 percent are in training or are interested in training (in 2018). The top type of training of interest is “on-the-job” training followed by “pursuing a college degree.” However, the percentage interested in a college degree declined each year of analysis.

Over one-third (35.7%) of those who identified Spanish as their primary language are either currently in training or are interested in training (in 2018). Again, the top type of training of interest (40.0%) is “on-the-job” training. This type of training increased by 28.9 percentage points over 2008 and 25.7 percentage points over 2016.

Among veterans, 27.1 percent are currently in training or interested in training (in 2018). “On-the-job” training and “pursuing a college degree” are the top two types of training of interest. Both increased over interest in 2016, 14.8 percentage points and 4.6 percentage points, respectively.

CURRENTLY IN TRAINING OR DESIRE TRAINING					
				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Employed, Likely to Change Employment	51.5%	38.3%	34.7%	-16.8%	-3.6%
Unemployed, Likely to Accept Employment	33.0%	25.6%	20.1%	-12.9%	-5.5%
TYPE OF TRAINING CURRENTLY TAKING OR DESIRE TO TAKE					
				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Employed, Likely to Change Employment					
On-the-job Training	11.2%	23.9%	31.7%	20.5%	7.8%
College Degree	36.4%	27.5%	28.6%	-7.8%	1.1%
Certification/CEU	11.2%	17.6%	20.2%	9.0%	2.6%

Computer	25.6%	6.1%	5.2%	-20.4%	-0.9%
Trade Certification	0.0%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%	-0.1%
Vocational Training	3.9%	5.9%	4.0%	0.1%	-1.9%
Job Preparedness	2.0%	2.3%	2.0%	0.0%	-0.3%
Unemployed, Likely to Accept Employment				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
College Degree	31.1%	28.0%	33.3%	2.2%	5.3%
On-the-job Training	11.4%	6.0%	13.9%	2.5%	7.9%
Vocational Training	6.1%	12.0%	13.9%	7.8%	1.9%
Certification/CEU	8.3%	10.0%	11.1%	2.8%	1.1%
Trade Certification	0.0%	6.0%	5.6%	5.6%	-0.4%
Computer	25.0%	14.0%	2.8%	-22.2%	-11.2%
Job Preparedness	1.5%	0.0%	2.8%	1.3%	2.8%
CURRENTLY IN TRAINING OR DESIRE TRAINING					
				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
Employed, Likely to Change, Ages 18-24	60.6%	44.8%	40.7%	-19.9%	-4.1%
Primary Language Spanish	47.2%	31.6%	35.7%	-11.5%	4.1%
Veterans	*	23.9%	27.1%		3.2%
TYPE OF TRAINING CURRENTLY TAKING OR DESIRE TO TAKE					
Employed, Likely to Change Employment, Ages 18-24				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
On-the-job Training	20.0%	17.5%	35.5%	15.5%	18.0%
College Degree	57.5%	47.5%	32.3%	-25.2%	-15.2%
Vocational Training	0.0%	7.5%	12.9%	12.9%	5.4%
Certification/CEU	5.0%	5.0%	9.7%	4.7%	4.7%
High School Diploma/GED	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%

Trade Certification	0.0%	2.5%	3.2%	3.2%	0.7%
Computer	5.0%	2.5%	0.0%	-5.0%	-2.5%
Job Preparedness	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	-2.5%	-2.5%
Primary Language, Spanish				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
On-the-job Training	11.1%	14.3%	40.0%	28.9%	25.7%
Certification/CEU	18.5%	7.1%	20.0%	1.5%	12.9%
College Degree	29.6%	21.4%	10.0%	-19.6%	-11.4%
Vocational Training	7.4%	7.1%	10.0%	2.6%	2.9%
Computer	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	-25.9%	0.0%
Job Preparedness	3.7%	7.1%	0.0%	-3.7%	-7.1%
Trade Certification	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-7.1%
Veterans				Percentage Point Change	
	2008	2016	2018	2008-to-2018	2016-to-2018
On-the-job Training	*	19.0%	33.8%		14.8%
College Degree	*	21.4%	26.0%		4.6%
Certification/CEU	*	25.0%	11.7%		-13.3%
Job Preparedness	*	2.4%	6.5%		4.1%
Trade Certification	*	4.8%	6.5%		1.7%
Computer	*	11.9%	5.2%		-6.7%
Vocational Training	*	2.4%	5.2%		2.8%
High School Diploma/GED	*		1.3%		1.3%
*vet status not asked in 2008 survey					

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 (a)(1)(B)(iii) (Education and Skill Level of the Workforce)

above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) (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 required⁶ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.⁷

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. Through the IowaWORKS integrated service delivery system:

- Customers are provided career services
- Services are provided through the 15 integrated one-stop centers, four satellite offices, and eight expansion offices
- Dedicated Wagner-Peyser staff are located in each of the 15 integrated one-stop centers, four satellite offices, and eight expansion 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 Title I, Title II or Title IV services

Online services include, but are not limited to:

- Resume builder
- Targeted job leads
- Career exploration and assessments
- Identification of gaps in skills, experiences and education

One-stop services aim to respond to business demand for workforce improvement by up-skilling job seekers and equipping them with current, in-demand skills to help them compete in today's

⁶ 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.

⁷ Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

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 job seekers, 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 goals and obtain or retain employment.

Youth

Iowa's WIOA Title I Youth program connects eligible youth to a continuum of services and activities, aimed at teaching the youth to navigate the appropriate educational and workforce systems based on an established career pathway. Services are based on the unique needs of each individual participant, and include, but are not limited to:

- Creating awareness of career opportunities
- Connecting a youth's skills, interests and abilities to career opportunities
- Assistance in addressing and overcoming barriers to education and training
- Connection to education, training and work-based learning opportunities
- Support in attaining career goals

Youth program policies were updated and became effective during PY18 to align with the release of the new data management system. Standard operating procedures were also developed to align with policies and system requirements. Iowa has embraced the emphasis WIOA places on work-based learning and has consequently met the 20 percent work experience requirement since the enactment of WIOA, with the exception of program year 2015 which was a transition year. Additionally, Iowa recognizes the significance of serving out-of-school youth who are not engaged in education or employment. The Iowa Title I Youth program remains compliant with meeting the requirement to spend 75 percent of local area funds on out-of-school youth. Iowa has met this requirement since the enactment of WIOA, with the exception of program year 2015 which was a transition year.

Trade

There has been an increase in Trade petitions during the last two program years, resulting in an increase of 10 percent from PY17 to PY18. This increase is the result of improved coordination with the state Rapid Response team and local level leadership to identify possible trade-related layoffs as early as possible. Additionally, developing relationships with employers soon after layoffs are announced has allowed Iowa to submit more robust petitions, including comprehensive data and research to increase the probability of certification.

Participation rates continue to be low in Iowa; this is due to the historically low unemployment rate in Iowa, as well as the high availability of jobs. Many Trade-eligible individuals are able to secure new employment, often at a higher wage than they were making at the Trade-impacted employer, immediately upon layoff. Iowa continues to explore other marketing opportunities to include informational videos, which will explain the benefits of the Trade Adjustment Assistance

(TAA) Program as we try to reach both urban and rural residents impacted by layoffs and maximize the number of Trade participants in Iowa.

Case management training has been a focus, increasing program knowledge and assisting in the transition to the new data management system. State Trade staff visited each local area to conduct in-person training and the reception has been positive. Often, the training is conducted prior to a Worker Information Meeting (WIM), which yields positive results for both the participant and the program.

A focus on WIMs and the need to stay in contact with all impacted workers following those meetings was one of the state workforce agency's priorities during the PY18. A focus on marketing materials to include published materials (pamphlets and postcards) were used to keep in touch with all impacted workers every 60 days following the WIM. Furthermore, secondary WIMs were scheduled to ensure all impacted workers had the opportunity to attend a second session to meet the State Program Coordinators as well as Title I American Job Center (AJC) personnel.

Beginning in the spring of 2020, the Trade program will pilot having a dedicated State Merit Trade program case manager located within an AJC. By having a dedicated staff member in this role, it is anticipated that Trade program participation within the local area, and subsequently the State, will increase.

Unemployment Insurance

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) administers unemployment insurance benefits in the state of Iowa. Benefits are made available to workers who meet all requirements and have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, such as when a plant closes, they are laid off or in other similar circumstances.

Job seekers file for benefits online or in certain circumstances can be assisted over the phone through Iowa's call center or by calling any of the Iowa *WORKS* centers. Weekly certifications are also online and benefits can be direct deposited or customers can take advantage of Iowa's debit card.

Unemployment services are blended between a central call center that customers can dial toll-free to speak to a live agent or at any of the 15 comprehensive one-stop centers, four satellite Iowa *WORKS* offices or eight expansion locations with cross-trained state merit staff. Iowa's new case management system is tied into the online unemployment claim filing site, capturing full registration data for claimants not likely to return to the same employer and feeding that information back to the Iowa *WORKS* system, satisfying registration requirements for both programs.

At the Iowa *WORKS* centers, customers can utilize computer labs to file their initial or weekly claims, engage with trained staff who can answer the hard questions, adjudicate or fix issues on the spot. Customers can take advantage of Iowa *WORKS* centers in person for claim assistance to share services, connect with programs, classes and training options all on their first visit.

Iowa's unemployment system supports IowaWORKS centers infrastructure and staffing costs, which allows services to be integrated into all functions of the workforce system.

Re-entry

Iowa returns nearly 6,000 citizens each year; a skilled pool of employees to meet Iowa employers' needs. In partnership with the Iowa Department of Corrections, IWD has implemented the Re-entry Initiative. IWD Offender Workforce Development Specialist certified re-entry staff are housed in four of the nine state correctional facilities, assisting with soft-skills training, resume creation, mock interviews, proctoring the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC), teaching classes, acting as the sponsor for Iowa Department of Corrections Registered Apprenticeship programs, hosting career fairs inside the facilities, networking with employers, providing individualized job referrals, and connecting customers upon release with the American Job Center network in the area to which the individual returns. Additionally, inmates are offered work readiness classes that emphasize job applications, resume writing, interviewing skills and effectively addressing the criminal history issue. Many employers experiencing labor shortages believe their number one challenge is to identify, attract and retain employees. To address these needs, employers are increasing their applicant pools by considering 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. Re-entry staff served over 1,400 individuals in 2018 and are on track to serve over 2,500 in 2019.

Federal Bonding Program

Federal bonding benefits an employer by providing free fidelity bond insurance to protect them against loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. The advantage of the program is that the employer benefits from the worker's skills and abilities while opening up doors of opportunity to job seekers that might otherwise struggle to overcome those barriers. The bond promotes confidence in a job seeker who needs to gain re-entry into or maintain a connection to the labor market and demonstrate that he or she can be a productive worker. Iowa was granted \$35,249 to purchase fidelity bonds, giving the state the ability to issue up to 300 bonds. In August 2019, states were granted approval to purchase those bonds through UIG Insurance, and Iowa purchased 12 to start, with two being used in the quarter. Iowa's opportunity to increase capacity through marketing, employer, community and partner training is beginning to show results that will only grow.

Rapid Response Assistance and Layoff Aversion

Rapid Response (RR) efforts in Iowa continued to play an important part in business engagement. As Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARN) are received, RR staff immediately begin working with company officials and local area leadership to organize and deploy RR activities. Iowa legislated that employers with any layoffs of more than 25 employees must notify IWD. This state requirement is in addition to the federal requirement to notify in the event of a layoff impact of 50 or greater.

When WARN notices are received, each employer is contacted by State RR staff. Subsequently, most receive local-level delivery of RR services. The RR Worker Information Meetings (WIMs) are scheduled as soon as possible to ensure services reach as many employees as possible. Iowa's Dislocated Worker Survey remains a key component to the WIM. During PY18, Iowa began experimenting with timing of survey distribution to promptly establish services. This does require support by the employer. An example of this type of unique partnership is the opportunity Procter and Gamble allowed for IWD staff to conduct WIMs and distribute the survey prior to the official layoff. This allowed for advanced planning on services required for the worker group. This re-enforces the importance of collaboration with the community and the importance of building these relationships with the American Job Centers, and allows for layoff aversion to address the needs of the workers prior to layoff.

National Dislocated Worker Grants

Iowa experienced significant flooding in the spring of 2019. As a result, numerous roads, bridges, and public buildings were severely damaged or destroyed. Flooding caused widespread damage to secondary and state roads along with interstate highway systems. Secondary roads became impassable in many areas as rain and flooding caused ruts so deep that fire and ambulance response was impacted. Across the state, initial estimates gathered by local officials indicated 23,540 structures were affected or received minor damage, and 1,201 structures received major damage or were destroyed. Hundreds of homes, businesses, state parks, schools, and entire towns were under water due to extended flooding causing multiple communities to completely evacuate.

IWD was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant with an approved funding amount of \$3 million. The State plans to provide temporary jobs to roughly 150 individuals to help assist in the recovery process. Temporary disaster relief jobs will help with the restoration efforts in participating counties through IWD's implementation of Iowa's Disaster Relief Employment Program (DREP). Workers will assist with clean-up, demolition, repair, renovation, and/or reconstruction of damaged and destroyed public structures. Workers may also assist with humanitarian efforts in impacted communities. Individuals employed in these temporary jobs will also have access to supportive services to allow participation in the DREP, based on their individual needs.

Veterans Services and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program

IWD currently has 15 Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOPs) specialists who are located in our IowaWORKS offices across the state. DVOPs main activity is to provide individualized career 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 two Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), one of whom is domiciled in the Des Moines IowaWORKS office, and the other in the Davenport 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.

LVERs and DVOPs receive regular training and education from WIOA core partners (Title I through Title IV) as part of a fully integrated American Job Center. Representatives from each core partner provide information and training annually, if not more regularly, during staff meetings and staff in-service dates which are twice a year. Although not all core partners are co-located throughout the state, each partner still strives to work together in an effort to improve integration and braid funding whenever possible.

Similarly, optional one-stop delivery system partners are invited into the AJCs during staff meetings so that all employment services staff, to include LVERs and DVOPs, understand the resources at their disposal so customers can have the best possible employment outcomes.

Education and training for AJC staff regarding veterans' services is covered by LVERs, DVOPs, and the Veterans Program Coordinator (VPC). Specifically, the VPC and LVERs in the state are responsible for providing staff training on Priority of Service, veteran programs such as Home Base Iowa and the HIRE Vets Medallion Program, along with other veteran resources.

Iowa was the first state to partner with Hilton Worldwide with the nationwide Hilton Honors program, offering 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.

Home Base Iowa

A program by Iowa's governor, "Home Base Iowa," 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 100 Home Base Iowa communities. A public/private partnership, Home Base Iowa has connected 2,350 businesses with over 1,000 veterans that have registered on the site. For more information, see www.homebaseiowa.org. This website also provides information on job opportunities in Iowa through the jobs microsite for Veterans, <https://workiniowa-veterans.jobs>, veteran-friendly employers and communities, veteran resources, Home Base Iowa employers, and more.

Iowa Department of Education

Through leadership and service to the state education system, the Iowa Department of Education works to ensure all students are ready for college and career training and receive the postsecondary support they need to succeed. The Department provides oversight to the state education system that includes public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies, community colleges, and teacher preparation programs.

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 and Workforce Preparation 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 Iowa'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.

Adult education and literacy (AEL) program enrollment, reported through the MIS, has decreased an average of 2.9 percent annually from FY14 to academic year AY17-18. Unduplicated headcount for AY17-18 was 16,095 participants, which is 0.6 percent lower than the previous year. Enrollment in Basic Skills and Developmental and Remedial Education decreased by 678 students, yet enrollment has averaged a 5.6 percent increase over the previous five years. The English Language Learning program has increased 2.4 percent over the past five years.

While only a portion of the overall population is served by AEL programs, this subset represents learners who were assessed on measures fundamental to academic and vocational success. These

measures include achieving education level gains, attaining secondary diplomas, entering and retaining employment, and transitioning to postsecondary education or training.

AEL instructional programs represent a progression of basic skill attainment as defined by the NRS educational functioning levels (EFL). Each level has a description of basic reading, writing, numeracy, and functional and workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level. As of 2017, six ABE Levels have been renamed ABE Level 1-6 with ABE Level 1 being the lowest and ABE Level 6 being the highest level. Similarly, the six ESL levels are ESL Level 1-6 with ESL Level 1 being the lowest.

ABE instruction had the most enrollees in 2017 with 6,486 participants, or 57.7 percent of the total enrollment, while ESL had 4,761 participants (42.3 percent). Although enrollment decreased in AY17-18 for ESL, there has been a five-year average increase of 4.6 percent. Of those who were both enrolled in AY17-18 and federally reported, 51.2 percent were female and 34.0 percent self-identified as white. Another 30.1 percent of participants identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, 23.1 percent black or African American, and 10.0 percent Asian. The remaining three categories (American Indian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two or more races) combined for 2.8 percent of the participants.

The largest age group served by AEL programs in AY17-18 ranged from 25 to 44 years of age, with 49.8 percent in this category. The next largest group, ages 19 to 24, accounted for 23.6 percent. The 45 to 59 age group had 1,584 participants (13.0 percent), which was slightly higher than the 16 to 18 age group with 1,255 participants (11.2 percent).

The three highest barriers to employment, as self-identified by participants upon entry into the AEL programs, included the following: English Language Learner, low literacy, or cultural (21.7 percent); low-income (5.2 percent); and being a single parent (2.9 percent). It is important to note that a participant might indicate more than one barrier.

Of the 11,039 participants reported in NRS, 70.0 percent self-identified their highest level of school completed as between the 9th and 12th grades. The next highest level of education was having completed high school (12.5%). These self-reported grade levels indicate a starting point to measure progress in AEL programs, in which the primary purpose is to improve basic literacy skills. The NRS approach to measuring educational gain is to define a set of EFLs at which students are initially placed based on their ability to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas. Iowa's AEL programs use the federally approved Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to assess all incoming students for proper grade-level placement. After recommended hours of instructional intervention, students are again assessed to determine their skill levels. If a student's skills have improved sufficiently to place him or her one or more levels higher, an AEL gain is recorded. In 2019, 5,821 (54.0 percent) of the total NRS reported participants persisted beyond the recommended hours and took a post-assessment. Of those who persisted, 3,835 (65.9 percent) completed an EFL.

Measurable Skill Gain—This measure demonstrates participants' progress toward achieving a credential or employment. For AEL programs, the NRS includes two ways participants can

demonstrate a MSG: an educational functioning level (EFL) gain or receipt of a secondary credential. A participant may have more than one period of participation but only one gain per period of participation. Of the 11,265 periods of participation in 2019, 43.8 percent achieved a MSG.

High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED)—For many participants in AEL programs, the main goal is to achieve a HSED. To qualify for a measurable skill gain, a student must be a participant within AY18-19 and pass all five sub-sets within the program year.

During AY18-19, a total of 1,718 participants completed all five sub-tests and had data available for matching against HSED recipients. Of those who met the age requirement this year, 1,673 were awarded equivalency diplomas in AY18-19.

In January 2018, the Iowa State Board of Education (Board) adopted an administrative rule change establishing alternative pathways for an Iowan to earn a high school equivalency diploma (HSED). Previously, the only way to earn a HSED was by passing the HiSET®, the state-approved high school equivalency test.

The new pathways, which are in addition to the HiSET®, are based on completion of an approved program consisting of at least 36 secondary credits; the completion of a regionally accredited postsecondary credential equal to or beyond an associate degree; or to a resident participant who presents a postsecondary degree equivalent to an associate degree or higher from outside the United States. All of Iowa's alternative pathways are grounded in comprehensive data, research, and integrity that ensures rigor and maintains quality standards important to Iowa. An additional 40 students obtained their high school equivalency based on one of these alternative pathways.

To qualify for core outcomes, participants must exit the program either by completing instruction or by no longer participating; however, to be included in federal reports, they must have completed a minimum of 12 hours of AEL coursework.

Iowa participates as a data-match state by partnering with Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) for employment and wage information. In addition, the MIS and National Student Clearinghouse are used to verify postsecondary student enrollment and credential attainment.

Of the 11,265 participants, 7,848 (69.7 percent) exited the program in AY17-18. Of those, 3,862 individuals (49.2 percent) were able to be tracked through the databases used to match employment data and were employed, earning a median quarterly wage of \$5,472.

During calendar year 2017, 7,557 participants exited and 3,120 (41.3 percent) were able to be tracked and found to be employed in the fourth quarter after exit. Of the 7,557 participants, 918 participants (12.1 percent) met the criteria for credential attainment cohort and 230 (25.1 percent) received a credential.

In Iowa, five community colleges work with the Iowa Department of Corrections to provide AEL services. In AY18-19, 1,673 participants were included as part of the total enrollment reported in the NRS. This number does not include all of the adults served in Iowa's correctional

institutions because, as stated previously, participants must meet minimum requirements to be reported in the NRS.

For the past three years, Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) has been a priority for educational services. Participants in an IET program received adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training and saw 14.5 percent increase over last year with 323 participants in AY18-19. IELCE participants showed a 115.9 percent increase in the number of participants from 164 to 354. When comparing those who exited during AY17-18, IELCE participants earned the most wages in the second quarter after exit with \$9,301 compared to \$4,708 for Corrections. Also, IET had the most employed in the second quarter after exit with 63 percent.

Career and Technical Education (Perkins)

The rapidly evolving skill requirements of the global economy pose challenges for young workers and businesses. Increasingly, workers of all ages must update their skills and credentials to obtain a job with family-sustaining wages, remain employable, or move ahead in a career. At the same time, businesses need a robust pipeline of qualified workers to meet the changing skill demands of their sector. Employers are generally looking for three types of skills in their entry-level employees: (1) employability or soft skills, (2) hard skills, and (3) occupation- or industry-specific skills. The intent of Iowa's Career and Technical Education (CTE) is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equips students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As students evolve through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics and the support necessary to succeed. HF2392, passed in 2016 and aligns with Perkins V, is divided in two sections - Division I addresses comprehensive, holistic career guidance and development, and Division II lays out the requirements for having all CTE programs be high-quality, regardless of person, place, or proximity. Under HF2392 Division I, through rule and guidance, the IDOE requires all school districts choose a career information system, develop a district plan for career guidance, and have every eighth-grade student complete an individual career and academic plan (ICAP), which is updated annually until the student graduates from high school.

For Division II, the legislation requires the establishment of regional planning partnerships (RPPs) to facilitate planning around CTE in a given region. This is achieved through: (1) development of a multi-year plan and budget; (2) coordination of the mandatory secondary CTE program approval process; and (3) use of funds for key activities and items including career guidance, professional development, and equipment. In alignment with the fifteen (15) community college regions, fifteen (15) RPPs were established. At a minimum, all RPPs are expected to address the following:

- Promotion of career and college readiness through thoughtful career guidance and purposeful academic and technical planning practices;
- Promotion of high-quality, integrated career and technical education programming, including the delivery of quality career and technical education programs by school

districts, and career academies, comprised of secondary exploratory and transitory coursework, to prepare students for higher-level, specialized academic and technical training aligned with labor market needs;

- Allowing students to access a spectrum of high-quality work-based learning experiences through collaboration with a work-based learning intermediary network; and
- Affording all students equitable access to programs and encouraging the participation of underrepresented student populations in career and technical education programming in six CTE service areas – agriculture, food and natural resources; business, finance, marketing, and management; health science; human services; applied science, technology, engineering, and manufacturing; and information solutions, which encompasses two divisions.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Iowa has made great strides in integrating Registered Apprenticeship (RA) into the state workforce system. Several training sessions have occurred with core WIOA partners to assist in the fundamental understanding and integration of the program. A pilot program was created by the Iowa Department for the Blind, WIOA Title I and Title III staff to educate and recruit individuals who are blind into RA programs. During this partnership, core partners strengthened their relationship and created a defined referral processes, utilizing the integrative service model. Iowa looks forward to seeing continued progress during future program years.

During PY18, IWD had 485 active apprentices, and 98 Registered Apprentices completed their program. In an effort to improve IWD's performance, the majority of the AJCs were monitored, and corrective action plans were established. Notable progress has been made, which is expected to continue.

IWD created various funding opportunities to assist in meeting programmatic goals; funding was competitively awarded to twenty-five sub-recipients. IWD's Reentry Specialists were trained to report incarcerated individuals receiving Title III services, while enrolled in an RA program. Job seeker and business referral processes have been created and fine-tuned to incorporate RA as a workforce solution. The processes have been shared on several technical assistance calls with other states.

Having registered more new RA programs over the past few years, Iowa RAP are 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.

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.

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.

Industrial New Jobs Training and Iowa Jobs Training Programs

Each year, U.S. employers spend \$177 billion on formal training programs and \$413 billion on informal on-the-job training. Two programs administered by Iowa's Department of Education's 15 community colleges and coordinated with the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the Department of Revenue, and Iowa Workforce Development are available to Iowa's local businesses. The Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E) provides businesses expanding its Iowa workforce with new employee training funds. If a business is expanding operations, or relocating to a new facility in the state, the 260E program can provide flexible funding to meet a wide variety of training and employee development needs. 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. In addition to increasing worker productivity and company profitability, businesses participating in the 260E may also be eligible for reimbursement up to 50 percent of the award amount for on-the-job training, as well as a corporate tax credit if Iowa employment is increased by at least 10 percent.

The other program, Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F) provides job training services to current employees of eligible businesses located in Iowa. Eligible businesses work with the local Iowa community college, to assess training needs, determine funds available, and to provide training. For participating businesses, the advantages include valuable employee training at a reduced - or no - cost.

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 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.

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 percent; the State share is 21.3 percent. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau has 13 area offices and 24 branch offices.

Benefits planning is provided in every area office and branch of IVRS, under the guidance of a statewide Benefits Planning resource manager who provides training and field support for the benefits liaisons in all 13 regions. Benefits planning provides analysis and assistance for job candidates from intake through closure so that our job candidates understand the impact of work on benefits, and how to utilize Social Security work incentives. At IVRS, we strive through benefits planning to assist all SSA recipients to work towards the optimum level of employment and financial independence.

Progressive Employment

VR job candidates can access a continuum of employment services designed to meet the job candidate at the level of 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 prospective business owners with disabilities in developing skills specific to running their own business and provides connection to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Business Services Resource Manager

The Business Services resource manager leads the statewide business services team, and this team has representation from each area office. The members of this team bring training and mentoring to each local office, while the resource manager helps coordinate these efforts, develops new business services strategies and training, and develops account relationships at the

corporate and local levels. The regional liaisons work directly with local branches of these businesses to facilitate job opportunities for IVRS and partner job candidates. 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.

Indian and Native American Programs

IVRS is continuing to implement strategies in partnership with the Omaha Indian Tribe Nebraska. This has been an underserved population and we now have an agreement outlining collaborative ways to collaborate with Native Americans from the Omaha Tribe who have disabilities. The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Project (Omaha Tribe VR) is the recipient of the federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, of 1973 as amended. The Omaha Tribe, IVRS and the Iowa Department for the Blind have a responsibility to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities within the State of Iowa to assist such individuals to become economically self-sufficient (or more self-sufficient) by assisting consumers obtain meaningful and gainful work.

The purposes of our joint efforts are to:

- Coordinate VR programming for eligible American Indians with disabilities residing within, or near, the Iowa boundaries of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and Iowa reservation;
- Provide and coordinate technical assistance in areas of mutual interest;
- Provide and coordinate training opportunities between IVRS, IDB and the Omaha Tribe VR staff;
- Provide and coordinate reciprocal training to IVRS and IDB from Omaha Tribe when cultural sensitivity training is available.

Department for the Blind

The mission of the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is to empower Iowans who are blind or have low vision to be gainfully employed and live independently. The IDB Vocational Rehabilitation program provides employment services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision and 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 person who is blind or has low vision can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. 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 have low vision. 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 offers the following programs and services to address the education and skill needs of Iowa's workforce:

Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services

The Iowa Department for the Blind has expanded opportunities for students and youth who are blind or have low vision. These individuals are able to access services designed to assist them to develop an understanding of work, navigate their communities, and obtain work experience before graduating from high school. Pre-employment Transition Services for students with disabilities or potentially eligible students include career exploration counseling, work readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, and work-based learning experiences. Services available to eligible students and youth with disabilities include rehabilitation technology and services, transportation and occupational clothing, and work related tools. Intensive services are also provided to eligible individuals who require additional supports with work behaviors, require job-coaching, need to build stamina to work and require assistance with identifying the right career field and work environment.

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.

IDB provides services to eligible adults that include vocational and other assessments designed to assist an individual to define career goals and a plan to reach those goals. Disability related skills training is provided to assist individuals in preparing for and accessing education, training and employment. Additional services such as medical and psychological services, interpretation services and transportation are provided if needed to assist the individual in successfully attaining their goals.

IDB helps individuals obtain training such as vocational training or post-secondary education training to achieve the vocational goals they have selected. VR counselors help job seekers develop job-search plans, write résumés, practice interviewing, and locate job and placement resources. Supported employment services are also available to individuals who require long-term supports to obtain success in employment. Through services such as work site assessments, procurement of assistive technology, and training in the use of adaptive equipment, individuals who are blind or have vision loss can perform their jobs competitively and efficiently.

Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Training Program

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.

Business Enterprises Program

The Business Enterprises Program (BEP) provides opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients of the Iowa Department for the Blind to manage their own businesses -- operating vending machines, road side vending sites, or snack bar/catering services. Program participants are provided with training as they learn the skills needed to manage their own business -- hiring and managing employees, inventory control, ordering, scheduling, accounting and preparing equipment.

Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

This program provides resources and training to ensure individuals can participate in skill and certificate training. 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 provides accessible resources and programs for English Language Learners who are blind or have low vision 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.

PROMISE JOBS

Promoting Independence and Self Sufficiency through Employment (PROMISE JOBS) is Iowa's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment & Training program designed to assist cash assistance recipients to become self-sufficient through participation in work ready activities. Program participants will develop an individualized Employment Plan outlining work ready activities in order to reach their individualized goals and reduce their dependency on the welfare support systems. A number of work ready activities are available to PROMISE JOBS participants, including:

- Assessments – Aptitudes and interest inventories are used to help participants determine their best route toward meeting their individual goals.
- Life Skills – Workshops covering money management, self-esteem, housing information, nutrition, parenting information, identifying personal goals, etc.
- Job Seeking and Skills Training – Workshops covering interviewing techniques, résumés, completing job applications, career exploration, networking, building skills and other work search information.
- Job Search/Job Coaching – Expanding and capitalizing on job search techniques in order to obtain employment with a livable wage.
- Employment & Community Service Opportunities – Obtaining/retaining full/part-time employment through unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, self-employment, work experience, and/or community service opportunities to build and expand experiences and skills.
- Apprenticeship Opportunities – Education, training and employment option available to job seekers wanting to earn a wage while receiving specialized training in a skilled profession.
- Basic Education – Includes assistance with covering the costs and supportive assistance in order to obtain their high school diploma, HiSET (formerly known as GED) certificate, adult basic education, and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) to open doors to opportunities that provide sustainable earnings.
- Post-Secondary Classroom Training – Includes assistance with academic and vocational training and certification to prepare participants for careers that are in high demand.
- Parenting Skills – Classes that provide parents resources and techniques to adapt to demands parenting requires.
- Family Development Services – Supportive services to assist with addressing and overcoming the challenges and obstacles family and work place on participants.
- Family Planning Services – Classes that provide the resources to gain a better understanding on financial and social impacts of raising a family.

Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)

This program provides intensive family development services to families receiving Family Investment Program (FIP) assistance who are identified as having multiple or severe barriers to self-sufficiency. FaDSS participants leaving FIP can continue to receive services for up to 90 consecutive days after leaving FIP.

Food Assistance Employment and Training Program

The Food Assistance Employment and Training program provides employment and training services to non-FIP food assistance recipients for the purpose of enhancing their employability. Program services include:

- Assessment
- Employment-related services: job club and job search
- Basic education: high school completion, English as a Secondary Language and Adult Basic Education

This program also pays expenses for transportation and child care for people participating in these activities.

Future Ready Iowa Governor's Initiative

Future Ready Iowa aims to achieve systemic changes to increase the number of citizens with a post-secondary credential with the intended result of increasing the number of skilled workers available to employers. The goal of Future Ready Iowa is for 70 percent of Iowa's workforce to have post-secondary education, training or a credential of value by 2025. Future Ready Iowa recognizes that education or training beyond high school is the new minimum to earn a living wage in a knowledge-based, global economy. In 2019, the Iowa Legislature passed \$16 million in new funding for key Future Ready Iowa programs.

Last-Dollar Scholarship Program

The Last-Dollar Scholarship program is designed to cover tuition and mandatory fees for Iowans to complete education and training up to an associate degree in an eligible program related to a high-demand occupation. The Iowa Legislature unanimously funded this program for the first time during the 2019 legislative session.

The Fall 2019 semester is the first semester the Last-Dollar Scholarship has been available. Early numbers show that more than 5,800 Iowa students have received the new Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship. More than \$6.6 million has been awarded for the fall semester, helping pave the way for more Iowans to acquire the education and training needed for good-paying, high-demand jobs. That's over half of the \$13 million appropriated by the Iowa Legislature for the 2019-20 academic year.

Summer Youth Internship Pilot Program

The Future Ready Iowa Summer Youth Internship Pilot Program provided \$197,396.05 in grant awards for organizations to create and carry out internship programs for low-income students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. The pilot programs were hosted during the summer of 2019. The programs focused on helping the students develop the skills necessary to be successful in any workplace. The curriculum includes a focus on paid work-based learning and exposure to high-demand occupations. Three organizations offered pilot programs with this funding for 113 participants, ages 14-21, who successfully completed the programs.

Employer Innovation Fund

The Employer Innovation Fund was created with \$1.2 million in funding from the Iowa Legislature during the spring 2019 legislative session. The purpose of the fund is to provide opportunities for Iowans to earn non-credit and for-credit post-secondary credentials leading to high-demand jobs in the state. Employers, community groups and other organizations working with employers can apply to receive matching funds to support local, grassroots efforts to meet employer needs and help Iowans successfully obtain needed credentials. The fund can also be utilized to address barriers Iowans have when obtaining the needed education and training (examples include: childcare, transportation or books and equipment). This fund encourages employers to find creative, innovative ways to strengthen their local workforce.

As of December 1, 2019, two rounds of funding have been completed. Thirty-four awards have been offered, totaling \$955,899.69. A third round will wrap up by December 31, 2019 to award the remaining \$244,100.31. These innovative projects will impact more than 1,300 Iowans in the next year alone.

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.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Individuals age 55 and older, at or below 125 percent 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.

All eligible participants start the program by receiving job training through a host agency. The host agency is a private non-profit (501(c)(3)) or a governmental agency. During the time the participant is in training they are paid minimum wage (\$7.25/hr), spending 18-20 hours per week providing services to the agency. The participant is also expected to be looking for unsubsidized employment during the host agency training time. The maximum time that can be spent in the program is 48 months.

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) mission is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business. Through two main divisions – business development and community development – IEDA administers several state and federal programs to meet its goals of assisting individuals, communities and businesses. Workforce Training Programs include:

Accelerated Career Education (ACE – 260G): Partnering with community colleges to enhance Iowa's workforce. The ACE program is designed to provide businesses with an enhanced, skilled workforce. ACE assists community colleges to either establish or expand programs that train individuals in the occupations most needed by Iowa businesses.

Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training (260E): Helping Iowa businesses provide training opportunities for new jobs. The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training program assists businesses creating new positions with new employee training. Eligible businesses may be new to Iowa, expanding the Iowa workforce or relocating to the state.

Iowa Apprenticeship Programs: Training employees through apprenticeships. There are more than 1,000 occupations eligible for apprenticeship training grants, from accounting specialists to nurses. 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. Iowa is committed to supporting Registered Apprenticeship Programs and increasing the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants through the Iowa Apprenticeship Act (15B) and the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (15C).

Community College Consortium (260F): Funding community college-sponsored employee training projects. The Community College Consortium (260F) program provides funding assistance for community college-sponsored employee training projects in which two or more businesses participate.

Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F): Training current employees of Iowa companies. The Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F) provides job training services to current employees of eligible businesses, and helps companies train current employees with new skills.

Iowa Student Internship Program: Assisting businesses with a future workforce and linking Iowa students to careers. The Iowa Student Internship Program provides grants to small and medium-sized companies in targeted industries to support internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in Iowa upon graduation. The goal is to retain educated workers in Iowa.

STEM Internship Program: Helping Iowa employers hire STEM students. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Internship program provides grants to Iowa companies for internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in Iowa upon graduation. The goal is to retain educated workers in Iowa.

Iowa Finance Authority

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) was established in 1975 to undertake programs to assist in the attainment of housing for low- and moderate-income Iowans. Since then, the IFA's role has expanded considerably. The IFA offers a variety of programs that address a continuum of housing needs, from homeless assistance to multifamily rental to single-family ownership. In addition to offering statewide affordable housing resources, the IFA also offers a wide variety of other programs to assist in community development, including:

Economic Development Loan Program: Through its Economic Development Loan program, IFA issues bonds and loans the proceeds to private entities or organizations for eligible purposes. The interest on the bonds may be tax-exempt (if eligible under the Internal Revenue

Code), taxable or a combination of both. In 2018, the State of Iowa received \$330 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.

Private Activity Bond Cap Allocation: The State of Iowa annually receives several millions of volume cap (the “State Ceiling”) to be allocated to certain Private Activity Bonds set forth in Section 146 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Section 7C of the Iowa Code distributes the State Ceiling among these types of bonds. In 2018, the State of Iowa received \$330 million of Private Activity Bond Cap (“Cap”) for allocation to certain private activity bonds. These include industrial revenue bonds, affordable multifamily housing bonds and other purposes specifically defined by the IRS.

Department of Human Rights

The Mission of Iowa’s Department of Human Rights is to ensure basic rights, freedoms and opportunities for all by empowering underrepresented Iowans and eliminating economic, social and cultural barriers. The Department helps individuals attain economic independence by ensuring access to government services and advancing educational achievement and entrepreneurial success consistent with their aspirations.

Weatherization Assistance Program

Is a federal grant program established to help reduce the heating and cooling costs for low-income persons, particularly the elderly, disabled, and children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. The installation of energy efficiency measures for each dwelling is based on a computerized energy audit which determines the cost effectiveness of each measure.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Is a federally funded block grant designed to help eligible low-income Iowa households in the payment of a portion of their non-business residential heating costs for the winter heating season.

Community Services Block Grant

Is a federal block grant program administered by the states. The purpose of the Program is to provide funding to states and local agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become a fully self-sufficient.

Family Development and Self-Sufficiency

Families can participate if they are on the Family Investment Program and are required to participate in Promise Jobs. This Program provides services statewide, through 17 agencies, to families facing multiple barriers to self-sufficiency and provides comprehensive in-home services through certified Family Development Specialists.

Credit Union Family Partnership Individual Development Account

This Iowa Credit Union Foundation Program offers matched savings accounts for Iowa families with limited resources who meet income-based criteria.

Job Corps

Job Corps, a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Originally established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the program currently operates under the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program to help young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Many Job Corps participants face significant barriers to education and employment. About 25 percent of students self-reported that they had a disability, such as a cognitive or mental health disability. About 25 percent of students entered Job Corps without having progressed beyond the ninth grade, and the mean reading and math skills of students were below the eighth-grade level. Eight percent identified as English-language learners.

Job Corps students receive individualized services that are organized into four service periods: (1) outreach and admission, (2) career preparation, (3) career development, and (4) career transition services. There are two Job Corps locations in Iowa; one in Denison and one in Ottumwa.

During the first 60 days in Job Corps, students take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine their academic achievement and competency. They also submit to medical and counseling assessments to determine their other needs. Following these assessments, students create and commit to a Personal Career Development Plan to guide their future training activities. Centers also must provide new students with career exploration activities, such as using labor market information to identify available career opportunities and assessing their own interests and skills when making career choices. Students receive targeted academic instruction and career and technical education and training in their chosen career. Job Corps offers training in more than 70 careers, but each center offers only a subset of trainings. As part of their training, students often obtain hands-on experience through real-world projects in the community.

The time a student spends in Job Corps varies, depending on his or her personal career plan and the goals set in the plan. The average stay in Job Corps is about 8 months, but program duration varies considerably: in PY 2015, about 18 percent left within 2 months and more than 20 percent stayed more than 12 months. Of those students who separated from the Job Corps nationally in PY 2015, 59 percent successfully graduated. To graduate, students must have, while in the Job Corps program, received a high school diploma or high school equivalency, or finished their training program.

National Farmworker Jobs Program

Proteus administers the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in Iowa. The NFJP responds to chronic seasonal unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The NFJP offers assistance that strengthens the ability of farm workers and their families to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Since its inception with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the farmworker program has been an integral part of the national workforce strategy. NFJP provides access to education services and job training, support, and additional services suited to the customer's career goals.

YouthBuild

There are an estimated 4.9 million young adults ages 16-24 in America who are neither in work nor school. Of these, there are estimated to be as many as 3 million youth living in poverty who are not in education, employment or training. These are the opportunity youth with whom YouthBuild programs around the country work.

At YouthBuild programs in the United States and across the globe, low-income young people learn construction skills through building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their neighborhoods and other community assets such as schools, playgrounds, and community centers. YouthBuild programs provides pathways to rebuild participant's communities and lives, breaking the cycle of poverty with a commitment to work, education, family, and community.

YouthBuild has built a robust network of 252 urban and rural YouthBuild programs in 46 states. They are sponsored and managed by local nonprofits, community colleges, and public agencies with primary funding from the US Department of Labor (DOL) administered by the Employment and Training Administration. Iowa has one YouthBuild in the state managed by Des Moines Area Community College for the past nine years.

The DMACC YouthBuild program provides at-risk youth, age 18 to 24, with the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency by gaining their DMACC high school diploma or equivalency (HiSET), construction skills training, and college credit while serving their community through construction of permanent, affordable housing for low-income families. Additionally, for the first time, Construction Plus is providing an additional occupational training track focused on Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) which is a high-demand industry in central Iowa and across the country.

The YouthBuild program plans to enroll a total of 51 participants broken into three 7 month cohorts of 17 individuals on average over the course of the 2 year grant program cycle. DMACC's construction staff delivers the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognized Home Builders Institute certificate in Carpentry and weatherization which includes Basic Construction OSHA certification. Iowa's Habitat for Humanity partners to provide participants with an opportunity to practice workforce and employability skills related to on-time attendance, positive work attitude and actual hands-on skills related to carpentry and home building. Polk County

and Blue Cross both makes available additional certification for a basic Lead Renovator and CPR/First aid training.

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), directly 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. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in Iowa has allowed the core partner agencies to identify how and where services could be further aligned to better support job-seekers, employers and service providers.

Strengths:

- Commitment and willingness among the core partners to build a better workforce development system. While the process has had many challenges, the partners have remained steadfast in their willingness to collaborate in creating solutions that benefit customers.
- Quality of service, programs and operations. Following several years of each agency striving to improve its core services, the core programs are now soundly positioned to affect change. Over the past two years, all core programs have met or are progressing to meet the WIOA key performance measure benchmarks.
- Accessibility to stakeholders, business leaders and key decision makers. Collaboration and partnering are core strengths of Iowa's workforce development activities. Partnerships have fostered an environment where business relationships are strengthened, resources mobilized quickly and access to key decision makers is abundant.

Weaknesses:

- Iowa's diverse regions and dispersed population present barriers to the efficient delivery of services. As noted in labor market information, jobs that were once abundant in the state's outlying areas have disappeared, leaving many communities in a state of economic hardship, with low unemployment rates and scores of employers in need of employment services. Delivering services to these rural areas is a challenge. Moreover, limited public transportation networks make it difficult for many, including those with barriers to access employment opportunities.
- Gaps in coordination, communication and alignment within the workforce development system. Even though progress has been made, gaps continue in the areas of coordination, communication and alignment within the system. Iowa is taking steps to better integrate activities, starting with the creation of a Core Partner Working Group dedicated to ensuring coordination at the state level.

- Data sharing. Workforce partners recognize the importance of using valid and reliable information to drive decision making, program evaluation and to support policy initiatives. The core partners are working on methods to improve data sharing through the alignment of data systems and the sharing of data in a transparent manner to determine effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.
- Iowa has limited financial resources to address its many workforce development challenges. Under WIOA, federal program funds are allocated to states based on population size. Within these federal funds the allowable allocation for program administration has always been capped at 5 percent of the total. As a result, less populous states such as Iowa have substantially lower levels of funding to cover the fixed costs, infrastructure funding and required administrative activities in order to be in compliance.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

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

The range of workforce development programs and activities previously described represent a significant investment of both human and capital resources into Iowa’s workforce development system. Since 2014 when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed, the State has made concerted efforts to increase interagency collaboration to better coordinate federal employment services and training for adults, dislocated workers and youth, and adult education, as well as create additional access points for participants with barriers to employment. These activities resulted in a developed network of physical assets, including strategically located one—stop centers.

Though the workforce system has made improvements since the passage of WIOA there is a recognized need to increase capacity. The goal over the next four years is to establish access to all workforce system services regardless of where the individual client or employer is located. To reach this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- Expand ability of all partners in the network to inform clients of workforce system services. This will be the result of extensive cross—training.
- Assess the ability to increase access. The core partners will work with local boards and the future one—stop operators to assess the ability to increase access to the system. For example, a number of adult education programs may be made available as itinerant sites to provide basic career services. This action can greatly expand the number and proximity of access points of contact for both employers and clients.
- Expand the use of technology. Given Iowa’s diverse regional needs, it cannot be assumed that all who need to travel to the current comprehensive sites will be able to do so. To address the barriers of distance, childcare, transportation and schedules that many people face, services will be available digitally. These services will include up—to—date and comprehensive employment and training websites with links to partner websites. In addition, resources will be accessible through the use of videoconferencing and live chat.

Iowa currently has 15 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) designated pursuant to Iowa Code Section 84B.3, in accordance with the “Special Rule Regarding Designated Areas” at WIOA Section 189(i)(1). On November 8, 2017, the U.S. Department of Labor / Employment and Training Administration (USDOL / ETA) Region 5 issued a WIOA Implementation Compliance monitoring report which, among other things, specifically addressed the number of LWDAs in Iowa. The monitoring report stated “the division of limited WIOA funds among 15 service areas, particularly in a State that has large rural areas, is stretching the available dollars so thin that the local areas are unable to fund core WIOA functions, such as staff support for the required [local area boards].” Given the likelihood that the funding requirements for 15 LWDAs would limit the capacity of State entities to maximize delivery of Title I workforce development activities, Iowa embarked on a year-long process to realign and reduce the number of LWDAs in the State. In February 2019, the State Workforce Development Board voted to realign Iowa from 15 to six LWDAs. This realignment vote was challenged through two rounds of appeals. On December 19, 2019, the USDOL / ETA issued a final determination that did not uphold Iowa’s redesignation of LWDAs. As a result, the State must continue operating with the previous structure consisting of 15 LWDAs. If key stakeholders desire to revisit LWDA redesignation, Iowa will make every effort to ensure the local area designation and appeals processes are well understood.

Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB)

Continued communication and enhanced service integration among WIOA core partners remains a primary focus as we build the capacity of the state workforce system. The Iowa Department for the Blind operates out of one state office building, allowing staff to work from home office locations throughout the state. Telework practices and the ability to travel throughout the state have allowed IDB to increase service capacity. IDB has increased visibility in local IowaWORKS offices by participating in disability access committees and other standing committees and workforce board activities. Counseling staff has also worked to develop cooperative working relationships with IowaWORKS staff. Factors such as staff turnover and hiring needs affect customer service capacity. IDB conducts training needs assessments to ensure compliance of federal and state mandates and reviews individual personnel training requirements to current job performance, future job requirements, and career advancement needs. IDB requires continuing education of all staff who provide direct and indirect services to clients. The IDB currently has dedicated vocational rehabilitation staff coordinating, implementing, and tracking workforce development activities across multiple programs. IDB’s services are provided statewide to clients and potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS)

Iowa has approximately 23,000 students under an Individual Education Program or 504 Plan and WIOA requires that all that are known to IVRS and must be served with at least pre-employment transition services. IVRS currently has fewer than 120 professional staff to serve those students. The capacity of IVRS to provide the identified activities is therefore significantly impacted. Such capacity issues impact all core partner agencies, since no one agency can effectively serve the host of job candidate and business needs. Thus, we are challenged to develop the patterns of

collaboration and service strategies that would best meet the needs of our customers while improving and streamlining the quality and effectiveness of local service delivery.

For the 23,000 individuals who are on IEPs and 504 plans in Iowa, IVRS has developed collaborative service plans with each school district in all 99 Iowa counties, with specific roles designated between high school and VR staff, depending on the needs/gaps in each district. All 23,000 transition aged students whom IVRS is aware of must be served as either “potentially eligible,” or determined eligible if they require more intensive rehabilitation services in order to be successful in their transition to employment.

Those who do not require specialized rehabilitation services can be served by the school system, and referred via warm referrals to other partner programs as needed. For eligible job candidates, IVRS can provide disability adjustment and career counseling and guidance, benefits planning, assistive technology assessment, training, and aids, on-the-job training, college and vocational/technical training, disability skills training, possible small business development services for those who are eligible, job placement with or without supports, and follow-up.

For our community businesses, IVRS can provide consultation on accessibility, disability etiquette training, information about tax incentives for hiring individuals with disabilities or making worksite modifications, and consultation on accommodations for specific disability situations.

Iowa Department of Education (IDOE)

The IDOE has the responsibility of overseeing Title II activities under the Adult Education and Literacy Act and the Perkins (through the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2018 (Perkins V)). As such, the capacity of the Iowa Community College system to deliver services via education and training that align with workforce needs is very strong. The Iowa Community College system is made up of 15 regions with 15 community colleges providing adult education and other education services in all 99 counties — are meeting the needs of employers and job seekers in their regions. More individuals start out their postsecondary education at a community college than at a four-year university, which highlights the capacity of the system.

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.

Iowa’s workforce delivery system partners will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa. The system will provide the training and education needed to develop a pipeline of skilled workers

who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa’s current and emerging industries. Iowa employers will have access to the skilled workforce needed to prosper in today’s global economy.

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—

A. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁸ and other populations.⁹

Goal I: Iowa’s employers will have access to 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.

Goal III: Iowa’s workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

B. Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers

See the Goals listed above in Section A.

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 measurements are negotiated annually with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. Iowa has developed proposed targets for the applicable performance measurements for PY20 and PY21. These proposed targets are included in Appendix 1, and are subject to change in each program year based on the negotiation process with the federal departments.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

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.

An effective assessment plan will review progress, obstacles and necessary changes in course of action for core partners, participants and employers. Iowa's Longitudinal Data projects should play an integral role in measuring long-term participant outcomes and in providing information that drives program evaluation and policy decisions.

The assessment plan will also review wage and employment outcomes of program participants by credential and program. Having a common list of Industry Recognized Credentials across core partners and measuring the attainment of these credentials will also be an important aspect for assessing progress. Once credentials are defined the assessment plan will review the employment outcomes of participants earning these awards.

Iowa should also consider utilizing a control group studies to assess performance emphasizing employer-based workforce preparation and promoting education alliances intended to limit duplication of services and to increase the engagement of employers in developing standards and articulating career pathways workers can take to attain entry to upper level skills.

Selecting a pool of individuals who successfully completed training during PY20, the state should analyze and compare the long-term employment and earnings outcomes of participants enrolled in employer-based training (OJT, Registered Apprenticeship, Customized Training, or employer-funded certificate training) with the outcomes of participants enrolled in traditional two- or four-year college degree or certificate programs. Information used to evaluate the outcomes of each of the participant groups will include the costs borne by the WIOA programs, as follows:

- Full cost of the formal component of participant training:
 - For college bound trainees: tuition, fees, books, remedial or pre-requisite courses and other charges of the educational institution;
 - For employer-based trainees: OJT wages, cost of any related classroom training or instruction, cost of customized training funded by WIOA;
- Full cost of supportive services funded for the full term of the training program;
- Percentage of staff time directly supporting the participant from the point of program entry to successful completion of training and including any follow-up services;
- Full amount and type of non-WIOA funds leveraged, such as: PELL, scholarships, individual contributions and employer wage and classroom cost match, including costs of employee benefits paid to participants while in training, if any.

Additional aspects that will be evaluated for each participant could include:

- Industry for which trainee was prepared;

- Length of time in formal training;
- Length of time from completion of training to attainment of employment;
- Whether or not the training included both an experiential and academic component;
- Whether or not the trainee attained a portable credential, degree, diploma, license or will attain a portable credential, such as a certificate of apprenticeship;
- Wages at second quarter after exit;
- Wages at sixth quarter after exit; and
- Wages at tenth quarter after exit.

In addition to participant analysis, employers offering the work-based training will be surveyed regarding their perspectives on the value and effectiveness of this approach. Employers will be asked to provide their input regarding the overall success of employees they hire just out of college with those they have hired and trained through WIOA supported work-based training. This input will be used to inform service providers who are developing work-based training programs for employers and participants.

Participants with similar socio-economic backgrounds and academic levels at entry will be randomly selected from across the state, using data captured through formal intake and assessment. Because it is assumed that the number of employer-based training approaches will increase under WIOA, additional comparison cohort groups will be selected each year through PY22. Data accumulated will be analyzed at the end of each program year and in total at the end of PY24. A report comparing the long-term employment and earnings outcomes of each of the two participant cohorts of the study will be produced. Results of the evaluation will be used to inform workforce development service providers and employers about the benefits and/or pitfalls of each of the approaches and to improve the practices involved with each of the approaches, including the following:

- Initial and ongoing involvement of the employer or industry for which employees from both cohorts are being educated and trained;
- Processes used to prepare and support participants throughout their preparation for training, training, and subsequent employment;
- Formulas for greatest return on investment and cost efficiencies identified;
- Level of relevance to the employer for each training approach;
- Level of skill quality produced as identified in earnings and employment of each approach;
- Amount of non-WIOA funds leveraged with each approach; and
- Overall lessons learned based on the findings including strengths and weaknesses of each approach for both the employer and the worker.

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) and includes registered apprenticeship. “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

Sector partnerships are increasingly recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic, and workforce development systems to address industry-identified labor market needs. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) shifts from an “employment first” strategy to one that emphasizes credential attainment through the use of sector partnerships and career pathways.

Sector Partnerships

Sector partnerships are comprised of industries with shared needs, as well as various education, workforce, economic, and community organizations in supportive roles. These partnerships develop and continuously evaluate goals, policies, and service-delivery strategies to meet the needs of employers in a given sector. In doing so, they operate within labor market regions and are not confined to municipal, county, educational, or state boundaries. Effective sector partnerships are industry-driven, meaning industries identify needs and assume the lead role in developing strategies which address their identified needs.

As called for in Iowa’s Unified State Plan, the Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will assume the lead role in the development, implementation, and achievement of policies and objectives related to sector partnerships and career pathways across the state. The SPLC will serve in a formal advisory role to the State Workforce Development Board on matters related to sector partnerships and career pathways. The SPLC membership emphasizes business, industry, and employer representation so that the council is truly industry led and oriented.

Under the guidance of the SPLC, the Iowa Department of Education has worked to support the planning, launch, and long-term success of sector partnerships in Iowa through a wide array of technical and financial assistance measures, including, but not limited to a series of informative facilitator toolkits and guides, the implementation of monthly facilitator conference calls and networking events, and the development of additional in-person or interactive webinar facilitator training sessions. These and additional resources, including an interactive map of the current sector partnership landscape in Iowa, can be found at SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov.

With numerous sector partnerships in existence prior to the enactment of WIOA, and strong local and state support (via an allocation from the Iowa Legislature through the Pathways for Academic Career and Employment program), Iowa is equipped to achieve additional sector partnership expansion, while still supporting the growth and success of existing programs.

Currently, there are more than 50 such partnerships throughout Iowa in varying stages of maturity across a multitude of industry sectors, with all of Iowa's 99 counties and many from neighboring states supported at least partially by these grass-roots initiatives. Most sector partnerships in Iowa were established in 2015 or later and over two-thirds are convened by Iowa community colleges to help identify regional economic and labor needs and engage industry and support partners to develop strategies to address such needs.

Continued state funding, support, and collaboration with WIOA core partners will be critical as we continue to offer support and guidance for the expansion of industry-led, community-supported sector partnerships through the development of new print, digital, or hands-on technical resources and the thorough process of updating or refreshing previous efforts.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are one strategy utilized by sector partnerships to address industry-identified labor market needs. Career pathways organize education and training into a coherent, stackable sequence aligned within specific occupations within a given industry. In that way, career pathways support an individual in developing the personal, technical, and employability skills required for advancement within an industry and transitioning from training and education into the workforce. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce service providers, employers, labor groups, and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of career pathways.

A specific focus of sector partnerships is to research, design, and leverage robust career pathway materials that accurately reflect local in-demand career opportunities in critical industries like advanced manufacturing, health science, and information technology. General mystique and confusion are often associated with careers in these fields, which leads to inaccurate stereotypes, the facilitation of incorrect information, and ultimately shortages in locally qualified, skilled labor.

Under the guidance of the SPLC and in support of the Future Ready Iowa initiative, the IDOE has partnered with core partners, educators, employers, industry associations, and strategic community partners to conduct exploratory research and develop career pathway materials for these and additional exciting career sectors in Iowa. These collaborative efforts will help keep Iowa's employers strong, growing, and competitive.

These robust and informative career pathway materials highlight a wide range of entry, mid, and senior level careers within each industry that have consistent need or potential for future growth because of various factors like changes in technology, an aging workforce, and changing consumer preferences. General skills, knowledge, and abilities are highlighted to help readers better understand how to be successful within each capacity, as well as various education and training options available within the state of Iowa, including technical certificates, higher education degrees, on-the-job training, and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Wages are averaged based on quantitative labor market analysis and qualitative measures from direct employer feedback through online surveys and in-person focus groups hosted around the state.

Work-Based Learning

Work on the statewide career pathway projects identified the need to increase the number of high-quality, work-based learning opportunities for students and job seekers who may be interested in pursuing a career within these fields. While some communities have the resources and relationships already developed to do so, many do not. Without additional efforts to promote hands-on learning opportunities, many students will be less likely to take the necessary steps towards pursuing these careers. Students can more easily see the connection between academics and careers when they are engaged in learning with curriculum that is personally and occupationally relevant.

The IDOE again partners with core partners, educators, employers, industry associations, and strategic community partners to develop and implement a series of industry-specific work-based learning toolkits to serve as the culmination of the thorough process to identify solutions addressing the growing need for a skilled workforce in these critical industries, improved coordination across partnerships and regions, and the need for employers and educators to understand the value of these investments. These toolkits provide guidance, tools, and recommendations to address barriers to increasing opportunities for high school students, while also providing a wide range of real-world examples from across the state that can be modeled and replicated within local communities.

All of these resources are made available to employers, educators, and other community support partners to help better promote careers within these critical industries through the Future Ready Iowa, Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning, and Iowa Department of Education websites. Print copies are also available for distribution, pending funding and resource availability.

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).

Goal I: Iowa's employers will have access to skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers.

Strategies associated with this goal will be measured by the WIOA primary indicator of performance of: effectiveness in serving employers.

State Strategy 1.1: Expand and support the framework of sector partnerships that are championed by business and industry to drive career pathways.

All core programs will collaborate with local workforce development boards to provide and gather information from local employers by developing effective relationships between the local workforce system and sector partnerships as a means to engage directly with industry across traditional barriers.

Championed by Workforce Development Boards, but “driven” by employers, Sector Strategies are regional in scope and industry specific. The goal of Sector Strategies goes beyond immediately placing workers in jobs; rather, the goal is to build regional talent pipelines, address skill shortages, and create meaningful “Career Pathways” for a range of workers in specific industry sectors.

- **Building Capacity:** Providing professional development and technical assistance to state administrators and regional stakeholders on how to expand and strengthen regional collaboration, industry-training programs, and other aspects of designing and implementing sector strategies.
- **Provide technical assistance for state policy makers and administrators:** Offer learning opportunities to enhance decision makers’ understanding of both the benefits and the mechanics of implementing a sector partnership. Support efforts in making available and promoting such technical assistance services such as mini-academies and peer learning forums across states. Publish best practice guides and ‘How to’ manuals for state administrators and policy makers. Furthermore, provide direct technical assistance and consulting to regions that are ready to launch a sector strategy.
- **Creating institutional seamlessness:** Create seamless and easily accessible workforce systems that respond to the needs of industry Sector initiatives. Support seamlessness by bringing about collaboration across agencies and jurisdictional boundaries. The coordination of activities among key stakeholders and multiple-employer focus allows sector initiatives to capitalize on economies of scale by spreading the costs and risks of new program development across multiple partners.
- **Aligning Activities:** Increase collaboration between public and private institutions that oversee and conduct workforce, economic development, education and social services.

State Strategy 1.2: Grow the skilled labor force by advancing the Future Ready Iowa initiatives, resources and programming to all Iowans.

- **Further expand Iowa’s sector workforce and economic development priorities like Future Ready Iowa:** Educate on the results produced by sector initiatives and the potential to strengthen workforce and economic development infrastructures to target and support key industries. Enhance communications strategies that convey the value and effectiveness of sector strategies.
- **Tap into underutilized human capital:** Fully utilize all potential sources of workers and identify and develop underutilized sources of workers and talent. Sector initiatives help regions identify and tap underutilized and underemployed workers, addressing the barriers faced by workers in securing employment and advancing in high-wage, high-growth industries. Sector initiatives also utilize the expertise of education and workforce partners in coordinating training and support services to guide low-wage, low-skill workers on career paths out of poverty.

- Building a self-directed workforce: Create a workforce with the attitudes, learning habits, and decision tools necessary for upward mobility within industries. Sector initiatives create a self-directed, demand-driven workforce system due to the high level of employer involvement. They focus on, and succeed in giving individuals the tools needed for economic mobility, and businesses the resources needed to attract and retain skilled workers. Sector initiatives measure the benefits of participation to both industries and workers including pre and post training wages, employee retention, and employer satisfaction rates.
- Creating Funding Strategies to Support Future Ready Iowa goals: Providing and aligning state funding to support the creation and implementation of regional sector initiatives. This may be done through grants that encourage regional collaboration or by directing workforce resources toward a specific industry.

State Strategy 1.3: Collaborate with sector partnerships and Iowa employers to enhance work-based learning opportunities for all Iowans.

- Core programs will educate, promote, design and collaborate with Iowa employers to facilitate work-based learning activities.
- Strengthen economic growth and industry competitiveness by creating new pathways into targeted industries, and toward good jobs and careers. This approach benefits low-income individuals and sustains and creates middle-class jobs.
- Utilize the intermediary networks in facilitating the many stakeholders involved to develop and implement industry-based workforce solutions.
- Develop the interest of philanthropic and other investors to assist in sector initiatives: Engage existing philanthropy as partners in identifying and funding potential states and sites where sector strategies can be implemented. Educate potential funders on sector strategies and opportunities to finance them. Create funding collaboratives, long-term partnerships between philanthropy and the public sector, which will seed and sustain sector initiatives.
- Building Sector Intelligence: Analyzing labor market changes to produce workforce trend reports and industry occupational projections, conducting workforce surveys and skill gap analyses, identifying and defining boundaries of regional labor markets, charting the skills needed for specific occupations, and creating certification programs that validate workers' ability to perform effectively in a variety of occupations.

Goal II: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities.

Strategies associated with this goal will be measured through the number of co-enrollments, referrals and how many students received services from workforce partners prior to high school graduation.

State Strategy 2.1: Further develop and promote accessible career pathways to all Iowans.

- Build upon prior work to expand regional partnerships that are deeply rooted in employer engagement and industry leadership, labor market alignment strategies and seamless

career pathways that encompass grades 9-16, including youth and registered apprenticeship opportunities. Strategic emphasis will be placed on seeking solutions to work-based learning barriers at all levels of learning. Iowa will also continue its commitment to refining processes and protocols for validating the state's most in-demand industry certifications and credentials, ensuring an assessment and accountability system that is fully aligned to the needs of the state's workforce.

- Engage Iowa's students in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self-directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Access to academic counseling, expansion of guided pathways which are aligned to career pathways.

State Strategy 2.2: Educate the system, partners and communities about the programs, initiatives, resources and opportunities available to up-skill the workforce.

- The goal of the state is to clearly communicate available pathways, resources and opportunities to students, adults, academic and work counselors, employers, community workforce partners as well as to those who might be assisting in choosing career pathways through an interactive website. These resources and pathways will also be communicated via printed brochures, flyers and social media by the system as a whole. Education faculty, staff, and administrators also help communicate information through public relations messaging, orientations, one-on-one advising, public meetings, and other methods.
- Develop a guide for students and parents, as well as another for high school counselors and administrators, which will include information on the various career pathways. The main message for all pathways is to make every credit count. The goal is to help parents, students, advisors and instructors understand that students should enroll in dual credit courses that have value and count towards their postsecondary plans.
- Standardize messaging across programs, initiatives and resources and focus communication to those Iowans who are in most need of enhanced skill development.

State Strategy 2.3: Connect all Iowans with long-term career opportunities from high-growth, in-demand sectors.

- 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.
- Over the next four years, we will encourage sector partnerships to focus on their role in informing career pathway development for youth, adults, and individuals facing barriers

to education and employment by promoting a recently developed framework and offering tools, resources, and technical assistance.

- 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.

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

Strategies associated with this goal will be measured through the number of co-enrollments and the percentage of growth in the number of participants utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT). Number of IETs offered, participants, completion - WIOA outcome measures.

State Strategy 3.1: Align workforce programs and initiatives to improve service delivery and outcomes for all Iowans.

- Alignment of programs across the workforce system will greatly improve seamless delivery of services and outcomes for Iowans engaged in those activities. Core partners realize that alignment of policy, resources, programs and staffing will result in a system integrated to drive success.
- All core programs will work to blend and braid resources to the extent possible to maximize benefits to Iowans, reducing duplication of services and enhancing the customer experience.
- Core partners will assess policies, both joint and individual, that can align to performance outcomes. They will assess programs for duplication and work to align those programs across the partners for a more streamlined integrated approach. Partners will also inventory resources to look for cohesive ways in balancing those resources across the system to better impact outcomes for customers.

State Strategy 3.2: Ensure seamless access to programs and services of the workforce delivery system to all Iowans.

- The quality of workforce development services is dependent upon the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities.
- All core partners will employ an integrated service delivery model, giving customers seamless access to all programs and services needed, while reducing duplication of effort amongst programs. All core programs will promote a concurrent and contextual approach to their service delivery activities.
- Cross training will be a major focus between partners, programs, communities and employers to ensure Iowan's have access to services no matter which door they step into.

- Continued expansion of accessible technology resources, alignment of case management and program delivery systems and a seamless referral system that promotes program accountability and ultimately success for the individual.

State Strategy 3.3: Continuous improvement of the system to ensure no programmatic or physical barriers exist to accessing programs and services by all Iowans.

- Implement continuous professional development for staff from all programs to elevate internal expertise and professionalism and to equip them with the tools necessary to operate a comprehensive, holistic approach to talent development.
- Core partners will participate in and support state and local area Disability Access Committees work in improving physical, technology and program accessibility for Iowan’s.

III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports 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).

Iowa’s State Board membership structure is codified in Iowa Code Chapter 84A. Per Iowa Code, Iowa’s State Board voting membership is 33 voting members. The State Board meets the WIOA requirements with respect to the percentage share that representatives of business and the workforce must have:

- 17 representatives of business make up 51.5% of the State Board’s voting membership; and
- 7 representatives of the workforce make up 21.2% of the State Board’s voting membership.

Representatives of the Workforce

The representatives of the workforce consist of:

- 4 representatives of labor organizations;
- 2 representatives of community-based organizations; and
- 1 representative of a joint labor-management Registered Apprenticeship program, who is a training director.

State Elected Officials

The State Board has the following state elected officials as voting members:

- The Governor;
- 1 state senator from the Iowa Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate after consultation with the Majority Leader of the Senate; and
- 1 state representative from the Iowa House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives after consultation with the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

Local Chief Elected Officials

The State Board has the following local chief elected officials:

- 1 member of a county board of supervisors; and
- 1 mayor.

Representatives of the Government

The WIOA final rules require that, where the lead official represents more than one core program, that official must ensure adequate representation of the needs of all core programs under his or her jurisdiction. The WIOA final rules also allow that, where one state agency administers multiple required programs, the head of that agency may represent those programs on the State Board. 20 CFR section 679.100(d)(iii)(A) contains the list of required representatives of the Government, which includes “lead State officials with primary responsibility” for the core programs:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under WIOA Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program authorized under WIOA Title II; and
- State Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV.

In Iowa, there are two distinct Vocational Rehabilitation programs. One is administered by the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and one is administered by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), which is a division of the Iowa Department of Education.

The State Board has the following four representatives of Government who are responsible for representing the following WIOA core programs:

- Director of IWD, who represents the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs under WIOA Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program under WIOA Title III;
- Director of the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), who represents the Vocational Rehabilitation program administered by IDB under WIOA Title IV;
- Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), who represents the Vocational Rehabilitation program administered by IVRS under WIOA Title IV; and
- Director of the Iowa Department of Education, who represents the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program under WIOA Title II.

Some of these representatives represent more programs than just their respective core programs on the State Board. This is necessary to achieve the purposes of WIOA and the State Board and is expressly authorized by 20 CFR section 679.100(f)(3), which states that a State Board member may not serve as a representative of more than one core program “except where a single government agency is responsible for multiple required programs, the head of the agency may represent each of the required programs.” In Iowa, the Director of IWD and Director of the Iowa Department of Education are the heads of agencies that are responsible for multiple required programs.

In addition to the WIOA Title I programs and Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program, the Director of IWD represents the following programs and grants that are administered by the agency:

- Unemployment insurance (UI);
- Reemployment (RES and RESEA);
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG);
- PROMISE JOBS, the State’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment and Training program, which IWD administers in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services;
- Trade Act Assistance (TAA);
- Ticket to Work (TTW);
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW);
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC);
- Federal Disability Employment Initiative Round 6 grant, which IWD administers in partnership with Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC);
- Federal Apprenticeship Expansion grant;
- Home Base Iowa; and
- State Offender and Ex-Offender Re-Entry.

In addition to the AEFLA program under WIOA Title II, the Director of the Iowa Department of Education also represents the following programs that are administered by the agency:

- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education; and
- State Kindergarten through 12th grade programs, such as the Statewide Work-Based Learning Intermediary Network.

Iowa Code section 260C.50 is entitled “Adult education and literacy programs.” Iowa Code section 260C.50(2) states, “The [Iowa] Department [of Education] and the community colleges shall jointly implement adult education and literacy programs to assist adults and youths sixteen years of age and older who are not in school in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for further education, work, and community involvement.” Iowa has 15 community colleges, each of which received an AEFLA grant. In addition to the Director of the Iowa Department of Education, the State Workforce Development Board also has a nonvoting member who is appointed by the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents.

Representatives of Business

Each of the 17 representatives of business meet the requirements in WIOA section 101(b)(1)(C)(i) and the final rules. These members:

- Are the owner or chief executive officer for the business or organization, or is an executive with the business or organization with optimum policy-making or hiring authority, and also may be members of a local workforce development board as described in WIOA sec. 107(b)(2)(A)(i);
- Represent businesses, or organizations that represent businesses that, at a minimum, provide employment and training opportunities that include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and
- Are appointed from a list of potential members nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations.

Multiple members represent small businesses as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The Iowa State Workforce Development Board meets quarterly. There are four required standing committees per Iowa Code:

- Operational
- Policies, procedures, and practices
- Youth
- Disability Access Committee

In addition, the SWDB has standing committees dedicated to Ex-Offender Re-Entry and Minority Unemployment and Outreach efforts. IWD currently performs the administrative functions for the state board, however Iowa is exploring options to provide the board a full-time Executive Director to support the work of the board. All information related to the SWDB can be found at <https://www.iowawdb.gov>.

2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State 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, as appropriate.

Iowa Workforce Development

Iowa has implemented an integrated service delivery model since 2010. By collocating and integrating workforce programs, Iowa's workforce delivery system has been coordinating services in an efficient, cost-effective manner for several years. The service delivery system strives to provide businesses with the skilled workers they need by assisting job seekers to gain and expand their skills for in-demand industries and occupations. Iowa recognizes the need to continually improve services for all customers, and places emphasis on the continuous enhancement of existing approaches while concurrently determining new, innovative approaches for service delivery.

There has been a long-standing emphasis on co-enrollment across programs in Iowa, however there was a lack of an official procedure. In August 2019, a co-enrollment procedure became effective pertaining to Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Ticket to Work, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW), Returning Citizens, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Registered Apprenticeship (RA).

The procedure spans from 100 percent co-enrollment between Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Dislocated Workers who are Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) certified, to when co-enrollment with other programs is beneficial to the customer. The use of Integrated Resource Teams is encouraged to maximize the benefits of co-enrollment without placing a burden on the customer while ensuring all programs have met their individual program policy requirements.

Across programs, emphasis is placed on working, and supporting, a customer through the time in which they attain their career goals. The time in which a customer may actively participate in a program differs based upon many factors. However, under common exit, the participant must complete services from all programs in which they are co-enrolled in order to exit from the system. In Iowa, common exit applies to participants who are co-enrolled in Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

The importance of work-based learning is a common theme throughout the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Iowa recognizes the importance of work-based learning, and

the impact it can have on growing Iowa's workforce. Various programs specifically accent work-based learning within their requirements. For example, Iowa has maintained successful performance since program year 2015 in meeting the 20 percent work experience requirement for Title I Youth.

Additionally, IWD received \$982,767.73 from the U.S. Department of Labor to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in the state. This grant's Period of Performance runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022. The goals of this grant are:

- Add 440 Registered Apprentices
 - 200 from RA Career Planners
 - 240 Request for Proposals
- Start 50 Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Iowa
- Help employers start or grow Registered Apprenticeship Programs in high-growth, high-tech industries: health care and advanced manufacturing, along with RAPS that reach rural communities
- Expand opportunities to underrepresented populations, including women, minorities, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities
- At least 25 percent of RA Sponsors included on Iowa's Eligible Training Provider List

Enhanced programming in the areas of work-based learning is an on-going goal within Iowa throughout the next four years.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Core Partners collaborate in high schools and learn about each other's services; make warm hand-offs and referrals; provide Pre-Employment Transition services, and plan events together. All members link up and coordinate services with community college teams. Specialized services from the Department for the Blind (IDB) are provided onsite for high school students as needed.

The personnel of both VR state entities provide technical assistance to improve programmatic and physical accessibility of One-Stops, and provide integration among Center programs.

IVRS and IDB continue to build relationships to ensure our clients and job candidates can utilize services in a welcoming atmosphere. Each Center worked on a strategy in making referrals and tracking them in an integrated service continuum. The state coordinated a strategy to improve customer-service, which Iowa implemented statewide. There are continued efforts to promote and replicate best practices across One-Stop Centers. Core partners meet in every region to work on problem solving and address issues impeding service provision. Joint efforts also occur between core partners during National Disability Employment Awareness Month annually. Also included are initiatives specific to: co-enrolment in future-ready Iowa initiatives, job fairs, internships, apprenticeships, on-the job training opportunities, career days, expos, and business tours.

Iowa Department of Education

The Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) maintains the lead role in the implementation and achievement of objectives related to sector partnerships and career pathways across the state, thereby assuming a more formal advisory role to the State Workforce Development Board. The SPLC membership emphasizes business, industry, and employer representation so that the council is truly industry led and oriented. Membership of the board is posted on the Department's website: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/adult-career-and-community-college/sector-partnerships/sector-partnership-leadership-council>

Resources have included facilitator trainings, a series of downloadable toolkit publications, community of practice networking opportunities, and survey findings of Iowa's sector partnerships. Guidance has been leveraged to aid in the expansion and development of sector partnerships through the stages of planning, emerging, and sustaining. Additional information and resources are housed at SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov.

Adult education and literacy providers are encouraged to be involved and at the table in the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development in their respective regions with a focus on aligning services. Through involvement with the Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration project, a three-year technical assistance grant, Title II has been working to connect the process of sector partnerships to career pathways through the development of integrated education and training activities.

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.

Iowa Workforce Development

The core program partners are committed to working together to implement the goals of Future Ready Iowa. The Future Ready Iowa initiative was created after Iowa received a National Governors Association grant in 2014 for up to \$170,000 to develop strategies to improve the educational and training attainment of Iowans and the alignment of those degrees to credentials with employer demand. Future Ready Iowa aims to build Iowa's talent pipeline for the careers of today and tomorrow. Several strategies have been derived as a result of the Future Ready Iowa initiative, including the Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning, the Employer Innovation Fund and the Last-Dollar Scholarship.

The Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning connects students and employers through shared projects that give students professional experience. This virtual platform is available to all Iowa schools, K-12 classrooms, and businesses for project involvement through a system where both classes and businesses can enter themselves as an interested party and browse for a good match

for a project. Students work on the projects primarily in the classroom, making this distinctly different from work-study or internship formats.

The Employer Innovation Fund was developed to expand the opportunities for more Iowans to earn for-credit and non-credit postsecondary credentials leading to high-demand jobs and encouraging Iowa employers, community leaders and others to collaborate to support regional workforce talent development. The fund awards competitive grants to support regional initiatives that accelerate credential attainment.

The Last-Dollar Scholarship program helps Iowans achieve education and training in high-demand jobs by paying the tuition for those who enroll in a pre-identified occupational program. This effort is geared towards training Iowans for in-demand occupations while meeting the needs of employers and growing Iowa's economy. The Last-Dollar Scholarship is intended to cover any remaining gap between federal and state grants and scholarships and the student's tuition and fees. Training programs included on the Last-Dollar Scholarship list are approved by the State Workforce Development Board, and can be found at <https://www.futurereadyiowa.gov/college-list>.

Iowa maintains a commitment to supporting registered apprenticeship programs and increasing the number of registered apprentices by providing training grants through the Iowa Apprenticeship Act and the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund.

The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to \$3 million for training grants awarded to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to conduct and maintain registered 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 Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards are eligible for an IEDA training grant.

The Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA with \$1 million being appropriated for Fiscal Year 2019. 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.

Additionally, an online website: <https://www.earnandlearniowa.gov/> was developed to help employers understand how a registered apprenticeship program works, the value it brings to their business and the resources available to help them set up a registered apprenticeship program. Job seekers can also learn why a registered apprenticeship leads to a successful career and how to get involved and connected to a registered apprenticeship program. An accessible list of sponsors is maintained on the website.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

According to the local service plans in each region, IVRS and the partners have developed highly collaborative strategies designed to help ensure that the customers in both rural and urban locations can receive the total package of services they require to be best prepared for the local “in-demand” jobs in our communities. For the transition-aged population, very collaborative joint programs have been developed to expand capacity to serve the host of eligible and potentially eligible students in the state. In most districts, the high school “Fall Plan” for the district involves Title I, II, III, and IV staff, community college Intermediary programs, the Intermediary IN programs, VR, and the Department for the Blind, as well as DHS case management, and the local community rehabilitation programs. Other collaborative programs would include Transition Alliance Programs (TAP) which involve local high school staff, VR and IDB staff, local businesses, Community Rehabilitation Programs, Intermediary Network programs, AEL, Title I, and Wagner-Peyser staff. These programs provide pre-employment transition services, job shadowing, work skills, career awareness, and job placement and follow up services to job candidates transitioning from high school. Other collaborative programs impacting the transition-aged youth might include TEAM, Making The Grade, and Project SEARCH. For the adult population, the local service plans have worked to integrate services through the process of cross training so that all partners can identify both core or outside partner agencies with specific roles where warm referrals might be made. Local business services teams are integrated, such that in many regions, there is time set aside for case staffing, response to local business needs with those who have the needed expertise, and for planning and carrying out of public events like National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events, job fairs, reverse job fairs, plant tours, and summer programs. A process has been developed for referral of individuals interested in an apprenticeship to be provided the needed information and referred to appropriate Center staff through a “passport” process.

Iowa Department for the Blind

IVRS and IDB work with Workforce boards and One-Stop Centers to assess program and physical accessibility as part of each area's Disability Access Committee. Additionally, cross-training opportunities are made available for interagency staff and partners to increase their understanding of the ADA and of available or needed assistive technology solutions. A regional plan is in place for integrated business services and responses to business requests for accessibility surveys, consultations on disability issues, job analyses, and recommendations for AT or accommodations strategies on the job. A process has been developed locally for Rapid Response, as well as responding to requests for reasonable accommodations. Core partner meetings occur with optional partners across the state to help with aligning services. Many regions have worked on sector partnerships to assist in developing career pathways. Business and community colleges continue to be involved in these partnerships.

Iowa Department of Corrections

Individuals with a criminal record face significant barriers in finding and keeping gainful employment. A 2010 study by the Center for Economic Policy Research estimates that reentrants are employed at a rate that is 5 to 20 percent lower than the general population. Without the skills to successfully re-enter the labor market, reentrants struggle to interrupt the cycle of recidivism. Career pathway models have shown promise in supporting individuals who

face barriers to employment. Career pathways combine education and training, work experience, and basic workplace skills (“soft” skills) to prepare individuals for success in the workforce. In a corrections setting, a career pathway model can align and connect education, training, counseling, and work experience opportunities within the prison to support inmates in building skills and experience needed to get – and keep – a job once released. The Iowa Department of Education has also developed interagency agreements with the Department of Corrections to provide the appropriate and necessary services. By making career pathways—or the sequence of education, training, and work experience within the IDOC—clearer and more visible, the IDOC is increasing opportunities for inmates to ‘chart their own course’ and build the skills and experience needed to succeed in jobs and careers.

Leveraging the WIOA priority on serving individuals with barriers to employment (including reentrants), IDOC is partnering with core partners in sharing labor market information, delivering reentry employment trainings and other key strategies to work with inmates and network with employers to address the barriers they may have in hiring returning citizens. The workforce development system is just one of many partners providing services to reentrants. Reentrants need extensive support, including housing, substance abuse treatment, medical care, family reunification and childcare, transportation. The IDOC is continuing to create relationships with organizations that support reentrants.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE, Perkins V, specifies that one of the purposes of the Act is to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical employability skills by increasing the employment opportunities for populations who are chronically unemployed or underemployed, including individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, out-of-workforce individuals, youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, and homeless individuals. To accomplish this mission, secondary and community college staff will be supported in their efforts to provide equal access to their activities to special populations under the Act, including:

- Continue to collaborate with representatives from community college, K-12, AEAs, higher education, corrections, vocational rehabilitation, vocational services, business and industry, workforce and economic development, human services, and related agencies. Participants have an interest in special population students and provide guidance, input, and support for statewide equity efforts to ensure equal access to non-traditional employment, training, and programs.
- Continue to collect and analyze disaggregated program data to evaluate access and achievement of the special population students. The data serves as a benchmark to measure participation and completion rates for male and female students in non-traditional career programs; and is designed to understand equity gaps better to support program improvement processes.
- Continue to provide information to guidance counselors, teachers, community college student services personnel and faculty, and other key stakeholders regarding the value of non-traditional occupations and strategies to promote them at the local level, including media promotion of non-traditional employment.

- Continue to award grants from the State Leadership Fund to serve individuals in the state correctional institutions, both those serving youth and those serving adults. The funds available will be utilized to provide services to individuals who choose to enroll in CTE programs.

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 (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

A key component in coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high quality customer-centered services, is to increase the integration of services made available to all job seekers on a local and regional level. The integration of services provided by all core and required program partners will also consider the future educational and employment needs of the job seekers served throughout Iowa. Expanding collaboration efforts around methods to improve local service delivery by improving our assessment of the opportunities and needs of individuals -- along with employer engagement -- will be key in our efforts to administer high quality, customer-centered services.

Sector Partnership Leadership Council

Iowa has developed and promoted an integrated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development, which will provide comprehensive, high quality customer-centered services. The regional planning process included an examination of target population data provided by the state data team and other relevant local studies. Regional areas examined supply-side data and considered ways to leverage partners' expertise, programs, and resources to connect available talent pools to career opportunities in targeted industries. The planning process included analysis of how the partners in each region will address the specific needs of the targeted populations and an asset mapping process to inventory the career, education, training and supportive services that are available in each region.

Labor Market Information and Career Pathways

Labor market information (LMI) and demand-driven data set the foundation for the WIOA career services in Iowa. LMI utilized through the statewide platform, Career Coach, a web-based tool that incorporates Iowa specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages will allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services.

Iowa's Career Pathway efforts uses this data to provide individuals with research groupings of careers, LMI and the knowledge, skills, abilities and credentials that are required for each occupation. Through partnerships between the core and required partners, Iowa's career pathways support local programs that empower students and participants of all ages to explore their academic and career interests. Iowa will leverage the work of statewide, public-private partnerships to better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those career pathways to expand access along with interactive delivery with the goal of providing more opportunities for targeted individuals.

Workforce and education partners including adult education, Career and Technical Education and Iowa's Community College system will expand career development guides and technical assistance materials to promote leading career pathway models and best practices that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. These technical assistance materials (along with associated professional development) will address how to improve career services and expand customer access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. They will also address how to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives in order to achieve outcomes similar to those of other populations.

Coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services

A key strategy outlined for Iowa is the development of policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management. Iowa is working to develop case management teams to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the required and optional program partners at the local level. As part of the cross-agency training and professional development which will be developed through a partnership with the core partners to ensure that needs are clearly understood by all parties, both core and required. This includes leveraging the resources of partners such as adult education to provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. Finally, as mentioned earlier, training will be delivered through technological solutions in order to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

Incorporation of Required Partner Services to Targeted Populations

Iowa will highlight and encourage adoption of the best practices that are identified in statewide innovation projects that serve targeted populations throughout the state. This includes joint projects between the agencies responsible for administering the required WIOA programs.

- Aligning and implementing the best practices of the current and future Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Projects. Iowa has partnered with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to explore Iowa service integration and the implementation of the requirements of WIOA. Leadership from

core partner agencies worked with WINTAC to develop a strategy to engage staff in establishing a common service flow in IowaWORKS sites. These efforts are designed to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities (aged 18 and above) in integrated career pathway and academic programs through community colleges and non-profit organizations in cooperation with Iowa's workforce development system, including the one-stop centers, local workforce development areas and other regional partners.

- Aligning and developing integrated education and training (IET) programs for low-literacy and low-skilled adults to concurrently address foundational skills with workforce training. The state's IET programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career path employment in demand occupations. The core partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based education and training programs that provide opportunities for low-skilled and low-literate youth and adults. The state will support new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-IET, and IET models that expand access and success of low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest.
- The state recognizes the use of bridge programs as a foundation for career pathway systems and also as a foundation for employment opportunities and other training. Title II will work closely with core and required partners under WIOA to re-examine the use of IET programs for those individuals who lack basic skills as a way of connecting with Title I and Title III for training opportunities, and with Title IV and Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) will ensure participants have access to needed supportive services, while preventing duplication of services. Joint staffing, cross-training and consultations ensure the participants get the services they need.
- Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved and returning citizens. Iowa is exploring a range of career pathway models for justice-involved participants that examines best practices and ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible these models will be folded into existing correctional efforts for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.
- Aligning and coordinating foster youth employment and training programs including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Activities to expand career pathway services for older foster youth who are nearing age-out is a priority for the core partners. Successful models for braiding and blending WIOA and other required partners' funds are under consideration as a basis for Iowa's effort.
- Aligning and coordinating critical programs and services for Veterans. Iowa veterans will be served through the WIOA priority of service as well as targeted initiatives administered by the workforce and education partners and the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs. As the WIOA definition of case management describes, it takes a

community of resources to assist Veterans to overcome/mitigate the identified barriers to employment and get them back into the workforce.

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 and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

A proven strategy to better collaborate and align the efforts of core WIOA program partners not only with one another, but also with those of ancillary partner or support services within a community or region with similar goals, is through an employer-driven, community-supported sector partnership initiative. Through a shared table methodology, employers are invited to review their local workforce, economic, and community development needs, identify areas of focus, and then access a suite of wraparound services and support partners to help them achieve these local goals.

Although the common goal generally revolves around the attraction, development, and retention of a skilled workforce within a respective industry sector and region, the solutions can often vary greatly based on factors such as location, timeline, and capacity. Each group strives to be employer-led as much as possible and rely on their volunteer employer member to assume official leadership roles, fill subcommittee or working group positions, and actively participate in planning, implementing, and tracking various solutions to achieve their goals. A key strength of such a sector partnership is that all employers from a respective industry or region are welcome to join, including small business owners and those who may not be as consistently called upon for other workforce or community initiatives. This diversity of employers and support partners often leads to stronger, more lasting solutions and relationships.

Iowa Department of Education

The Iowa Department of Education partners with these sector partnership groups to offer broad statewide support through the development and validation of robust career pathways materials, industry-specific work-based learning guidance, and the identification or accreditation of industry recognized credentials. Additional technical and financial support efforts are modeled after successful programs from other states, as well as direct feedback from current and past sector partnership teams.

Iowa Workforce Development

Similar to the benefits the IowaWORKS system provides job-seeker customers, the system also provides enhanced labor exchange access to Iowa's business customers. The system allows for enhanced recruiting for employers and third party agents. In Iowa's previous data management system, third party agents had to create individual accounts for their clients. In IowaWORKS,

they have the ability to create an account and select to represent their clients. This allows either party to inactivate the relationship at any time.

Employers are able to register and create a company profile, enter and manage job orders, manage recruitment, search for qualified job seekers, and view resumes and profiles of those qualified job seekers.

The Iowa *WORKS* system includes the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) module. The WOTC module allows employers and third party agents to complete electronic entry of IRS Form 8850 and ETA Form 9061, complete batch upload of applications, upload verification documentation, including powers of attorney, have access to application status, receive notification of determinations and requests for information, print certifications and have access to denials and requests for information. The functionality for employers and third party agents to upload applications, powers of attorney and verification documents helps to protect personally identifiable information of the employees and applicants.

In order to meet the needs of business across the state, Iowa utilizes the Employers' Council of Iowa (ECI). ECI is an advisory group that is located in each local area, and offers no-cost membership to all businesses in the local area. The role of ECI is to guide Iowa Workforce Development's (IWDs) business focus, address topics of concern to employers, sponsor training initiatives and assist IWD in meeting critical human resource needs.

In addition to local area ECI groups, Iowa maintains a State ECI board. The State ECI board represents local ECI members within their respective local areas at state meetings, serves as resource contact in the local area for ECI education and promotion, maintains communication with IWD and local AJC's in the area to lend support, to improve services, and to exchange information and ideas, maintains a high level of communication with local ECI Chairs and keep them informed about state and national issues relating to employers and IWD and gathers and disseminates information about the activities of local councils.

The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) remains a tool to connect with business. 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 representatives from, but not limited to, the core partners. Individuals from high school transition age to the aging population are also represented.

Iowa's core partners have developed strong partnerships at the local area levels with respect to business engagement. Integrated business outreach teams were developed to deliver quality services to employers in a one-contact format. Teams from the core partners are cross trained in each other's services so that whether one person from that team visits the employer or a small team of core partner's visit, the employer walks away with a contact that can speak on behalf of and connect that employer to any of the services offered from the system. The core partner business engagement teams meet regularly to debrief from visits, review next steps and deliver the services that are tailored to the employer's needs.

Similar to the core partner business engagement teams, IWD and IVRS staff at the local level have teamed up to deliver on-site ADA assessments to any employer that requests. All staff have been trained to deliver and support employer's efforts in assessing their physical sites for accessibility opportunities.

A key initiative in Iowa, supporting employers with up skilling and expanding their workforce is the Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund. This fund is a grant opportunity to carry out creative solutions that address local workforce issues. It encourages employers, community leaders, and others to lead efforts for developing regional workforce talent pools. Employers can promote credit and non-credit education and training opportunities in high-demand jobs.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Services to businesses are tracked between core partner programs. Businesses are able to inform partner programs of their needs through the Workforce Board activities. Invitations are extended to partners in the Rapid Response team efforts.

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).

Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Department of Education

One of the best ways to ensure that future workers will meet the new and evolving skill requirements for jobs is through partnership with postsecondary educational institutions. To meet the skill needs of employers, partnerships 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 does not 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 masters' universities,
- 19 baccalaureate colleges,
- 21 associate's colleges.

In addition, 11 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.

Effective July 1, 2017, following the competition and the awarding of the Title II funds, all 15 of Iowa's community colleges are providers of adult education and literacy services. Since as early as 1918, Iowa's community colleges have been committed to preparing a skilled workforce to contribute to Iowa's economic growth and stability. Iowa's 15 community colleges educate well over half (58.5 percent) of all Iowa residents enrolled in public or private two- and four-year postsecondary institutions in the state, exceeding the national average of 41.0 percent reported by the American Association of Community Colleges. In addition, the student body served by Iowa's community colleges has become increasingly diverse. Students representing racial and ethnic minorities made up a record high 22.4 percent of total enrollment during the 2018-2019 academic year (AY) at Iowa's community colleges. As such, Community Colleges serve a critical role in the state reaching its Future Ready Iowa goal of 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce with education or training beyond high school by 2025.

As grant recipients for Title II funds, Iowa's community colleges are well poised to support the needs of adult learners, to effectively incorporate workplace skills and workforce training and to provide high quality educational instruction to participants in adult education and literacy activities. As partners, Iowa's 15 locally governed community colleges play vital roles in the economic development of their communities and the state. In several regions, community colleges are the service providers for Title I Youth and Adult, Dislocated Workers as well as providing the physical space for the one-stop centers therefore offering a full range of assistance to job seekers. As key partners in statewide industry, workforce, and education initiatives, Iowa's community colleges provide individuals with access to high-quality education and training to ensure employers have a pipeline of skilled workers that meet their specific needs. By working together and forming connections with local business and industry, community organizations, state agencies, and other key stakeholders, Iowa's community colleges are tightly linked to regional economic development and labor force needs and well-positioned to collaboratively address statewide challenges. As such, for every dollar of public money spent on educating students at Iowa's community colleges, taxpayers receive an average return of \$3.50 over the working lives of the students.

One-Stop staff are partnering with educational institutions to provide relevant 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 ETPL. 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 Vocational Rehabilitation Services

IVRS agencies provide counseling and guidance, assistive technology and other services and support for participants who have disabilities to be able to access programs at the community colleges and CTE schools. Title IV programs initiate jointly planned business tours, career days, job fairs, and summer pre-employment transition services programs with local educational institutions.

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.

Iowa Workforce Development

The State chose to utilize the ETPL module within the IowaWORKS system. This transition led to a significant change in which training providers would apply and be maintained on the list. In 2018, each provider on the ETPL was contacted with information on why and how to transition to the new system.

Additionally, updated ETPL policies were drafted, posted for public comment and taken before the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) for approval. WIOA compliant ETPL policies were passed by the SWDB in September of 2019, and became effective November 15, 2019. The combination of updated ETPL policies, and a WIOA compliant ETPL module, will ensure that training providers are engaged and maintained accurately and according to federal regulations. As Iowa continues to progress in the area of ETPL management and maintenance, we will also be able to shift focus on progression of outreach and engagement of new training providers to ensure the intent of consumer choice is fully applied.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Title IV programs work with program participants to access to on-the-job trainings, occupational skill trainings, apprenticeship programs, community-based trainings, and other programs offered through local educational institutions and community providers.

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).

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 of bringing diverse agencies and programs together.

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 procurement for the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund (ISWJCF) allocated to Iowa’s 15 community colleges, AEL services are being provided to individuals who need assistance acquiring the skills necessary to be successful in job training and employment. Funds from the state are leveraged with Title II funds, awarded through competition, to increase access to services through Your Future Starts Here Iowa (<http://yourfuturestartshereIowa.org/>). In addition, providers from community and faith based organizations are engaged with the Iowa Literacy Council, engaged in statewide efforts to increase access for adult education and literacy services including services targeting English Language Acquisition participants. These organizations are leveraged by ensuring a pipeline for participants with shared best practices and a connection to the American Job Network.

Funds leveraged from the state procurement for AEL programs adhere to the allowable use restrictions of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). The \$5.3 million investment has supported efforts to integrate standards based instruction with workplace learning to prepare participants to successfully transition to postsecondary training and careers. The funds received by the community colleges is used to expand services and improve the quality of AEL programs. Now more than ever, Iowans understand that college and career readiness is the first step to success. They realize that education, skill acquisition, and training have become necessary to succeed in both postsecondary education and the workforce. In 2016, the Iowa State Board of Education adopted a new definition of college and career readiness to reflect what students should achieve to be prepared for postsecondary success. Iowa students who are college and career ready have successfully:

- achieved proficiency in essential content knowledge;
- acquired practical transition skills;
- developed key learning skills and cognitive strategies; and
- built a strong foundation of self-understanding and engagement strategies.

Iowa’s community colleges facilitate college and career readiness through programs such as joint enrollment, work-based learning opportunities, adult education and literacy, and high-quality credit and noncredit programs.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

WIOA requires that 15 percent of the budget be allocated towards the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). IVRS has developed strong policy surrounding the provision of Pre-ETS service delivery. IVRS collaborates with every public school district in Iowa to develop a Local School Plan that addresses the following information: the services the school district will provide to students with disabilities, the new and/or expanded services IVRS will provide within the district, services provided by community partners and/or IVRS contracted programs, and any gaps in services. Local School Plans are also developed with private accredited high schools across the state along with some identified alternative educational settings.

- As gaps in services are identified on the Local School Plans each Fall, programs have been developed collaboratively with school districts and other community partners across the state. The following programs have been developed to assist with delivering VR services, including Pre-ETS, in collaboration with school districts across the state:
- IVRS Intermediary Networks (INs): IVRS awarded funding through the Department of Education/IowaGrants to regional intermediary networks to develop and expand work-based learning opportunities in selected regions. The program 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 (STEM). The goal is to align students' career interests to appropriate post-secondary education through delivery of Pre-ETS.
- 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.
- Making the Grade (MTG): Students with disabilities 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 with disabilities in participating high schools are placed in paid work-based learning experiences in the community to assist with skill building necessary for their future career.
- 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.
- Transition Alliance Program (TAP): TAP is a 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.

- **Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself (TEAM):** TEAM is a collaboration between Easter Seals, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS). The focus of TEAM is on developing and providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are attending all high schools within Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS), including students covered under Section 511 and students who are potentially eligible for IVRS, prior to graduation. TEAM staff will work collaboratively with the IVRS Counselors assigned to DMPS and the DMPS Work Experience Coordinators (WECs) in order to provide new or expanded services for students with disabilities in each of the five required activities for Pre-ETS. TEAM may not duplicate any class or program already provided by the district. Year round services will be provided to include activities that occur during the school day and after school, as well as activities throughout the summer.
- **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. Multiple state agency partners, including juvenile placement settings, are assisting with the development of policy, procedure, and structural elements of its Juvenile Reentry System (JReS). The goal of JReS is the reduction of recidivism rates and to improve other youth outcomes through implementation of comprehensive system-wide reforms to juvenile reentry policies and processes, which include: enhanced cross-system coordination, utilization of quality and effective programming, data sharing and prioritization of resources. IVRS has been an active partner in this process for implementation of Pre-ETS in these alternative educational settings.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. A current Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) defines the responsibilities of both divisions. This MoA is designed 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.

Iowa Student Aid Commission

The rising price of higher education often stands in the way of college aspirations. Fewer than 1 in 4 adults believe college is affordable to everyone in the United States. In order to receive any federal financial aid, most state financial aid and even many forms of institutional aid, students must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. In 2016–17, the number of Iowans filing the FAFSA was 157,444, which is 5 percent lower than the previous academic year. The number of filers has been gradually declining since 2011–12 and is reflective of Iowa’s recovery from the Great Recession. As job availability has improved over time, some Iowans were more likely to enter the workforce than to enroll in college.

In 2016–17, roughly \$316 million in Pell Grants was awarded to students attending Iowa institutions with an average award amount being approximately \$3,500. The lowest-income students—those eligible for the federal Pell Grant—are most likely to enroll in two-year institutions. Nearly half of Pell recipients enroll in community colleges, nearly a quarter in Regent universities and nearly another quarter in private not-for-profit institutions.

The state of Iowa appropriations for financial aid in 2017–18 were \$63.6 million, which was down 4 percent from the year before. The largest state-funded financial aid program is the Iowa Tuition Grant for private not-for-profit institutions. In 2017–18, funding for this program was \$46,630,951, or nearly three-quarters of scholarship and grant appropriations. In 2016–17, the state of Iowa funded 20,807 grant and scholarship awards totaling \$66,392,369.

The Kibbie Grant is one of two state-funded grant programs Iowa College Aid administers specifically for students enrolled in career education and career option programs at Iowa community colleges. The second program, the Iowa Vocational Technical Tuition Grant (IVTG), has been operational since the 1974-75 academic year. IVTG provides need-based grants to students who enroll in any career education or career option course at an Iowa community college. The eligibility criteria for the Kibbie Grant and IVTG are generally the same, with three primary differences:

- The IVTG serves students in all career education and career option programs at Iowa community colleges, whereas the Kibbie Grant serves only students enrolled in targeted career education and career option programs that lead to occupations in Iowa that are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers.
- The maximum award for the IVTG is set statutorily at \$1,200, whereas the maximum award for the Kibbie Grant adjusts each year to fund one-half of the average tuition and mandatory fees at Iowa community colleges.
- The EFC range for IVTG (\$201–\$5,100) is more limited than that of the Kibbie Grant (\$0–\$6,000), primarily due to the Kibbie Grant receiving a significantly larger appropriation to fund a smaller number of programs of study.

Given the similarities between the Kibbie Grant and the IVTG, stakeholders and Iowa College Aid staff developed an awarding methodology that leverages the grant dollars from each program, as well as the Federal Pell Grant, to provide an adequate amount of grant aid to low-income students. Kibbie Grants are awarded in conjunction with Federal Pell Grants and Iowa Vocational Technical Tuition Grants to leverage federal and state funding with the intent of making a community college education more affordable for low-income students.

Additionally, in the fall of 2019, Iowa College Aid began administering the Future Ready Last Dollar Scholarship and Future Ready Grant. These funds were appropriated to address the goal of having 70 percent of Iowans with a postsecondary degree or industry-recognized credential or certification by 2025. The “last dollar program” takes into account any additional public funding or grants the student is eligible for, such as a federal Pell Grant. The total amount of “last dollar” funding a student receives to cover the direct costs of being a student varies depending on other public funding for which the student is eligible. Programs eligible for funding are based on high demand scholarship as determined by the State Workforce Development Board.

The Future Ready Iowa Grant, aids students who did not complete an eligible bachelor's degree program but have previously earned at least half the credits necessary that will lead to a high-demand job. Accredited Iowa colleges or universities that offer bachelor's degree programs aligned with high-demand jobs must offer student support services, guidance counseling and employment outreach for grant recipients.

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.

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.

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. Partly due to their open access admission policies, community colleges serve a heterogeneous population of students, from those in high school earning college credit through joint enrollment opportunities, to displaced workers seeking industry-recognized training to improve employment prospects. Iowa's community colleges are helping to build the state's talent pipeline by upskilling and recertifying the current workforce. The colleges accomplish

this through a variety of program offerings, which include arts and sciences college parallel (transfer) programs designed to transfer to four-year colleges and universities; career and technical education (CTE) programs to prepare students for industry-specific careers; training and retraining programs for Iowa's businesses and industries; and a variety of adult education and noncredit courses.

Future Ready Iowa

Iowa's Future Ready Iowa initiative aims for 70 percent of Iowans to have a 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 the state, 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 to assist job-seekers in developing a personal career path, accessing the ETPL, and improving direct contact with at-need employers.

Last Dollar Scholarship and Future Ready Grant, as noted above, are initiatives designed to engage new high school graduates and returning adults to complete high demand industry-recognized credentials in targeted programs. These funds are made available through the Iowa College Aid Commission.

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 maintain 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

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:

- Equipping workers with skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed for all Iowans to secure self-sustaining employment.
- Ongoing supports so ALL Iowans can maintain self-sustaining employment and work to their fullest potential.

Career and Technical Education Joint Enrollment

In a potentially positive sign of readiness for both college and careers, the number of Iowa high school students taking college-level courses doubled from 2006–07 to 2016–17. In 2016–17, almost 44,000 students at Iowa high schools were jointly enrolled in college-level courses. The most common courses are technical/vocational, representing more than a third of joint enrollments in 2015–16.

Corrections Education

Iowa’s community colleges are the primary point of entry for most incarcerated and returning citizens. A continuum of educational services is addressing many of the challenges faced by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students including lack of college-readiness and supporting them through to credential, degree, transfer and employment.

Correctional education programs are intended to break the cycle and reduce recidivism by providing opportunities to develop the skills required to succeed in workplaces and communities. These programs range from adult basic education and secondary instruction that enable high school dropouts to earn: (1) high school credentials; (2) career and technical education credentials to equip inmates with the occupational skills needed to find and maintain employment; and (3) postsecondary education credentials to close access, achievement, and completion gaps.

Of the 7,851 federal and state incarcerated individuals in Iowa in AY 2018-19, 20.4 (1,601) percent indicate an educational level less than a high school diploma. Iowa’s community colleges that share the service areas for federal, state and local correctional facilities enrolled 1,673 unique individuals during AY 2018-19 in adult education and literacy (AEL) services. AEL programs pre- and post-test participants after a minimum number of instructional hours. Without a post-test, measuring gains would be impossible. Of those post-tested, 44.35 percent made an educational functioning level gain. Gains also include the awarding of Iowa’s High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) for eligible students passing the state identified assessment, the HiSET®, as a measurement of high school equivalency. In AY 2018-19, there were 1,756 HSED completers in a correctional setting.

Research has shown that access to correctional education and training can boost post-release employability, reduce recidivism, and, by extension, improve stability and mobility for the families and communities most affected. In response to the economic and human effects of incarceration, Iowa is beginning to take steps toward improved transition services, and greater interagency coordination. Iowa will pursue grant opportunities that focus on correctional

education and connections to employment upon reentry with an emphasis on optimizing and increasing access to post-secondary education.

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.

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)

The IEDA has representation on the State Workforce Development Board in accordance with Iowa Code §84A.1A, ensuring coordination between economic development and workforce activities.

IEDA continues to coordinate four workforce training programs that deliver customized training to grow a skilled and talented workforce for Iowa business, including the:

- Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Act (Iowa Code Chapter 260E) which assists businesses creating new positions with new employee training. Eligible businesses may be new to Iowa, expanding the Iowa workforce or relocating to the state.
- Iowa Jobs Training Act (Iowa Code Chapter 260F) which provides job training services to current employees of eligible businesses. The program assists businesses in developing their current workforce in order to remain economically competitive.
- Accelerated Career Education Program Act (Iowa Code Chapter 260G) which is designed to provide businesses with an enhanced, skilled workforce and assists Iowa's community colleges to either establish or expand programs that train individuals in the occupations most needed by Iowa businesses.
- Iowa Apprenticeship Act (Iowa Code Chapter 15B) which was created as a way to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by assisting eligible apprenticeship programs in the form of training grants.

The State's Labor Market Information (LMI) System provides the foundation for workforce analysis, research and strategic planning. The LMI 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.

Statewide Laborshed Study Initiative is a joint initiative between IWD and IEDA to ensure that stakeholders in the workforce development system have up-to-date, common data for planning purposes, including local workforce development plans under WIOA, local economic

development business recruitment/retention data and the effective implementation of individual programs and initiatives such as the WIOA core programs.

Iowa's Laborshed Study was developed by the University of Northern Iowa in 1998 to identify and estimate labor availability based upon documented commuting patterns into a community. IWD took on the responsibility of conducting the Laborshed Study in 2001.

The Laborshed labor market information data generated aids local economic and workforce development officials in their facilitation of industry expansion/recruitment and their service to existing industry in the area. This labor supply study gives employers, economic development entities, workforce development entities, education professionals, students, and workers insight into the availability and characteristics of their local labor force which is not captured in other traditional LMI data.

Between 2001 and June 2018, local economic development organizations, community colleges, and local utility partners were responsible for approximately 25 percent of the total cost incurred for each Laborshed Study. The remaining 75 percent was covered by IWD. This partial fee model made it difficult for many small and rural communities/counties to purchase a Laborshed Study for their local area. It also created inconsistencies in the geography and timeliness of data collection and study completion. While a statewide Laborshed Study has been conducted each year with financial assistance from the IEDA, due to the fee for service model on the individual basis, local and regional Laborshed Studies were not run in a systematic fashion as each local area chose if and when to complete a study. Starting July 2018, in partnership with IEDA, IWD will begin conducting at least one Laborshed Study in each of Iowa's 99 counties at no cost to the local or regional economic development organizations.

The Laborshed data updates is done on a two-year cycle. IWD will complete studies for approximately half (51 counties) the state in state fiscal year 2019 and complete the remaining half (48) in state fiscal year 2020. This biennial rotation will continue year after year.

Even though the Laborshed Studies is 100 percent funded by IEDA and IWD, IWD's LMI Division continues to collaborate with local economic development officials to promote data collection, determine the most effective methods of delivering the resulting information, and presenting to local stakeholders.

The Laborshed Study begins with a survey of a community's employers. IWD asks employers (with 5+ employees) to provide a count of their employees by their residential ZIP code. In partnership with local workforce and economic development contacts, IWD attempts to ensure the participation of each community's largest employers (in terms of employment level) in the survey. After a sufficient response is achieved, IWD aggregates the data and through the use of geographic mapping software displays the Laborshed (commuting) area, by ZIP code, of a community's workforce. Once the Laborshed area has been documented, IWD contracts with a third party vendor to conduct a telephone survey alongside an in-house online survey of individuals (18 to 64 years of age) living within the documented Laborshed area.

This survey consists of questions covering numerous labor force related topics including but not limited to: employment status, likeliness to change/accept employment, occupation, industry, current/desired wages, current/desired benefits, education/training, commuting, and job search methods. Prior to both the employer survey and the residential telephone survey IWD works with local economic developers to coordinate the publication of a news release in the community and surrounding areas to improve survey participation and ease residents' concerns of possible phone scamming in the area.

When the residential survey is completed, IWD projects the results upon the local population using estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The results of the community's and region's Laborshed Study is shared with local stakeholders and are often presented to local economic development, workforce development stakeholders including local employers.

This initiative allows the entire state of Iowa to have up-to-date data for planning purposes, regardless of the size or location of the community, and will consequently improve the ability to have data-based planning for economic and workforce development in the state. In particular, it will better position Local Workforce Development Boards to perform more effective strategic planning with local workforce development plans based on accurate and up-to-date regional analysis.

Additionally, the Future Ready Iowa Coordinator ensures there is a coordinated effort across partner agencies and programs, including the WIOA core programs and the IEDA, to help Iowans meet the goals set out in Future Ready Iowa.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Iowa Workforce partners will work with emerging industries to ensure that they have access to quality, skilled workers for their business.

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. indicators, 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.

Iowa Workforce Development

The Iowa *WORKS* data management system encompasses case management, data collection, reporting, labor exchange, LMI, etc. and is used in all of the AJCs among several partners to track customers and activities in one common database. Iowa *WORKS* is an intuitive, customer centered, WIOA compliant system which allows customers, both job-seekers and employers, as well as AJC staff enhanced access to workforce services and delivery. The system provides a coordinated method to manage multiple programs, while streamlining services to customers. The communication center allows AJC staff to communicate with job-seekers and employers. Appointments and notifications can be easily shared within the system ensuring continuous accessibility for individuals when accessing programs and services.

Job seekers have the have virtual access to enter work registrations, resumes, and explore careers from their homes, or by visiting an AJC. Similarly, employers can easily enter job order information virtually at their own convenience. Iowa will be adding the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module which offers Employer Outreach Specialists, Business Services

Representatives (BSRs), and other workforce system staff a full range of tools and resources to actively manage employer recruitment efforts. The CRM module can be a tool to convert potential business customers into marketing leads in order to provide assistance to these businesses and track the profile details they manage on behalf of the potential employer. The online survey feature will be beneficial in soliciting feedback from users and enhanced data tracking.

Iowa is planning to add a module for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training. Like many of the other modules, individuals can register and apply for services, track activities and services, receive notifications and schedule appointments.

Iowa*WORKS* will also allow access for all Vocational Rehabilitation and Department for the Blind staff. Once complete, all business engagement activities across the core partners will be captured in a single case management system, improving the coordination of services and reporting of employer data. Referrals across core programs will also be completed in the Iowa*WORKS* system; all referrals will be tracked and resulted within the system ensuring no customer falls through the cracks. This system improves Iowa's ability to track co-enrollment and increase the effectiveness of integrated resource teams.

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 Level (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 enables local providers to have immediate access to the data for targeting instruction for continuous program improvement.
- Local data is 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).
- Assessments are 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).

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.

The data collection process begins with local providers 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.

Research is conducted on several adult education-related topics from which analysis and report are produced. Below are the following products:

- Condition of Community Colleges Report
- Annual Condition of Secondary Career and Technical Education
- Analysis of the Economic Impact and Return on Investment of Education
- Fall Enrollment Report
- Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund Reports
- Joint Enrollment Report

B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers¹⁰.

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

¹⁰ For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs.

To begin to overcome these challenges, Iowa intends to explore 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.

The Iowa core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the agencies are able to request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data for performance reporting. WIOA continues to motivate the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate new and innovative methods of sharing data. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the newly established State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) agreement.

The core partners are actively reviewing technology interoperability solutions. While Iowa does not use a fully integrated data system, it is nevertheless committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across core programs with the goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to the participants' employment as quickly as possible. Core partners have been working to identify and address any data collection gaps through the following actions:

- Core partners have adjusted their own data systems in response to performance accountability requirements under WIOA and based on Federal guidance as it became available. Partners have identified data collection methods and standards that are best practices that could be explored for use by other core program partners (e.g., how to account for participants who lack a Social Security number when reporting performance outcomes);
- Core partners have researched mechanisms for facilitating smart referrals, and allowing core program partners to share information directly with each other's systems; and
- Core partners could review prototype dashboards to track individual agency and aggregate performance data across programs.

Iowa will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via API tools when applicable. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and

workforce professionals if available, and shareable in user-friendly formats is invaluable for developing better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the various program data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

Iowa Workforce Development

Data collection begins immediately at the point a customer registers in the IowaWORKS system. When they complete the registration process by providing basic information, they become a reportable individual for Federal reporting purposes. As an individual transitions to participant level services, data continues to be collected from the time they become reportable, through their fourth quarter after exit. Joint case management and data collection between programs is expected to improve with the implementation of the IowaWORKS system.

IowaWORKS reporting features allow for improved access to current data in real-time and allows State and AJC staff to make data-driven decisions and easily manage the data. Reports are available to be generated statewide, locally and at the individual customer level. Users can create reports to see who is using the system and the methods in which they are accessing the system, the types of services being utilized, statistical data regarding job orders, job seekers, demographics and resumes, and case management data regarding the number of applications entered, enrollments, caseloads, exits, outcomes, measurable skill gains, and credentials. These reports can assist staff in managing their case load and predicting performance indicators in local areas.

Data sharing agreements with partner programs are being explored to ensure comprehensive data collection. Data collection policies and procedures are being refined to ensure that the integrity of the data being collected aligns with the requirements of the WIOA compliant IowaWORKS system.

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, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system.

Iowa continues to excel in providing services by using the Integrated Service Delivery model. This model ensures that programs do not duplicate each other, but instead, work collaboratively to deliver the best outcome for the customer.

Iowa drafted its first set of Administration and Governance policies under WIOA. These policies went before the State WDB, and were approved in September 2019. The core partner policy group is currently drafting joint program policies in regards to One-Stop Operators, One-Stop Certification, Memorandum of Understanding and One-Stop Cost Sharing and Infrastructure Funding Agreements. These are currently under development, and are

anticipated to be published in August 2020. Additionally, the core partner policy group will work to expand the IWD co-enrollment procedure to include all core partner programs.

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.

Iowa Workforce Development

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the designated state workforce agency in Iowa and is responsible for administering the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, as well as the Title III Wagner-Peyser Act. Additionally, IWD administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker advocacy system under Title III. 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
- American Job Centers (AJC) Division
- Workforce Services Division
- Information Technology Division
- Unemployment Insurance Division (including Appeals and Labor Market Information)
- Division of Labor Services
- Division of Workers' Compensation

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 Rod Roberts 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 with the upkeep of the IowaWORKS offices (AJCs). Duties of this division include: human resources, building and grounds management, printing services, accounting and financial reporting.

American Job Centers (AJC) Division

In conjunction with local workforce partners and Local Area workforce development boards and service providers, the AJC Division is responsible for the delivery of various state and federally funded employment and training services at the local level. The IowaWORKS offices and affiliate sites 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 career counseling, assessments, workshops, job training, and assistance to all populations with an emphasis on special needs populations. Iowa's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) services and Re-Entry programs, including Federal Bonding, are also administered from this Division.

Workforce Services Division (WFS)

The Workforce Services division administers the following employment and training programs for the state of Iowa:

- WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
- WIOA National Dislocated Worker Grants
- WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser)
 - Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Advocacy System
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
 - Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)
- Registered Apprenticeship
- PROMISE JOBS (IWD is the subcontractor from the Iowa Department of Human Services)

Administration of these grants and programs includes establishing state policy and procedures for all programs, providing training and technical assistance to all stakeholders for the programs, and conducting monitoring and oversight off all grants/programs. The WFS division acts as the liaison between the state and our federal and local partners, and completes and issues all required state and federal reporting for the above grants.

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. This includes a recent modernization of the case management system used for federally funded workforce programs such as WIOA and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

Unemployment Insurance Division

The Unemployment Insurance Division collects unemployment insurance taxes, maintains the Iowa Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund and determines eligibility for unemployment insurance to make payments to eligible jobless Iowans. In addition, the Unemployment Insurance appeals unit has administrative law judges who hear and decide administrative appeals regarding unemployment insurance benefits. Four departments comprise the Unemployment Insurance Division: UI Benefits, UI Tax, UI Integrity and UI Appeals. Each bureau serves an important role in ensuring Iowa's unemployment insurance program is administered efficiently and with integrity. Oversight of the Appeals and Labor Market Information departments is maintained within this Division as well.

Labor Market Information Department

Under the supervision of the Unemployment Insurance Division Administrator, the Labor Market Information (LMI) department 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 this department 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.

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 Organizational Chart is attached at Appendix 2.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II)

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 assists 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 Community Colleges to the division administrator of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation 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 and Literacy State Plan.

Adult Education and Literacy Organizational Chart is attached at Appendix 2.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The mission of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services: We provide expert, individualized services to Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support.

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 percent; the State share is 21.3 percent. 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 State Office 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 is the State Rehabilitation Council.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Organizational Chart is attached at Appendix 2.

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 have low vision. 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 have low vision 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 Iowans who are blind or have low vision who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. 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 eligible individuals. 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 is attached at Appendix 2.

B. State Board

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

i. Membership roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Voting Members:

- Kim Reynolds, State of Iowa, Governor
- Jake Chapman, Senate Appointed by President, State Representative
- Dave Deyoe, House of Representatives Appointed by Speaker of the House, State Representative
- Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development, Director
- Ryan Wise, Iowa Development, Director or Designee
- Emily Wharton, Iowa Department for the Blind, Director or Designee
- David Mitchell, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Administrator IVRS or Designee
- Lynn Schreder (Vice-Chair), KHI Solutions, LLC, Business
- Jay Iverson, Home Builders Association of Iowa, Business
- Anne Parmley, Pearson, Business
- Amy Larsen, United Equipment Accessories, Business
- Sondra Meyers, Katun Corporation, Business
- Becky Jacobsen, Smithfield Foods, Business
- Jeff DeVries, WestWing Logistics, Business
- Cara Sanders, Siemens Gamesa, Business
- Kelly Barrick, The Private Bank, Business

- John (Jack) Hasken, Jackson Manufacturing, Inc., Business
- LuAnn Scholbrock, Coloff Digital, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Vacant, Business
- Carrie Duncan, International Association of Machinists Local 1010, Labor
- Rich Kurtenbach, Labor Organization: Construction Industry, Labor
- Ken Sagar, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, Labor
- Andy Roberts, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local #33, Labor
- Richard Moon, Sioux City Joint Electrical Apprenticeship Training Committee, Joint Labor – Management Apprenticeship Program
- Jayson Henry, The Well, Community Based
- Carmen Heck, Goodwill of the Heartland, Community Based
- Quentin Hart, City of Waterloo, City Elected
- Nancy McDowell, O’Brien County Board of Supervisors, County Elected

Ex Officio, Nonvoting Members:

- William Dotzler, State of Iowa Senate, Minority Leader Appointee
- Kirsten Running-Marquardt, State of Iowa House of Representatives, Minority Leader Appointee
- Drew Conrad, University of Northern Iowa, Board of Regents Designee
- John Smith, Drake University, Association of Independent Colleges Appointee
- Wendy Mihm-Herold, Northeast Iowa Community College, Association of Community College Presidents Designee
- Rita Grimm, Iowa Economic Development Authority (IDEA)
- Rosie Thierer, Iowa Department on Aging (IDA)
- Beth Skinner, Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Kelly Garcia, Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Greer Sisson, United States Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship
- Mary Cannon-James, Largest Statewide Labor Organization for State Employees American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 66
- Vacant, Labor Organization: Construction Industry
- Vacant, Labor Organization: Manufacturing Industry

ii. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

As prescribed in WIOA, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) is an integral part of the success of the workforce system in Iowa. In the Fall of 2019, the Iowa SWDB underwent retraining efforts to ensure all existing and new members have a robust understanding of their

roles and responsibilities to ensure each member has the tools necessary to be an active, effective member of the board. Training topics included: an overview of the workforce system and governance under WIOA; membership categories and roles and responsibilities of SWDB members; an overview of the local workforce system, including local workforce development boards and how the state and local levels work together within the workforce system; and high impact board strategies, including sector partnership and career pathways. Additional training is planned to take place annually to expand upon the information received at these trainings. New member training is also planned to ensure new members have the tools they need to be effective members of the SWDB. After completing training in the fall of 2019, SWDB members also participated in an Operational Planning Session, designed to further build understanding of the value and indicators of a strategic, high functioning SWDB and identify priorities for moving the Board to a strategic role. Both the training and planning sessions were extremely successful and the Iowa SWDB is poised to begin 2020 with energized members who are motivated to move forward the strategic vision of the workforce system in Iowa.

As the designated state workforce agency in Iowa, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has served as staff to the board, performing administrative functions for the SWDB. IWD will continue to serve in this capacity until the SWDB is able to hire dedicated staff, a task that is hoped to be accomplished in the Spring of 2020.

The State WDB has four required standing committees per Iowa Code which include: Operational; Policies, Procedures, and Practices; Youth; and Disability Access. The SWDB has established two additional standing committees dedicated to Ex-Offender Re-Entry and Minority Unemployment and Outreach efforts.

The Operational Standing Committee should provide information and assist with operational and other issues related to the state workforce development system and 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.

The Policies, Procedures and Practices Standing Committee should provide recommendations regarding policies, procedures, and proven and promising practices regarding workforce development programs, services, and activities. In the fall of 2019, the Directors of the state agencies tasked with administering the WIOA Core Programs (Titles I - IV), created and implemented a WIOA Core Partner Working Group, a functional partnership comprised of representatives from the agencies overseeing key workforce programs. The Working Group will be charged with collaborating to carry out the vision and strategy established by the Governor and the SWDB by developing joint policy and an integrated approach for monitoring, program oversight/support and technical assistance for local service design and delivery. Moving forward, Iowa will work to integrate the WIOA Core Partner Working Group with the Policies, Procedures and Practices standing committee.

The Youth Standing Committee provides information and assistance to local workforce development boards with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth.

The Disability Access Standing Committee's mission is to address issues relating to providing workforce services to individuals with disabilities, including (but not limited to):

- Issues relating to compliance with applicable state and federal nondiscrimination laws regarding the provision of programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the state workforce development system.
- Appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.

Goals of the Disability Access Standing Committee is to lead a statewide initiative to:

- Ensure that Iowa's one-stop delivery system meets all accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities under the ICRA, ADA, and WIOA; and
- Increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities to the programs, services, and activities of Iowa's one-stop delivery system.
- Continuously improve for individuals with disabilities the provision of services within the one-stop delivery system.
- Improve opportunities for individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

Each Local Workforce Development Board has been tasked with creating a Local Disability Access Committee to work with the State Disability Access Committee as part of the statewide initiative.

The State Disability Access Committee will provide direction, guidance, and technical assistance to the Local Disability Access Committees to help meet the goals of the statewide initiative.

The Ex-Offender Reentry Standing Committee is focused on aligning efforts by State and local entities to give ex-offenders a better opportunity to start a new career and find self-sustaining employment to help them successfully re-enter their communities.

The Minority Unemployment and Outreach Standing Committee was created to address disparities in the minority unemployment rate in Iowa. According to the latest Census information, Iowa's statewide unemployment rate was 3.9 percent, while African Americans had an unemployment rate of 14.2 percent, Native Americans had a rate of 11 percent, Asian Americans had a rate of 5.3 percent (other pacific islanders had a rate of 13.6 percent) and Hispanic Americans had a rate of 8.1 percent for the same time period.

Former State Representative Wayne Ford is credited with bringing this issue to the State Workforce Development Board and helping in the development of the group's goals and agenda. The goal of the subcommittee is clear and measurable: to reduce unemployment in minority communities by five percent (or to the state average) in five years. Four counties have been identified as pilot communities: Polk, Dubuque, Black Hawk and Pottawattamie.

These counties were selected based on having high concentrations of minority residents and unemployment rates. Listening tours were held, which provided opportunities for members and

leaders of the communities to gather a broad perspective and identify connections and influences within communities. A strategic plan is being developed that aligns with the Future Ready Iowa Alliance's recommendations to the Governor. To meet the goal of the Future Ready Iowa initiative, all Iowans need to be able to obtain the education and soft skills necessary to take advantage of the employment opportunities available in Iowa.

Currently, the SWDB does not have dedicated staff and the lead state workforce agency, IWD, has performed its administrative functions. However, Iowa is exploring options to provide the board a full-time Executive Director to support the work of the board. All information related to the SWDB can be found at <https://www.iowawdb.gov>.

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.

The state agencies responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program specific areas constantly assesses performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program. To ensure that program partners are well positioned to meet the performance accountability requirements of WIOA, a working group on performance accountability focused on coordinating core partners to ensure that systems have the capacity to collect and report required new and updated data elements under WIOA, as well as the capacity to track aggregate data for performance indicators applicable to all four core partners.

The core programs will continue to work with the working group to establish updated procedures to negotiate performance benchmarks as applicable. The state will develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems, and to evaluate common performance outcomes (including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas). One potential tool to support that assessment is a dashboard to aggregate data for all core programs. The working group could explore the logistics such a dashboard, if practical, will provide as a high-level view of each core program's performance and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. Meanwhile, the state will continue to work to accurately reflect the hard work that the local areas are performing in serving Iowans.

Under the provisions of WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Literacy - each of the local workforce areas are required to review, not approve, the Adult Education competitive applications for Adult Education and Literacy federal funding through the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE). The local workforce areas will review if there is alignment between the submitted Adult Education application and the local plan for the workforce area. The information gathered from the review will be used to evaluate alignment and develop ways to improve alignment between Adult Education and other core and required partners.

The WIOA performance accountability measures in Section 116 will be used to assess the effectiveness of programs and service providers statewide and ensure continuous improvement in the service delivery system. Through ongoing Core Partner Group meetings, strategies will be assessed for their performance and the implications of that performance on the workforce system overall in relationship to the overarching goals and specific program performance measures. In an effort to increase awareness, accuracy, and transparency, performance reports will be published for each region. These reports allow the state and local areas to track and monitor performance regularly. Programs are assessed on their fiscal management, program implementation - including enrollment and performance benchmark attainment, and data management. 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 1), 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 utilizes 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 with baseline years PY16-PY19 are determined by the State in two of the three following areas where baseline data is being collected:
 - Retention with same employer
 - Employer penetration
 - Repeat business customers

Iowa intends to negotiate performance standards annually 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 work with local programs to monitor performance measures consistently throughout the year and provide technical assistance to improve outcomes.

The State of Iowa assesses and ensures data integrity in data collection and reporting in a multitude of ways throughout the year to ensure quality data. This includes but is not limited to:

- Federal monitoring of programs, fiscal/financial and reporting systems
- State audits of programs, fiscal/financial and reporting systems
- Data Validation conducted annually, and quarterly beginning in PY19
- Trade Independent Review of submitted reporting quarterly
- IT Procedure and Business Unit Report Submission process reviewing data integrity a minimum quarterly
- Quality Assurance Review (regular monitoring/review of programs) conducted by State staff
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Data Integrity initiative (TAADI self-check tool)
- WIOA Title I Data Integrity initiative (WIOA Data Integrity self-check tool provided by DOL in future)
- UI Data Integrity Initiative.

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will conduct annual on-site monitoring reviews of each Local Workforce Development Area's administration and governance, program delivery, performance and reporting, and fiscal compliance in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

Monitoring may be conducted as standalone reviews or incorporated into other program reviews which results in promising practices, areas of concern, and findings, and identifies opportunities for technical assistance and program improvements. IWD may utilize the following monitoring techniques:

- Random sampling
- Risk assessments
- Desk reviews
- On-site visits
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Data validation

Local Workforce Development Boards (WDB), on behalf of the Chief Lead Elected Official for the Local Workforce Development Area, are to conduct on-site monitoring of all contracted service providers at least annually or, for contracts lasting less than one year, once during each contract term for financial and programmatic compliance. Local WDBs are to submit the approved monitoring report and resolutions to IWD for review.

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 healthcare industry through Project Search MOAs
- Expansion of the Assistive Technology program
- Expansion of the Benefits Planning program

B. Assessment of One-Stop Program 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.

Workforce partner programs will be assessed using common performance measures, in addition to other required program specific performance accountability measures. Performance will be reviewed at both the state and the local area level.

TAA will implement monitoring to effectively oversee the operation and administration of the TAA program and to improve the timeliness of reported data, as well as verify the accuracy of such data. Monitoring will include a review of the administration of the TAA program, the TRA program, training, ATAA/RTAA, job search, relocation, and employment and case management services. Monitoring will identify and share best practices, identify and correct deficiencies, and identify and address staff training needs. Quarterly monitoring of random samples of 20 cases shall be audited to include two certifications. The four quarterly samples within the calendar year should cover at least four of the sixteen regions within the state.

Monitoring may result in one of more of the following outcomes:

- Strengths – Areas of notable effectiveness that may be recognized as best practices.
- Areas of Concern – Issues of quality that are not attributable to a failure to comply with policy or program requirements that may be a symptom of a larger problem or lead to non-compliance in the future. Concerns may result in recommendations from IWD and do not require a response from the region.
- Findings – Issues that can be cited as non-compliance with policy or program requirements. Findings will require a response from the local area, to include a corrective action plan, to resolve the findings.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) will be monitored by the Veterans Program Coordinator (VPC) in conjunction with the local American Job Center (AJC) leadership teams. The VPC shall monitor and evaluate performance data to ensure that the Individualized Career Service rate is met. Additionally, to ensure the median earnings and employment rate for veterans and disabled veterans is exceeded or met in the 2nd and 4th quarters following exit.

The VPC shall conduct quarterly case reviews on each Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) to ensure the DVOP is providing and documenting services appropriately. The VPC will identify and correct deficiencies, and identify and address staff training needs with the help of AJC management.

States are currently working towards developing performance measures that Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) must meet including effectiveness in engaging employers. Once agreed upon, the VPC will work with AJC management to monitor the LVERs' performance on a quarterly basis.

The VPC will audit each AJC annually to ensure staff are aware of and correctly following Priority of Service for veterans and eligible spouses. Also, the VPC shall evaluate the level of integration of veterans services and Priority of Service for all employment and training programs within the AJC.

As the single state agency responsible for administering the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, the Iowa Department of Human Services (IDHS) is a mandatory one-stop partner. Under TANF, states are required to meet federal work participation rates each federal fiscal year. There are two separate rates based on the number of families receiving “assistance” as defined for TANF purposes, one for all families, and one for two-parent families (both parents sharing a common child receiving assistance are in the home). The Family Investment Program (FIP) is Iowa’s TANF assistance program subject to work rate requirements. Unless meeting a federal exemption, a parent or other adult in the household receiving assistance is considered to be a “work eligible” individual. Work rates are based on the percent of cases with one or more work eligibles who participate a minimum average number of hours each week in one or more of twelve “countable” activities specified by federal law. The IDHS contracts with Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) to provide case management services to work eligible individuals to facilitate their participation in these activities.

While there are other federal and state requirements and prohibitions, for purposes of this Plan, assessment of TANF as a one-stop partner is limited to the following:

- (1) The appropriate and timely referral of work eligibles to IWD to receive services related to work, education and training. As part of the FIP application process, work eligible individuals are referred to IWD through an automated process that occurs daily. Procedures are in place to identify any breakdown of this process and notify the IDHS and IWD so corrective action can take place. Any issues have been few and resolved quickly.
- (2) Meeting the required work participation rates each federal fiscal year is a shared responsibility of the IDHS and IWD. With the exceptions of federal fiscal years 2012-14 when the state failed the two parent rate, the state has otherwise consistently met both rates. The IDHS monitors performance through monthly internal reports indicating both rates as determined by the IDHS, and through quarterly reports from the federal TANF agency representing the official rates. Program managers from the IDHS and IWD meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues.

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 Annual Report for activities funded through WIOA for program year 2018 can be found at: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa>. The report documents the progress that has been made towards achieving the goals in the state plan, as well as a review of the activities administered within the local areas which demonstrate the effectiveness of those programs.

See IVRS Annual Agency Performance Plan as submitted to Iowa Department of Management.

See IDB Annual Agency Performance plan as submitted to Iowa Department of Management.

Local programs are evaluated for effectiveness by IDOE through their status update, oversight of data integrity, fiscal accountability as well as desktop and site monitoring. 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.

An area of focus for Iowa's Title II providers is increasing the number of low skilled individuals successfully transitioning to postsecondary education and employment. Each provider has set an enrollment target that is tracked and used for performance monitoring. Enrollment is also reviewed for co-enrollment as well as participants with multiple barriers to employment. These enrollment goals are part of a strategic effort to increase the skill set for adults in becoming future ready and contributing to the talent pipeline for employers in high demand industry. All funded providers are required to set an enrollment target and are funded based upon actual enrollment of participants. Some strategies that are encouraged by the IDOE include but are not limited to offering flexible schedules, distance education, providing support services and year-round activities in age-appropriate settings.

The Iowa adult education and literacy monitoring process examines the alignment of program policies, processes, and capacity with program standards and WIOA. IDOE also uses a risk-based quality assurance system to ensure student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and compliance with federal laws and regulations. While local providers are encouraged to use the risk assessment tool for internal review, the IDOE completes an assessment annually to determine the appropriate monitoring strategy (desktop or onsite) for each local entity.

Six principles of program quality guide the annual monitoring of adult education and literacy providers. Benchmarks for each principle, described below, provide a framework for continuous program improvement and progress.

Learner Progress

- Program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented using adult education principles and is accessible to all learners.
- Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress, guide instruction, advising and other services that support a "successful" transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.

Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development

- Curriculum is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards.
- Instruction meet learners' needs and learning styles.
- The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into

instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.

Program Design and Leadership

- The program addresses access and equity and is responsive to the regional needs identified by key stakeholders, including learners most in need of services.
- The program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation, and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult education and literacy.
- The continuous improvement planning process is purposeful, ongoing, and systematic and is focused on the program's effectiveness in supporting learners.

Accountability

- The program maintains a stable financial condition operating in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner.
- The program has a system for collecting and reporting data that ensures its integrity that demonstrates achievement towards the state's negotiated benchmarks for enrollment and performance.
- The program ensures accuracy in reports, reliability, privacy, and security of records.

Community Interaction and Outreach

- The program builds a collaborative system of support services that promote learner achievement and the program goals.
- The program's collaborations result in increased options for learners in postsecondary education, training, and employment aligned with the regional needs and identified in the application and local plan.
- The program successfully recruits learners from the community identified in WIOA as needing literacy services, including those with barriers to employment and hardest to serve.

One-Stop System Integration

- The program has in good faith participated in the development and implementation of the local plan, an infrastructure funding agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with core and required partners, as regionally applicable.
- The program is actively engaged in the coordination of services and resources that support the one-stop system as a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services that are accessible to all job seekers, workers, and businesses.
- The program shares in the performance measures of the regional one-stop comprehensive system.

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.

Iowa is dedicated to ensuring all requirements of WIOA legislation are met, including conducting evaluation and research projects on program activities. Currently, Iowa is focused on ensuring the completion of the WIOA implementation tasks outlined by the WIOA Implementation Progress report issued by USDOL Region 5 in October 2019. The WIOA System Transformation project is well underway to address this report, and program evaluation will be conducted during the 2020 - 2023 state planning cycle.

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—

i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Iowa follows the discretionary youth allocation formula detailed in C.F.R. 20 § 683.120(c)(2). Seventy (70) percent of identified funds, after allowing for Governor's reserve funds per WIOA section 128(a)(1), will be allocated 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 local area 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 local area 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 local area compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

The remaining 30 percent of local area allocations are based on the number of disadvantaged youth in each local area 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 minimum funding provision be applied to the WIOA Youth funding stream. A local area must not receive an allocation percentage for a program year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding program years. This minimum funding provision will also apply after any local areas redesignation in Iowa. Iowa will calculate the amount of funding for each new local area by applying the funding allocation amounts from the previous two program years to the new local areas to ensure the minimum funding provision is met. Any amount needed to provide increased

allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Iowa follows the discretionary adult allocation formula detailed in C.F.R. 20 § 683.120(2)(2). Seventy (70) percent of identified funds, after allowing for Governor's reserve funds per WIOA section 133(a)(1), will be allocated 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 local area 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 local area 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 local area 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 local area 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 local area 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 minimum funding provision be applied to the WIOA Adult funding stream. A local area must not receive an allocation percentage for a program year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding program years. This minimum funding provision will also apply after any local area redesignation in Iowa. Iowa will calculate the amount of funding for each new local area by applying the funding allocation amounts from the previous two program years to the new local areas to ensure the minimum funding provision is met. Any amount needed to provide increased allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

After allowing for Governor's reserve funds per WIOA section 133(a)(1) and (a)(2), state dislocated worker funds will be allocated using the following six factors 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, local areas 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 15 weeks 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 minimum funding provision be applied to the WIOA Dislocated Worker funding stream. A local area must not receive an allocation percentage for a program year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding program years. This minimum funding provision will also apply after any local area redesignation in Iowa. Iowa will calculate the amount of funding for each new local area by applying the funding allocation amounts from the previous two program years to the new local areas to ensure the minimum funding provision is met. Any amount needed to provide increased allocation(s) to the affected local areas will be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to the other local areas.

B. For Title II:

i. 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.

Applicants will be required to offer instruction at all educational functioning levels (EFL) (Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education and English as a Second Language), based on identified needs of the participant and area served (state requirement). Programs must also prepare adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

All organizations who meet the definition of “Eligible Provider” as provided in WIOA Title II—AEFLA Federal Requirements and described below are invited to submit bids. Interested Applicants shall complete an Eligible Provider Form and submit it with the proposal. The Department will review all proposals to determine eligibility as defined by the requirements below. Applicants determined to be ineligible because they did not meet the eligible provider requirements will not be considered for funding. Applicants will be notified in writing that they are ineligible and will have appeal rights as outlined in PART V, F. Refer to PART V, A for the eligibility review process.

1. Applicants may apply if they meet the definition of eligible provider. An “eligible provider” means an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in two consecutive years (*state requirement*) in providing adult education and literacy activities and may include (WIOA §203(5)):
 - a local educational agency;
 - a community-based organization 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 that is not described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (g) and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
 - a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (h);
 - a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (i); and
 - any other organization type, even if not specifically listed above, to apply if they meet the demonstrated effectiveness requirement (34 CFR 463 Preamble).
2. Applicants are eligible to submit bids if they have provided services to eligible individuals in the past two consecutive years (*state requirement*) in any of the areas outlined below.

An **eligible provider** must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on its record in improving the skills of eligible individuals, in particular, individuals who are basic skills deficient in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition. An **eligible provider** must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training (34 CFR 463.24). **Eligible Providers** can demonstrate past effectiveness in two ways:

- An **eligible provider** that has been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide two consecutive years (*state requirement*) of performance data to demonstrate past effectiveness in the areas listed above.
- An **eligible provider** that has not been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide two consecutive years (*state requirement*) of performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals,

including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in the WIOA Title II AEFLA Federal Requirements. (See WIOA Final Rules Subpart C, §463.24 and 29 U.S.C 3272(5)).

Following the initial term of the contract and subject to continued availability of funding the Department retains the right to fund the grant recipient for up to four (4) consecutive fiscal program years. The exercise of grant renewals after the first year of funding will be made on a program by program basis. Renewals will be contingent on the grant recipient's ability to successfully implement the terms of the grant and demonstrated effectiveness as determined by outcomes.

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFP process. Award amounts for Sec. 231 funds will depend upon available funding. An applicant must be awarded in order to be eligible for incentive funds or to use funds for the purpose of serving those in correctional or institutionalized settings. (*state requirement*). Iowa has on average allocated \$2,900,000 to eligible providers. Federal allocations have historically been funded based on:

- Eighty-five percent (85%) on needs: institutional grant; ACS data relative to serving adult education and literacy participants; and enrollment; and
- Fifteen percent (15%) on performance in achieving the state's targeted benchmarks and performance outcomes.

Eligible providers may also offer up to twenty percent (20%) of their allocation to serve those in correctional or institutionalized settings, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart F. The Department reserves the right to award grant funds in amounts different than the applicant's budget request and the suggested award amount. Such adjustment may be based on how the proposed budget and budget narrative will cover program expenses and whether the requested amount is appropriate, proportionate to the participants served, based on previous performance, and reasonable, as determined by the Department (*state requirement*). In delivering **comprehensive adult education and literacy activities**, meaning that eligible providers will be required to be a full-service adult education program providing instruction at all educational functioning levels (EFL) (six Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) plus all six English as a Second Language (ESL)), based on identified needs of the region. Providers must also prepare adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. As well as meeting the requirements of WIOA §231(e).

1. Be responsive to—
 - a. Regional needs as identified in the local plan under WIOA Title I §108; and
 - b. Serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals—
 - i. Who have low levels of literacy skills; or
 - ii. Who are English language learners.

2. Serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;
3. Demonstrate past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in WIOA, Title I, §116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy;
4. Align proposed activities and services to the strategy and goals of the local plan under WIOA Title I, §108, as well as with the activities and services of the one-stop partners;
5. Demonstrate that the program—
 - a. is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and
 - b. uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;
6. In accordance with the [2016-2020 Unified State Plan](#), instruction in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition should be aligned with the state-adopted Career and College Readiness Standards for Adults and based on the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;
7. Deliver activities that effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services and systems lead to improved performance;
8. Deliver activities that provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
9. Ensure that activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet the minimum state qualifications and certifications, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means;
10. Coordinate activities with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;

11. Provide activities that offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;
12. Maintain high-quality, accurate data of measurable participant outcomes (consistent with WIOA Title I, §116) in the state adult education managed information system and monitor program performance to demonstrate the ability to meet the goals outlined here through a variety of data sources, including academic assessment scores, attendance, and activity; and
13. Deliver additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs if the local areas where eligible provider is located has a demonstrated need.

ii. 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 email. 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 federal funds for Sections 225, 231 and 243 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, 231 and 243 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.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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. 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 percent 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.

i. 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.

Iowa's core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the partners are able to request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data for performance reporting. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs.

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.

Because core partners have expressed an interest in maintaining their existing legacy data systems a workgroup could continue to research interface system(s) that integrate data via API tools when applicable to share common data elements at intake and “sit-on-top” of existing systems to pull out data and share it with other systems as necessary.

With the inception of WIOA, the core partners recognized the importance of data alignment and integration. Beginning in 2015, the core partners held inter-agency meetings to formulate Iowa’s plan for accomplishing streamlined reporting given WIOA’s requirements. Procuring a new, WIOA compliant, data management system that could house data for all of the core programs was determined to be the best solution to the lack of data system integration.

Iowa launched Iowa*WORKS*, a WIOA compliant data management system, for several core and partner programs during PY19. This includes modules for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Title III Wagner-Peyser, TANF, TAA and WOTC. A module for SNAP E&T will also be integrated, however is currently not live. Data sharing agreements for core partner programs not integrated into Iowa*WORKS* are being explored.

Iowa*WORKS* incorporates a common intake system which:

- determines program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment
- assigns a unique identifier to each program participant that will be used across programs
- gathers required reporting elements common across all partners
- creates a common portal by which customers may access services
- allows participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes;
- creates a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies

ii. 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.

Iowa has made tremendous progress in this area with the launch of Iowa*WORKS*. The system allows for streamlined intake, service delivery and comprehensive on-demand reporting features which allows staff at all levels of engagement within the workforce development system, to review participation and track program outcomes.

Knowing that each individual agency will need 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, work will continue to analyze the outputs of the system and refine processes and procedures to ensure all programs have the data required per their respective program.

iii. 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.

The State WDB facilitates the development and implementation of WIOA and the one-stop delivery system. Standing committees and workgroups continue to provide additional resources in many capacities including process improvement and recommendation to continue to move WIOA forward on behalf of the State WDB. Additionally, state standing committees provide direction, guidance, and technical assistance to local standing committees in order to meet the goals of the state system as a whole.

Improved data collection ensures streamlined processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement to help improve decision-making. The state has worked to minimize the participatory burden of an accessible system through the implementation of Iowa*WORKS* and a common intake and reporting system among core and relevant agencies.

To ease transitions within and across systems and programs in Iowa*WORKS*, a standard operating procedure was developed in regards to referrals to programs and partners. Referrals to core partner programs and/or outside community agencies will be done by utilizing the Iowa*WORKS* system, ensuring that participants who could benefit from the services provided by core partner programs and community agencies are appropriately referred and resulted. The process 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.

Iowa is dedicated to developing a plan towards greater data alignment and integration, and is in the process of researching centralized and federated methods to track, share, manage, and report performance data over the medium term, but is doing so in a manner that appreciates the complexity of the task at hand, while improving on previous methods of extracting data. Data-sharing and data integration efforts make the most sense where there is a commonality of interest, need, or purpose and a set of shared goals. Any efforts to develop data-sharing agreements or, where appropriate, move towards data- integration will proceed on the basis of value-added partnership such that all partners gain something from the partnership.

iv. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

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 10 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, Local Workforce Development Boards 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 are 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 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.

Purpose of the Project

- Implement new performance accountability measures
- Refine the Eligible Training Provider application and approval process
- Develop recommendations for additional measures

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, 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
- An intake system to collect participant data
- A reporting mechanism for reporting state performance to USDOL 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 unique identifier, 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 processes are used for all programs and activities provided by workforce investment funds at Iowa’s AJCs. 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 database. Iowa*WORKS* is Iowa’s data management system.

Iowa*WORKS* 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 AJC is asked to enter their specific demographic information, which begins their registration. This registration information is verified by AJC staff to ensure complete data entry.

Iowa*WORKS* is the common data-collection process for the following programs:

- Title I, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
- Title III, Wagner-Peyser
- Veterans Employment Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- TANF
- Food Assistance Employment & Training
- Iowa’s State Performance Accountability System

The comprehensive reports and query capabilities provided by Iowa*WORKS* is essential to program analysis at both the state and local levels, leading to data-driven decisions that improve

quality and efficiency. The system can generate predictive reports on the WIOA primary indicators of performance to evaluate potential program outcomes, and address data entry concerns as applicable across programs.

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, data is compiled on each local area, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Local WDB's routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities.

The core partners 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.

Currently, all core partners are collecting and reporting many similar performance measures. This includes using the Unemployment Insurance (UI) database to report employment data through a data match using participant social security numbers. Postsecondary enrollment information is currently obtained using the National Student Clearinghouse and through the IDOE Community College Management Information System (MIS) to conduct a data match to track successful postsecondary enrollment in recognized education or training programs.

Title II is able to produce all the WIOA required reports under Section 116 and will continue to work with any workgroups in researching other available resources and ways to streamline the compilation of data necessary for the required performance measures. The core partners could also explore ways for tighter alignment with the Department of Labor's expanded Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI). Through data sharing, core partners intend to coordinate and align measurable skills assessment by implementing one assessment tool that can be used by all partners. For example, use of the eCASAS assessments by all local Adult Education programs, one-stops, and other eligible training providers will enable the core partners to share the assessment data and meet reporting requirements.

Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS and IDB)

Both Vocational Rehabilitation agencies (IVRS and IDB) are responsible for collecting the data necessary to meet the reporting requirements under RSA-PD-16-04 Case Service Report Manual (RSA-911) and the ETA-9169, WIOA Annual Report and for having internal control processes in place to ensure the accuracy and validity of their data.

Under section III. Unique Identifier Data Elements, Section A. Unique Identifier of RSA-PD-16-04 (RSA-911), when a blind or general agency in the same State identifies that an individual has been or is being served by the other agency, every effort should be made to ensure the same unique identifier is used for both agencies. To fulfill this requirement, within 30 days after the conclusion of each calendar quarter (January 30th, April 30th, July 30th, October 30th), IDB

sends a list of all potentially eligible and eligible individuals being served by the IDB program to IVRS. The list includes each individual's First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, Client ID and Unique ID. IVRS uses the list to identify individuals being served by both agencies. IVRS uses the unique ID assigned by IDB for federal reporting for IVRS.

ETA-9169, WIOA Annual Report requires that IVRS and IDB submit one combined State report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. At the conclusion of each program year, after RSA has populated the WIOA Annual Report with data submitted through the RSA-911, IVRS and IDB calculate the required elements not reported in the RSA-911 including:

- Funds expended on Career Services (See TAC 17-01 Attachment 7, Table D for which services count as Career Services)
- Funds expended on Training Services (See TAC 17-01 Attachment 7, Table D for which services count as Training Services)
- Cost per participant served in Career Services
- Cost per participant serviced in Training Services
- Percent enrolled in more than one core partner program

IVRS acts as the responsible party for submission of the WIOA Annual Report for the State. IDB provides the information needed for IVRS to calculate the combined elements no later than September 15th each year. IVRS calculates the combined elements and submits the report prior to the October 1st deadline.

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. 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.

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.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

IVRS obtains 2nd and 4th quarter wage data from IowaWORKS through special access granted to specific VR staff in each region. This information is reported electronically, and also used for internal progress analysis. Additionally, by special agreement with the Iowa Department of Education, IVRS may be able to receive information on measurable skill gains for the transition population. This information will be gathered along with credential attainment. Data is also collected on the numbers of Ticket-to-Work handoffs for the eligible IVRS job candidates receiving SSA benefits, along with which Employment Network the tickets were referred to.

Our goal is that 100 percent of available tickets will be released and referred to ENs for follow-up once the VR casefile is closed. Additionally, at various key points in the VR process, IVRS offers client satisfaction and exit surveys, and this information is used for quality improvement.

Iowa Department for the Blind

IDB uses UI wage data to track job retention and wages through interagency agreements. The information is used to validate data collected across programs and to identify gaps in data systems. IDB is exploring additional agreements with the Department of Education and other partners to verify measurable skills gains, credential attainment and post-program success. Strategies will be explored to eliminate manual data entry and reduce errors. Case management follow-up services are used to assess the progress of participants exiting to employment and post-secondary education.

Iowa Workforce Development

IWD is exploring utilization of the LMI Division in order to track participant outcomes post-exit for Title I and Title III exiters. Annual analysis will include those program participants who exited during the program year. Services data will be extracted from the Iowa *WORKS* system and matched to the State of Iowa Unemployment Insurance database. Participant wages may be analyzed during the year preceding program enrollment and the year post-exit. Post-program data collection may include, but is not limited to, educational attainment, job retention, wages and industry sector of employment. Follow-up services will also be utilized to assess the progress of participants exiting programs.

Developing long-term participant outcome metrics is essential to creating a continuous cycle of program and system improvement. Moreover, as discussed in the first section of this Unified Plan (Economic and Workforce Analysis), Iowa has a variety of workforce challenges that require measurement, tracking and assessment. As such, Iowa's core partners are committed to producing an evaluation system that extends beyond what's required for federal reporting. Iowa's Longitudinal Data System could play an integral role in measuring long-term participant outcomes. This system represents:

- An integrated infrastructure for data connectivity across K-12, Community Colleges, Regents Universities, and workforce organizations;
- An inter-agency decision making system for approving, prioritizing, and responding to cross-agency data requests;
- A program evaluation measure and report for K-12, post-secondary, and workforce efforts; and
- A streamlined data collection system for post-secondary institutions.

Developed under grants from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences the system has been intended to enhance the ability of the state to make data-driven decisions to improve student learning, as well as facilitate research to increase student achievement and to close achievement gaps. As part of the efforts to measure post-program progress, the system could be used to measure the outcomes of workforce development system program participants. To do so, under the direction of the State Workforce Development Board, a working group will

need to collaborate to define the data that is required to inform decision making and program improvement.

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.)

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 fared 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 the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS), a data sharing tool jointly managed by the Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Labor (DOL) which provides earnings data for out-of- state individuals who participated in Iowa's workforce programs. These 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 SWIS, 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.

Confidential information follows each organization's internal policies - no universal release is available at this time.

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. Personally identifiable information at the individual record level is protected by having all staff sign a confidentiality agreement and, when appropriate for non-departmental agencies, release of information forms signed by customers are obtained in order to release UI

data to that agency. In terms of outside agencies personally identifiable information is protected by aggregating individual records and standardized confidentiality screening. AEL public facing results are aggregated to protect the confidentiality of participants being measured. In addition, outcomes with fewer than 10 participants are suppressed for confidentiality purposes. AEL also requires each local program to sign an assurance as a part of the funding application indicating adherence to outlined GEPA requirements.

In regard to IowaWORKS, the vendor, Geographic Solutions, is subject to the security and privacy requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Administrative Simplification, and its regulations, in addition to state privacy security laws and regulations. Security commitments are standardized and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Security principles within the fundamental designs of Virtual OneStop application that are designed to permit system users to access the information they need based on their role in the system while restricting them from accessing information not needed for their role
- Use of encryption technologies to protect customer data both at rest and in transit

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.

Iowa prides itself on providing outstanding services to our veterans. All WIOA team members are trained on veteran services and resources and have a solid understanding of Priority of Service. As part of Iowa's Standard Operating Procedures, each new customer who visits an American Job Center (AJC) is asked by non-JVSG (Jobs for Veterans State Grant) Career Planners, "Have you, or your spouse, ever served in the U.S. Military?" If the customer states that they are a veteran, they are thanked for their service. If the customer is a spouse, the customer is thanked for their support. The veteran is then provided a folder with veteran-related resource information, to include information regarding Priority of Service.

Additionally, all customers must complete a comprehensive registration in our data management system, IowaWORKS, at least once every year. During registration, customers are asked veteran-

related questions to ensure their eligibility for Priority of Service is recorded and that they are flagged as veteran or eligible spouse of a veteran. Upon completion of the registration, eligible veterans receive a notice regarding Veteran Priority of Service and employment opportunities for veterans. Among the listed services are: career and job counseling, providing labor market information on the jobs and employers in the area, information on veteran job programs and training, developing jobs for those veterans with barriers to employment, etc.

All AJCs have Priority of Service posters in several locations throughout the center. Iowa has a 24-hour hold on all job orders so that veterans receive priority over non-veterans. Additionally, when AJCs hosts large job fairs, veterans, service members, and spouses are invited to attend earlier than the general public.

Each AJC has at least one designated computer for veteran customers in the Exploratory (resource) area. This area has a plethora of information displayed regarding veteran programs, Priority of Service, and Home Base Iowa.

Once a veteran and/or eligible spouse, has self-attested to have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), the veteran/eligible spouse meets with a non-JVSG Career Planner who conducts a basic assessment with the veteran/eligible spouse and enrolls into Wagner-Peyser. The Career Planner informs the veteran/eligible spouse about additional programs and services in the AJC, eligibility and Priority of Service for those programs, and then makes the appropriate referral to the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP). If the DVOP is not currently available, the Career Planner provides additional services to fulfill the veterans' immediate needs and schedules an appointment for the veteran/eligible spouse to meet with the DVOP.

To monitor and ensure Veterans are aware of all services, AJC operations managers run a monthly report that displays all registered individuals which allows them to identify Veterans that may have registered outside of the center. Non-JVSG Career Planners then contact those veterans, share information regarding programs and services, and invite them into the Center. Core partner programs refer customers to JVSG and DVOP services, and DVOP's often refer customers to core partner programs, ensuring Veterans receive the services they need.

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.

Each region has a disability access committee (DAC) with a chair and co-chair from IVRS/IDB. The DACs are composed of various core partner and outside partner members who work together under the direction of the Statewide DAC. They have conducted physical accessibility and ADA accessibility surveys and continue to work on program accessibility. All groups have conducted disability focus groups to gather information about the various needs of customers with disabilities in accessing Center programs. In addition to this, the groups have completed local assessments of the assistive technology options that would be available to the community, the level of comfort of Center staff in offering those accommodations, and as well, the appropriate process for working with requests for accommodations from customers. The DACs in the various regions also drive the Integration Continuum process.

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. Core 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 they 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. 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 (IDB). As core partners, IVRS and IDB provide 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

While the state does not have a finalized One-Stop Certification policy, the Core Partner Policy working group is tasked with drafting this policy.

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are 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.

To meet this challenge, Iowa's core programs are committed to grow and diversify Iowa's workforce through improved access and engagement by developing strategies to engage populations that tend to have lower labor participation rates including, but not limited to, people with disabilities, veterans, women, older workers, people without a high school diploma, ex-offenders, individuals with language barriers, female heads of households with dependent children and out of school youth.

The State Board recognizes that innovative strategies and policies must also be created to build the pipeline of Future Ready Iowans. 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.

To grow the economy, transitioning these populations into employees must become a priority for policy makers and for employers. Of the working age adults in Iowa, there are 93,111 that speak English less than very well according to ACS data.

The following procedures will be in place for all comprehensive one-stop centers and core partner locations:

1. In the reception areas where customer services are provided, partners shall post and maintain signs in various languages, informing the public of interpreter services available at no charge to the public. Interpreter services include providing in-person or remote ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters and Limited English Proficient interpreter services. Where facilities have communication equipment, such as Interprettype or assistive listening devices, staff shall ensure the equipment is available and operational for communication between customers and staff.
2. TTY (Telephone for the deaf) numbers must be included in any listing of partners' telephone numbers. TTY numbers must be listed and clearly identified on all letterhead, business cards, brochures or fliers, posters, web sites, or similar documents or communication tools whenever a telephone number is listed.
3. TTY, and/or equivalent such as Nextalk, must be available and operational in all office locations and facilities. Staff must have instruction and demonstrated proficiency in TTY use and access to TTYs sufficient to perform their job tasks. Frontline staff must be capable of receiving and initiating TTY calls and relay calls (including voice carryover and hearing carryover). Training and performance standards must include the handling of potential TTY calls ("silent calls"). TTYs must not be set on automatic answer in locations where voice telephones are answered by a staff person.
4. In offices where video communication equipment is installed, staff must have instruction and demonstrated proficiency to operate the equipment for communication, such as videophone calls, sufficient to perform their job tasks.

Language Assessment and Primary Language Identification

1. Initial contact — Staff, observing the following, should consider that a customer may be Limited English Proficient or deaf or hard of hearing:

- Family member speaks or companions are non-communicative,
- Speakers exhibit limited English skills (broken English) or use one-word answers, or
- Speakers have a heavy accent.

The staff person should consult, if necessary, with other people in the office and referral sources to determine native or primary language.

2. Explain rights — If the customer is Limited English Proficient or deaf or hard of hearing, staff should explain to the individual the right to have a language interpreter service at no cost.
3. Notation — The staff person must make a distinctive note on the outside of the customer’s paper file and/or on-line record that interpreter services will be needed, reading: “Needs Interpreter Services: Language _____”
4. When a staff person becomes aware that effective communication is not occurring, appropriate interpreter services should be provided to ensure equal access.
5. Getting Interpreters — It is the responsibility of the service provider to arrange for interpreters as follows:
 - If an in-house bilingual employee is available for the needed language and can provide immediate communication, staff should use him/her. The Department encourages bilingual employees to assist with translation. However, it is not intended for bilingual staff to provide ongoing interpretation.
 - Contact an interpreter from the list of community interpreters. Otherwise, contact one of the Limited English Proficient interpreter services, which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
6. Other translators — When an individual declines free interpreter service, staff shall use other persons who can provide effective communication between the parties. The staff person will write in the customer’s record, the name of the person interpreting. It is not recommended that a family member or friend be utilized unless other interpreter services have been offered and refused and both parties have agreed to the family member or friend. Minors (under 18 years old) may never be used as interpreters under any circumstances. An individual has the right to change his/her mind and request a different interpreter.

Staff Expectations

1. Staff members who are proficient in languages other than English, including ASL, are encouraged to utilize those languages in communicating directly with a customer, if it is the customer’s choice.
2. Staff should avoid conflicts of interest and assignments that create the appearance of a conflict of interest. The roles assumed by staff in the provision of services to customers are incompatible with the interpreter role.

3. Situations where staff may provide interpreting for others include:

- Bilingual staff may assist with immediate communication for arranging interpreter services.
- Emergencies, during which life, health or safety of customers or others may be in immediate jeopardy, are sufficient justification to permit staff to utilize their best judgment and efforts to facilitate communication until such time as qualified interpreters become available in accordance with 32 MRSA §1525-A(2).

Printed Translation of Documents

In addition to the required initial contact sign posted in each reception area of partner offices where customers are served, there may be a need to print certain other documents in various languages. Partners will determine on a case-by-case basis which documents will be printed depending on the customer's primary language and the number of customers needing language interpretation and whether the document is considered vital. Audio or video translations, if needed (in lieu of printed material) may be utilized. In the event no written translation of documents is available, partners will ensure that in-person translation or translation by telephone will be provided in a timely manner.

Complaint Rights and Process

Partners will take appropriate corrective action if a complaint or other information indicates a failure by any of its staff to adhere to a policy of equitable and fair access. All complainants must be given a procedure and process by which a complaint might be recorded and forwarded to the EEO Coordinator.

Translated materials and interpreter assistance will be provided during the complaint process. All staff members who receive complaints from customers must forward them to their immediate supervisors.

The complaint procedure and complaint form shall be distributed to the Limited English Proficient individual in the appropriate language (if available); otherwise the complaint procedure will be communicated to the individual who is Limited English Proficient in their language in another effective manner on a case by case basis.

Public Communication

A. Videos and Public Service Announcements produced or used by partners must be captioned. Labels and promotional material must clearly identify the presence of closed captioning. Material already existing before January 2019 need not be modified to include captioning except when necessary to provide effective communication.

B. Notices of conferences or workshops open to the general public with pre-registration must state that sign language and assistive listening devices are available upon request. Notices of

events open to the general public without pre-registration must state that sign language interpreters and assistive listening devices will be available.

C. Printed material for the use of the general public must include the notation that the material is available in alternate formats upon request. Alternate formats may include translation of the material into a specific language other than English, large print, Braille, audio or electronic version, etc.

Training of Staff

Staff members who may be called upon to utilize interpreter services under these requirements will be trained on the processes involved in requesting and providing those services as well as training on the following:

- The impact of ethnic and cultural differences and effective communication.
- The crucial need for sensitivity and understanding of ethnic and cultural differences.
- Definition of the role of the Title VI/EEO Coordinators.
- How to use interpreter services effectively
- Non-discrimination and equal opportunity statutes, policies and procedures.

This training should be incorporated into New Employee Orientation and/or New Supervisory Training for each respective core partner provider.

The Core Partner Policy group will plan to draft policy regarding the accessibility of services for individuals who are 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.

As part of the WIOA system transformation currently underway in Iowa, the directors of the agencies that administer the core programs under WIOA have designated a WIOA Core Partner Working Group, a functional partnership comprised of representatives from the agencies overseeing key workforce programs. The Working Group will be charged with collaborating to carry out the vision and strategy established by the Governor and the State Workforce Development Board by developing joint policy and an integrated approach for monitoring, program oversight/support and technical assistance for local service design and delivery. The Group contains an appointed representative, authorized with decision making authority from each of the core partner agencies: Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, and the Iowa Department of Education.

The objectives of the WIOA Core Partner Working Group are:

- Ensure policy and guidance issued to the local system is aligned across agencies and programs and advances the objectives of WIOA and the priorities outlined in the State WIOA Plan;
- Develop integrated and collaborative approaches for cross program functions that support the local system including monitoring, performance measurement, resource braiding, and the provision of technical assistance; and
- Support implementation of customer-centered approaches designed to drive continuous improvement of the workforce system to meet the needs of Iowa businesses and individuals.

Member Functions and Commitments include:

- Attend and participate in quarterly scheduled meetings as well as other meetings as needed (e.g. meetings may move to monthly or as needed during key times, such as WIOA State Plan development);
- Engage in research, discussion, planning, writing, etc. to support the work of the group including plan and policy development, establishment of joint policy, procedures and resource leveraging;
- Serve as an ambassador for WIOA and the State Plan by integrating the key principles, priorities and strategies into their respective agency messaging, policy, procedures, etc.; and
- Communicate on an ongoing basis the purpose, role, objective and progress of the WIOA Core Partner Working Group to leadership of member agencies.

The WIOA Core Partner Working Group will also facilitate coordination with all required one-stop partner programs to ensure streamlined and integrated programs and services across the workforce system in Iowa.

While the WIOA Core Partner Working Group ensures coordination at the state level, the partner agencies and programs at the local level are actively involved in coordinating their efforts to ensure a holistic approach to services and ensuring programs and services are offered based on the individual needs of customers. Iowa has long employed an Integrated Services model approach, which is at the center of the successful services provided to Iowans every day.

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 administering 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; **Yes**

(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); **Under development with anticipated effective date of July 1, 2020.**
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. Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities 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 currently has 15 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA). In Iowa, LWDA and Local Workforce Development Region is used interchangeably, 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.

Iowa currently has 15 LWDAs designated pursuant to Iowa Code Section 84B.3, in accordance with the “Special Rule Regarding Designated Areas” at WIOA Section 189(i)(1). The 15 LWDAs date back to the Job Training Partnership Act under which States established “Service Delivery Areas” or SDAs. These SDAs were formed to align with service delivery in the State and, in Iowa, this resulted in areas that aligned generally with community college areas throughout the State. Subsequent workforce development legislation, first the Workforce

Investment Act of 1998 and, most recently, WIOA, allowed for existing service areas to continue to serve as LWDA's, with only minimal qualifying criteria. The U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) Region 5 has affirmed as recently as April 4, 2019 that Iowa qualifies for the exception provided by the "Special Rule Regarding Designated Areas" at WIOA Section 189(i)(1).

On November 8, 2017, the USDOL/ETA Region 5 issued a WIOA Implementation Compliance monitoring report which, among other things, specifically addressed the number of LWDA's in Iowa. Finding 1 of the monitoring report stated "the division of limited WIOA funds among 15 service areas, particularly in a State that has large rural areas, is stretching the available dollars so thin that the local areas are unable to fund core WIOA functions, such as staff support for the required [local area boards]." As a result, USDOL/ETA Region 5 directed the State to establish WIOA-compliant LWDA's that are able to fulfill all of the required roles and functions of a LWDA.

In response to USDOL/ETA Region 5's direction, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) convened on November 20, 2017 and created a standing Realignment Committee to make a recommendation with respect to LWDA realignment to ensure WIOA compliance. The Realignment Committee was comprised of representatives from all of the WIOA core partners, which include the Department of Education, Department of the Blind, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), SWDB members, legislators from both parties, community college representatives, and local workforce board members. The Realignment Committee held its first public meeting on December 13, 2017. IWD provided a detailed response to the monitoring report, including a Realignment Plan, to USDOL/ETA Region 5 on December 21, 2017.

Between December 2017 and February 2019, a total of 88 public meetings were held wherein the realignment process was discussed (five at SWDB, six Realignment Committee meetings, and 77 Chief Elected Official / Local Board meetings). These public meetings resulted in significant input to the Realignment Committee, including several recommendations regarding different LWDA configurations and numbers. In February 2019, the Realignment Committee arrived at its recommendation to reduce and realign Iowa's LWDA's from 15 to six. The Realignment Committee created two different configurations consisting of six LWDA's, and presented these configurations to the SWDB on February 18, 2019. At this meeting, the SWDB adopted the recommendation of the Realignment Committee to reduce the number of LWDA's from 15 to six, and the SWDB selected one of the recommended configurations.

Following the SWDB realignment vote, eight of the existing local boards appealed the SWDB decision. On May 30, 2019, the SWDB convened to consider the appeals and vote on whether any changes would be made to its February 18, 2019 realignment decision. After reviewing all materials and listening to public comments, the SWDB had a full and open discussion and voted to affirm its realignment decision of February 18, 2019. On June 25, 2019, the Chief Lead Elected Officials from seven LWDA's appealed the SWDB's realignment decision to the USDOL/ETA in accordance with WIOA section 106(b)(5) and its implementing regulations at 20 C.F.R. 679.290(a).

On December 19, 2019, the USDOL/ETA issued a decision that did not uphold Iowa's redesignation of LWDAAs. Specifically, the decision stated that Iowa must continue operating with the previous structure, consisting of 15 local areas, until the State:

1. Issues a local area designation policy and procedure publicly and transparently;
2. Issues a local area designation appeals policy in accordance with WIOA section 106(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. 679.290; and
3. Seeks meaningful local input and consultation as the State implements a compliant local area designation policy and local area designation or reorganization.

Iowa has completed the first two steps above, and USDOL/ETA approved these modifications on December 20, 2019. With respect to number three, if key stakeholders desire to revisit LWDA redesignation, Iowa will make every effort to ensure the local area designation and appeals processes are well understood.

C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

A Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chair or CLEO may appeal a designation decision to the SWDB within 30 calendar days of the date such designation is approved by the SWDB.

Appeals must include the following information:

- Intent or notice to appeal.
- Name and contact information of the LWDB Chair or CLEO filing the appeal.
- Provide justification for the appeal, including the reason for disagreement with the decision and a proposed alternative WIOA-compliant designation.
- Signature and date of the LWDB Chair or CLEO.

The appeal must be submitted electronically to the SWDB at: WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov.

The SWDB will review the appeal, provide the appellant with the opportunity to be heard at the next regularly scheduled SWDB meeting, and make a ruling on the appeal within 30 calendar days of that meeting. The SWDB shall notify the appellant in writing of its decision.

In accordance with the WIOA regulations, in the event the SWDB denies the appeal or fails to issue a decision within 30 calendar days following the SWDB meeting that considered the appeal, the LWDB Chair or CLEO may request review of the SWDB's decision, or lack thereof, by the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The request for review by the USDOL must be filed within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the written notification of the SWDB's denial or failure to issue a decision.

The appellant must establish in its request for review by the USDOL that the appellant was not afforded procedural rights under the appeal process set forth in this plan, or that the area meets the requirements for local designation as specified in WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or (3).

The request for review must be submitted by certified mail, with return receipt requested, to: Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DS 20210, Attention: ASET.

A copy of the request for review must be submitted to the SWDB at: WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov at the same time the appellant sends the request for review to the USDOL.

The appeals process described in this plan can also be found in Iowa's WIOA Administration and Governance Policy.

D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

Any Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) or One-Stop required partner may appeal for cause, within 10 business days, the Governor's determination regarding the portion of funds (or non-cash contributions) it is to provide for One-Stop infrastructure costs.

WIOA stipulates that the State mechanism allocation determination may be appealed only if the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA sec. 121(h)(2)(E). The Final Rule further limits admissible grounds for an appeal to three possibilities. The appellant must make a case that the State's determination is inconsistent with the:

- Proportionate-share requirements
- Cost-contribution limitations
- Cost-contribution caps

To be officially received, an appeal must fully contain and evidence the following:

- An introduction identifying the appellant and designating the correspondence letter as a formal appeal.
- Full citations from WIOA or the corresponding regulations that support the appeal.
- Identify the basis for the appeal.
- Signature and date of the appellant.

The appeal must be submitted electronically to: WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov.

The State shall review the documentary evidence submitted by the Local WDB and shall request any additional information or conduct any investigation necessary to render a decision. IWD will issue a written decision/response within 20 business days of the receipt of the appeal.

Appellants who do not receive a decision from IWD within 20 business days or who received an adverse decision may file an appeal with the State WDB. The appeal must be filed in writing

within 10 business days after the adverse decision was received or if no decision is received. Upon receiving an appeal, the State WDB will review the appeal and issue a final decision within 20 business days after the appeal was filed.

The appeals process described in this plan can also be found in Iowa's WIOA Administration and Governance Policy.

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 has recently launched a public e-Policy website that will house all of Iowa Workforce Development's policies, including administrative and programmatic, which have been reviewed and approved by the State Workforce Development Board. Currently, these policies include Administration and Governance, Eligible Training Provider List, Title IB Programs and WIOA Definitions. Policies are accessible at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>.

As Iowa continues to work through WIOA system transformation, comprehensive WIOA policies are being established including comprehensive financial policies. Such policies are being drafted with an anticipated completion date for PY20.

The process of updating policies to ensure compliance with WIOA has been an ongoing goal in Iowa. Many policies require participation of core partner program representatives. To respond to this, Iowa has created a Core Program Policy Group which meets to discuss and draft policies that effect all programs. Policy development includes a 30-day public comment period, and subsequent review and approval of the SWDB.

Additional guidance is disseminated via field memos, desk aids, standard operating procedures, webinars and technical assistance sessions. The State is currently in the process of migrating all of these resources into the new e-Policy site for enhanced accessibility of program staff, stakeholders and the public.

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.

Iowa will evaluate the amount of state set-aside fund availability, and with guidance from the SWDB, will determine approaches to utilize the state set-aside in coordination with the goals and strategies outlined in the State plan. Certain industry sectors may be identified for priority use of state set-aside based on identified sector strategies at the State and local level. Iowa will

continue to explore opportunities to invest funds in initiatives which may include, but is not limited to:

- Bridging Youth Apprenticeship to Adult Apprenticeship
- Dual Enrollment
- Business Services
- Skills Gap and Labor Shortages
- Services to special populations and groups

Potential ideas to implement include a partnership between Title I programs and Registered Apprenticeship to co-enroll Title I eligible participants into Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. Funding may be used to assist in paying the Registered Apprentice's On-the-Job Training wages, Related Training Instruction, and/or supportive services for Registered Apprentices who are co-enrolled in Title I throughout the RA program.

The State Dislocated Unit is responsible for overseeing and facilitating Rapid Response and uses a variety of approaches and strategies to avert and respond to layoffs. The objective of Rapid Response coordination is to create an appropriate time and approach for the delivery of resources and services. Rapid Response set-aside dollars may be used, when necessary, to support a local area which has experienced an influx of dislocated workers from a single employer, or group of workers connected to a specific industry or industries. If this approach is utilized, requests for additional assistance must be submitted to the State Dislocated Worker Unit and is subsequently reviewed on an as-needed basis. The Dislocated Worker Survey must accompany the request in order to assess how additional financial resources can help support the employment and training needs of dislocated workers. Additionally, the State is exploring utilization of Rapid Response set-aside to purchase equipment that can be used to ensure accessibility to services within rural areas during Rapid Response events.

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.

On March 12, 2019, Iowa was hit with a major storm system described as a “bomb cyclone” which brought a deluge of rain and melting snow resulting in historic flooding. According to the National Weather Service, the weather pattern in Iowa over the last half of the winter and into March featured record snowfall, along with temperatures well below normal. These conditions contributed to a deeper than normal snowpack and a very cold period which produced deep frost depths that prevented snow melt from penetrating the soils. In addition, soil moisture values were extraordinarily high through the winter, which magnified the runoff into streams and rivers. These conditions paired with the strong storm system lifted temperatures warmer than normal and provided widespread rainfall. Within two days, virtually all of the snow pack that existed across Iowa melted and added to the widespread 1-3 inches of rain that fell across the entire state. This series of weather patterns made conditions in Iowa primed for flooding. In addition, rising water levels breached levees along multiple waterways, especially along the Missouri River, severely impacting several communities. As a result, numerous roads, bridges and public buildings were severely damaged or destroyed. Flooding caused widespread damage to

secondary and state roads along with interstate highway systems. Secondary roads have become impassable in many areas as rain and flooding have caused ruts so deep there are concerns that fire and ambulance response will be impacted. Rutted roads have also limited school bus accessibility. Franklin County alone estimates 700 miles of gravel roads were damaged by the floods. Across the state, initial estimates gathered by local officials indicated 23,540 structures were affected or received minor damage, and 1,201 received major damage or were destroyed. Hundreds of homes, businesses, state parks, schools and entire towns were underwater due to extended flooding causing multiple communities to completely evacuate. To help assist in the recovery process, temporary disaster relief jobs will be created to help with the restoration efforts in participating counties through Iowa Workforce Development's implementation of Iowa's Disaster Relief Employment Program (DREP). Workers will assist with clean-up, demolition, repair, renovation, and/or reconstruction of damaged and destroyed public structures. Individuals employed in these temporary jobs will also have access to supportive services to allow participation in the DREP, based on their individual needs.

Vice President Mike Pence visited Iowa in mid-March and assured the State of Iowa that President Trump would work to expedite a disaster declaration for the State. The FEMA disaster declaration came on March 23, 2019, identifying 56 of Iowa's 99 counties eligible for assistance. With that FEMA designation, the State was able to start having conversations regarding the application for a National Dislocated Worker Grant through the US DOL Employment and Training Administration. On March 26, 2019, a call was held with representatives from DOL ETA Region 5 to gain technical assistance on the NDWG application process. On March 27, 2019, the State hosted two calls to bring stakeholders up to speed and determine the interest in moving forward with an NDWG application. An emergency application was filed with US DOL on April 12, 2019 requesting three million dollars to serve 150 dislocated Iowa workers across seven approved counties. The emergency application was approved by US DOL on May 10, 2019.

Policy that is being applied to the NDWG follows formula Dislocated Worker policy for support services unless outlined specifically in the DREP handbook. Career and training services were not included in the grant application. The only services approved for use on the DREP grant are subsidized employment and certain support services.

The State of Iowa created a dedicated website to National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs). It is located at <http://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/ndwg>. This website includes an overview of the disaster and specific grant information. It includes application materials local workforce development boards could use to aid in the application for funds. Finally, there are about twenty documents which local workforce development boards and service providers can use to administer the DREP in their area.

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.

Early intervention is provided to worker groups through a functionally aligned and coordinated effort between the state and local area staff. Providing early intervention immediately following Trade certifications is an essential component to ensuring those affected receive comprehensive services offered through TAA and its partner programs.

Rapid Response is initiated by communications between the State Trade Coordinator, State Rapid Response Coordinator, and also in conjunction with local level leadership. Rapid Response coordination includes the following core components; company, employees, the date of the event, union affiliation, and contact person at the company.

The State Program Coordinators and the AJC staff work together 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 programs.

Coordination with the local AJC staff to determine a plan of action and co-enrollments in order to align services between WIOA, TAA and any National Dislocated Worker Grants 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 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 the IowaWORKS system and all partners/staff have access.

Once a customer enters approved training, there is additional coordination with Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance for an individual's ongoing income support. The state 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 Wagner-Peyser utilize IowaWORKS and the UI mainframe systems to collect universal information demographics for each customer. Through these systems, customer enrollment in various programs, customer participation, and exit outcomes are tracked. Each database is programmed with its own logical checks or warnings that 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 AJC 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, who are best able to answer technical eligibility and service questions.

b. Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

1. Work-Based Training Models

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.

Work-based learning continues to be a priority training approach in Iowa. Engagement in work-based learning activities continues to be an emerging practice for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in the state. Work-based learning benefits both job-seekers and business, by up-skilling individuals and assisting employers to off-set training costs of a potential job candidate.

Iowa incorporates on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, customized training and transitional jobs within its menu of available services to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The State emphasizes utilization of a stair step approach when engaging participants in work-based learning activities. Some individuals with multiple barriers to employment may need to begin with a less intensive activity such as transitional jobs, where they learn or become accustomed to the basic expectations of a workplace. Whereas, other individuals may present as job ready and can be placed in a more intensive OJT arrangement. Conversely, it is important to place individuals with the right fit, and ensure business partners are aware of their obligations as well. Business service teams are integral in engaging participating businesses and ensuring they are educated about the benefits and responsibilities of a business partner. Like job seekers, businesses must be screened to identify what type of placement they are equipped to manage,

and the business service teams serve an important role in ensuring a suitable placement exists for both customers.

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.

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.

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.

2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

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 to \$3 million. In 2019, the Governor further supported this program with the creation of the Future Ready Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund with additional \$1 million

investment. IWD received additional funds from the Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant to advance the state's work on growing RA programs and hiring additional job seekers into programs. IWD created two RA Career Planner positions to assist in this referral process. IWD is working in conjunction with the US Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship to increase the number of High School RA Programs throughout the state. IWD and IVRS are currently implementing a pilot program to recruit Individuals, who are blind, into RA and Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Programs. IWD has actively recruited RA Sponsors to apply for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List and hopes to have at least 25 percent of all sponsors on the list by 2022.

IWD is also promoting the co-enrollment of RA into every Workforce Services program by communicating and training with AJC staff. RA Program Coordinator also discusses with Trade Program Coordinators when Trade petitions are certified to encourage RA when possible. IWD is also using WIOA set-aside funding to enhance participation of Title I participants with a funding opportunity for local workforce development boards.

3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Iowa updated and has approved WIOA compliant ETPL policy. Staff used various resources in drafting policy including, but not limited to: the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; WIOA implementing regulations; TEGL 41-14; TEGL 41-14, Change 1; and ETPL policies drafted by other states. The policy drafting process included a review for accuracy by IWD WIOA general counsel, and was posted for public comment in August 2019. Management and staff members from the IWD Workforce Services Division, in addition to IWD WIOA General Counsel prepared responses to comments received. The final version of ETPL policy was presented to the State Workforce Development Board in September 2019. The SWDB approved the policy at their board meeting on September 20, 2019. IWD determined that the policy would become effective November 15, 2019. A mailing was sent to all active training providers which included a listing of subsequent review dates, a copy of the SWDB approved ETPL policy and an IowaWORKS ETPL User Guide.

Potential Eligible Training Providers include entities that provide a program of training services and must be one of the following types:

- Institutions of higher education that provide a program which leads to a recognized post-secondary credential
- An entity that carries out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act. Registered Apprenticeship programs will be included and maintained on the ETPL for as long as the program remains registered under the National Apprenticeship Act.
- Other public or private providers of training, which may include:

- Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or private organizations of demonstrated effectiveness that provide training under contract with the Local Board
- Joint labor-management organizations
- Eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, if such activities are provided in combination with training services described at 20 CFR § 680.350.

Training providers may be classroom based, online based, or outside of the state. Providers of all types are required to meet the same eligibility and performance criteria. A provider must be in statutory compliance with Iowa laws in relation to operation as a training education institution.

Providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, paid or unpaid work experience, or transitional jobs are not subject to ETPL requirements.

In order to determine initial eligibility, a training provider is required to provide the following program specific information for each program of training services at initial application.

After Provider Registration is complete in the data management system, an application for each education and training program must also be completed via the Iowa Workforce Development data management system located at <http://www.iowaworks.gov>.

When completing an application, the following information is required:

- Description of each program of training to be offered
- Information addressing a factor related to the indicators of performance as described in WIOA
- Description of whether the provider is in a partnership with a business
- Information which demonstrates high quality training services that leads to recognized post-secondary credentials
- Description of how the training program(s) align with in-demand industries and occupations, as identified in State or Local Plans

Completing all required fields in the application will meet the above requirements.

Prior to the end of the initial eligibility period, providers who wish to have each of their education and training programs continue to be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) must complete a review of continued eligibility. After the first continued eligibility determination, programs will be reviewed for continued eligibility on a biennial basis.

For continued eligibility of programs, the provider must submit the following information through the renewal process in the data management system located at <http://www.iowaworks.gov>:

- Program-specific performance information regarding participants, including:
 - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter and fourth quarter after exit from the program

- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
- 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 (1) year after exit from the program
- Information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants
- Cost of attendance, including the cost of tuition and fees
- Completion Rate
- A description of how the provider provides access to training services, including to rural areas, including the use of technology
- A description of the degree to which training program(s) align with in-demand industries and occupations in the State, as identified in State and Local Plans
- Any applicable state licensure requirements of training providers
- A description of training provider's ability to offer industry-recognized certificates and/or credentials through the program
- A description of training provider's ability to offer programs that lead to post-secondary credentials
- A description of the quality of the program of training services including a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential
- A description of the ability of the providers to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities
- The timeliness and accuracy of the eligible training provider's performance reports
- Relevant information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA Title I

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 funded by the Adult Formula program.

The Adult Priority of Service policy was updated and became effective on June 3, 2019.

Monitoring policies have been drafted and are being refined prior to going to the SWDB for approval. Program year 2019 monitoring procedures have been developed and are outlined in Field Information Memo: 19-05, which includes a review of the application of Adult Priority of Service. Iowa plans to review Adult Priority of Service requirements within its annual compliance monitoring of each local area within the state.

5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

Field Information Memo: 18-02 outlines the process for the transfer of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Modifications to a local workforce development area plan regarding funds transfer are due by April 30 each year. Modification regarding funds must comply with any waivers allowing modification. WIOA 683.130, and Iowa procedure accordingly, allows up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The following process must be used when modifying a local plan to reflect any changes in the plan or the transfer of funds between programs.

The Local Workforce Development Board's (WDB) designee is responsible for drafting the plan modification and presenting it to the Local WDB and CEOs for review and vote. Once the local plan modification is approved, a completed and signed Local Plan Modification Transmittal Form should be sent to the Title I Bureau Chief. The Title I Bureau Chief will work with the program coordinators to review the modification.

Within 30 calendar days of a Local WDB's proposed plan modification, IWD will review the proposed plan modification and will do one of the following:

1. Approve the plan modification;
2. Conditionally approve the plan modification upon suggested changes or the provision of requested additional information; or
3. Reject the plan modification.

It is the responsibility of the Local WDB to ensure local plan modification are reflected in all versions of the plan available or distributed to the public. The Local WDB is also responsible for ensuring that the agenda including the local plan modification, minutes including board approval, and final approved Local Plan Modification Transmittal Form are all posted to the Local WDB website.

At a minimum, a plan modification includes:

- A transmittal form outlining changed to the plan;
- All plan modifications should include details regarding the reason for the change as well as any service delivery and performance outcome impacts expected as a result of the change
- Financial related plan modifications should include the section of the plan that is being changed, amount of funds being transferred, which program and funding allotment the funds are being transferred from and to, the estimated number of participants to be served and the planned level of expenditures
- Program plan modification should include the section of the plan that is being changed and the new plan verbiage.
- Any additional necessary information or documentation.

Once this process has been completed, a program coordinator provides IWD Financial Management with a signed copy of the Local Plan Modification Transmittal Form to initiate the transfer of funds.

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 or contracts 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 or contracts.¹¹

Iowa policy 1.4.8.1 Service Provider Procurement and 1.4.8.2 Allowable Methods for Competitive Procurement of Service Providers was approved by the SWDB in September 2019 and will become effective during program year 2019.

As outlined in policy, Local WDB's must select providers of WIOA Title I Youth program services through a competitive procurement process. Competition is intended to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of service providers providing career services and youth workforce investment activities by providing a mechanism for the Local WDB to regularly examine performance and costs against original expectations.

Non-Federal entities are required to use the following methods of procurement to select a youth service provider through a competitive process:

- Sealed Bids, (formal advertising), such as an invitation for bids (IFB)
- Competitive Proposals, such as a request for proposals (RFP)

If the Local WDB has an established standing youth committee, it may assign the committee the function of selection of service providers. Local WDBs, or their standing youth committee, must select youth service providers best positioned to provide program elements resulting in strong outcomes.

When selecting an entity as the service provider for youth workforce investment activities, the Local WDB must consider the entity's programmatic and fiscal integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance and other factors that demonstrate transparency and responsibility.

¹¹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

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, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are encouraged to establish youth standing committees to provide information and to assist the Local WDB with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth, which must include community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. It is intended that these committees will set local area procedures and oversee efforts to expand and enhance services to out-of-school youth, including the selection of youth services providers that demonstrate the capacity to ensure successful programmatic outcomes. Currently identified youth standing committees have representation across core programs and other one-stop partner programs.

The State WDB has appointed a Youth Standing Committee with representation across core partner program and other one-stop partner programs. The State aims to resume discussions among this committee over the duration of this plan.

In addition, Iowa's Youth Workforce Program Coordinator has recently completed a series of technical assistance sessions with each local workforce development area, and plans to continue recurring meetings with youth service providers to provide on-going guidance, technical assistance, and promising practices regarding youth services, including outreach and services impacting out-of-school participants.

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, including quality pre-apprenticeship programs under the work experience program element.¹²

Iowa policy 8.2.5.0 Program Elements outlines that local programs must make each of the 14 youth elements available to youth participants. The full policy can be found at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>. Local programs may determine what services a youth participant receives based on their objective assessment results and individual service strategy. Local programs are not required to provide every element to participants, and should partner with other entities to provide program elements that cannot be provided by the local program.

Monitoring policies have been drafted and are being refined prior to going to the SWDB for approval. Program year 2019 monitoring procedures have been developed and are outlined in

¹² Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Field Information Memo: 19-05, which includes a comprehensive review of files and case management of Title I programs from application to exit. This will include, but is not limited to, compliance with Title IB program policies, compliance with state and local policies, and data entry into IowaWORKS. Iowa plans to review these requirements within its annual compliance monitoring of each local area within the state.

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). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

Iowa policy 8.2.3.4 Additional Assistance outlines the criteria for both out-of-school youth who require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program and in-school youth requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment. The full policy can be found at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>, and states:

Youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, includes:

1. Migrant youth
2. Incarcerated parent
3. Behavior problems at school
4. Family literacy problems
5. Domestic violence
6. Substance abuse
7. Chronic health conditions
8. One or more grade levels below appropriate for age
9. Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment
10. American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
11. Refugee; or
12. Defined as needing “additional assistance” by the Local Workforce Development Board within local policy

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 and provide the state policy for determining whether a youth is attending or not attending school.

The definitions of the terms attending school and not attending school were presented to the State WDB and approved in September 2019. These terms can be found on the e-Policy site at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>, and states:

Attending School

When an individual is homeschooled, attending classes, or is registered to begin classes at:

- A public or nonpublic educational institution offering any grade kindergarten through twelve;
- An alternative school program; or
- An institution providing post-secondary instruction which uses “college,” “academy,” “institute,” “university,” or a similar term in its name to imply that the individual is primarily engaged in education

Not Attending School

When an individual is:

- Not 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, Job Corps, a high school equivalency program or a dropout re-engagement program.

6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the State definition which must further define how to determine if an individual 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. If not using the portion of the definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), indicate that is the case.

The definition of the term basic skills deficient was presented to the State WDB and approved in September 2019. This term can be found on the e-Policy site at: <https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>, and states:

Basic Skills Deficient

An individual who:

- Has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- 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.

For the WIOA Title I Youth program, Appendix A: Allowable Source Documentation for WIOA Title I Eligibility, which can be found on the e-Policy site at:

<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Home>, outlines that for in-school and out-of-school youth verification of basic skills deficiency, including verifying an individual 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, can be determined through the following methods:

- Copy of any generally accepted standardized test
- Transcript with a failing grade in a math or reading during the most recent academic year
- Case notes (must have verified status with appropriate entity)

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 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 disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**
- 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**
- 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.**
- 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.**
- 7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.**
- 8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including**

cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

This section does not apply to Iowa.

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 processes 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**

7. 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;

Waiver Request #1

The state of Iowa is requesting a waiver for Program Years 2020 and 2021 from the WIOA sections 116(d)(4)(A) and (B) and 122(d)(2)(A), and at 20 CFR section 677.230(a)(4) and (5) and 20 CFR sections 680.400 through 680.530, which require the collection and reporting of performance related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the State's ETPL.

Under WIOA sections 116(d)(4)(A) and (B) and 20 CFR sections 677.230(a)(4) and (5), Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) must report performance data with respect to all individuals engaging in a program of study (or the equivalent). While Iowa recognizes the value and importance of monitoring provider performance, requiring ETPs to produce data on all individuals instead of just WIOA-funded participants places an undue burden on ETPs to collect, enter, and report excessive data. This is especially burdensome when ETPs have many students of whom only a small percentage are WIOA participants. The U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education acknowledge this burden in their response to comments regarding 20 CFR section 677.230 in the preamble of the WIOA Final Rule by stating, "The Departments are cognizant of the reporting burden the ETP performance report places on ETPs and do not want to place additional burden on these entities," however, there was no change to the regulatory text. Requiring ETPs to provide data on all individuals instead of WIOA-funded participants may dissuade the institution from participating as a WIOA program provider, thereby significantly limiting consumer choice. Accordingly, Iowa requests a waiver of the requirements in WIOA sections 116 and 122 and 20 CFR sections 677.230 and 680.400 through 680.530 that require the collection and reporting of performance related data on all participants in training programs on the State's ETPL.

The following supporting information is provided:

1. The statutory and regulatory requirements are identified above, within the waiver request.
2. There are no State or local barriers that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.
3. This waiver request will help fulfill the State and Federal goals of effective and efficient use of public funds in the administration of the WIOA-governed one-stop delivery system in Iowa.
4. The State anticipates that this waiver will help program outcomes by creating administrative efficiencies not otherwise available, which will, in turn, free up limited WIOA funds for use in other areas to meet Federal requirements.
5. This waiver request will help local areas, including Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), by allowing them to combine their efforts and resources relating to administrative functions, which will allow them to fund cost efficiencies that would otherwise be unavailable.
6. Iowa will continue to conduct monitoring of local areas and Local WDBs, including their compliance with all WIOA requirements governing administrative costs and ETPs. Iowa

will collect and include information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA annual report.

7. Iowa will post waivers for a public comment period of 30 days as part of the WIOA State Plan prior to submitting the waiver request.

Waiver Request #2

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) WIOA No. 15-16, "Competitive Selection of One-Stop Operators," states:

The WIOA Joint Final Rule requires that a competitive process be conducted at least once every four years. The requirement to use a competitive process for one stop operator selection is set forth in WIOA sec. 121(d)(2)(A). Due to this statutory requirement, the competitive selection process for one-stop operators in all Local Areas cannot be waived. While the Local WDB must select the one-stop operator through a competitive process at least once every four years, a State may require, or a Local WDB may choose to implement a competitive selection process more often than once every four years.

TEGL No. 15-16 makes clear that the Secretary of Labor will not waive the requirements relating to the competitive designation or certification of the One-Stop Operator (OSO). But it appears to leave open the possibility of waiving eligibility requirements for the OSO. These eligibility requirements are in WIOA section 121(d)(2), which states:

To be eligible to receive funds made available under this subtitle to operate a one-stop center referred to in subsection (e), an entity (which may be a consortium of entities)-

(A) shall be designated or certified as a one-stop operator through a competitive process; and

(B) shall be an entity (public, private, or nonprofit), or consortium of entities (including a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes 3 or more of the one-stop partners described in subsection (b)(1)), of demonstrated effectiveness, **located in the local area**, which may include-

- (i) an institution of higher education;
- (ii) an employment service State agency established under the Wagner Peysen Act (29 U.S.C. ,49 et seq.), on behalf of the local office of the agency;
- (iii) a community-based organization, nonprofit organization, or intermediary;
- (iv) a private for-profit entity;
- (v) a government agency; and

- (iv) another interested organization or entity, which may include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization, or a labor organization.

Iowa requests a waiver of the requirement in WIOA section 12l(d)(2)(B) that the entity that is the OSO be “located in the local area.” Eliminating this requirement will allow multiple Local WDBs to jointly select an entity to serve as the OSO for their local areas even if the entity is not located in one of the local areas. Performing the OSO role remotely for the comprehensive one stop center(s) and local area(s) in which the entity is not located will allow participating local areas to save money on the OSO.

The following supporting information is provided:

1. The statutory and regulatory requirements are identified above, within the waiver request.
2. There are no State or local barriers that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.
3. This waiver request will help Iowa’s local workforce development areas (local areas) to fulfill the WIOA requirements for OSO competitive selection despite limited federal funding.
4. The State anticipates that this will help program outcomes by allowing Iowa to use less money on OSOs, which will free up funds for use in other areas to meet WIOA requirements.
5. This waiver request will help local areas, including Local WDBs, by allowing them to combine their efforts and resources when competitively selecting an OSO, which will allow them to find cost efficiencies that would otherwise be unavailable.
6. Iowa will continue to monitor local areas and Local WDBs for WIOA compliance, including with respect to the competitive selection of OSOs. Iowa will collect and include information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA annual report.
7. Iowa will post waivers for a public comment period of 30 days as part of the WIOA State Plan prior to submitting the waiver request.

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; **Not Applicable – Iowa has a statutorily created State Board.**
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.

IowaWORKS offices develop annual strategic plans to ensure that all team members are provided ongoing training opportunities that will enhance their knowledge on a range of topics from workforce related programs to professional development. IowaWORKS team members are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. Cross-training allows staff members from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. Staff development 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:

- IowaWORKS Team Meetings (All core partners are invited)
- Conducted every Wednesday morning for one hour
- Topics range from customer service to program specific updates, Priority of Service, team building, conflict resolution, and community partner and employer presentations
- Other topics are scheduled on an as needed basis specific to the Center needs.
- IowaWORKS Team Meetings (Individual teams meet for 30 minutes each morning to discuss topics that are relevant for that specific team)
- Business Engagement, Welcoming, Exploratory, and Career Services
- Additional Quarterly Meetings
- IowaWORKS Leadership Meetings, Business Engagement Team Meetings
- February and October (Federal Holidays)
- Safety
- Procedures & Policy Reviews
- EEO and ADA
- State Workforce Initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa and Home Base Iowa
- 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. During the spring of 2019, IowaWORKS leadership team traveled to five locations in Iowa and trained all AJC partners on the new Standard Operation Procedures that were developed. A shared drive was established to house all SOP related documents as well as folders for team members to share best practices. Additionally, in the summer of 2019, a training bureau was established and will be charged with ensuring that professional development practices are appropriate to the current needs of the workforce system beneficiaries, providers and employers.

During the spring of 2019, Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) was invited to Iowa to engage our core partner leadership teams in a discussion regarding WIOA integration. Following the training, IowaWORKS partners met with together with their teams to discuss the strategies that WINTAC discussed. IowaWORKS team members (Title 1, 3, and 4) met and completed the Integration Continuum, assessing their current level of engagement

between the core partners. Following the assessment, teams discussed the outcomes of the assessments; identified opportunities to strengthen or improve partnerships; and developed short-term and long-term goals for ongoing evaluation for informing, shaping and measuring efforts and outcomes. This provided a renewed focus on how core partners are cross-trained and work together to deliver services in our IowaWORKS and all core partners plan on continuing this strategic planning.

In addition to the WINTAC project, all local areas have Disability Access Committees which regularly evaluate our centers and provide training to our core partner team members. Recently, ADA accessibility training was conducted for team members and DAC members. In collaboration with IVRS, our team members provide ADA accessibility evaluations for employers.

2. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

Iowa continues to incorporate Unemployment Insurance services in the IowaWORKS Centers. Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Division regularly provides UI training at basic and advanced levels. The trainings are conducted in person with occasional virtual sessions. Team members from field offices attend these classes as local management determines necessary and provides in-service training to IowaWORKS Center staff when appropriate. Additionally, online policy and procedure documents are available for any team member or partner staff to access if needed. The library of documents is in a keyword searchable format. This process has been very beneficial to ensure the most recent version of a procedure is available when handling UI issues.

Each of the IowaWORKS Centers 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. If a local office team member has a question about a claimants' situation, IWD has a direct messaging system the team member can contact a UI expert in the main IWD office in Des Moines for assistance.

In addition, Iowa participates in the RESEA program which provides additional opportunities for addressing UI concerns while connecting customers with employment services.

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.

All customers who visit an IowaWORKS center will receive a warm welcoming and will complete basic registration. Our integrated Career Planners will ensure all center customers have seamless access to all IowaWORKS services. Career Planners provide informational only services to those customers who are seeking the ability to conduct self-directed/guided job search. These services, which Iowa refers to as, Exploratory Services, are provided immediately and continuously without further eligibility or documentation requirements. These Basic Career Services, are to include Labor Exchange Services, Labor Market Information, initial skills assessments, workshops, program eligibility information, Email assistance, and basic information regarding resumes and unemployment. When an IowaWORKS Career Planner determines that a customer will benefit from Individualized Career Services, or when a customer expresses interest in additional services, to obtain or retain employment, these services will be made available to the individual. After the individual completes the appropriate application, the individual will meet with a Career Planner for a one-on-one appointment and complete enrollment into either Title I or Wagner Peyser depending on the needs of the participant.

Iowa's Unemployment Division is a One-Stop partner that provides a robust menu of services to UI claimants/unemployed individuals in partnership with the American Job Center Division. These individuals receive services beyond what they could obtain on their own using self-service tools including but not limited to staff-assisted services.

Iowa provides participants with a seamless, one-stop experience that includes a professional level of service provided in a timely manner.

Iowa provides the following access to services:

- Each One-Stop has team members that are trained in UI in order to provide meaningful assistance. Team members are able to assist customers in filing their UI claim and provide the claimant with their rights and responsibilities. The team members are able to offer assistance to claimants with barriers such as Limited English proficiency, disabilities or other barriers.
- Each One-Stop has partner program staff physically present and all team members in the One-Stop are trained on partner programs and are able to provide meaningful information to customers about the partner programs.
- Each trained UI team member is able to submit questions or eligibility issues to the main UI department through technology. All team members working on the One-Stop have the ability to call the ACD UI line to get additional assistance for a customer if necessary. All One-Stop Operations Managers have access to the UI Benefits Managers if needed to assist a customer.

All offices have dedicated phones for customer use that can be used to dial directly into the UI customer service line for assistance if a team member is not available in person. All Wagner-Peyser Career Planners have received basic UI training and can answer basic unemployment

related questions. Career Planners are able to submit questions or eligibility issues to the main UI department through technology if additional assistance is needed.

All IowaWORKS Centers have dedicated phones for customer use to contact the UI customer service line for assistance if a Career Planner is not available in person. Additionally, all IowaWORKS Career Planners have the ability to call the UI line to obtain additional assistance for a customer if necessary. IowaWORKS Operations Managers also have access to the UI Benefits Managers if needed to assist a customer.

Trained State Merit Staff will provide meaningful Unemployment Insurance (UI) appointments for individuals who require more in-depth assistance or guidance in resolving UI issues.

UI appointments are reserved for those individuals who require staff-assisted services (beyond self-service or information-only service). Any individual who requires these staff-assisted services will meet with a Career Planner prior to the appointment, complete the Wagner Peyser (WP) enrollment, and provide any additional Individualized Career Services and/or referrals that the participant may need to be successful in their job search.

Career Planners 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. Business Engagement Team Career Planners meet one-on-one with individuals who are job ready and who express interest in receiving staff-assisted job search services. These Career Planners schedule mock interviews, facilitate job developments, and refer to employer led workshops.

c. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Integrated Service Delivery

The State of Iowa will provide reemployment services to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals using an integrated service delivery.

- Integrated data systems - RESEA, Rapid Response, TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers program use a common data system. This data system displays services, case notes, workshop attendance and the overall progression of the UI claimant/unemployed individual.
- Streamlining case management and assessments - Each program is able to see case notes and services provided to the UI claimant/unemployed individual. eliminates duplication of services and assessments.
- Job Search and Training Services - The One-Stop provides a variety of job search activities including but not limited to job search workshops (resume building, interviewing, career planning, mock interviews, application assistance and a variety of other workshops), hosting job fairs, employer meet and greets and assistance in filling out online/paper employment applications. The One-Stop has a direct referral process to training programs to provide short term training for high demand occupations through a

variety of partner programs including but not limited to Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Title I. These services are available to all UI claimants/unemployed individuals.

- Helping UI claimants access the full range of on-line and in person services delivered through the American Job Centers - All UI claimants that come in person to the American Job Center is provided information on the range of services offered by the One-Stop. UI claimants are also encouraged to visit the website and the One-Stop when call the UI ACD call center. This includes entering information into database to receive job alerts that meet their skills and abilities.
- Ensuring Claimants Meet Eligibility Requirements-
 - Iowa continues to incorporate Unemployment Insurance services in the IowaWORKS Centers. Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Division regularly provides UI training at basic and advanced levels. The trainings are conducted in person with occasional virtual sessions. Team members from field offices attend these classes as local management determines necessary and provides in-service training to IowaWORKS Center staff when appropriate. Additionally, online policy and procedure documents are available for any team member or partner staff to access if needed. The library of documents is in a keyword searchable format. This process has been very beneficial to ensure the most recent version of a procedure is available when handling UI issues. Each of the IowaWORKS Centers 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. If a local office team member has a question about a claimants' situation, IWD has a direct messaging system the team member can contact a UI expert in the main IWD office in Des Moines for assistance.
 - All customers that are selected to participate in an initial or sub RESEA program will complete a UI Eligibility Review to ensure the claimant is conducting appropriate work search contacts and is registered for work in the database system. The RESEA program staff have been fully trained in UI and are able to issue immediate decisions if an eligibility issue arises. There is an immediate feedback loop between UI program staff and the American Job Center for potential eligibility issues. The issue is reported via technology and then the UI program can establish a fact finding if necessary.
 - Ensuring all Claimants are notified of all deadlines and eligibility requirements associated with the TAA program/seamless communication with case managers
 - Working with rapid response teams
 - Providing effective services for Veterans that file for UCX - Veterans that file for UCX will be profiled for the RESEA program to ensure services are offered early in the Veteran UI claim and is connected to the menu of services in the American Job Center. If these Veterans are identified as having a significant barrier, a referral to a local DVOP will be made to provide additional services.
 - Undertaking strategies to promote entrepreneurship

Connecting UI claimants to career services through the RESEA (Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment) program

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program is a program to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The program connects participants with in-person assessments and reemployment services through local American Job Centers (AJC). Activities include, but are not limited to, developing an individual re-employment plan, providing labor market information, identifying job skills and prospects, and reviewing claimant's continued UI benefit eligibility.

Initial RESEA Program

The following items will be reviewed/discussed at the RESEA appointment:

- Review of UI claim
- Review of work registration
- Review and completion of additional information entered into IowaWORKS system to allow for quality job leads
- Discussion on utilizing IowaWORKS
- Labor Market Information specific to the occupation including setting up a virtual recruiter
- Available community resources
- Review of work search logs and work search activities
- Discussion on work availability and career expectations
- Unemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Brief review of resume
- Register in IowaWORKS Orientation and job assistance workshop
- Complete a re-employment service plan

Following the RESEA initial appointment RESEA customers enter the following information into their Iowa WORKS account in order to receive quality job referrals.

- Name, Mailing address, Email address
- 1 desired job title
- Education
- Last 10 years or 3 jobs (whichever is less) employer or experience, including internships, volunteer work or military experience with a
- minimum of 20-word job description
- 6 job skills selected
- Virtual Recruiter must be set up
- Resume Status must be Active and Online Status must be "Online"

SUB RESEA Program

Iowa will be launching the SUB RESEA program in some areas of the state in 2020. This project is currently in the pilot stage and information and processes may change.

The SUB Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program is a program to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The program connects participants with reemployment services through local American Job Centers (AJC). Activities include, but are not limited to, developing an individual re-employment plan, in depth resume

assistance, business engagement meeting referral, discussion on job searching progress and job referrals and reviewing claimant's continued UI benefit eligibility.

The following items will be reviewed/discussed at the SUB RESEA appointment:

- Intense review of resume for occupation.
- If it is not “usable” for job searching the RESEA Advisor will sign up the customer for a resume writing class. The resume will then need to be emailed and approved by RESEA Advisor.
- They will also need to attend an interview workshop if they didn't during initial RESEA
- UI Eligibility
- Job Search follow up questions
 - What type of work and salary are they seeking?
 - What workshop did they choose during their initial?
 - What takeaways did they learn from the class?
 - Did they sign up for any other workshops?
 - Are they applying at more than 2 jobs a week?
 - How many interviews have they had and at what companies in the past 4 weeks?
 - What do they think is preventing them from securing a job?
- Refer them to three jobs from our website that match their skills
- Place them in an appointment with Business Engagement team if resume is “business ready.”
- Will explain the Business Engagement team's role and suggest that they prepare for a brief mini interview and dress for a mock interview.
 - RESEA Advisor will give the business engagement team a synopsis of their progress and situation from the information list above in a case note. RESEA Advisor will also input a Job Search Verification note
 - Give Interviewing Tip Sheet & Tip Sheet for Dress for Success

If the customer is determined “business ready” by the RESEA Career Planner and placed into a Business Engagement appointment the following items will be reviewed/discussed.

- Mini Mock Interview - 4 questions
 - Tell me about yourself...
 - What are your 3 strengths?
 - If you could improve 1 skill what would it be
 - Why did you leave your last job?
- Job Development/Placement and/or referral to businesses
- Add to continued services sheet if applicable (candidates ready to present to businesses)

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:

The coordination between employment services and UI claimant services is essential to ensure an integrated approach to reemployment service delivery. The services described in section (c) are often provided by Wagner Peyser team members. The services provided include but are not limited to the following:

- Job Search and Training Services - The One-Stop provides a variety of job search activities including but not limited to job search workshops (resume building, interviewing, career planning, mock interviews, application assistance and a variety of other workshops), hosting job fairs, employer meet and greets and assistance in filling out online/paper employment applications. The One-Stop has a direct referral process to training programs to provide short term training for high demand occupations through a variety of partner programs including but not limited to Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Title I. These services are available to all UI claimants/unemployed individuals.
- Helping UI claimants access the full range of on-line and in person services delivered through the American Job Centers - All UI claimants that come in person to the American Job Center is provided information on the range of services offered by the One-Stop. UI claimants are also encouraged to visit the website and the One-Stop when call the UI ACD call center. This includes entering information into database to receive job alerts that meet their skills and abilities.

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

The One Stop focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops, referrals to training and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches.

2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

Claimants that are not expecting to return to work must register for work in Iowa's database. When a claimant files an unemployment insurance claim online, they will answer questions to determine if there is still a job attachment and whether or not they will be required to complete work searches. If the claimant is required to complete work searches, the application system will check to see if the claimant has an active resume on file with our IowaWORKS system for their work registration. If they do not have an active resume, the claim

application will take them through a series of questions to get the claimant registered for work. When the application is submitted, the information provided on their application will be transferred to the IowaWORKS system to create their account (if one does not exist), create a resume and set the resume to be online and searchable by employers. If a customer files a claim by phone in a few circumstances, the customer is instructed to complete the online work registration. If a customer is selected for the RESEA program, the claimant's information entered in the work registration is reviewed and additional information is required to be entered into the system to increase the number of job alerts.

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

All customers that are selected to participate in an initial or sub RESEA program will complete a UI Eligibility Review to ensure the claimant is conducting appropriate work search contacts and is registered for work in the database system. The RESEA program staff have been fully trained in UI and are able to issue immediate decisions if an eligibility issue arises. There is an immediate feedback loop between UI program staff and the American Job Center for potential eligibility issues. The issue is reported via technology and then the UI program can establish a fact finding if necessary. The One-Stop provides a variety of job search activities including but not limited to job search workshops (resume building, interviewing, career planning, mock interviews, application assistance and a variety of other workshops), hosting job fairs, employer meet and greets and assistance in filling out online/paper employment applications.

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.
- Method and results of contact IWD recommends keeping detailed records of those efforts. 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.

4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

The One-Stop has a direct referral process to training programs to provide short term training for high demand occupations through a variety of partner programs including but not limited to Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Title I. These services are available to all UI claimants/unemployed individuals.

IowaWORKS Career Planners are trained in the basic eligibility requirements of all WIOA Core programs as well as community resources that might be beneficial to our customers. Our integrated service delivery system provides our customers assistance with employment applications, resume assistance, assessments, skills development and employment services programs. Career Planners provide information to participants on community resources, Labor Market Information, HiSET (high school equivalency program), occupational training, on-the-job training and support services. Additionally, Career Planners share the ETPL with participants so they may make an informed decision on training providers. They also provide information on GAP/PACE, Title I programs, Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship, and other grants and scholarships that they may be eligible for. Career Planners identify participants' needs, assist with unemployment insurance, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, workshops and training. When Career Planners identify that a customer may benefit from a referral, they facilitate a "warm handoff" to our core partners. Currently, each local area tracks these referrals with their own system. In the future, Iowa plans on utilizing our IowaWORKS (Geo) system to place and track referrals, both initial and follow ups.

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.

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.

Top five labor-intensive crops

Based on information from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa leads the nation in corn and ranks among the leaders in soybean production. Other top crops include oats, hay, red clover, flaxseed, rye and wheat. Iowa's primary fruit production is apples. Top vegetables grown in the state include cabbage, cucumbers, green beans, onions, potatoes and sweet corn.

Agricultural employer needs

Agricultural employers in Iowa primarily hire seasonal workers from within their communities. It is becoming harder for these employers to fill their workforce needs with local workers. More and more they are using farm labor contractors to recruit workers. Additionally, employers are experiencing a decline in the number of farmworkers willing to migrate for seasonal opportunities. One reason for this decline is younger populations are not interested in migrating long distances as were previous generations. Many opt to stay closer to their permanent residences in southern states where climates allow for more year round farming opportunities. Older generations are retiring 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 workers from which to recruit. The H-2A visa program is on the rise in Iowa. The majority of these jobs provide labor for construction needs on farms (The H-2A program allows U.S. agricultural employers anticipating a shortage of domestic workers to bring non-immigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature.).

Employers need workers who understand and speak English. Many employers have expressed a need for English classes for their workers. It is extremely difficult for employers to communicate with employees when there are few individuals on their staff who are bilingual.

Employers are requiring an increased need for individuals with advanced training and skills to operate equipment on their farms. Farm applicators are in high demand and require additional training and skills. Additionally, there is a shortage of workers with driver's license and/or a CDL license for employers to hire. An increasing number of agricultural jobs are requiring the ability to perform multiple job duties, including driving farm equipment

Economic, natural, and other factors that are affecting agriculture in Iowa

Weather affected Iowa farmers more in 2019 than in recent years. The negative impact to Iowa's economy from flooding will reach \$2 billion as farmers struggle with damaged grain, massive cleanup, and impassable roads and bridges to fields and livestock. The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation says the losses to farmers along the flooded Missouri River ripple throughout the economy, driving the state projected \$1.6 billion in damages higher. The flooding in Iowa was not only vast, but with a lasting impact to affected areas.

Land erosion creates major economic issues for Iowa. Soil erosion causes serious problems for farming, surface water, plant and animal life, and the residents of Iowa. It is the number one pollutant of Iowa's waters. It threatens our environment for two reasons: 1) soil is eroded from areas where it is needed, e.g. tillable acres, and must be removed from areas where it is not wanted, e.g. drinking water, reservoirs, lakes and ditches; 2) loss of topsoil reduces available natural plant nutrients and organic matter, leading to heavier reliance on commercial fertilizers. Soil run-off causes many other costly problems as well.

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.

The majority of Iowa's farmworkers are from Mexico, and predominantly from the states of Zacatecas, Durango and Tamaulipas. Many of these individuals have relocated to Iowa and work as seasonal workers. Those who migrate during peak season (July through September) reside in Texas or Mexico during the winter and migrate to Iowa during peak season to work. The primary language spoken is Spanish. While workers are predominantly from Mexico, Iowa has Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) from Costa Rica, Central and South America, South Africa, and the Ukraine. During the peak season, Iowa estimates more than 10,700 MSFWs working in the state. Non-peak season in Iowa is January-March when the number of MSFWs drops to approximately 2,630.

Language Barriers

Many MSFWs lack English language skills which creates a communication barrier. This barrier makes it difficult to look and apply for employment, attend training, complete paperwork and obtain a job that will provide a livable wage. All outreach workers in Iowa are bilingual, speaking English and Spanish. Almost all of Iowa's American Job Centers (AJCs) employ individuals who speak Spanish. All AJCs have access to a language line that provides interpretation services.

Available resources

MSFWs in Iowa have many resources available to them, however, the lack of knowledge of these resources creates a greater need - the ability to access these resources. Iowa's outreach workers meet with individuals within their communities to provide information and educate them about available local resources.

Health Issues

Limited access to medical, public health, and preventive care services has consequences, especially among these isolated populations. New and older workers come unprepared to face the daunting work in the field which can lead to the need for medical care. Health needs also arise due to underlying health issues. Pregnant women need assistance as they are exposed to extreme heat and field conditions.

Housing

The lack of affordable rental housing in rural Iowa creates a need for Iowa's MSFWs. Many, if not all, migrant workers who come with Farm Labor Contractors (FLCs) are required to pay for their own housing. These housing locations are not inspected prior to occupancy and are only inspected if the Iowa Department of Public Health receives a complaint. Other Iowa housing locations provided by FLCs are not reported or issued a housing permit. Outreach workers are only made aware of these locations when conducting outreach at worksites. MSFWs routinely complain about the lack of clean housing, overcrowding and high rent payments paid to the FLC. They are left with no other choice as they are here only for a short time and have no other accommodation options.

Public Benefits

Iowa's MSFWs often need assistance with public benefit applications or to appeal application denials. Migrant workers often do not understand they can apply for food assistance while living in Iowa as a migrant worker. Outreach workers have contact with the Iowa Department of Human Services across the state to assist with the completion and processing of these applications. Outreach workers help MSFWs complete these applications online as well. Additionally, seasonal workers in Iowa may be eligible for Medicaid. This is another program for which outreach workers provide application assistance.

Mistreatment and lost wages

Iowa has experienced an increase in complaints from MSFWs about mistreatment and not being paid wages owed. Outreach workers in Iowa conduct vigorous outreach across the state. While conducting this outreach, MSFWs are informed about their work rights and the complaint system. Many times after the outreach worker leaves, the MSFW will contact the outreach worker to file a complaint. MSFWs must be paid for all hours worked and not be mistreated by employers. The majority of complaints are against farm labor contractors operating in the state.

Education

There is a significant need for educational resources that focus on this population. Workshops for the general public are offered in AJCs, however, Spanish-language workshops are not offered. Many MSFWs do not have a resume and may not understand the importance of maintaining an update-to-date one. Many of Iowa's MSFWs have less than a high school education. Although Iowa's AJCs market career development to everyone who walks in the door, the MSFW population is less likely to take advantage of those resources. Because this population is less likely to visit a center, it is crucial, and required, outreach workers make available AJC services, or provide information on what services are available within a center, where they work and congregate

Social Isolation and Chronic Poverty

Due to the inherent isolation of 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 live at or near the poverty line and are also considered to be underemployed. Currently, AJC 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:

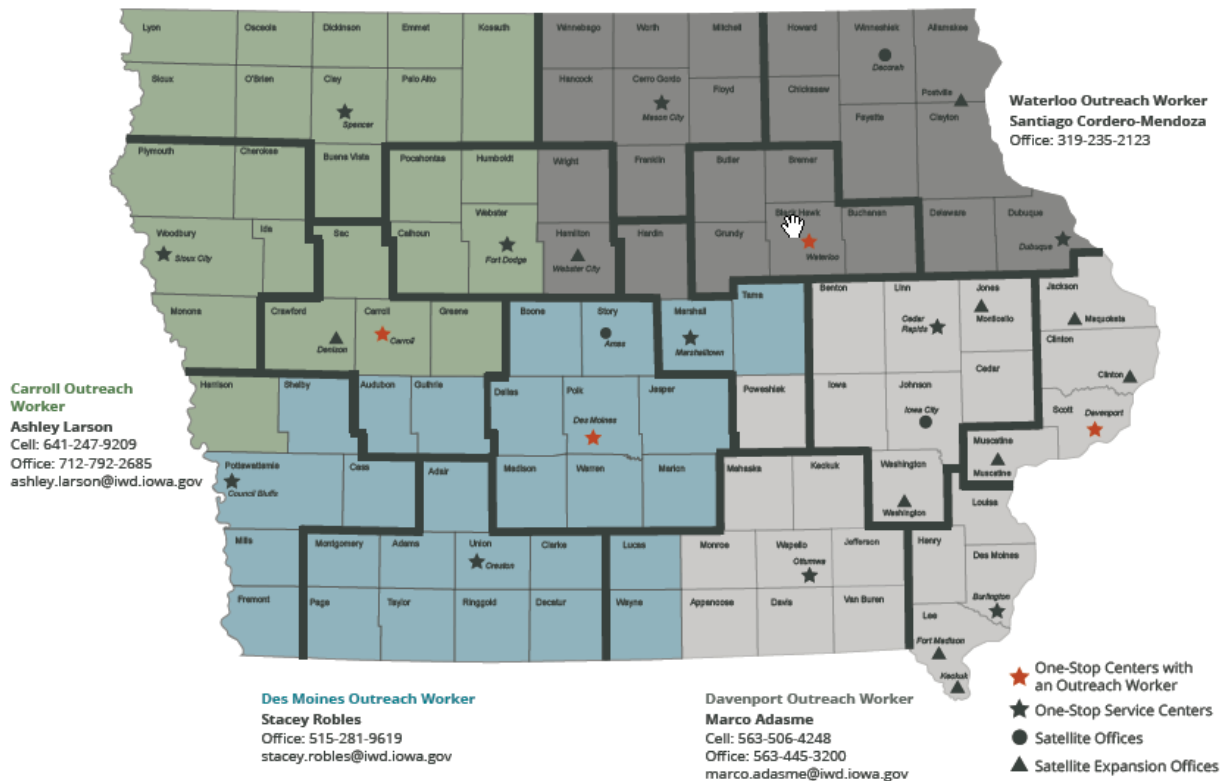
A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Reaching Farmworkers

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) serves the agricultural community through its outreach program designed to contact MSFW who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted at the AJC.

Iowa plans to continue strengthening cooperative partnerships with the National Farmworkers Jobs Program (NFJP), Proteus; the Iowa Department of Education; and Iowa Legal Aid to conduct outreach activities to enhance the service offerings to MSFWs.

IWD currently has four outreach workers. The outreach workers are strategically placed across the state to allow outreach to be conducted in each county without more than a two-hour drive. This allows the outreach workers to visit each local office in their area at least once each month. The new IWD outreach map aligns with the Iowa NFJP grantee outreach map. This allows for improved joint outreach across the state.



Utilizing technology

Outreach workers each carry an Apple iPad to assist in recruitment efforts. These iPads are used to register MSFWs on location. MSFWs are able to search for jobs and make referrals to employment without traveling to an AJC. Outreach workers assist in resume writing, job search activity, and job referrals all from the MSFWs location and at times convenient for the MSFW.

Communication

Outreach workers are using social media to reach MSFWs. They use several different mobile apps and will continue to review new apps as they become available. MSFWs use of technology continues to increase. Text messages are used, when appropriate, by outreach workers to contact MSFWs.

Departure meetings

Iowa's outreach workers continue to attend onboarding events when the workers arrive for the season, and are exploring the option of departure meetings with employers. Departure meetings will be held on the last or near last day of work with MSFWs. These meetings will focus on how the MSFW's season went with the current employer, the possibility of returning to the same

employer next season, and other job opportunities available in Iowa. Departure meetings will be beneficial to both employers and MSFWs.

Community event

Community events, coordinated by IWD outreach workers, will be held outside of MSFWs working hours. These events will be held in areas of the state that have the largest concentrations of MSFW populations. Local organizations from within the community will be invited to provide information about their organizations. Other organizations that serve MSFWs will be invited to attend. By providing these events, MSFWs will gain knowledge of available services and how to access these services.

Outreach Workers Schedule

A normal day for an outreach worker is 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. These work hours can make it difficult to contact MSFWs, because MSFWs often have the same work hours. As expected, employers do not like to have MSFWs away from work during peak season. In 2020 outreach workers will begin to work outside of their normal hours to allow for more targeted outreach. This effort will increase Iowa's outreach contacts.

Employer Visits

It is important for IWD to establish positive working relationships with Iowa's agriculture employers. Employers are more willing to open their doors to outreach workers if they have been contacted prior to the season and understand the benefits of working together. Outreach workers will meet with employers in the off-season to explore needs for the upcoming season. This will help open the door for them when the workers arrive. Outreach workers will discuss the previous season and advise of any changes employers could make for the upcoming season in relation to the hiring and recruitment of workers.

Resources

Iowa's AJCs offer materials about available resources. Unfortunately, not all of this material is translated into Spanish. AJCs review the provided material and determine what needs to be translated and submit it to the IWD Communications bureau. Material is required to be available to MSFWs in their native language.

Unique needs

Migrant workers often arrive with only a backpack of clothes and a willingness to work in Iowa. There is a great need for personal hygiene items, as well as food items for these workers. Each year outreach workers coordinate with local AJCs to collect items to distribute to MSFWs in their communities during onboarding events and while conducting outreach.

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.

Regular Trainings to Outreach Workers

All outreach workers will receive annual training on local office procedures and on services, benefits, and protections afforded MSFWs by Employment Services. They will also receive training on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS), daily logs and reports, and joint outreach best practices.

New outreach workers will receive two weeks of training in the local office on local office procedures prior to receiving training conducted by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The SMA's training will include training modules from WorkforceGPS as well the complaint system, Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS), reports, MSFW definitions, and monitoring requirements for all new outreach workers.

Outreach workers will receive training annually from Iowa's NFJP, Proteus, at the state's annual meeting. This training will be conducted by both Proteus staff and the SMA; and will include services offered by Proteus, eligibility requirements, referral processes, and joint outreach opportunities.

Additionally, outreach workers will receive training annually on protecting farmworkers against sexual harassment and issues such as sexual coercion, assault, and human trafficking.

Iowa Agriculture Conferences

Outreach workers will attend conferences that focus on farmer associations and agriculture businesses. These conferences include, but are not limited to, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Iowa State Extension, Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, Women in Agriculture, Agribusiness Showcase, Iowa Organic Conference, and Farming for the Future.

Conferences for Outreach Workers

Outreach workers are encouraged to attend one of the following conferences each year: National Farmworker Annual Conference (MAFO) which focuses on farm worker rights and laws or the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Program's Annual Conference (AFOP) which is the conference for the NFJPs and focuses on ways to collaborate with that organization. Outreach workers may attend any regional or national training provided by U.S. Department of Labor.

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.

Unemployment Insurance training

Outreach workers will receive training from IWD's Unemployment Insurance division. Many times migrant workers will file unemployment in Iowa prior to returning to their home state. Outreach workers will be trained to answer basic questions that may arise.

Wednesday morning meetings

Every Wednesday morning local AJCs provide training to all center staff on various topics. Past topics include Title I, Registered Apprenticeship, Rosetta Stone software, Iowa Department of Transportation, and How to Handle Stress. Outreach workers are encouraged to attend these meetings in person whenever possible. These meetings may also be attended remotely, or listened to at a later date as they are recorded. These trainings provide valuable information about AJC services, partners, and resources available in the community. Outreach workers may attend meetings in any of the local AJCs they cover.

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

Iowa offers Performance and Development Solution (PDS) classes to all state employees. These classes offer a way for employees to continue professional development. Outreach workers will be offered the opportunity to attend classes.

Training Bureau

IWD has created a new training bureau to onboard new agency employees. All new outreach workers are encouraged to attend the new worker training provided by the bureau. As training classes are created, current outreach workers will attend when the training is beneficial.

WorkforceGPS

All outreach workers will create an account in WorkforceGPS and review all current training material. Outreach workers will attend all new webinars offered by the National Monitor Advocate. Outreach workers are encouraged to attend webinars held for the NFJP as well.

E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

National Farmworker Job Program

IWD has strategically set up the MSFW outreach map to align with the NFJP's outreach map. This allows outreach workers and NFJP case managers to conduct joint outreach more

effectively. Outreach workers invite NFJP case managers to all outreach events they attend where MSFWs are present. Outreach workers carry NFJP brochures to give to MSFWs and provide information about the program when case managers are unable to attend events. Outreach workers utilize an electronic form to submit all referrals to the NFJP. This enables these referrals to be tracked between the agencies. Outreach workers are able to complete this form while conducting outreach when they determine an individual is interested in the program. The SMA, outreach workers and their AJC managers meet with the director and case managers of the NFJP quarterly to plan outreach activity and discuss upcoming events across the state. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be renewed July 2020.

Iowa Migrant Education

IWD is currently working on an MOU with Iowa's Migrant Education program. This MOU will set the foundation for joint outreach and collaboration moving forward. It will also assist in identifying data sharing elements that will aid in conducting outreach. Outreach workers currently attend events hosted by Migrant Education. During the summer, Migrant Education holds events at schools for students enrolled in summer reading programs. These events have assisted outreach workers in locating and identifying migrant workers. Outreach workers invite Migrant Education to all onboarding events where migrant workers are hired and families are present.

Iowa Legal Aid

IWD currently works alongside Iowa Legal Aid to conduct joint outreach to MSFWs. Iowa Legal Aid provides free legal assistance to MSFWs through the farmworker project. Legal services available include employment rights, taxes, health and safety, immigration, education, and housing. Every complaint IWD receives that requests a referral to Iowa Legal Aid is referred via the complaint form. Iowa Legal Aid attends outreach events with the outreach workers and addresses questions that arise during these events.

MSFW Coalition

The Iowa SMA and outreach workers are part of a MSFW coalition that meets quarterly. At each meeting an organization is invited to discuss the services they offer and how these services may assist MSFWs. The coalition discusses trends across the state and any issues that have arisen during the previous quarter. The coalition communicates using a Google Group, with emails sent to the Group and distributed to those in the Group. This ensures all participating agencies are receiving the same information. IWD will continue to be an integral part of this coalition.

Business Engagement Teams

Outreach workers will work alongside the business engagement teams in their local offices. They are encouraged to meet with each business engagement team monthly and set up a business outreach plan for the month. This outreach plan will target new agricultural employers in the area along with employers the AJC has worked with in the past. Plans will include when employers will be contacted, who will contact the employer, and which employers will be visited

that month. Outreach workers will discuss the hiring needs of the agricultural employers in the area during this monthly meeting.

OSHA

IWD plans on creating new partnerships to reach additional MSFWs. A partnership with USDOL OSHA will assist outreach workers in locating MSFWs in the event of an accident on a farm or facility. In the past IWD was only made aware of these incidents if OSHA contacted them requesting information about an employer. Outreach workers can be of assistance to OSHA during an investigation with both interpretation and completion of documents. This will allow the outreach worker to document a complaint or apparent violation, if applicable.

Radio Stations

IWD is working to form relationships with local Spanish-speaking media outlets across the state. This relationship will help open the door for outreach workers to provide information to MSFWs via the radio. ARS job orders can also be promoted on the air. Radio stations are often made aware of migrant workers who have come to the community to work. This relationship may open the door to new pockets of migrant workers within the community.

Department of Transportation

A relationship with the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) will assist outreach workers when questions are asked about driver's licenses or CDLs. Migrant workers here on an H-2A visa often will have questions about obtaining state-issued licenses. The DOT offices in rural Iowa are not always familiar with this type of visa. This partnership will provide education to DOT staff as well as education to the outreach workers.

Latino Coalitions

Local Latino coalitions are beginning to form across the state. These coalitions consist of organizations providing services to the Latino population in their community in a unique way. Iowa's outreach workers will become members of these organizations as they are formed and attend meetings regularly. It is important that outreach workers become familiar with the services available in the communities to which they provide outreach.

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;

WIOA Title I partners will be trained on identifying MSFWs. Outreach workers will meet with Title I staff every month to review MSFW referrals. Outreach workers will utilize the referral form created at the AJC to make referrals to the Title I provider. When completing a referral to the NFJP, a dual referral will be made to the Title I provider, if applicable.

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Business Engagement Team

Business engagement teams across the state currently write job orders for agricultural employers. They recruit for employers, offer job retention courses, and labor marketing information. Hiring events are also held in the AJC for employers. Topics such as layoff aversion, unemployment insurance and human resource assistance are discussed with employers.

Spanish vocabulary classes will be offered to agricultural employers that utilize the ARS. These classes will be offered prior to the workers arriving at the job site. Commonly used words will be taught and a glossary of terminology will be handed out. Employers will have the opportunity to provide a list of industry specific words to be translated for them as well.

Business engagement teams receive annual training on the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS). Training includes how to market the ARS, what benefits employers receive from utilizing it, and how workers are recruited through the system.

The Labor Marketing Division assists in identifying agriculture employers. Outreach workers will work with this division to assist in identifying potential agriculture employers that hire on a temporary or seasonal basis.

The Iowa State Extension Office is a great resource for locating farmers that hire MSFWs. Extension offices work with farmers across Iowa to advance land-grant values, and will hold farm tours to engage farmers in the community. Outreach workers will partner with extension offices to gain access to new farmers.

Practical Farmers of Iowa's mission is to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities. Many of Iowa's farmers are part of this organization. Each year they hold field days on farms across the state. These field days offer the opportunity for AJC staff and outreach workers to get to know their agriculture community. Farmers from the area attend these field days as a way to engage with other farmers. This is the perfect opportunity to learn how farms operate.

B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Complaint system training is conducted annually for all AJC staff. It is important that staff understand the system in order to explain it to MSFWs. Each office has a designated complaint specialist along with a back-up person. These individuals receive additional training each year.

The MSFW Coalition will receive a presentation once a year on the importance of utilizing the established complaint system. This presentation will be given by the IWD SMA and outreach workers. Complaint forms will be shared with the coalition and they will be encouraged to utilize these forms.

Outreach workers will explain the complaint system during every onboarding event held with MSFWs. They will distribute business cards to each worker and ensure they know how to file a complaint if an issue arises. During every departure event the complaint system will again be explained to the MSFWs and complaints taken onsite if one needs to be filed.

Outreach workers will carry a checklist that must be completed for every onboarding event and departure meeting. This will ensure the topic of the complaint system is covered and explained to MSFWs.

IWD's complaint poster with the SMA's information is prominently displayed at every AJC. Additionally, it is posted inside every housing location that is inspected by outreach workers or IWD's designated agency. Agricultural employers are encouraged to post the complaint poster in break rooms where MSFWs gather.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Handbook

IWD currently utilizes several different marketing materials to promote the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to agricultural employers and MSFWs. The current *Agricultural Recruitment System Handbook* is given to agricultural employers who hire seasonal labor and have had difficulty filling positions. Business engagement teams and outreach workers take the handbook with them when contacting businesses. The handbook will be updated to reflect current information.

Brochures

Two brochures have been created that give an overview of system benefits. One brochure targets the employer and the other provides information to the individual looking for work. The worker brochure describes the guarantees that are outlined in an ARS job order.

Marketing Videos

The IWD Communications division, along with the SMA and outreach workers, are creating marketing videos with testimony from an employer that utilized the ARS. This video will be shared on all IWD social media platforms to encourage employers to utilize this system. This

video also will be shareable via email. An additional video will be created to attract individuals to Iowa to work on these contracts. It will share, from the workers' perspective, the benefits of working on an ARS contract. This video will be used in the recruiting process for employers.

IWD's SMA and outreach workers will present at conferences throughout the year that agricultural employers attend to market the ARS. This platform will raise awareness of the ARS and its benefits.

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).

The SMA signed a MOU with our NFJP, Proteus, in February 2019. Although the MOU is required by the U.S. Department of Labor, IWD and Proteus went above and beyond in their agreement to ensure collaboration. Each year the two organizations hold a joint annual training. Topics are selected by both organizations, with the complaint system presented at each training. The organizations carry each other's marketing materials and invite each other on outreach activity. Outreach plans are shared to identify areas where outreach can be conducted together. Co-enrollment strategies have been developed to avoid duplication of services. An electronic referral form is used to make referrals to both agencies.

IWD has an active MOU with the U.S. Wage and Hour Division (WHD). This MOU was established to facilitate the sharing of information regarding complaints and apparent violations. A point of contact was established at each agency with the SMA being the point of contact for IWD. WHD is able to share information regarding the results of complaints and apparent violations submitted by the SMA. This MOU assists with the SMA's requirements to follow up with MSFWs who file complaints. IWD and WHD also carry each other's marketing materials and agree to jointly disseminate outreach material to MSFWs.

IWD will establish an MOU with Iowa Migrant Education during calendar year 2020. This MOU will be the start of a partnership. Both agencies want to collaborate on MSFW outreach efforts. A joint training was conducted in November 2019. This training allowed both agencies the opportunity to better understand the services each offers. The MOU will set training frequency, information sharing, outreach requirements and referral processes. It will be the first MOU established between the two organizations.

IWD will explore the option of establishing an MOU with Iowa Legal Aid during calendar year 2021. Currently the two agencies conduct joint outreach whenever possible, however this relationship can be expanded. Meetings will be held in calendar year 2020 to determine the need

for an MOU. IWD would like to establish a third party authorization form to allow Iowa Legal Aid the ability to share information about complaint referrals and apparent violations.

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.

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 workers; Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; the NFJP grantee, Proteus; The Department of Education Migrant Program; Iowa Legal Aid Farmworker project; and Iowa's MSFW Coalition. The plan was also posted (or linked to) 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 on Iowa's Administrative Rules website.

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.

IWD did not meet the equity ratio for the number of MSFW to Non-MSFW receiving staff-assisted career guidance, e.g. job search assistance, UI claim assistance, referred to other federal/state assistance, or individualized career service during PY18. Iowa implemented a new WIOA-compliant system in June 2018. This new system allows IWD to more accurately record and track services. Training will be conducted for all AJC staff so they understand the importance of recording services provided to MSFWs. Outreach workers will receive additional

training on completing a Wagner-Peyser application when providing a staff-assisted Wagner-Peyser service.

Iowa experienced vacancies in outreach worker positions which resulted in reducing the level of services offered to MSFWs. This impacted referrals as well as staff-assisted services. Iowa will strive to be fully staffed with the outreach position.

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.

Agricultural Recruitment System

IWD fully implemented the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) in 2017 and markets this system to agricultural employers in Iowa and surrounding states. Handbooks and brochures were created for both employers and potential workers. A total of 14 ARS job orders were created over the past three years. IWD will continue to promote and market this system.

Outreach workers attend monthly AJC staff meetings as stated in the prior AOP. They present on topics related to MSFWs and agriculture employers. These presentations raise awareness with AJC staff of the needs of MSFWs and agriculture employers.

Complaint System Training

Outreach workers, AJC managers and local office staff received complaint system training each of the last four years. This training was conducted by the SMA. A designated complaint system specialist was assigned in each AJC at the point of contact for all MSFW complaints. Training will continue to be provided annually.

Conferences

Outreach workers attended the MAFO conference every year as stated in the AOP. This conference gave outreach workers the opportunity to network with other states and learn promising practices in other states. Each year outreach workers attended local conferences within Iowa to connect with agricultural employers.

MOU

The SMA established an MOU with Iowa's NFJP February 2018. This MOU is required by USDOL; however, the SMA and NFJP included additional items to enhance collaboration. This MOU will be renewed in July 2020.

IWD's prior AOP focused heavily on H-2A housing inspections. Iowa's outreach workers no longer conduct housing inspections, allowing them to devote their time specifically to outreach. Iowa had several outreach worker position vacancies in the outreach worker position throughout the last four years. Iowa needs to be fully staffed with four (4) outreach staff in order to meet the

demands of the workers and employers. Continuing to increase coordination with our AJC partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers.

E. State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed, provided input to, and approved the Agricultural Outreach Plan in its current form.

The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 the State has eight significant MSFW one-stop centers. Each office has an outreach worker assigned to cover the area to conduct vigorous outreach activities. Each office employees a bilingual Spanish speaking staff member.

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 Unified or Combined 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 and literacy (AEL) services use a student-centered approach, in which instructors help participants set and achieve learning goals. Iowa's AEL funded providers facilitate participant progress by aligning curriculum and instruction with college and career standards, providing and participating in high quality professional development and training.

Iowa's federally funded AEL providers are instituting the federal College and Career Readiness Standards and incorporating the Common Core standards in the high school diploma programs in accordance with 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.

College and Career Readiness standards are designed to prepare all adult education participants for postsecondary education and training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. The Iowa adult education and literacy team supported the implementation of academic content standards by bringing in national trainers to train program instructors in the fundamental advances in instruction that the College and Career Readiness standards demand. Training for instructors included critical information (methods and materials) about the CCR standards with a strong focus on level-specific instruction, standard aligned lesson plans and curriculum, and approaches to implementation of the CCR program-wide.

The English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for adult education ensure that English language learners (ELL) receive the focused and effective instruction they need to access Iowa's academic content standards. Program instructors participated in professional development in the ELP standards to address the need for educational equity, access, and rigor for adult ELL students. Iowa's English language acquisition programs will be designed to support ELLs in becoming skilled in reading, writing, and comprehension of English, obtaining a high school credential, and supporting them as they move toward further education, training, or employment.

Local educational programs will continue to provide standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment focusing on the skills that enable learners to participate more fully as citizens, workers, and family members. Monitoring will be used to track the implementation of the college and career readiness standards in lesson plans, curriculum and assessment for preparation in transitioning successfully to further education or employment.

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 any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these 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.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the State’s Eligible Agency (SEA) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. The Department is responsible for administering the funds and providing program and performance oversight to grantees. AEL eligible providers competed and were awarded funds July 1, 2017 for a three year grant cycle based on their ability to meet demonstrated effectiveness and in response to the considerations defined in Sec. 231 of WIOA. Continuation of their funding has been based on their fulfillment of grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During the program year 2019–20, the Department will release a new competitive grant application for all eligible providers of federal AEFLA funds to provide adult education and literacy services as defined in Sec. 203. These awards will begin July 1, 2020. The Department will review the applications according to the considerations defined in Sec. 231 of WIOA with additional state priorities, standards, and context. All eligible providers that can demonstrate effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals will be considered.

Grant applicants will be required to describe their activities planned to support the adult education and literacy in their proposed service delivery area as well as their local workforce development area. Specifically, applicants will be asked to discuss (1) outreach efforts for attracting participants with low literacy skills to the program; (2) program design accommodations particularly focused on the needs of participants (i.e., child care, class times and locations, curriculum content, and materials); and (3) linkages established with education, workforce and community partners to facilitate the integration of services for participants. At the Department a multi-generational approach has been emphasized. These efforts have included reaching out to community, faith-based and local education agencies to share information and discuss potential partnerships or collaborations in addressing literacy and basic skill needs.

The grant application has been aligned with and awarded providers will be monitored based on the following principles of Iowa's AEL Program Standards associated with high quality and continuous program improvement.

- a) **Learner Progress** – Program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented using adult education principles and is accessible to ALL learners. Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress, guide instruction, advising and other services that support a “successful” transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.
- b) **Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development** – Curriculum development and instruction meets learners’ needs and learning styles, is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards. The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.
- c) **Program Design and Leadership** – Program serves the adult education needs of the community. Program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult teaching and learning.
- d) **Accountability** – Program implements processes for fiscal and data management that ensures accuracy in reports, validity, reliability, privacy and security. Sufficient resources and training is allocated to implement the processes for financial and data management with clearly defined procedures and the ability to monitor program efficiency and effectiveness.
- e) **Community Interaction and Outreach** – Program establishes a visible and valued presence in the community through outreach and local partnerships. Program recruits and coordinates with partners and local resources to ensure the continuation of services to adult learners in the community.
- f) **One-Stop System Integration** – Program addresses design principles that support the alignment of core and required WIOA partners to ensure seamless integrated services that are accessible to all jobseekers, workers and businesses through unified strategic planning and shared governance.

Eligible providers will be required to be a full-service adult education program in providing instruction for ALL educational functioning levels (EFL) (five Adult Basic Education (ABE) and all six English as a Second Language (ESL)), based on identified needs of the learners and the region. Funded providers are also charged with preparing adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment which includes 21st Century Skills.

Eligible providers are required to offer these activities, per the Iowa WIOA Unified State Plan:

- Adult education;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Literacy; and
- Workforce preparation activities.

Eligible providers may also offer any of the following, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463.30, Subpart D:

- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

Eligible providers may also offer up to twenty percent (20%) of their allocation on the following, as needed for the purpose of serving Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals, per 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart F:

Eligible programming for corrections education includes adult basic education, literacy, English language acquisition, adult secondary school completion and high school equivalency preparation, college transition, integrated education and training, and workforce preparation. Efforts should focus on increasing support and attention to reentry activities, enhancing access to College and Career Readiness educational opportunities and workforce preparation activities, and expanding access to support services that enable eligible individuals to transition to full, productive members of their communities.

Outreach Efforts

An area of focus for Iowa is increasing the number of low skilled individuals successfully transitioning to postsecondary education and employment. Each applicant will set an enrollment target that will be measured and used for performance monitoring. Enrollment is also reviewed for co-enrollment as well as participants with multiple barriers to employment. These enrollment goals are part of a strategic effort to increase the skill set for adults in becoming future ready and contributing to the talent pipeline for employers in high demand industry. All funded providers are required to set an enrollment target and are funded based upon actual enrollment of participants. Some strategies that are encouraged by the Department include but are not limited to offering flexible schedules, distance education, providing support services and year-round activities in age-appropriate settings.

Program Design

Eligible local providers will be required to describe in their application for funds their process for development and/or approval of curriculum and evidence of how instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles, while embedded in real-life contexts anchored in Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy standards (College and Career Readiness Standards, 21st Century Skills and English Language Proficiency Standards). All adult education, literacy, and English language acquisition activities are required to be based upon the Department's adopted content standards. Eligible providers were also required to detail their practice for ensuring high quality instructors are engaged in on-going professional development with support in integrating new

evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.

Providers are encouraged to be innovative in delivering instruction to include individual and 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. All funded providers will be required to record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

The state benchmarks for each educational functioning level (EFL) remains the focus for all funded providers with performance-based funding and a targeted post-test rate established annually and posted in Iowa's Assessment Policy Guidelines. This performance data is reviewed monthly during webinar meetings with all funded providers. In addition, training from the state data specialist and publicly posted benchmark progression has made it possible for each provider to review local and statewide data. 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. 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 postsecondary education.

Adult Education and Literacy

As a requirement for all funded providers, the goal of Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities is to improve participants' basic skills in language arts and mathematics. ABE activities are performance oriented and deliver instruction through processes that facilitates, measure, and certify learning outcomes. In addition to offering comprehensive services to meet the diverse educational needs of participants and to prepare them to transition to postsecondary education and job preparation classes, activities are conducted within flexible time limits and are relevant to the practical needs of adults.

Adult education activities include literacy (reading and writing) and computational skills necessary for functioning at levels comparable to the skills needed to complete a high school equivalency diploma. Courses may be remedial for students or they may provide educational opportunities for students who speak, but do not read, English. These activities are standards-based and are designed to teach the academic skills necessary for success, and to help participants acquire family sustaining employment.

With the incorporation of STAR (Student Achievement in Reading), managed enrollment has been encouraged by the Department for activities to provide direct explicit instruction in adult

education and literacy classrooms. This delivery approach is research based and is evidenced through program performance. This shift in classroom management has required a transition period for AEL providers, but has been a required component for applicants to respond to in the grant application.

English Language Acquisition

As part of required core services, English language acquisition activities 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.

In order to prepare the English Language Learner (ELL) population for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and integrate them into the workforce system, the Department will support extending the existing ELA activities with employability skills and integrating digital literacy skills. The ELA activities are required to align to the English Language Proficiency Standards. In their application for funds, eligible providers are required to describe the curriculum and instructional materials to be used (which includes reading, listening, comprehension and speaking) and any planned workforce preparation activities must align to Iowa's 21st Century Skills.

Within the ELA activities, participants 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.

Workforce Preparation

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. Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation have been the

mainstays of the services offered by AEFLA funded providers from the beginning including: 1) effective referrals, 2) comprehensive assessment, 3) tracking participant goals and progress, and 4) data-informed decisions driving planned services for the participant. 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.

All adult basic education must be based on the College and Career Readiness content standards with workforce preparation activities aligned with Iowa's 21st Century Skills. All workforce training services referenced in WIOA Section 134 (c) (3) (D), must be anchored on industry standards. Eligible providers are required to describe in their application for funds how the instructional materials to be used meets these requirements.

Integrated Education and Training (IET)

Iowa incentivized the delivery of IET and awarded ten of the 15 eligible providers effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019 based on their application with an annual enrollment target of 400+ participants. This time allowed the department to provide technical assistance, professional development and to identify promising and best practices for program design. The IET as defined by WIOA Sec. 203 as a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement targeted industry recognized credentials.

The Department's focus has been to promote the engagement of all core partners to blend adult education content, workforce preparation activities and workforce training. There are several examples for IET based on partnerships and designed to meet labor market demands in the local workforce development areas. These examples will be shared to encourage eligible providers in the PY2020 competition to offer IET and IELCE activities. Experience with the exploration of regional labor market needs and career pathway sectors; engagements with core partners; and workforce training with industry recognized credentials, such as in nursing, truck driving and welding, will ensure that the newly awarded providers have the required technical assistance to begin immediately offering this service approach to their participants.

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:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- 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.

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 (IDOC) has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of IDOC's major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to incarcerated youth and adults, to ensure a smooth transition for returning citizens and a reduction in the state's recidivism rate. The Iowa Department of Education will continue to work collaboratively with the IDOC in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state-administered AEL services.

Recidivism definitions and terms used in Iowa's reporting of recidivism were developed by The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) to establish standard performance measures. The recidivism rate (FY 2018) is the percent of offenders released from prison or work release who returned to prison within three years (FY 2015). The releases tracked are parole; discharges due to end of sentence; and sex offender releases to special sentence supervision. The recidivism rate for FY 2018 was 37.8 percent. Twenty-two percent of the recidivism rate is due to new convictions.

Iowa's AEFLA funded providers enroll participants at state correctional institutions and through local correctional and institutionalized facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of

shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required WIOA performance except when excluded and are subject to Iowa's assessment policies. In PY 2019, data shows that 16 percent (1,836) of total periods of participation in adult education were corrections and institutionalized individuals. Of those, 44.5 percent achieved a measurable skill gain during their participation.

The IDOC's contract with educational providers, in partnership with the community colleges and the Iowa Department of Education work 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 Section 231 funds is being applied 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.

The department has been actively engaged with IDOC in securing initiatives and grants that prioritize the delivery and expansion of postsecondary education in correctional facilities. These efforts will partner with adult education in ensuring that a strong pipeline of college ready participants have the skills necessary to continue their educational pursuits. Two upcoming grants with Lumina and Ascendium will specifically focus on optimizing and expanding access to post-secondary education. These grants will allow additional opportunities for returning citizens thereby encouraging their participation to complete their high school equivalency and develop the necessary reading and math skills to be college ready.

d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

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, including how 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.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) will leverage past experiences with providing English literacy and civics education in meeting the new requirements for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) 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 English language acquisition (ELA) that is aligned with the English Proficiency Standards 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 and Iowa's 21st Century Skills. The application will be reviewed and scored by the department to ensure compliance and quality of services. The review will take into account the following factors: selection committee's scoring and recommendations (scoring rubrics will be published on the AEL program website here); alignment of proposed applicant activities with needs for services in the intended service area; evaluation of cost of service relative to need and cost efficiency; evaluation of historic program data provided by the applicant; and evaluation of financial internal controls provided by applicant.

The biggest challenge with the IELCE competition will be adequate funding for quality IELCE programs that will in turn serve Iowa's adult English language learners (ELL), including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Despite the funding challenges, IELCE awards will be based on the number of participants grantees are proposing to serve. There are three different bands of funding, ranging from \$10,000 up to \$40,000 per program year. Programs must serve at least 10 and up to 41+ participants depending on their award amount. The department's Program consultant will provide technical assistance and guidance to funded IELCE programs as they begin or continue to expand their IELCE program.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Integrated English literacy and civics (Section 243) activities—education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables them to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Services and funding shall include and be used for the purpose of instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training. IELCE funding will be awarded under a separate RFP following the same process as the Adult Education and English Language Acquisition RFP. IELCE applicants are required to describe their civics curriculum and instructional materials and how they align with OCTAE's Employability Skills framework or other widely accepted national employability skills framework. Applicants are required to describe how their curricula and instructional materials will be aligned to the national employability skills framework they will be using and how they are based on industry standards. Applicants are also required to describe their relationships with

workforce and economic development boards and systems and local employers and how those relationships will support integrated education and training for speakers of languages other than English, including professionals with credentials and degrees in their native countries.

Section 243, IELCE, funds can be expended during the program year on personnel, contracts, software, travel, professional development, and supplies necessary, allocable and allowable to implement the IELCE program under the Uniform Guidance. These expenditures are to be reported on the quarterly expenditure claim reports in Iowa Grants. The Iowa Department of Education encourages providers to seek out partnerships that leverage workforce services for participants of the IELCE program. For example, a provider might collaborate with local WIOA partners to fund the training component of the IET activities.

During grant year 2019-20, the department will implement a competitive application process for IELCE funding that will determine the eligible entities that will be awarded. The department requires all eligible providers for funds from Section 243 to use the same application process, the state grant management system, Iowagrants. The department uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers.

Entities must provide narrative details to demonstrate their effectiveness and how they will meet each consideration along with alignment of English language acquisition with the CCRS. 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 skills and achieve measurable outcomes. In addition, each program will demonstrate their connection to a career pathway and whether access to career advising is embedded in the activity. Funded providers will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement.

The department plans to issue continual guidance and technical assistance to eligible providers on how to co-enroll participants in occupational training, and how section 243 funds may be used to provide occupational training as part of an integrated education and training program, as appropriate.

TIMELINE: The following steps will be taken in conducting the IELCE competition:

February 1: IDE publishes Request for Proposals (RFP).

February 20: IDE provides a bidders' conference.

April 3: Applications are due.

May 1: Feedback from the LWDB is due.

June 1: Department announces applicants that will receive funding.

July 1: AEFLA grant providers began multi-year grant cycle.

In summary, through a competitive and fair competition, quality technical assistance, and additional policies that recognize the needs and strengths of Iowans who are English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, Iowa will have quality IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to 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.

Current practices which have been adopted as an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program include the following service delivery model:

- An awarded eligible provider offers English language acquisition and civics education and/or blended learning instruction with embedded workforce preparation activities aligned to a specific career pathway; and
- Partner with another educational provider to provide an industry recognized relevant occupational certificate that support in-demand regional employers.

Recent examples of this model includes co-teaching in the manufacturing industry with a resulting certificate as a CNC operator (which has been identified through sector partnership work as in-demand occupation with clearly defined educational ladders and lattices to other training and occupational fields). This example includes 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. Other examples include on-site instruction in the food processing industry along with Certified Nursing Assistant licensure.

Based on labor market information the workforce development boards work with sector partnerships to develop career pathways for in-demand industries. These career pathways form the basis for integrated education and training (IET) activities for IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Iowa Adult Basic Education (IELCE) Activities have been integrated into our local workforce development systems since the reauthorization of the Act. All of our Adult Basic Education program Coordinators, along with appropriate staff, are required to serve on each of our current 15 Local Workforce Development Boards. Most perform leadership roles with the standing committees and are committed to furthering the engagement and development of the regional sectors for in-demand employment initiatives including IELCE activities.

Another strategy to ensure direct input and validation from local employers is to involve Coordinators with employer-driven, community-supported sector partnership initiatives. A common goal of these voluntary workforce, economic, and community development efforts is to better attract, train, and retain a skilled workforce within a respective industry sector and region.

Underutilized populations, such as those in need of IELCE, are often addressed directly by these efforts through customized offerings and strategies. All of our IELCE providers subscribe to the final rule 34 CFR §463.37, integrated education and training is part of a career pathways strategy that supports acceleration in accordance with the definition of career pathways in section 3(7)(E) of the WIOA and, accordingly, within the scope of the program, the adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and occupational training should occur simultaneously and not sequentially.

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 the required state leadership activities and has identified a number of areas in which services are being provided through technical assistance or through targeted training. Funds under section 222(a)(2) will not exceed more than 12.5 percent of the AEFLA funds. Twenty percent of these funds will be awarded to eligible providers through the Professional Development Facilitator (PDF) project. The PDF project will target continuous improvement of instruction and professional growth. Activities that support the required leadership activities include:

- A. 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 include working 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. 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 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:
 - a. Proper procedures for administration and reporting;
 - 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.

Professional development standards incorporated in the administrative code outline the minimum annual hours of instructor training, individual professional development plans, and monitoring of staff qualification and high quality professional development. A professional development management system is used to report professional development activities in adult education and literacy programs. The system tracks instructor professional development plans, hours of professional development attended (including required pre-service), and catalogs of state and local offerings of trainings. State leadership funds are targeted to support high quality professional development activities based on the needs identified in individual and program plans and classroom observations. Professional development activities include 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. Recent contracts for professional development services related to research-based activities include Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training and technical assistance; English Language Proficiency Standards, and Math Teaching Strategies for Adult Learners.

The adult education and literacy team will implement the Professional Development Facilitator project to develop a statewide system concentrated on local program need, state dissemination of products and information, and leadership development. Local adult education instructors from around the state will assist in the development of local professional development plans by identifying the greatest areas of opportunities for improvement.

- 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:
 - i. STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction forums for certified instructors;
 - ii. Low-literacy training in alphabetics and vocabulary;
 - iii. High-literacy training for fluency and comprehension;
 - iv. Math Strategies for Adult Learners cohorts;
 - v. Supporting programs in implementing Integrated Digital English Acceleration;
 - vi. Providing programs access to Canvas, learning management system;
 - vii. Hosting an adult education and literacy virtual conference to showcase best practices and resources both in and out of state in areas such as: integrated technology, classroom management, online learning management systems,

- blended learning, flipped classroom, distance education, and cultural competency; and
- viii. Annual Adult Education and Literacy Summer Conference to equip AEL educators with the skills and knowledge participants need to be successful in the 21st century.
 - b. Enabling local programs to establish, strengthen, 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 management system, developing standard aligned blended learning courses for reading, writing, math and language acquisition, online instructor and volunteer 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 methods will include activities such as:
- a. Local program site visits to assess programs and to highlight core partners' areas related to partnerships, shared governance and collaboration;
 - b. An electronic newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
 - c. Sessions at state and local conferences showcase promising practices and models in areas such as creating a virtual classroom, distance education in Adult Education and Literacy, online educational resources aligned to the standards, using CASAS data to inform practice, integrating technology into the Adult Education classroom, and blended classrooms;
 - d. Webinars showcasing promising practices and models;
 - e. Monthly online coordinator meetings and data specialist trainings throughout the year to provide technical assistance on topics such as enrollments; reviewing the AEFLA applications, forms, and submission guidelines; assessment policies; financial reporting; fiscal reporting; developing budgets, and claims; retention of students; strategic planning; and Iowagrants.gov;
 - f. Bi annual, on-site leadership staff orientations to include training on topics such as program targets, financial claims, data management, and program monitoring and continuation of WIOA activities;
 - g. Job descriptions which detail professional development activities based on the adopted Iowa administrative code; and
 - h. Dissemination of standards and annually updated handbooks.
 - i. Professional Development Facilitator project to establish professional development priorities and disseminate information.

Local programs are evaluated for effectiveness by the department through their status updates, oversight of data integrity, fiscal accountability as well as desktop and site monitoring. 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 uses funds made available under section 222 (a)(2) to provide activities such as the operation of professional development programs; the provision of technology assistance; development of curriculum implementing the essential components of reading instruction; program improvement and support; alignment studies with standards and competencies, incorporating 21st century skills; and promoting workplace adult education and literacy activities. Additional supported activities include coordination with other agencies to increase enrollment and successful completion in adult education programs and linkages with post-secondary institutions.

To assist eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve state levels of performance, trainers in the area of Student Achievement in Reading, writing, math, classroom instructional models, and English Language Acquisition present professional development opportunities that include instruction on implementation.

Online professional development courses offered through a learning management system make it possible for Iowa's adult education and literacy team to disseminate best practices in areas such as new instructor training, aligning academic standards with course content, developing models of integrated education and training, and accessibility to career pathways without disrupting local programs' services for adults. Online professional development improves consistency of instruction while reducing travel costs for trainers and participants. The state team, with the assistance of a professional development taskforce and professional development facilitators will develop online training opportunities that can be accessed at the convenience of the educator, thereby enabling new instructors to begin learning about their roles and responsibilities immediately. These interactive professional development courses will include, learning management systems 101, critical adult education teaching skills in identifying and remediating reading difficulties, motivating the adult learner, blended learning models, integration of English language instruction with workplace education, and a continued focus on alignment of adult education activities with academic standards of reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team in collaboration with a statewide taskforce of Iowa program coordinators and instructors will develop online adult education open educational resources. These resources will be blended learning templates aligned with rigorous content standards in reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition. These resources will be available to eligible providers in an online learning management system. This system will assist in the implementation of technology applications and support the use of instructional technology in the adult education classroom.

Iowa has established professional development standards that detail professional development expectations and effective teaching strategies. Professional Development standards will assist programs in providing state approved targeted training that is aimed at improving quality instruction to adult learners. In support of the professional development and instructor standards, the Professional Development Facilitator project is being implemented to concentrate on local program and statewide need, state dissemination of products and leadership development. The professional development facilitators will consist of local adult education and literacy instructors who will be responsible for developing local PD plans in collaboration with program coordinators and coordinate state level staff development activities. Adult education and literacy leadership activities will also 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
- Expand the usage of the professional development management system to support program and individual continuous quality improvement.

Activities supported by state leadership funds are evaluated by the following criteria:

- Statewide implementation, adoption, and diffusion into adult literacy instructional strategies, methodologies and curriculum infusion;
- 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.

Surveys were conducted to establish a baseline of current practices and levels of integration for the one-stop centers. Based on this information, guiding documents were developed and disseminated to assist eligible funded programs in their roles and responsibilities associated with partnering with the one-stop centers. Trainings were developed and accompanied these documents to assist with implementation and help address barriers to ensure seamlessly delivery for the participant. The Department will continue to assess current practices and integration with the one-stop centers to maximize the impact of the adult education activities.

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 (IDOE) assesses the quality of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded providers on an annual and ongoing basis, including: professional development evaluations and reports; on site and desktop monitoring; program status updates; monthly performance reviews; and quarterly financial reviews. The results of these assessments provide the basis for program improvement actions and program improvement plans.

A. Professional Development Evaluation. Iowa administrative code 23.7(3) delineates the professional development standards for adult education and literacy providers. These standards drive the state's evaluation and continuous improvement process for staff development, including decisions informed by local program personnel. IDOE identifies priorities, analyzes effectiveness, and sustains continuous improvement of professional learning with data collected through participant surveys following all workshops, conference presentations, and other activities. The department conducts these surveys, manages event registration and evaluations, tracks participant hours of engagement, and monitors individual professional development plans through an online professional development accountability platform. Local program personnel likewise document self-assessments and classroom observations in the platform, thereby providing a full cycle of data from self-appraisal to the eventual impact of staff learning on instruction.

The annual state training plan includes priorities derived from surveys and training requests submitted through the professional development platform. Survey results and requests are reviewed to identify local technical assistance needs, define objectives, and determine the best delivery method. 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) requirements, and resources needed to administer programs.
- *Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training.* Provides coordinators and data personnel with training on the fundamentals of the NRS, including 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, career pathways instructional strategies, and such standards as the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards.
- *Fiscal Accountability Training.* Provides information and resources on financial management policies and practices for compliance with state and federal financial rules and regulations, including federal Uniform Cost Principles, factors affecting allowability of costs, documentation of expenditures, time and effort reports, cost sharing, and maintenance of effort.

The IDOE requires AEFLA-funded providers to offer local personnel opportunities for professional development and it allocates state leadership funds to support efforts that focus on established priorities.

Actions to Improve Quality: The IDOE uses participant survey data, attendance hours, individual professional development plans and classroom observations, to make data-driven decisions about state-sponsored professional development, including revisions to future trainings. This allows the department to establish priorities based on issues in common among local providers. Challenges that are isolated to a local area must be addressed in the annual status update and, if persistent, require an improvement plan.

B. Site and Desktop Monitoring. The Iowa adult education and literacy monitoring process examines the alignment of program policies, processes, and capacity with program standards and WIOA. IDOE also uses a risk-based quality assurance system to ensure student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and compliance with federal laws and regulations. While local providers are encouraged to use the risk assessment tool for internal review, the IDOE completes an assessment annually to determine the appropriate monitoring strategy (virtual or on site) for each local entity.

Six principles of program quality guide the annual monitoring of adult education programs. Benchmarks for each principle, described below, provide a framework for continuous program improvement and progress.

1. Learner Progress
 - a. The program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented in a manner that is based on principles of adult learning and is accessible to all learners.
 - b. Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress, guide instruction, advising and other services that support a successful transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.
2. Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development
 - a. Curriculum is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards.
 - b. Instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles.
 - c. The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development to improve instructional practice with support for integrating new evidence-based strategies in instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation.
3. Program Design and Leadership
 - a. The program addresses access and equity and is responsive to the regional needs identified by key stakeholders, including learners most in need of services.
 - b. The program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation, and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult education and literacy.
 - c. The continuous improvement planning process is purposeful, ongoing, and systematic and is focused on the program's effectiveness in supporting learners.
4. Accountability
 - a. The program maintains a stable financial condition operating in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner.
 - b. The program has a system for collecting and reporting data that ensures integrity and demonstrates achievement towards the state's negotiated benchmarks for enrollment and performance.
 - c. The program ensures accuracy in reports, reliability, privacy, and security of records.

5. Community Interaction and Outreach
 - a. The program builds a collaborative system of support services that promote learner achievement and program goals.
 - b. The program's collaborations result in increased options for learners in postsecondary education, training, and employment aligned with regional needs and identified in the application and local plan.
 - c. The program successfully recruits learners from the community identified in WIOA as needing literacy services, including those with barriers to employment and hardest to serve.
6. One-Stop System Integration
 - a. The program has in good faith participated in the development and implementation of the local plan, infrastructure funding agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with core and required partners, as regionally applicable.
 - b. The program is actively engaged in the coordination of services and resources that support the one-stop system as a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services accessible to all job seekers, workers, and businesses.
 - c. The program shares in the performance measures of the regional one-stop comprehensive system.

Actions to Improve Quality: When the state monitoring team identifies findings of noncompliance, programs must implement corrective action based on a program improvement plan submitted within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report. The corrective action plan must identify specific strategies the local entity will implement to ensure that findings have been resolved. The monitoring team also encourages providers to implement their recommendations during the upcoming program year.

C. Program Status Update. For each continuing year of the grant, local AEFLA-funded providers report strategies implemented during the program year to address goal and performance areas requiring continuous improvement. Specific targets that must be updated can include enrollment, post-testing rates, educational functioning level gains, transition services, and integrated education and training participation. Programs must also provide evidence of implementation for the previous year, which may be qualitative or quantitative, as well as improvement plans that address unmet performance targets that detail actions to improve quality in the upcoming year. Programs create status update forms and upload related documentation to evidence implementation of strategies in the state grant management system. The IDOE can generate ad hoc reports to compare applications with updates within and across local providers. The Department uses this information to track continuous quality improvement of programs across the state.

Actions to Improve Quality: Status updates are reviewed by a panel of department personnel. Updates that lack sufficient documentation or continuous improvement are negotiated back to providers through the online grant management system with a request for additional information. Technical assistance is provided to those local entities and may include goal setting strategies, examples of documentation, or clarifying definitions.

D. Monthly Performance Review. Iowa's AEL Assessment Policy requires programs to conduct monthly reporting on data integrity and student records. This data is pulled from an online data management system and reviewed for validity. The following data elements are reviewed: participant educational levels; attendance; number of participants exiting services after 90 days and with no scheduled services; and a unique identification number. Key data elements are posted on the department's website for tracking local AEFLA-funded providers' progress toward targets, including NRS enrollment and High School Equivalency Diplomas awarded. Each funded provider 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 provider at any time through the data management system, the state's review is conducted at least monthly.

Actions to Improve Quality: The IDOE allocates funds to providers based on performance. In addition, the department ties program performance reports to continuous improvement plans with required actions for data elements that are not updated on a monthly basis. Providers that do not report data on a monthly basis are out of compliance with Iowa's Assessment Policy and they limit the department's ability to make data-driven decisions. In order to assist programs in developing improvement plans, the department provides technical assistance on data reporting, NRS guidelines, implementation of Iowa's Assessment Policy Guidelines, best practices, and recommendations.

E. Quarterly Financial Reviews. The IDOE adult education and literacy team examines quarterly claims submitted by local programs to confirm the allowable and allocable use of AEFLA funds. The financial review takes place in the state's online grant management system where providers upload requests for reimbursement and documentation of expenditures. The team also uses this as an opportunity to track the use of state leadership funds for required professional development activities that local entities have described in their application and subsequent status updates. Three levels of approval within the IDOE ensures that the review of claims is complete and accurate.

Actions to Improve Quality: Financial reviews that are out of compliance with state and federal financial rules and regulations are negotiated back to providers for correction. 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 budget caps for correction and administrative percentages. The IDOE reviews and approves amendments based on the rationale provided by the local entity. Each amendment creates a new budget; however, each previous version of the budget is retained in the grant management system for tracking purposes. Changes in the budget and submission of claims are time stamped to ensure timely response and processing.

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) 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 program years. Providers develop these plans in partnership with the IDOE to

ensure clarity in the actionable elements. With funding tied to performance, programs are incentivized to meet state negotiated benchmarks.

Certifications and Assurances

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**

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 the supplement-not-supplant requirement); **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. 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**
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303). **Yes**

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

Instructions: In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions.

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 04/30/2020)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about the following provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program

beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

1. An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.
2. An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.
3. An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.
4. An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.

1. [SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. [Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. [SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(required, only if applicable\)](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access to or participation in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of WIOA, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The Department works in partnership with Iowa’s Department of Human Rights, the IDOE Equity Review process, and other key stakeholders to ensure equitable access specific to AEFLA at the state and local level, described below and pledges to adhere and devote ongoing attention to each of these areas.

- **Gender:** The Department ensures that all genders will be equitably recruited and served through AEFLA. The Department will work with providers to ensure strategies are implemented to recruit and serve participants to achieve a proportional representation of male and female participants according to the service area demographics.
- **National origin/race/color:** The Department requires eligible providers to detail their experience in serving participants from diverse cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Applications and annual status updates from eligible providers ensure a continued commitment to recruit and serve eligible individuals from diverse populations (national origin, race, color) and that all activities, program components and published materials will remain free of bias of national origin, race, and color. Additionally, the Department will ensure at the state and local level that staff, and volunteers are representative of the target population of the participants being served. Guidance and examples of written material that is culturally sensitive and provided in other languages to recruit and serve participants, if needed, to eliminate language barriers that may exist, has been provided by the Department.
- **Disability:** The Department ensures that eligible providers will ensure equitable access to all AEFLA activities and facilities as detailed by the application process with specific state standards and are reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in services. Each eligible provider agrees to assurances to serve participants, regardless of

disability. Additionally, the Department will provide professional development to assist providers and staff in developing strategies to ensure that all activities and published materials will be free of bias regarding disabilities. To further ensure equitable access to the program, all eligible providers agrees to assurances to make any reasonable accommodation needed to ensure the full and equitable participation for all individuals in AEFLA activities. In addition to this and in compliance with the GEPA and WIOA Section 188, the Department in partnership with one-stop partners, where applicable, ensures that all physical spaces are designed, constructed and maintained to be compliant with the American Disability Act requirements, and are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities in order to ensure their equal access in AEFLA activities.

- **Age:** The Department ensures that all participants of eligible age will be served and have equitable access to participate in all AEFLA activities based on need while ensuring that all programs and published materials will be free of bias regarding age. Additionally, the providers will offer age-appropriate activities and materials, including but not limited to reading materials, for participants.

The Department pledges to operate the AEFLA, Title II, WIOA activities as described above, to ensure equitable access and participation in regards to gender, race, national origin, color, and disability. Furthermore, the Department will ensure that providers will address recruitment, intake, participation, and hiring practices, in compliance with GEPA, in the following manner:

- **Recruitment:** Funded providers will ensure that AEFLA staff will recruit ALL eligible participants and not discriminate on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The local administrator will ensure any promotional material is not bias and is available in alternative format, including languages, as regionally necessary and available to all individuals. If individuals are in need of assistance to complete an application, staff will provide assistance and if needed, make arrangements for accommodations.
- **Intake:** The eligible provider will involve staff personnel in the intake process for eligible individuals to provide a human-centered design process. Interviews, advising and assessments will be conducted with all eligible individuals to discuss and assess the educational needs and goals while addressing any questions about the services provided. The eligible provider will use information gained during the intake process to place eligible individuals in appropriate AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (in compliance with GEPA).
- **Participation:** All eligible providers will ensure that the physical facilities are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities to ensure their equal access to the program. All individuals will be able to participate in all AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
- **Hiring Process of Eligible Provider Staff:** The Department promotes equal employment opportunities and the fair treatment of employees without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, or sexual preference in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. All eligible providers are

required to be an equal opportunity employer. In adhering to this, providers will ensure equal opportunity hiring guidelines to ensure equal access in employment to all who apply for a position using AEFLA funds.

The Department is committed to adhering to and monitoring these standards and practices and will make all provisions necessary to ensure that this plan is in compliance with the General Education and Provisions Act (GEPA).

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan¹³ must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by 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 State Rehabilitation Council continues to provide guidance, direction and recommendations to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meet quarterly and IVRS provides the following updates to SRC Members: Administrative Report, Financial Overview, Rehabilitation Services Update, State Plan and Independent Living Update, Legal Update, Policy Updates and Iowa Client Assistance Program (CAP) report. SRC members are provided with updates related to IVRS progress on state plan goals, objectives and strategies and SRC members provide feedback. In addition, Resource Managers and field staff frequently present to the full SRC and share initiatives happening across Iowa.

The SRC consists of two Subcommittees that include Outreach and VR Service Delivery.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: Responsible for gathering input and recommendations on the State Plan and annual State Plan amendments, conduct comprehensive statewide needs assessment, plan legislative reception.

¹³ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

VR SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE: Responsible for customer satisfaction survey, SRC Annual Report, and reviewing and making recommendations regarding agency policy issues.

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

The VR Service Delivery Committee presented on recommendations to IVRS at the August 2019 SRC Meeting. Areas covered included: Section 511, Outreach & Information, Referral Process, and Review of Service Delivery.

Issue: Section 511 makes it harder for youth to enter subminimum wage employment and creates requirements for VR agencies to provide career counseling and information and referral services to adults working in subminimum wage settings to help them shift from subminimum wage employment to competitive integrated employment. Section 511 went into effect in July, 2016. Since that time, IVRS has contracted with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE) to show individuals required under Section 511 to receive career counseling a video explaining VR and employment.

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

IVRS Response: An Estimated 1900 individuals remain in sheltered employment. WIOA is not a sheltered workshop issue, but a subminimum wage issue. We have a process in place through a contract with ICIE that has led to improvements and meets the federal guidelines. IVRS has reached out to DHS and inquired about how many individuals are in day habilitation programs and how those numbers have changed during the last three years.

We have a list of 24 sheltered workshops and will plan to outreach to them during the next year to ensure understanding of our Information/Referral and education information.

We are working with ICIE to determine if a different webinar might be helpful at this time to engage families and youth at an earlier time or if a different webinar would be helpful to supplement the current ones.

Issue: There are 115,000 Iowans receiving SSDI – they are automatically eligible to receive VR services, but many have not heard of IVRS or do not know what services are available to them.

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

- Panel discussions
- Outreach videos
- Focus groups
- Reverse job fairs
- Video resumes

IVRS Response: The 115,000 individuals receiving Social Security disability cash benefits obtain knowledge of employment services through a system in place with our Disability Determination Services. The system identifies youth who are under the age of 18 and receiving benefits to determine whether they are already an IVRS job candidate, if not they receive a letter discussing services and program availability. All new disability recipients receive information pertaining to Ticket to Work, which includes information on the State VR system.

In 2018, IVRS hired a Benefits Planning Resource Manager, developing a tiered approach to VR Implementation.

Visibility activities are being focused on October Disability Awareness, Facebook pages, success stories, Iowa Job Honor Award, video development, Chamber of Commerce partnerships, DD Council, Aging, DHS, State Workforce Board.

There are currently 213 activities are assigned to Planning and Development Team members at IVRS and staff are engaged in 60 committees and teams related to VR activities.

Issue: IVRS changed the way in which individual's access services and the Committee has received some feedback that we feel warrants some additional attention.

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

IVRS Response: IVRS aligns with the intention of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which is that every individual with a disability can work when provided with the appropriate supports. If there is a staff member, or office, that is not operating in this manner, it appears to be a training issue, and does not reflect the viewpoint of IVRS as a whole.

The Coordinating Council is currently working on updating the referral and application policies. The SRC is represented on the Council through the CAP representative. The Council has the opportunity to review the Coordinating Council recommendations prior to agency implementation. It is based on the recommendations of the Coordinating Council that new referral and application policies have been drafted; these were sent out to the Coordinating Council members for review prior to the meeting held on September 24, 2019. The Coordinating Council has also been provided with copies of the associated referral and application documentation, such as the application and preliminary intake forms. All Coordinating Council members participated in discussions in the last meeting related to these forms, and were specifically asked how they would like these updated to assure the process of referral is as efficient as possible. These recommendations were all accepted and the form has been updated. The referral and application policy drafts were once again updated to reflect these recommendations, to assure the forms and the policies match. These drafts will be discussed, at the next meeting.

IVRS is emphasizing engagement at intake services. Creating value, beginning to discuss employment options along with Discovery/Employment First changes are integrated into these discussions.

An internal work group including ICAP is reviewing and making recommendations.

Issue: First meeting with current pamphlets and questions can give a mixed message, counselor turnover is costly budget and causes a negative experience with the candidate, timelines of interviewing to eligibility needs to be reduced, counselor/associate caseloads and process timetables, hiring companies should meet your candidates.

Recommendation: 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 to streamline the process. Eliminate hardcopy paperwork by going to cloud base software as quickly as possible and involve hiring companies as team approach with counselors and candidates for onboarding successful employing practices.

IVRS Response: It is part of our legal requirement to share the ICAP brochure.

Business Services address hiring practices and training in job development, business development. We have business work teams established at our One Stop Centers, Disability Access Committee addresses business service integration. In relationship to business services, the hiring team is involved through our business services – we don't have statewide consistency but it is being addressed.

IVRS does recognize timeframes can cause frustration. This includes time it takes to complete eligibility – the regulations allow IVRS counselors 60 days to determine eligibility, and longer with a signed extension from the job candidate. On average, IVRS is completing eligibilities in 39 days, which is ahead of the national average. Factors that cause a delay include; waiting for necessary documentation of disability, which is required by regulations and legislature. This process is under review to improve effectiveness and engagement.

IVRS utilizes a cloud-based software program at this time, however, IVRS has had a delay due to the difficulty in obtaining staff to provide further development of the system that are required by the RSA 911 regulations. As a result, IVRS has also attended meetings and researched several off-the-shelf programs in an attempt to further explore ways to streamline data collection and the IVRS process. These programs will cost IVRS two million dollars and do not contain components that are necessary per the 911 requirements. As a result, it will take over a decade for IVRS to receive a return on the investment. Since this purchase will not benefit IVRS, it was decided to maintain the current system and continue to seek out and train the necessary developers to continue with the process. It is the goal of IVRS to eventually go paperless and reduce the need for hard copies of case files and associated materials. Unfortunately, until the system can be built and developed, IVRS must continue with the current process of a mix of electronic and hard copy information at this time. We have a Project Management Team that has weekly meetings and an IRSS priority list multiple pages long that can't currently be used as we are focused on compliance and staff IT recruitment. As compared to other state VR systems, IVRS is still one of the leaders in mobile technology and use of cell phones, tablets.

In relationship to engagement, the Job Candidate Handbook will help. We do not feel job Candidates are interested in history – they want to know what is current and available for them today. This has been tried in the past and received negative feedback.

Staff retention: Part of work improvement and performance planning is to make sure it is a collaborative discussion and everyone agrees on steps and goals. This includes our staff person who has to have ownership and to ensure it is not an authoritarian dictatorship. Turnover – we have a number of strategies in place, emphasis on work culture, engagement, supervisor leadership, exit surveys, bureau chief and administrator office visits, priority communication on two goal areas – Employment outcomes and Pre-ETS hours. This also included hiring changes and more active involvement of the local supervisor in being involved and leading the hiring decision.

Additional Recommendations made throughout 2018-2019 program years.

Recommendation: The Service Delivery Committee recommends an IVRS primary focus on Intellectual Disabilities and Deaf/Hard of Hearing groups.

IVRS Response: IVRS is in agreement with these focus areas.

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

No recommendations were rejected and the section above includes responses by IVRS in what is taking place to meet SRC recommendations.

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;

1. Project Search: IVRS requests a continuation of the waiver of statewideness for Project Search which was approved by RSA in the FY2014 state plan. As part of the approval process, IVRS completed an analysis to confirm that Project Search services provided under the TPCA were not 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 facility-based employment. IVRS third-party Project Search programs were established in Des Moines and in Waterloo.

2. Transition Alliance Program: The Transition Alliance Program (TAP), which RSA approved in 1997 under a Waiver of Statewideness, continue to be explored in other areas of Iowa as program success rates are statistically high. TAP is jointly funded by a school district and IVRS. Each TAP provides Pre-ETS and enhanced transitional services to eligible IVRS job candidates 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.

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 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. requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

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. These include:

Veterans Administration — IVRS has a long-standing agreement with the VA. This agreement spells out the referral process; which agency will be responsible for specific services; the inclusion of each other's employees in staff development activities; and the identification of key liaison individuals.

Department of Human Services — This is a general agreement between DHS and IVRS, which allows and encourages interaction between the two agencies for individuals with whom both provide services. It relates to referrals, joint planning, 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 percent 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.

Developmental Disabilities Council — the IVRS attorney currently serves on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. The DD Council’s focus is to arm those 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.

Iowa Transportation Coordination Council — IVRS is also a team member 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 to discuss 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 agency 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.

LifeLong Links — IVRS established an agreement to serve as a member of LLL. The common goal shared by IVRS and LifeLong Links is improving the lives of consumers in the aging and disability communities.

Future Ready Iowa — is a commitment for collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to help close the skills gap by better aligning our education, economic development and workforce development initiatives. Future Ready Iowa establishes a shared vision and goal that 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce will have education and training beyond high school by 2025. The Future Ready Iowa Alliance helps IVRS accelerate this important work. There is a need for programmatic and messaging alignment. The communication directors of the relevant agencies have begun coordinating on messaging.

Intermediary Networks — were established with funding from IVRS in collaboration with the Department of Education to Community College regions to develop and expand work-based learning opportunities. Funds were used to hire staff to prepare 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 (STEM). The goal of an Intermediary Network is to work with students with disabilities and align their career interests to post-secondary education, as appropriate. The long-term results are positioning students for successful career attainment and increase work-based learning opportunities for this targeted population.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) — worked with IVRS to hire an Employment Specialist within the Area Agencies of Aging Centers. This position helps further integrate Iowa Workforce services through Iowa’s Skilled Employment Initiative for employment in the Iowa economy focused on the mid-skill areas. The AAAs have been designated as Aging & Disability Resource Centers in each of their regions and bridge the gaps that currently exist for this population of IVRS job candidates. Each Employment Specialist works only with individuals age 55 or older under this contract.

Making the Grade — Making the Grade is an employment program designed to provide students in high school the opportunity to obtain part-time employment after school and during the summer. The program facilitates understanding of the work habits and behaviors necessary to be

employed, while obtaining a paid job that can produce references and skill sets to draw upon after high school. Students with disabilities, including students covered under Section 511, who are receiving services from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services under an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) may participate in the program. The program is about reaching school districts with limited services to assist students in obtaining competitive community employment, and serving those individuals who are already eligible and in need of an employment service due to gaps in the current system. Year-round services are provided after school and in the summer as part of Making the Grade.

Iowa Jobs for America Graduates (iJAG) — A project was developed through Boone Community School District to partner in the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities utilizing the framework of the iJAG program. Boone Community School District began implementing an innovative learning project focused on a work-based learning continuum of awareness (early years), exploration (middle years) and training (high school) in partnership with a variety of employers and higher education institutions. One hundred percent of the focus of this project is on students with disabilities served through the Boone Community School District who are eligible for services through an IEP or 504 plan. Boone Community School District will provide these services through a sub-contract with the Iowa Jobs for America Graduates Program (iJAG). The staff specialist for the project will track their time through a daily Personnel Allocation Report. IVRS staff are coordinating service delivery efforts and monitoring progress.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

IVRS has agreements with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Program, the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (I-PAT), the Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD) and the University of Iowa Health Care for providing assistive technology and assistive technology services, or administrating staff training to such services. Services include referrals, exchange of information, services provided in collaboration, staff development, and strategies for coordination and collaboration.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

Not Applicable.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

IVRS works closely with Regional Workforce Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in coordinating services and supports for out-of-school youth. An agreement providing data exchange and the sharing of safe data information has been established between IVRS with the Iowa Workforce Development.

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. 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.

WIOA requires that 15 percent of the budget be allocated towards the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). IVRS has developed strong policy surrounding the provision of Pre-ETS service delivery. IVRS collaborates with every public school district in Iowa to develop a Local School Plan that addresses the following information: the services the school district will provide to students with disabilities, the new and/or expanded services IVRS will provide within the district, services provided by community partners and/or IVRS contracted programs, and any gaps in services. Local School Plans are also developed with private accredited high schools across the state along with some identified alternative educational settings.

As gaps in services are identified on the Local School Plans, programs have been developed collaboratively with school districts and other community partners across the state. The following programs have been developed to assist with delivering VR services, including Pre-ETS, in collaboration with school districts across the state:

IVRS Intermediary Networks (INs)

IVRS awarded funding through the Department of Education/IowaGrants to regional intermediary networks to develop and expand work-based learning opportunities in selected regions. The program 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 (STEM). The goal is to align students' career interests to appropriate post-secondary education through delivery of Pre-ETS.

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.

Making the Grade (MTG)

Students with disabilities 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 with disabilities in participating high schools are placed in paid work-based learning experiences in the community to assist with skill building necessary for their future career.

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.

Transition Alliance Program (TAP)

TAP is a 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.

Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself (TEAM)

Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself (TEAM) is a collaboration between Easter Seals, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS). The focus of TEAM is on developing and providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are attending all high schools within Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS), including students covered under Section 511 and students who are potentially eligible for IVRS, prior to graduation. TEAM staff will work collaboratively with the IVRS Counselors assigned to DMPS and the DMPS Work Experience Coordinators (WECs) in order to provide new or expanded services for students with disabilities in each of the five required activities for Pre-ETS. TEAM may not duplicate any class or program already provided by the district. Year round services will be provided to include activities that occur during the school day and after school, as well as activities throughout the summer.

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. Multiple state agency partners, including juvenile placement settings, are assisting with the development of policy, procedure, and structural elements of its Juvenile Reentry System (JReS). The goal of JReS is the reduction of recidivism rates and to improve other youth outcomes through implementation of comprehensive system-wide reforms to juvenile reentry policies and processes, which include: enhanced cross-system coordination, utilization of quality and effective programming, data sharing and prioritization of resources. IVRS has been an active partner in this process for implementation of Pre-ETS in these alternative educational settings.

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;

IVRS staff will provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Area Education Agencies (AEAs). 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 (Pre-ETS) to individuals who are Potentially Eligible (PE) but have not yet applied for services. All of these services are outlined in a Local School Plan with each LEA annually. The Local School Plan is individualized to meet the needs of each LEA. LEA staff, IVRS staff and other community partners are included in the development of each Local School Plan.

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 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:

- Student knowledge and skills;
- Student learning characteristics, including student response to ease of accessibility and accommodations;
- Complexity of support needs; and,
- Number of environments impacted.

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 as part of the Pre-ETS provided. These services can be conducted in a group setting and will require collaboration to determine the Pre-ETS 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 Pre-ETS 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 AEA/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.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. As referenced, a current Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) defines the responsibilities of both divisions. This MoA is designed 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.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Outreach efforts are identified in the Local School Plan for each LEA. Some of these activities could include but are not limited to attending an IEP meeting, participating in transition fairs or back to school nights, and other transition planning meetings.

For Potentially Eligible (PE) students in need of Pre-ETS, IVRS staff work collaboratively with LEA staff to identify students and gather the necessary documentation needed for participation in these activities. For students with more intensive needs, who would benefit from individualized VR services, an application for IVRS would be completed to determine eligibility for services. An IVRS Counselor would complete a comprehensive analysis of the disabling conditions and impediments to employment.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

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. 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 procurement procedures. The funds are designated for specific services as long as they are provided to eligible IVRS job candidates consistent with categories of the waiting list that are receiving services. IVRS monitors programs and expenditures for compliance with existing state and federal policies. IVRS also provides coordination efforts with our state's independent living centers and Statewide Independent Living Council. Independent living services are provided through the Administration for Community Living and have their own state plan.

IVRS has purchase of service agreements with over 80 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP). These agreements provide services to adults and students depending on their employment need(s).

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

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 contractual agreements established for the provision of Supported Employment Services (SES) with various Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) 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 Services, the IVRS counselor must identify funding for long-term support(s) required to maintain employment after the IVRS case file is closed. IVRS provides funding for Supported Employment Services through a shared arrangement with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise System under DHS. Once a determination is made that SES services are required, a team meeting occurs to discuss plans for the provision of this service.

When the individual being served is an adult and Supported Employment is a required service, the agreement with the Department of Human Services is implemented for funding (see MOA between IVRS and the DHS). If the individual being served is a student, then IVRS supports the student in Supported Employment 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.

IVRS expanded partnerships with private vendors for specific employment services. In addition, IVRS executed a contract with the University of Iowa – Center for Disability and Development for employment services, as well as several independent contractors in order to meet the Supported Employment needs of Iowans with disabilities.

g. Coordination with Employers

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

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services believes strongly and is actively implementing the dual customer approach - serving both our job candidates and business partners. We are the intersection of disability expertise and business intelligence!

During the past two fiscal years, IVRS has continued to infuse business outreach activities into local and state plans resulting in strengthening our business relationships statewide. These relationships enhance the IVRS counselor's understanding of business expectations (or business intelligence), and are directly connected to the planning process with consumers. It has been found that by increasing employer involvement throughout the rehabilitation process, job candidates have better information to make informed choice decisions on their career plans. An additional result is a broader range of employment opportunities available.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to serving business and industry as a valued customer and in the past year, demonstrated this commitment through a wide range of activities and service delivery. During the last year, four of our counselor roles now include specific goals to serve business partners. This means, we have staff in the field designated to provide services to our 2nd customer. Additionally, the business team serves as mentors for the field. The team is led by the Director of Business Services and meets with at least one designated business staff per office; however, many offices have elected to identify multiple staff as "experts" as part of our team.

In FFY17, IVRS focused on training - not only for internal staff but also Iowa workforce partners and community rehabilitation providers. It is important when serving business and industry that everyone unites to meet business needs. IVRS training focuses on the importance of a business relationship and meeting business needs with our job candidates, versus just making placements that do not result in long-term employment. We want to do a better job of understanding the business needs and helping them identify and meet their bottom line. Often we can utilize the talents of our job candidates to help businesses with their needs. This may include restructuring jobs; we are finding that both business and candidates are winning. When people do what they are good at - they are more productive - creating increased revenue for business and industry.

Training begins with a business intake to learn about the business, then moves to a job analysis/task analysis so that recommendations can be made to help the business. This training is done classroom style, as well as in the business community; learning by doing with mentoring.

Because of training, staff and partners have learned the value of the job analysis, which has helped in making a better employment match for job candidates. Both IVRS staff and community partners have completed more job analyses since being trained. IVRS has had some great customized outcomes as a result of staff doing a better analysis with Iowa businesses!

When staff implement the job analysis process, potential solutions begin to emerge. For example, one business was using skilled laborers to make boxes. By hiring a separate person to make boxes, the business actually saved money since it was not a skilled position. Keeping skilled workers on the line doing production allowed the business to have less production loss and pay workers in accordance to their duties. Through hiring a person to make the boxes, an opportunity was created for a job candidate who did not have the skills to work on the line but wanted to work in advanced manufacturing. This is one of many examples that IVRS has used to create opportunities for job candidates. Additionally, these analyses are perfect ways to introduce our job candidates into the careers they may be considering, in order to help them make an informed choice.

The IVRS Business Consultant has been involved in training staff at many levels; including state, regional and national conferences and webinars. In-person trainings include Iowa Association of Providers conference and the Iowa APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First) conference. National webinar trainings include: Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) on Reverse Job Fairs; Work-Based Learning webinar and Community-Business-School relationships sponsored by NTACT (National Transition Assistance Center on Transition); Cornell University's Employer Engagement: *Meeting Business Needs, Adding Value*; and ODEP's (Office of Disability Policy) webinar on Increasing Employer Engagement, in partnership with the IVRS administrator. This has increased visibility of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation business engagement efforts and resulted in IVRS earning a reputation as a proactive and innovative partner.

Most recently, a panel of IVRS business specialists was asked to present nationally for RespectAbility.

Our most recent innovative idea is to utilize ZSpace, an augmented reality computer, to connect students to work. A trainer is coming to Iowa to teach the new classes available. Our business team is taking the lead on this and will be partnering with business to determine which courses will best prepare students and adults for the career. Our candidates will be able to get a hands-on opportunity to see some of the training modules available and will work with business and industry to create some business intelligence opportunities in a classroom setting prior to introducing them to the actual workspace. This will allow our candidates to have some hands-on interaction with careers before taking the next step.

Video resumes is another innovative way IVRS has moved business services forward. As we are an Employment First state, we understand that the individuals we serve have most significant disabilities. In an effort to highlight and showcase these individual's skills and talents, we have

created video resumes with “QR codes” on the resumes. In doing this, it allows the hiring manager to watch the person performing their duties in a positive manner. Businesses have mentioned that they love this, as they are able to show their hiring managers the skills of the person. We have found, often times HR is receptive to hiring persons in “modified” positions, but the manager struggles with hiring the person. HR has said that by having the video, they can show the hiring manager the skills and the necessity of hiring the person for a job that has been modified. Our success rate of hires for those with video resumes is over 50 percent.

IVRS is also actively involved with embedding into business. This looks different depending on the needs of the business, the territory and the counselor's availability. Examples include:

- John Deere - our staff spent a week there doing the job, side by side with the staff. Because of this, he now is able to show up with candidates and give them a tour, introduce them to the hiring managers and has served as a mentor to our candidates placed there. He understands the jobs because he performed the jobs.
- Hodge - after the externship at John Deere was so impactful, they referred us to their partner company, Hodge. Our counselor then performed an externship there and was able to develop the same relationship resulting in similar outcomes.
- Prudential - this is a national account, with the relationship being led by Iowa. Our staff went through the application, testing and interview process to learn exactly what was required to do the job. He also spent time on site learning the different jobs and we have had multiple successes from this type of service to a business.
- LaQuinta - our staff who is embedded there is spending two half-days a month on site. She went through the orientation and hiring process before getting a spot located inside the hotel. We immediately had seven hires. She continues to provide training and mentorship to our candidates who are there as well as those interested in hospitality and hotel.

An exciting business partnership that grew over the last year was with Kwik Trip. Kwik Trip saw a need to carve out a position called “Retail Helper,” which assists the cashier by cleaning, packaging fruits and vegetables, stocking and rotating inventory. This allows the cashier to focus on the customer, providing optimal customer service, which increases business. This has proven to be a wise financial decision on the part of the business to create this opportunity for Retail Helper positions! We just learned in the last year turnover in Iowa was six percent, while it was 20 percent nationally. This was attributed to our staff knowing the culture and need of the business and making excellent matches. IVRS has developed a process to best serve both customers. There is a point of contact in every office that serves as the business “POC” point of contact. All referrals for the entire state are given to the Director of Business Relations with IVRS and these then are distributed to the points of contacts. We have a referral form for internal and external applicants, we do the prescreening and vetting moving forward with those that best meet the culture of the store. Our staff has taken ownership and developed a database for tracking all referrals and providing consistency in business service across the state.

Another emerging partnership is CVS Pharmacy. This is a national partnership with the highest number of placements of individuals with disabilities at the national level. Unfortunately, Iowa was unable to move forward with hires. A new strategy was put in place to start by training our staff on business intelligence by having them go through the application and virtual try out. The goal is for VR staff to be so knowledgeable that we can get our applicants through the barriers of

the application and the testing required. This will be valuable for Iowans with disabilities - for their VR staff to have the ability to help make those connections is the healthcare sector.

IVRS business team has partnered with the Laborer's Union and training to improve outcomes in the trade sector. Our staff have met on several occasions and have participated in a hands-on training. Our staff then brought the contacts back to the area offices to hold a meet and greet with our students to teach them about apprenticeships. We have seen one successful closure, several hires and multiple candidates engaged with the pre-apprenticeship activities!

Sector Partnerships — IVRS area offices are involved and engaged in sector partnerships. At the state level, IVRS has representation on the statewide Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Advisory Boards and 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 one 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, businesses receive services in a continuous fashion, the relationship is built with the partnership, and there is not any gap in service delivery to the business.

As mentioned, IVRS belongs to the National Employment Team or NET. They were instrumental in working with business to identify the single point of contact model. Each year, a summit is held with the statewide points of contacts gathering in one place to share successes and business relationships. The two relationships we focused on this year were CVS and Starbucks. Iowa is moving full speed ahead with CVS and is still building connections with Starbucks. One thing that came from this summit, was for members of our business team to get to know and meet with members of other states business teams. We are a part of the regional team and recently met with Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. Staff found it beneficial to make connections with business team members from other states and are sharing strategies to partner with business across the state line. Additionally, we were able to learn some best practices. We will continue to have three zoom meetings twice a year.

IVRS continues to support the Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) through Occupational Skills Training. 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 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.

The IVRS Self-Employment Program (ISE) 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, outline a plan of action to help explore: an individual's qualifications and skills; the entrepreneurial idea; determining the feasibility of the business idea; and facilitating 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 may help with preliminary exploration of business ventures. Services available through Iowa Workforce Development may also provide additional resources. 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.

IVRS has five videos featured through America's Job Honor Award that highlight business partnerships and individuals who have overcome barriers to achieve successful employment. These videos are excellent communication tools for business talking to business, and exemplify positive features of accessing VR employment services. This past year, both businesses highlighted were partners of IVRS. Hy-Vee, our business partner hiring the most IVRS candidates for several years and Templeton Rye in Templeton, Iowa. Our staff there have developed a fabulous relationship with the business, leading to four customized placements in a matter of a couple months. These employees were so valuable, that Templeton Rye offers them a ride share (pays for their transportation).

Additionally, IVRS boasts several members on the State Rehabilitation council who represent business and provide their perspective regularly to IVRS.

IVRS efforts in coordinating with business partners helps foster competitive integrated employment. Customized employment strategies including Discovery and Customized employment continue to be refined within the IVRS system. Ongoing training has been made available to both staff and IVRS partners on providing these services, as well as services to businesses.

IVRS has prioritized business engagement to expand access to the trades industry and apprenticeships. The Iowa Workforce Center is a leader in the country with their emphasis on quality apprenticeship programs and IVRS collaborated with IWC during the past two years in training and outreach to apprenticeship programs attempting to identify opportunities to improve access for individuals with disabilities.

An initiative that grew in 2017 as part of this collaboration was beginning a partnership with the North Central States Regional Carpenter Council. Coordination occurred between the Nebraska VR offices, Iowa Job Corps, and Iowa VR. Key activities include:

- Identifying a point of contact for each area partner.
- Receiving consistent communication from the Council on openings and employment needs.
- The Council should refer applicants and apprentices to VR when applicable. Referral information shared.
- Improved communication and referral from Job Corps to VR in efforts to better connect graduated students to needed supports for on-going success.
- Improve marketing awareness of the trades with all partners. VR will share information at schools and transition fairs.
- VR should be contacted as soon as possible by the Council regarding any needs.
- Tour training centers will be set up with a direct contact list available for all partners.
- Meeting rooms can be used at the training center for any appointments - this will expand awareness for all partners utilizing the facilities.
- Continued follow-up meetings will occur at six months to review if we are improving career connections.
- VR will continue transition efforts with local high school districts and their presence at the Denison, IA Job Corps Program.
- A cheat sheet will be developed with key partner contact names and information.
- Expand the use of social media and marketing by partners of the collaborative service delivery options.

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

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 focus on work-based learning opportunities for all students combine to enhance transition employment services for IVRS job candidates.

The IVRS Transition Resource Manager is actively involved with the Special Education Advisory Panel, and the Administrator works with the Department of Education's Work-Based Learning Grant as well as the Future Ready Iowa Program.

The IVRS Intermediary Network grant was implemented in late 2016 and renewable through contract amendments for five years. The purpose of this grant expanded efforts of the Intermediary Networks in areas without access to current IVRS-sponsored programs such as the *Transition Alliance Program* or *Making the Grade*.

The primary responsibilities under this grant include developing and leading initiatives and projects that create robust partnerships with regional K12 school districts, businesses, industries, organizations, and other community partnerships to enhance career-awareness, work-based learning opportunities, and early career connections and opportunities within the college's service area for students with disabilities. The goal of an Intermediary Network is to work with students with disabilities and align their career interests to appropriate post-secondary education as appropriate. The long-term results are positioning students for successful career attainment. Since the inception of this grant, IN numbers continue to expand. Currently IVRS INs are involved with 122 Iowa school districts and work with 29 percent of eligible and potentially eligible students.

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 developed a MOA outlining collaborative partnering efforts. The purpose of this agreement established 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 and the Iowa Department of Human Services. This agreement clarifies roles and responsibilities of IVRS and DHS in regard to common consumers.

Collaborative planning efforts are in place between IVRS and Iowa Medicaid Enterprise to implement Employment First principles. Monthly meetings hosted by IVRS with IME and other stakeholders occur to facilitate competitive integrated employment outcomes.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

The IVRS attorney is currently on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and their Executive Director is assigned to the leadership team of Employment First which is coordinated through IVRS.

Collaborative efforts continue between IVRS and DD that include the following:

- Establishing a pilot in Dubuque to learn about Discovery and Customized Employment services;
- Offsetting costs in sponsoring the annual APSE conference;
- Providing funding to support ongoing follow-up and training for previous projects in Des Moines and Ames;

- Helping sponsor an IVRS statewide conference to advance staff knowledge of Employment First principles along with Discovery and Customized Employment services.

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 Agreement. This MOA describes the financial responsibilities and the populations served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

IVRS also partners with local Community Rehabilitation Providers in separate areas of the state to pilot model programs for Individual Placement & Support (IPS) for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness.

IVRS is represented on the Mental Health Planning Council and meets quarterly with this group to discuss service needs and gaps in Iowa, and review legislative initiatives.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

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 financial team has developed a sustainability model that is used as a foundation for the allocation of agency financial resources. Discussions occur regarding filling vacancies, justifying 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 requires justification to hire. Personnel in the Disability Determination Services Bureau are not reported as they are not covered by the IVRS State Plan.

Positions are targeted to offices based on optimum caseload size, as well as job candidates projected to come off the waiting list and move into active services. Current staffing is;

- Area Office Supervisors and other managers, 17 positions
- Professional staff — counselors and rehabilitation associates, 115 positions
- support staff, including rehabilitation assistants, 59 positions

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 have two vacancies. Our support staff, including Rehabilitation Assistants have three 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 six vacancies during the next five years. Professional Staff including Rehabilitation Counselors and Associates, are projected to have 35 vacancies during the next five years. Support staff including Rehabilitation Assistants, are projected to have 20 vacancies. This is based upon retirement factors and an aging workforce and does not consider other types of turnover that may be experienced.

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 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 in rehabilitation counseling.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The University of Iowa has ten students enrolled in the Master Degree Rehabilitation Counseling program. Drake University has ten students enrolled in their Master Degree Counseling Program. The University of Iowa's Rehabilitation Counseling program will emphasize service delivery to individuals who are deaf after recognition of area of need through partnership with IVRS. Drake has had a primary emphasis on growing their mental health counseling program and we are looking for strategies to promote the vocational rehabilitation connections. Our training officer presents to students annually at Drake University to share about IVRS opportunities, has developed an internship program for students, and will be taking part in the Master's Program Interviewing team.

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 had nine student graduates during the prior year and Drake University had five 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, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. During the past year, IVRS area offices supervised practicum and intern students in the Rehabilitation Counseling programs to provide them with fieldwork 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 and 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.

Specific consultation has occurred with Iowa's Department of Administrative Services in efforts to expand recruitment from non-traditional sources. Although the State of Iowa has underutilized departments for Females, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities, IVRS met or exceeded all state goals.

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 including MBA or MPA.

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.

For certain 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 the individual's 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 a master's degree is quite limited. In those cases, individuals with related degrees are considered for vacancies.

IVRS has a strategic plan emphasizing 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 help enhance IVRS' 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 section 101(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

IVRS provides and supports ongoing, professional career development training; which may be provided either 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; ethics, and organizational change projects that enhance the achievement of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

IVRS staff have the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars and concentrated training activities to improve skills in working with specific groups of individuals with disabilities, as well as individual or group staff development activities designed to enable staff to acquire special skills.

In 2019 the following classes were offered to all employees of IVRS through internal trainings and external presenters:

- Deaf Deaf World
- Eligibility Training
- Rubric Training
- Sexual Harassment
- Budget Worksheet
- Financial Trainings
- The Career Index+
- Career Scope
- New Staff Training
- Dragon Anywhere
- PowerDMS
- Iowa Self-Employment
- Transition Conference

In August of 2019, 150 contracted and internal staff attended the IVRS Transition Conference. This conference provided training on areas recommended by staff in the field working in the area of transition. External and internal experts provided evidence based methods and practices to staff who work directly with students.

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 Services, and services to high school students and youth.

The training coordinator position is offering professional development courses to all employees. Specific classes are required of new employees and vary depending upon the job classification involved. These required trainings through the professional development series provided by the State of Iowa are:

Supervisors:

- From Interview to Hire
- Fundamentals of Supervision
- Performance Evaluation
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Crucial Conversations
- Discipline, Grievances & the Merit System
- Diversity Training for Managers and Supervisors
- Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action / Anti-Discrimination
- Investigating Employee Misconduct
- Preventing Sexual Harassment for Supervisors
- Shaping Effective & Engaged Teams
- Strategic Planning & Systems Thinking

New Counselors:

- Diversity Training for Employees
- Ethical Issues in Today's Workplace
- Preventing Sexual Harassment for Employees (E-learning)
- Professional Impact
- Customer Service
- Managing Your Time and Priorities
- Americans with Disabilities Act (E-learning)

Other rehabilitation staff:

- Diversity Training for Employees
- Ethical Issues in Today's Workplace
- Preventing Sexual Harassment for Employees (E-learning)
- Professional Impact
- Customer Service
- Managing Your Time and Priorities
- Listening: The Forgotten Skill

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 assistive technology, mental illness, learning disabilities, autism, and head injury/traumatic brain injury. IVRS is the lead agency with the Employment First Initiative and both internal staff and IVRS partners have 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, coordinated and/or provided by the IVRS

Training Specialist. Recent examples this past year have included external and internal training on deaf services and motivational interviewing.

Standing committees exist to help disseminate information on a regular basis in the areas of Motivational Interviewing, business development and engagement, benefits planning, transition services, and assistive technology. These committees help to keep field staff informed of best practices and preferred methods for service delivery.

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 Language Link, which is part of the State's Master Agreement.

Collaboration continues with 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. Staff also use forms that have been translated into Spanish.

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.

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 Department of Education have an agreement to provide joint training for staff to receive common information and skill development pertinent to students with disabilities. This includes the DE-sponsored Summer Institute, as well as local IVRS staff/management and education agencies conversations on how to work together to support 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 requires participation locally in training and cross training of staff on language, services, etc.

IVRS has a close working relationship with the bureau responsible for Special Education within the Iowa Department of Education. IVRS counselors participate in IEP meetings and provide information and referral services to high schools for students that are on waiting lists that are not being served. Pre-Employment Transition Services are made available to potentially eligible students as well as to those students in eligible status. IVRS and school districts are participating in initiatives to provide summer services to students with disabilities. 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.

Twenty-nine percent of IVRS referrals come from Iowa school districts for youth in transition. In PY2018, 905 students were successfully employed working 30 hours a week, with average earnings of \$12.21/hour. Over \$4.92 million was spent on tuition assistance for students in our post-secondary training programs to obtain educational and occupational skills training to help compete in today's labor market.

The IVRS model of serving students which includes substantial work readiness and work orientation to students who are potentially eligible, intensive services to students who are eligible, and expanding contract initiatives to meet capacity needs, all combine to increase the number of students served in the State of Iowa.

j. Statewide Assessment

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 and State Rehabilitation Council members routinely review practices, customer satisfaction, IVRS policies, quality assurance, agency data, and labor market information. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is an ongoing topic at SRC meetings, particularly with regard to collaboration among state agencies and outreach to stakeholders and other partners. All of this information contributes to identifying specific needs and gaps for IVRS to address as part of the state planning process. IVRS staff use survey information, data and outcome information to develop subsequent strategies to fold into IVRS Strategic Plan discussions.

The 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment submitted to RSA outlined strategies IVRS developed to enhance individual skills and support the State of Iowa's business community after assessing what was working and what was not. Through the expansion of services that connect with business and industry, IVRS created linkages with the business community in a manner that strengthens informed choice and develops the labor pool needed by Iowa's business community.

Referrals and outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services continue to increase and expand. This has been driven by Employment First efforts occurring across state systems as well as increased collaboration and partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers, Iowa Medicaid, and Iowa's Workforce system.

B. who are minorities;

IVRS met the currently identified standards and indicators from RSA including the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities; however, each IVRS office has an outreach plan specific to individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved, including minorities.

IVRS staff participate on a number of boards and network with civic organizations and churches in an attempt to reach out to individuals who identify as minorities. IVRS is also involved in working with human rights and international and statewide service organizations; and other agencies or individuals who may be able to assist minority individuals in the rehabilitation process.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

IVRS has a number of initiatives to improve services to individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. An IVRS Counselor is assigned to the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) and part of a newly-formed statewide group of VR professionals serving individuals who are Deaf. IVRS hired one counselor who is Deaf for Des Moines and anticipates hiring additional staff upon approval from the Department of Administrative Services.

The IVRS Bureau Chief is working with the Department of Education to develop a more cohesive plan of serving students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in secondary schools. He and other members of the IVRS Resource Team and Assistive Technology Team spoke at a statewide conference to address services for individuals who are Deaf in secondary schools.

Additional initiative specific to improving services to the Deaf population include:

- Hosting forums in each IVRS office and inviting individuals from the Deaf community to provide feedback and recommendations on how IVRS can improve services to this group.
- Sending two counselors to Washington State to a month-long immersion training in American Sign Language.
- Creating Vlogs to reach out and communicate with Deaf communities online.
- Continuing roundtable discussions with the Deaf communities, partnering agencies, businesses and schools to learn about IVRS strengths, weaknesses and resources, as well as to develop/maintain relationships.
- Forming a Deaf group within our agency to process the information gained from those round table discussions and make changes/do things that we are able to do.
- Developing Video Remote Interpreting and translation services cue cards for every office to use so that a person who is Deaf can walk in to access services from us just as anyone do.

- Providing Deaf culture training and an in-service entitled “It’s A Deaf Deaf World” to staff.

The SRC also recognized that individuals with disabilities who are 55 years of age or older have unique barriers to employment beyond their disability. IVRS develop a specific program for this population and IVRS entered into an agreement with the Department on Aging. Employment Specialists were hired to partner with the IVRS Counselor in identifying job goals, resources in communities, and businesses open to hiring older workers with knowledge of the needs for an aging population.

Benefit Planning services are provided to each applicant of IVRS who receives Social Security benefits to allay fears about exploring community employment. A Benefit Planner was hired by IVRS to provide technical assistance, training, monitoring, and services needed for internal staff and beneficiaries they serve.

State Rehabilitation Council VR Service Delivery Committee who requested specific information on the following targeted populations:

- Intellectual Disabilities
- Psychiatric Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing

IVRS has also begun participating in a newly funded IPS (Individual Placement and Supports) with Hope Haven Inc. and North Iowa Vocational Center in a pilot project for placement services for individuals with mental illness. Additional data analysis will be done during the next two years as the project is just in planning phase.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

The new RSA 911 Data Reporting Requirements have been added to the electronic case management system since the development of the last State Plan. There continues to be a need to improve understanding from all partners in the American Job Centers regarding issues such as common application, intake orientation for job seekers, as well as strategies for co-enrollment. Collaborative partnerships are occurring and the Workforce Center in Creston, Iowa serving the SW portion of the state was recognized in national WINTAC webinars for the joint service delivery efforts. IVRS staff were key partners in this effort.

WIOA provides IVRS and partners the opportunity to work collaboratively without duplicating services while expanding capacity to provide statewide services. Both IVRS and Workforce Centers are mandated to provide comprehensive services; however not everyone with a disability requires intensive services. IVRS provides guidance and technical assistance, which allows for a continuum of services based on each individual’s need. 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.

During meetings at the local level with Iowa Workforce Managers, IVRS staff continue to learn about services available to all individuals, regardless of disability. Integration in One-Stop programs allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops and services with IWD staff trained by IVRS.

Integration in One-Stops may include joint staff meetings, shared business partners, and technical assistance or evaluation by IVRS. The focus of integration should support a job seeker to achieve employment with available services and supports from a One-Stop team. Involvement in services from IVRS is based on a person's need for intensive services or necessary supports that are not available through Workforce Development. If a job seeker does not have a disability, IVRS is not generally involved; however, there may be questions IVRS is asked related to program and/or building access.

IVRS and IWD staffs create a braided service that no longer "hands-off" an individual between programs but instead, works together to achieve common outcomes. IVRS connects with Career Pathways training, National Career Readiness Certification, Adult Education and Literacy, etc., and provides technical assistance to these programs as applicable. IVRS coordinates the Individual Plan for Employment with the other partner's plan for employment, creating a "short-term" to "long-term" employment plan that creates opportunities for self-sufficiency and middle skills development for an individual.

Training and ongoing service development is essential to a fully integrated system. Providing an integrated service system to access employment opportunities continues to be refined among Iowa systems. Most IVRS supervisors are part of each Workforce Area's Regional Board and participate in community conversations with employers. They become aware of business needs and potential options for employment in local communities, which benefit both Iowa job seekers and employers.

IVRS is also represented on the State Workforce Board and the state alignment committee addressing Department of Labor's concern on the make-up of the Regional Boards. This work will lead to recommendations for alignment of geographic areas in a different manner and more effectively utilize the limited dollars available for increasing direct services and decreasing administrative overhead. Although not fully implemented, sector partnerships have allowed IVRS job candidates to gain access to information pertaining to in-demand careers.

A major development occurring during the last year has been the implementation and expansion of regional disability access committees. These committees were formed at the regional board level through each of our major One Stop Centers. Through guidance from a statewide Disability Access Committee, formed through the state workforce board, each region was asked to develop their own committee. These are chaired by IVRS or IDB staff and include representation from core and required partners in the local area. These committees are tasked with identifying physical accessibility issues, program accessibility issues and ways to collaborate and partner together to increase employment outcomes through the One-Stop Center for individuals with disabilities.

Physical accessibility studies have been completed at each of the Centers and reports have been compiled; the workforce center has already begun communication with regional managers and

property owners in efforts to remedy accessibility issues. A survey was sent to all core staff regarding comfort levels in working with individuals with disabilities. 126 responses were received and information was gathered leading to the development of a disability sensitivity training program, which is being implemented across every region through a collaborative partnership with the Disability Access Committees and the Disability Employment Initiative through the workforce centers.

After resolving the physical accessibility issues and implementing the disability sensitivity training, efforts will be taken to address program accessibility through identifying existing assistive technology resources at the One-Stop Centers and how it relates to reasonable accommodations for job seekers who need assistance.

The workforce system may also provide assistance to individuals who are interested in starting their own businesses. IVRS and IDB offer the Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) program to individuals of their respective agencies. IVRS and IDB provide the financial assistance to start a business to job candidates with matching dollars provided by the candidate. When the candidate is served by both agencies, IVRS and IDB coordinate the services and the IPE. Workforce may also provide resources or contribute funding support to person's involved in ISE.

ISE has proven to be a successful option for employment in both FFYs 16 and 17, with 65 Iowans with disabilities becoming successful entrepreneurs. Iowa Workforce offices may also be involved to support, provide resources or advise IVRS or IDB job candidates in business ventures.

In response to the need to increase options for business services to IVRS and IDB job candidates, IVRS recently added "micro-business" to the services available through ISE. This is a new program, which has been supported by the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC participated in a presentation of ISE and heard a number of success stories involving customized strategies resulting in self-employment. This will continue to be a major emphasis as we implement programming during the next two years.

The ISE program is also changing supervision and will be integrated into the bureau manager in an effort to develop consistent practices through the whole state as well as prioritize self-employment options for all candidates through creating awareness and knowledge among our professional staff. IVRS has implemented entrepreneurial strategies as part of a Pre-Employment Transition Service for students with disabilities to consider as a potential vocational option.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

The IVRS program has been designed to provide a continuum of VR services by offering Pre-Employment Transition Services to any student with a disability in an educational program receiving special education services under an IEP or who are covered under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, regardless of whether the student has applied for or been determined eligible for VR services.

IVRS counselors are active in all public schools in the State of Iowa. Counselors are integrated into the school culture, and collaborate with LEA staff on services. IVRS staff work directly with a variety of school staff, including, but not limited to, Special Education Teachers, AEA, School Administration and School Counselors. Through this collaboration, students who are on an IEP or served under the provision of a 504 plan are identified their freshman year of high school. Staff collaborate to provide

Pre-ETS services all four years of high school as needed by a student. As counselors provide Pre-ETS services in the schools, they are working 1:1 and in groups with students who are either active, or Potentially Eligible. Students get to know the counselor and learn about the strategies to assist them in building their employment skills. The counselor is assessing that student to determine whether the student can independently access comparable benefits or services found in the community without supports. If it is apparent through counselor observation or through teacher referral, that the student will require intensive services to successfully access employment, training, post-secondary education, or any other employment-related service, the IVRS staff person will meet with the student for an intake and determine eligibility for services, pending agreement by the student and their parent/guardian.

IVRS staff employ a workforce model that uses a team approach to providing transition services. Utilization of Counselors, Associates, and Rehabilitation Assistants allows for increased capacity when serving high schools. IVRS works with LEA's via a collaborative process to create the school plan that outlines gaps in services in order to develop new or expanded activities in each of the required Pre-ETS areas.

All students who apply for vocational rehabilitation services, even if they are still receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, are subject to all relevant requirements for eligibility, order of selection and the development of the IPE.

IVRS partners with the LEA's and WIOA partners such as Iowa *WORKS*, Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa Community Colleges. Through these partnerships, IVRS is able to streamline service delivery and make referrals when needed.

IVRS developed a MOA with Department of Education at the state level to outline roles and responsibilities between IVRS, LEAs and the DE. IVRS does not supplant or duplicate the services provided by the LEA, which is clearly outlined in the local school plans. The local plans outline responsibilities to maximize staff and community resources.

IVRS targets students with IEPs and/or 504 Plans in outreach efforts. IVRS staff are encouraged to reach out to school counselors, school nurses, and other LEA staff in order to reach students with disabilities who have barriers to employment and who are not on an IEP or 504 Plan. AEA and School Social Workers provide outreach to underserved populations or students who may not traditionally be referred for services, but who have significant limitations to employment because of a mental health diagnosis.

The provision of Pre-ETS may look different at each school depending on what is already being provided in that area and the needs of students at a particular school. Local school plans are written and Pre-ETS services are designed to fill needs in each local school. Activities are

conducted using each office's workforce plan and leverage capacity from IowaWORKS, Intermediary Networks, and other contract programs such as TAP and Making the Grade. Each fall, partners designate roles and responsibilities at fall refresher meetings. The template for services ensures that services are not supplanted, and that local plans provide quality Pre-ETS services for transition students.

The following Pre-ETS services are focused on and planned for: Job exploration counseling, Work-based learning, Counseling on opportunities, Workplace readiness training, and Instruction in self-advocacy.

IVRS has developed several strategies to increase capacity and expand services. IVRS contracted to community colleges to establish an Intermediary Position that is solely focused on the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

Additionally, IVRS recognized a need in serving students with disabilities in the largest school district in Iowa and developed a new program called Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself (TEAM). TEAM is a collaboration between Easter Seals, IVRS and Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS).

The focus of TEAM is on developing and providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities who are attending all high schools within DMPS, including students covered under Section 511 and students who are potentially eligible for IVRS, prior to graduation. TEAM staff work collaboratively with the IVRS Counselors assigned to DMPS and the DMPS Work Experience Coordinators (WECs) to provide new or expanded services for students with disabilities in each of the five required activities for Pre-ETS. TEAM does not duplicate any class or program already provided by the district. Year-round services are provided to include activities that occur during the school day and after school, as well as activities throughout the summer.

In the state of Iowa, the minimum age for the provision of transition services is age 14 and the maximum age is 21. Allowing transition services until the age of 21 provides time for students who may have gotten behind in credits to complete their high school education. This also allows additional time for students who may need longer than the typical four years to develop skills.

Some examples of current strategies used by IVRS in serving students and youth are included below:

IVRS has initiated a pilot project using "zSpace" – a virtual reality computer system that provides K-medical school curriculum through augmented reality. zSpace was purchased as a research project for two school districts specifically to provide benefit to students with disabilities. zSpace allows students to utilize exploration and experiential learning in a virtual reality environment. The zSpace devices were purchased through Pre-ETS dollars for two schools within the Charles City and Forest City school districts. The software, and Pre-ETS activities surrounding these devices, focus on STEM careers and provides students the ability to problem solve, build confidence, and develop interests in STEM careers within in-demand industries in their local areas. It provides students the opportunity to experience and demonstrate 21st century work skills while being exposed to STEM education. The purpose was also to answer specific questions including: do students who get exposure to stems education improve

their academic skills, do students who are exposed develop more interest in stem-related fields of study, and does participation in zSpace at the local level create more employment connections with the business community? Local businesses in smaller communities often have a hard time attracting and attaining a skilled workforce so this project is hoping to identify if this can be beneficial. The measurable gains won't be visual until after two years so the aggregate data will be reviewed on a two-year basis.

Staff are working with business and industry to identify curriculum specific to industry and how it connects to corresponding high school classes. IVRS has paired with IowaWORKS to encourage participation in classes and career pathways offered for STEM careers.

IVRS encourages STEM services for groups through the use of our third-party contracts. One contract developed Intermediary Network positions that connect with community college to focus on STEM related training programs.

IVRS staff have been highly involved in creating job fairs and reverse job fairs, and inviting STEM-focused businesses.

IVRS has initiated several strategies involving area office's developing a Pre-ETS summer camp that has an emphasis on STEM careers. Camps are designed to provide additional learning and development in the STEM career fields for both potentially eligible students as well as students on the IVRS caseload. In 2017, Burlington and Sioux City Area Offices were highlighted for their innovative approaches to summer work readiness programs.

Staff are encouraged to focus on career pathways discussions with all job candidates whereas in the past, an individual might only consider a singular goal. Currently, staff are encouraged to assist individuals in focusing on how career pathways could move them out of poverty or lower class to the middle class.

Strategies are also supported and linked to the Future Ready Iowa goal embraced by the State of Iowa. This effort creates linkages for students to utilize local employer information and creates a foundation that can guide informed choice for post-secondary training, employment participation, and high school curriculum development.

IVRS provides and pays a fee for services for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through programs such as Mason City Project SEARCH (when involving an eligible student with a disability), and Menu of Service activities with CRPs such as job shadows, and workplace readiness services.

IVRS arranged Third-Party Cooperative Agreements and other contracts which include: Transition Alliance Program (TAP); Making the Grade (MTG); DMPS Project SEARCH; Waterloo Project SEARCH; IVRS Intermediary Networks; and Menu of Service contracts the latter which funds services such as "Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience, Discovery", etc. Participation in these activities is paid on an individual basis for eligible job candidates through an authorization for services. Each of these help IVRS bridge the transition from High School to Adulthood with a focus on Employment.

IVRS utilizes Motivational Interviewing as an evidence-based counseling method. This technique is used in various areas, and especially when providing Pre-ETS (Counseling on Opportunities). Motivational Interviewing is a training topic that is led by the MI Cohort, and each office is connected to an MI Champion who can train and provide technique refreshers to local area office staff.

Discovery services and Assessment activities are funded by IVRS and used as a tool for transition students as a prelude to supported employment and customized employment. This is a best practice for students who will require intensive instructional training, assistive technology, and/or need career exploration and advocacy skill building.

Summer Programs leverage programming from community partners including IDB, IowaWORKS, and CRP providers. This allows participating students to access training and resources from a wider scope of services available from WIOA partners.

Education has been provided by IVRS to LEA staff, AEA administrators, and staff via fall meetings and throughout the school year regarding WIOA, service responsibilities, Pre-ETS and other pertinent legislation.

Counselors utilize technology to reach students who are attending school online.

As IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model, gaps and weaknesses within the system continue to be identified. A major barrier has been the inconsistent communication and understanding of roles and responsibilities between education partners, community providers and IVRS staff in the role of transition. Training, regular “check-ins,” ongoing communication and follow-up continue to be the primary considerations to resolve this.

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.

Current efforts are focused on infusing current practices, programs, services, and plans to create the system of continuous service delivery that achieves a seamless system of transition. This includes employer-led, job-driven models into the continuum and expanding upon programs and services that produce outcomes so that IVRS and partners can continue to achieve results for students and youth in 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 individuals who may have entered facility-based employment have obtained employment.

Throughout the state, many of Iowa's Community Rehabilitation Programs have shown a commitment to competitive integrated employment (CIE) and helping facilitate an individual's movement towards this goal. CIE is a priority for most of SRC members and has been the driving force behind Iowa's Employment First efforts as well. As a result, there were changes made to the IVRS Menu of Employment Services in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services and supported by external service providers. The work in Iowa is done collaboratively and both a representative from DHS and the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Community Providers remain key members of the Iowa Employment First Leadership Team.

IVRS will continue to participate in Employment First efforts – with its clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant disabilities access competitive integrated employment. The Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community Providers, Iowa's Department of Human Rights, Iowa Client Assistance Program and the IVRS State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. As previously discussed The Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment and the Disability Employment Initiative have been collaborative partners in helping IVRS promote Employment First.

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 wrote a Memorandum of Agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities and financial obligations that exist between IVRS and the Local Education Agencies/ School Districts. This MOA was signed by both parties and implementation and education was provided at each local district individually by IVRS staff. The DE provided initial web-based training to Administration via their web site, and more training is anticipated in conjunction with IVRS efforts.

The state MOA is an agreement between IVRS and the DE that identifies that instructional training support is the responsibility of the LEA. The instructional training coverage may be needed during the school day, after school, or in the summer, as long as the student is covered under an IEP. The LEA's do not typically have the staff capacity to provide instructional coaching in the community, which leaves students without access to necessary employment supports. These supports must be written and agreed upon by the IEP team in advance, however there are times when students who were not planning on securing employment have a job opportunity that they accept, require an IEP amendment quickly to add in these services.

The local IVRS offices are responsible for developing plans with the LEAs in their area. These plans outline the services and activities that IVRS staff will deliver within the schools and the

services and activities that the LEA will deliver. This is written to support the MOA developed. School plans are signed by the school administrator and IVRS staff.

The MOA specifies how IVRS and Education will work collaboratively to serve students in transition. The agreement stipulates when IVRS and the local education agency are working together with a student, IVRS and the LEA will jointly deliver 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. As noted, LEA will provide or pay for instructional training services when students participate in a Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience which IVRS funds. Both services are discussed as part of IEP planning in which IVRS staff and others participate.

Because IVRS' expertise is in the knowledge of work, employment services and business relationships, IVRS assumes responsibility for job development and employer development to assist a student in obtaining employment. Local school plans identify a collaborative approach to transition planning and include additional partners who may be able to assist in facilitating a student's progress. At the local level, schools, IVRS, Workforce and other partners discuss the essential components of Pre-Employment Transition Services and coordinate who will do what activity based upon the capacity and supports available.

Goals and objectives are determined based on the local school plans and MOAs that were developed in a collaborative process. At this time, school plans do not include a measure for performance, rather implying that services outlined and described in the plan will be completed and/or provided to students served. As data is gathered, IVRS staff communicate this during fall refreshers and team meetings. One example could be the number of students referred by a school from year to year, or the number of students served by a counselor during a school year.

Each IVRS office is expected to provide a summer program for students working in conjunction with schools. This effort has expanded to include a variety of other partners each summer including business, Workforce, Intermediary Networks, and community colleges in Iowa.

Current strategies include further IVRS internal training, statewide webinars, increased communication through the Department of Education School Leader Newsletter, inclusion in Community of Practice Webinars and further integration of joint training opportunities. The Iowa Coalition of Integration and Employment will continue to address transition planning as a topic in their quarterly meetings, and report progress and concerns to IVRS as a continued part of our statewide needs assessment.

k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

In FFY18-19, IVRS determined 10,231 individuals eligible for services. IVRS anticipates being able to serve up to 11,500 annually for the next two years.

On a weekly basis, IVRS removes all individuals on the Most Significant Disabled waiting list. As of October 2019, IVRS had 0 individuals with Significant Disabilities and 149 individuals in the Others Eligible Category on the Waiting list. In October 2018, IVRS opened the Others Eligible Category. The number of individuals removed was approximately 50 every other week. IVRS stopped removing Others Eligible in April 2019 due to capacity of the counselor caseloads. Consumers that are determined to have Most Significant Disabilities will move directly into services. MSD consumers will not be placed on the waiting list. The Budget Team has decided not to restrict the movement of MSD job candidates into services. Job candidates with Significant Disabilities and Other Eligible will continue to be placed on waiting lists for services. It is anticipated with an increase in Potentially Eligible individuals being served, that we will see a growth in the waiting list numbers. This was also a recommendation from the SRC.

IVRS currently releases the names of individuals from 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. Management staff reviews a variety of issues including taking into consideration the budget sustainability model and the Rehabilitation Services Bureau field capacity. This discussion occurs during Budget Team meetings.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

Based on current projections, we believe that approximately 14,500 individuals will receive services from IVRS in 2020 and in 2021. The numbers are based on the representation in the current caseload.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

IVRS funded supported employment services for 1,210 individuals in FFY18 and FFY2019, using both Part B Title VI funds and Part B Title I funds. Total Supported Employment expenditures were \$3,568,890 of which \$481,254 came from Part B Title VI funds. IVRS estimates that it will services approximately 1,250 job candidates in Supported Employment during FFY20/21.

IVRS has received feedback regarding a need to provide increased outreach and training to individuals receiving services in facility-based employment settings. IVRS is implementing strategies in collaboration with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE) and has developed education packets and three webinar options for individuals earning subminimum wages. These webinars were provided to individuals, families, case managers and providers regarding service delivery focused on community employment.

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 facility-based employment. Enhanced communication among all partners will provide for improved integration of data and enhance the development of an individualized education plan and individual plan of employment.

IVRS estimates that 1,250 individuals will be served annually in supported employment during the next two fiscal years.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

IVRS plans to serve 5,720 individuals who are MSD under Title I with an average service cost of \$745/case annually.

IVRS estimates that 5,600 individuals who are SD will be serviced at an average services cost of \$700/case annually. In 2018-2019, IVRS was serving all categories as a result, 72 individuals who are Others Eligible remain on the caseload and will be serviced this year at a service cost of \$214/case.

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 week, IVRS removes individuals from the SD waiting list once the agency services all individuals who are MSD. Individuals who are Most Significantly Disabled go directly into service. There has not been any “Others Eligible” removed from the waiting list since April 2019.

If not served immediately, individuals who are SD may remain on the waiting list for anywhere between one week to three months before being released into services. There are currently 0 individuals on the SD waiting list, and 149 individuals on the OE waiting list. It is anticipated that these number may change as staff capacity indicates a growth in the waiting list during 2020.

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 funds at an estimated cost of \$5,440,000 with an average service costs of \$745. Individuals who are SD are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$5,695,238 with an average service costs of \$700. Individuals who are OE who have been on the caseload since 2019 are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$110,510 with an average service cost of \$214.

I. 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 following goals were developed and approved through ongoing discussion between IVRS leadership and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Providing recommendations and input on the State Plan is a responsibility of the SRC – Outreach Committee.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

GOAL 1: IVRS should maintain a close link to the Future Ready Iowa goals to ensure all of Iowa's workforce will represent a continuum of the most advanced, diverse, skilled and future-ready workers in the nation. Iowa's employers will have access to these workers and the supports they may need to employ them.

Each and every employee of IVRS in our field offices has a performance plan highlighting the Governor's goal which includes Training Iowans for the jobs of tomorrow, and this is the heart of Future Ready Iowa. Since 2014, each area office of IVRS has worked to develop a local service plan with the local One-Stops in their region, and these plans have included cross training and awareness of the Future Ready Website, with its information on program opportunities and direction. Specialized vocational rehabilitation services are provided by IVRS through the development of comprehensive service plans which outline the services that VR can provide, such as counseling and guidance, assessment for assistive technology, benefits planning, and specialized business services such as ergonomics, government incentives, specialized supports, accommodations, and accessibility reviews and reports. The IVRS service plans outline the supports and services required for an individual with a disability to obtain the skills they require to prepare for an enter into competitive, integrated employment in local in-demand industries, and other required employment services are obtained through consultation and referral to appropriate partner agencies. IVRS provides technical assistance to the One-Stop center and partners on accessibility for training and job search services, and can collaborate with the other programs to help ensure that job candidates receive the supports and services required for success. Regarding business services, much effort has occurred to promote integration of the regional business services teams and sector boards through strategies such as: Providing joint Outreach to business, and responding to requests for services by the staff who have the expertise; Integrated county teams to address the needs of businesses in a county where specific sector boards do not exist (as in the Davenport region, and parts of Region I); Fully integrated participation on sector boards so that needed information can be provided to businesses by board members who have the expertise; and so that information about the businesses in a sector can be

shared throughout the center programs; Jointly planned events that allow businesses in a sector to present information about their industries to job ready candidates from the various partner programs, followed by opportunities for job candidates to interact individually with the business representatives, gather information, and even apply for a job within the sector industry of their choice (Reconnect: Iowa City/Cedar Rapids); Jointly planned reverse job fairs, and development of pipelines through corporate development, staff internships to learn about the business, and imbedded staff (Dubuque and Des Moines); Center-wide staffing of job ready cases on a regular basis to help ensure warm referrals, coordination of multi-agency job readiness services, joint representation to businesses for job development and placement, and follow-up.

GOAL 2: All Iowa youth will be afforded the best educational and career opportunities in the nation. Iowans will be provided access to high quality education, training and career opportunities.

IVRS has a number of current strategies focused on bringing pre-employment transition services, and real-life work experiences to high school students in all 99 Iowa counties. Given the high number of high school students in Iowa who are on IEPs and 504 plans, much effort has been directed to working collaboratively with our high schools and colleges, and in a collaborative manner with Center partner agencies. Our focus has been to begin early with high school students to introduce them, in collaboration with our other partners, to the career pathways in their local areas, and this is accomplished in a variety of ways. First of all, IVRS works closely with our community college partners to work hand-in-hand with the intermediary Network initiatives in most regions. This truly expands capacity for IVRS in providing pre-ETS and real-life work experiences such as plant tours, job shadows, career days, job fairs, and the like. IVRS piloted a practice which has become universal involving Interagency representation at the Fall high school planning meetings including Title I, Titles 2 and 3, VR and IDB, Intermediaries and Intermediary Ins. In addition to jointly planned business tours, career days, and job fairs throughout the school year, IVRS has been working closely in all regions with our partners to expand the summer pre-employment transition services programs. Other IVRS initiatives have included occupational Skill Training programs, stem camps (Sioux City), the construction simulator for summer programs, and computer based virtual work samples (Z-Space). Some very unique IVRS initiatives have included Project Search in several regions, Making the Grade partnerships with VR, high schools, and local community rehabilitation programs, sector Board Career Videos, the Future Ready website, Registered Apprenticeship orientation and presentation, and use of the Career Index by IVRS staff. One very interesting initiative comes from the Dubuque School System called HEART, and this involves actual hands-on experience in construction in local community projects, coupled with specific classroom training, such that high school graduates are ready for skilled employment or more advanced apprenticeship programs. IVRS continues to promote the Employment first philosophy that work is the first and preferred option for all individuals, including youth. High expectations to build towards successful careers are discussed in initial conversations by IVRS, and staff are able to access students as early as age 14. IVRS has invested resources in developing school-to-work programs to include various initiatives such as Project Search, TEAM, iJAG, Intermediary Networks, TAP, Making the Grade, all of which are specific to youth.

GOAL 3: Iowa will improve the structure, accessibility and administration of workforce delivery systems across the state. Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

WIOA has called for a collaborative, seamless system of services that will prepare Iowa workers for the well-paying jobs of the 21st century, and much effort has gone into the development of this collaborative system through partner cross-trainings in every region. Disability Access Committees assess program and physical accessibility, and jointly work out solutions for center issues. Additionally, the Disability Access Committees have spearheaded the Integration Continuum efforts to chart the progress of integration in each One-Stop region. The cross trainings have focused on staff from each program working together to become familiar with the services of the other partner programs, and on the development of effectively making warm referrals and tracking those referrals so that One-stop customers do have access to all the services that they require, provided by those programs that have the expertise and training to provide those services. Another statewide activity of our Disability Access Committees has been to develop and present Customer surveys and focus groups to determine accessibility issues needing solutions, and as well, Development of local center processes for responding to requests for reasonable accommodations. With regard to business services, the local business services teams have developed Outreach strategies for local businesses, and strategies for responding to requests for services by the staff who have the expertise.

IVRS will support integration and coordination of services between IVRS and Workforce Development offices through a collaborative approach. Development of the electronic case management system so that data can be shared across systems to evaluate its effectiveness continues. A common application form and how information is shared across programs to avoid duplication remains a gap. IVRS will provide expertise to Workforce partners so that job candidates can access services and achieve success without the need of IVRS intensive services. The work for the Disability Access Committees is focused on building capacity and aligning applicable services to ensure all individuals can access both physically and through service programs the necessary employment services to assist them through the One Stop Centers. IVRS employs two assistive technology specialists who work with local offices in identifying assistive technologies and/or accommodations that enhance an individual's ability to live and work. Both positions can assist in developing Iowa systems to ensure their accessibility, in addition to providing support to individuals with disabilities, and technical expertise to business and industry in hiring people with disabilities. IVRS also partners with Easter Seals of Iowa's Assistive Technology Program, with a specific focus on the AT needs for rural job candidates.

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;

As noted above, IVRS and the SRC jointly developed the goals and priorities, which were based on an analysis of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) results and feedback from stakeholders and IVRS Staff.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

The goals and priorities were developed while reflecting upon the VR performance accountability measures.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

IVRS goals and priorities identified above have been discussed with the State Rehabilitation Council, as well as the inclusion of recommendations from the monitoring activities identified in section 107.

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 reviews the Order of Selection and makes a decision based upon input from the IVRS budget team. Currently all individuals on the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list are served immediately. As of October 31, 2019, there were 149 job candidates on the waiting list – all are Others Eligible.

This is one more than September 30, 2019, and 453 less than a year ago, October 31, 2018. 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, then those are Significantly Disabled and the Others Eligible.

State Rehabilitation Council members are provided updates on the IVRS waiting List information at quarterly SRC meetings, IVRS staff are updated on waiting list information weekly.

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, 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 place 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 the 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 Data Analyst 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, IVRS plans to serve 5,720 individuals. It is estimated that 925 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 1,150 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be \$5,440,000.

For Priority Category 2, IVRS anticipates that 5,600 individuals will be serviced, with 1,190 exiting with employment after receiving services. IVRS estimates that 1,064 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$5,695,238.

For Priority Category 3, IVRS anticipates 72 individuals will be serviced and 11 will exit with employment. Ten will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$110,510.

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 costs of services are based on the projected year 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 influencing service delivery flow.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order; and

The time within which goals are to be achieved are for Priority 1 = 35.0 months, Priority 2 = 41.4 months and Priority 3 = 76.4 months.

Based on current projections, IVRS believes that approximately 11,500 individuals will receive services from IVRS in the coming year. The numbers below are based on the representation in the current caseload.

Actual outcomes may vary, as we continue to see change in the way the caseload breaks out in the waiting list categories.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

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 the 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 decision of eligibility should be completed within 10 working days of having received the medical information. The priority of service may be increased and updated later 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.

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.

When determining the priority for services the counselor must ascertain how the functional impediment affects 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 job candidate may request mediation or appeal of the counselor's decision, and the Iowa Client Assistance Program may help with that request.

The State Rehabilitation Council approved a policy this past year to support eligibility for individuals who are at immediate risk of losing their employment. Through analysis of the situation, if it is determined that an individual with a disability is gainfully employed, but at risk of losing their position, then IVRS can determine immediate eligibility and provide the agreed upon services in an effort to save the job. If additional services are later identified or requested, then the Order of Selection criteria would be followed.

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.

The SRC approved a policy this past year to support eligibility for individuals who are at immediate risk of losing their employment. Through analysis of the situation, if it is determined that an individual with a disability is gainfully employed, but at risk of losing their position, then IVRS can determine immediate eligibility and provide the agreed upon services in an effort to save the job. If additional services are later identified or requested, then the Order of Selection criteria would be followed.

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 funded supported employment services for 1,210 individuals in FFY18 and FFY2019, using both Part B Title VI funds and Part B Title I funds. Total Supported Employment expenditures were \$3,568,890 of which \$481,254 came from Part B Title VI funds. IVRS estimates that it will services approximately 1,250 job candidates in Supported Employment during FFY20/21. Funding will come from the IVRS general budget as it is anticipated with community partnerships and collaborative efforts continue to increase with Iowa's renewed vigor in embracing the philosophy of Employment First.

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 Iowa's adult service providers associated with Supported Employment and 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. Another MOA between IVRS and the Department of Human Services/Medicaid identifies the necessity of long-term extended supports through Medicaid or by natural supports as required for Supported Employment.

Both the IVRS Policy Manual and Menu of Employment Services Manual provide detailed instructions for staff and partners on serving individuals who are under age 25 and require extended services. IVRS added the provision in the Menu of Services Manual for supervisory staff to grant exceptions based on the need of individuals between the ages of 14 – 24 for extended services.

Occasionally, an individual under age 25 who requires Supported Employment Services may not be receiving services from a Waiver, or may be on a waiting list for Waiver at the time they become eligible for IVRS. In these cases, IVRS staff need to request an exception to provide the long term supported job coaching through IVRS. This would only occur after the individual reaches stabilization in the job. This may be funded up to 8 units (2 hours) per month of Supported Employment Job Coaching services for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual reaches age 25, or is approved for Waiver services. If additional hours of coaching were needed beyond the eight hours, it would require an exception. The purpose of this exception is intended to facilitate a youth's transition to work and attainment of natural supports that should occur in the work environment. All of these efforts are designed to help sustain their employment in SES.

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 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 collaborate 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 align funding, 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 24. Continued emphasis needs to occur in this area, as Iowa's managed care system has experienced significant change and there is a lack of knowledge and understanding across stakeholders. An Employment First Service Guidebook was collaboratively developed to help with providing better information.

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.

Below are some of the strategies that have been implemented to improve services at IVRS:

- Supported Project Search programs
- Significant expansion of Occupational Skills Training programs
- Provided trainings to partners on Competitive Integrated Employment and how to better serve our individuals
- Partnered with workforce on One Stop Center services and the implementation of the Disability Access Committees
- Motivational Interviewing cadre
- Hired a Business Services staff member to better work with employers and train IVRS staff on business development
- Expanded Transition Alliance Programs
- Communication regarding CRP accountability for timely services
- Expanded CRP partnerships to provide more services to the MSD population
- Started summer camps for Transition Students that include bringing in employers to better educate students on employer needs
- Community of Practice webinars for staff and partners to view and learn about Employment First services
- Making the Grade contracts enhancing school to work for transition students

- More involvement with Business Service Reps from Workforce and aligning with them more with business networking
- Reverse Job Fairs
- Connecting to the Sector Boards
- Z-Space
- Collaboration with the School for the Deaf
- Chamber Memberships
- Developed a program for Older Workers
- Hired two Assistive Technology Specialist to serve the state in getting individuals better accommodations and AT needs meet.

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.

Part of the Unified State Plan strategy has been to provide workers with the skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed to secure and maintain, sustain employment so that ALL Iowans work to their fullest potential.

Towards this end, IVRS employs two Assistive Technology Counselor Specialists who work with local offices in identifying assistive technology that can enhance an individual's ability to live and work.

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 involve a continual exploration of new and innovative technologies that become available to help in service to customers. Primary Assistive Technology expenditures include Computer parts, Glasses, Hearing Aids, Home Modifications, Rehabilitation Technology Devices/Services, and Vehicle Modifications.

IVRS collaborates with the Easter Seals of Iowa Assistive Technology Program with a specific focus on assistive technology needs of rural job candidates. There is a Joint Statement of Cooperation between Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Program.

The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology – Center for Disabilities and Development University of Iowa Health Care and IVRS establishing relationships for providing assistive technology devices and services for Iowans with disabilities.

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.

IVRS local managers participate on a number of boards in their areas and network with civic organizations and community partners 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. This includes networking opportunities that would typically be available in Chamber of Commerce events.

IVRS has a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa School for the Deaf, which focuses on services for that population. Previous goals were developed because 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. This continues to be a targeted area.

Additional communication is occurring with VR supervisors on services to individuals who are minorities. The IVRS caseload statistics indicate that minority representation exceeds minority representation in the population. IVRS met the 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 minority groups in high school through service delivery to Potentially Eligible and students under Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Some offices are providing outreach to refugee agencies and groups within their local area. In other offices, there are action groups comprised of core partners (county teams in others) that provide presentations about various services available within that county. Area offices will be asked during the next two years to identify opportunities to bring in speakers or resources to expand staff's awareness of cultural differences for targeted minority groups in their region. This would occur periodically through scheduled staff meetings to meet local outreach needs.

IVRS is continuing to implement strategies in partnership with the Omaha Indian Tribe Nebraska. This has been an underserved population and we now have an agreement outlining collaborative ways to collaborate with Native Americans from the Omaha Tribe who have disabilities. The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Project (Omaha Tribe VR) is the recipient of the federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, of 1973 as amended. The Omaha Tribe, IVRS and the Iowa Department for the Blind have a responsibility to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities within the State of Iowa to assist such individuals to become economically self-sufficient (or more self-sufficient) by assisting consumers obtain meaningful and gainful work.

The purposes of our joint efforts are to:

- a) Coordinate VR programming for eligible American Indians with disabilities residing within, or near, the Iowa boundaries of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and Iowa reservation;
- b) Provide and coordinate technical assistance in areas of mutual interest;
- c) Provide and coordinate training opportunities between IVRS, IDB and the Omaha Tribe VR staff;

- d) Provide and coordinate reciprocal training to IVRS and IDB from Omaha Tribe when cultural sensitivity training is available.

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).

As IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model, gaps and weaknesses within the system are 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 a continuum of services; and expanding upon programs and services that produced outcomes in the past, IVRS and partners are achieving results for students and youth in transition. The following summarizes the coordination of services for students 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

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

This remains a priority of the State Rehabilitation Council, and has been the driving force behind Iowa Employment First. Improvements have occurred because of changing the IVRS Menu of Service Manual based on feedback from community surveys.

IVRS has established a commitment to continuing partnerships with the Iowa Association of Community Providers member network and spoken at several of their meetings. IVRS has also revisited collaborative efforts with the Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid System.

IVRS continues to offer joint training to CRP partners to keep staff updated in best practice approaches in service delivery. Seen below are the following topics that are – or have been offered – through IVRS Community of Practice opportunities:

- Success Stories in Utilizing an Integrated Resource Team

- Utilizing the Positive Personal Profile to Capture & Showcase Information Learned in Discovery
- Successful Transition Practices & Partnering with Schools
- Business Engagement Strategies to Support Successful Employment Outcomes
- Iowa's Success Stories
- The Role of Person-Centered Planning in Achieving Integrated Employment Outcomes
- Discovery and Customized Employment
- WIOA & Section 511
- Engaging & Utilizing Workforce to Support Successful Employment Outcomes
- Translating Information Learned in Discovery into Successful Employment
- Benefits Planning: The Role in Employment & Iowa Resources

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) requires 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. 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 identify ways to collaborate and provide a seamless system to Iowa citizens. The goal is to allow anyone to access information about services available through the core programs, and be able to begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet. IVRS technology staff continue to assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness in data collection, case management and reporting.

Changes to the RSA-911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements have dominated internal case management system development over the past months and 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

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. Discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as the development of structures to move toward a common system.

IVRS was the first VR program in the country to submit their fall 911 report. Efforts are continuing to revamp the internal processing system to gather the required future information and remain at the forefront for transparent service delivery. Continued communication is occurring with core partner agencies in efforts to integrate shared data to the extent the systems will allow.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

IVRS and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act core partners have continued to build towards a shared vision for an integrated, job-driven workforce system that meets the needs of both business and job seekers. Legislation no longer segregates disability and as such, all organizations are working toward full and comprehensive inclusion in the provision of services to persons with disabilities. Instead of recruiting individuals early just because they “have a disability,” VR staff 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.

Throughout the State of Iowa IVRS is co-located with IWD in most locations. The management of both IWD and IVRS work collaboratively on creating a solid partnership that will advance the vision of the integration model described above. Integration in the One Stop programmatically allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops, and services with IWD staff.

The work of the state workforce board and the regional disability access committees are key resources and a strategy for implementation to positively impact all partners at the One-Stop Center as we work together to prepare a Future Ready Iowa workforce that is inclusive of all Iowans.

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, the IVRS State and Strategic Plans, feedback from Iowa business through the Employer Disability Resource network, and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Innovative strategies are consistently being addressed by the IVRS to minimize duplication, expand service delivery options, increase capacity, while reducing costs. To achieve results, the IVRS team has opportunities to exercise innovation and creativity in the delivery of rehabilitation services.

IVRS has continued overseeing Iowa's Employment First efforts. This initiative has a clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant barriers achieve competitive integrated employment at an optimum level that meets their needs and interests. The Iowa Development Disabilities Council, the Disability Rights of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community Providers, the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment along with the IVRS State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. IVRS efforts are closely linked to service delivery strategies with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

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 in the State Plan and the work of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau focus on achieving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Throughout this document, all strategies currently employed and new strategies being developed focus on and achieve goals and priorities established by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the Unified State Plan.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities, which was tasked to review ways to increase employment for individuals with disabilities, IVRS has prioritized service areas relating to expansion of early work experiences, establishing high expectations, and a focus on business driven demand needs. Communication is continuing in coordination efforts within waiver programs to increase effectiveness.

IVRS will review emerging practices and identify ways to integrate recommended practices and strategies into service delivery. IVRS has utilized expanded practices in implementing the Employment First effort, in expanding contract use as well as in supporting partnership with the Independent Living Centers in expanding support and resources for individuals with the most significant disabilities in supported 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.

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 provides consultation, technical expertise, and technology assistance to design and implement an accessible workforce system; only providing direct service delivery when because of disability; additional employment services and supports are required. This has required system-wide training to improve understanding that disability is part of the natural human experience.

Implementation of Section 511 of WIOA involves continued education and coordination with both education and community rehabilitation partners. Efforts are occurring across systems to inform local education agencies and Area Education Agency staff on Section 511 and understand with the proper supports, encouragement and services, students with the most significant disabilities can be employed at their optimal level in competitive integrated settings. Ongoing training remains available to provide subminimum wage earners in Iowa career counseling and information and referral services as required under Section 511.

Internally, IVRS staff experienced a learning curve in implementing the provisions of WIOA. The intensive service model requires that systems distinguish individuals who require intensive VR services and understand the Employment First philosophy. Staff need to determine the right strategies and supports for all individuals who want to work. Efforts to refine their skills are continuing to be addressed with assistance from Subject Matter Experts, innovative pilot practices and ongoing training. In January of 2017, IVRS hired a Training Resource Manager who is creating a professional development training series for all staff. There are individual tracks for different job classifications that allow for further drilling into expertise areas.

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.

STRATEGY — IVRS will work with employers to develop their skills in hiring people with disabilities and ensuring they provide an accessible and welcoming work environment. IVRS will participate in regional workforce boards so businesses have expertise available in creating opportunities for persons with disabilities. This will be measured by the number of business accounts developed by each IVRS office. IVRS will also continue to inform businesses about Section 503 requirements for federal contractors, and utilize initiatives like the Talent Acquisition Portal at the national level. IVRS continues efforts to strengthen transition services for our secondary school students ensuring they develop work skills leading to gainful competitive employment.

STRATEGY — IVRS staff will work with local education agencies to help them understand the career skill gap, programs available to students to become employed in Fast track career jobs, and career pathways that will lead to employment. IVRS will support STEM training to help students and youth achieve access in higher employment. IVRS will also provide counseling and guidance services on labor market information and the opportunities available with appropriate training. Information will be provided by IVRS to youth about internships, apprenticeship training and post-secondary options.

IVRS continues to promote the Employment First philosophy that work is the first and preferred option for all individuals, including youth. High expectations to build towards successful careers are discussed in initial conversations by IVRS, and staff are able to access students as early as age 14.

IVRS has invested resources in developing school-to-work programs to include various initiatives such as Project Search, TEAM, iJAG, Intermediary Networks, TAP, Making the Grade, all of which are specific to youth.

STRATEGY – IVRS will support integration and coordination of services between IVRS and Workforce Development offices through a collaborative approach. Development of the electronic case management system so that data can be shared across systems to evaluate its effectiveness continues. A common application form and how information is shared across programs to avoid duplication remains a gap. IVRS will provide expertise to Workforce partners so that job candidates can access services and achieve success without the need of IVRS intensive services. The work for the Disability Access Committees is focused on building capacity and aligning applicable services to ensure all individuals can access both physically and through service programs the necessary employment services to assist them through the One Stop Centers. IVRS employs two assistive technology specialists who work with local offices in identifying assistive technologies and/or accommodations that enhance an individual’s ability to live and work. Both positions can assist in developing Iowa systems to ensure their accessibility, in addition to providing support to individuals with disabilities, and technical expertise to business and industry in hiring people with disabilities. IVRS also partners with Easter Seals of Iowa’s Assistive Technology Program, with a specific focus on the AT needs for rural job candidates.

IVRS is a collaborative partner in the development of the Iowa Unified Plan and provide staff support to work groups in moving towards common definitions and measures for meeting the achievement of agreed-upon goals. IVRS is using our data metrics system for analysis as well as measuring the success of a number of innovative projects that have been underway, some of which include:

- Regional Board Career Pathway/Sector Board strategies
- Pre-ETS and the Potentially Eligible student population
- Employment Services Contract with Iowa Department of Aging
- Medicaid aligned funding agreement
- Making the Grade contracts
- Assistive Technology Specialist expansion
- Intermediary Network contracts

With regard to technology, IVRS has invested in efforts to expand the effectiveness of work staff and increase capacity for service delivery. This has included use of remote technology such as iPhones, video technology, laptops, tablets 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. These strategies have been implemented to continue with service delivery improvement in light of IVRS' inability to replace exiting staff unless approved by the Iowa Department of Management. We are investigating further ways to utilize electronic signatures as we gradually transition to a less paper intensified system.

Employment First opportunities are continuing to draw attention to Iowa and facilitate changes in our systems. Iowa's efforts have been enhanced through the collaboration occurring between a variety of systems and entities that serve individuals with disabilities. Close communication is provided by IVRS to agencies under contract with IVRS in the provision of Supported Employment Services (SES).

Community Provider organizations participated in initial SES pilots that involve new service delivery options such as Discovery and Customized Employment. IVRS initially had a focus on provider transformation, but this past year has moved towards capacity building. 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 a higher 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.

Communication across all systems and stakeholders, variance in federal rule regulations, expectations of constituents and stakeholder groups that are sometimes competing goals, staff capacity, training, and financial resources all impact effective, quality service implementation. As an agency, IVRS has a strategic plan that is coordinated with our state plan, and integrated into Iowa's Unified Plan. Communication and collaborative engagement with partners has enhanced service delivery and expanded options for people with disabilities, although remains on ongoing need. 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 take time and take resources away from service delivery.

Efforts to streamline and align systems between IVRS and Iowa Workforce need continued refinement. In the meantime, both agencies have collaborated to provide information on: Disability Etiquette, Reasonable Accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities, Act, WIOA requirements, Assistive Technology, Work incentives and available resources at IVRS.

Additionally, staff and partners of IVRS need to increase their knowledge and ability to deliver services in the areas of Discovery services and Customized Employment strategies. Expertise in these areas have required using funds to support training from two Subject Matter Experts in order to fully development staff and partner knowledge of these services.

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.

Outcomes for Supported Employment services are analyzed by IVRS annually. Expenditures on this service is tracked, along with recidivism rates, and closure information including hours worked and rates of pay. Alignment with Medicaid waiver funding occurred and system consistency has been enhanced. There has been a need for IVRS to provide ongoing training to address program changes and resolve issues created with Iowa's new system of Managed Care. Implementation of new payment points and the development of Customized Employment and Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience services have expanded employment options to individuals and students who are Most Significantly Disabled. Competitive integrated employment remains the ultimate goal for individuals accessing IVRS.

When considering the reason for IVRS recidivism rates, an interdisciplinary team analyzed SES and recognized that a significant lack of formalized training affected outcomes. As such, a focus emerged to enhance training of professionals and job candidates alike. Supported Employment Service outcomes have continued to increase over the last three years as staff and partners work more cohesively with each other to engage Iowa businesses.

Vendor data is shared annually in a Report Out provided by IVRS to internal staff and Community Rehabilitation Program staff (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. Report Out data is provided to Iowa CRPs that shows:

- The number of IVRS job candidates who received 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 services for cases closed;
- An average cost per successful employment outcome; and
- 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 at the local regional level.

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. ICIE includes a base consortium of representatives from the Development Disabilities Council, the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Rights Iowa, the Iowa Department of Human Rights, 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 individuals with 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.

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) is continuing work with the Department of Education to educate parents, teachers, Department of Education Administrators and others on Section 511. RSB is 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 staff turnover issues experienced by a variety of Community Rehabilitation Programs; adjustment to a system of Managed Care which began in Iowa in 2016; difficulties in establishing or maintaining ongoing and/or long-term supports; secondary school transition programming that does not always support competitive 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.

The following information was shared by IVRS at the March 14th, 2017 State Rehabilitation Council members to explain WIOA Performance Measures:

Primary Indicators of Performance:

1. The primary performance indicators include:

a. Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit: the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

b. Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit: the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

c. Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter after Exit: the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Median is the number that is in the middle of a series of numbers and is not the same as the mean or the average of all numbers in the data set.

d. Credential Attainment Rate: a credential is a secondary school diploma or the equivalent, a recognized post-secondary credential, an industry recognized certificate/certification, an apprenticeship, a State or Federal-recognized licensure, or an associate, baccalaureate, or post-graduate degree. A credential does not include work readiness certificates, workforce development board certificates, or health/safety certificates.

i. The credential indicator is the percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attended a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent. The credential must be obtained during participation in or within one year after exit.

ii. Those individuals included are participants who exit a post-secondary program or those in secondary education without a secondary diploma or equivalent. To be included in the calculations for determining levels of performance with respect to the credential attainment indicator, the participant must be employed or enrolled in a program leading to a post-secondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

iii. Only one credential is counted toward the performance measure in each period of participation.

e. Measurable 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 skills gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Included in the indicator are VR participants with education or a training program that leads to a recognized secondary or post-secondary credential on the individual's IPE. Depending on the type of educational or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

i. Documented achievement of at least one education functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level.

1. Comparison of the participant's initial educational functioning level, as measured by a pre-test, with the participant's educational functioning level, as measured by a post-test;

2. Credits or Carnegie Units awarded by an adult high school program that leads to a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

3. Exit from a basic education program and enrollment in post-secondary education and training during the same program year.

ii. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

iii. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.

1. For secondary education, this gain may be documented through receipt of a secondary transcript or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the State unit's policies for academic standards.

2. For postsecondary education, this gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours—which is at least 12 hours per semester or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed consecutive semesters during the program year—that shows a participant is achieving the State unit's academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs).

iv. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year on an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or

v. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupation skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams.

f. Effectiveness in Serving Employers: includes two ways of measuring the level of performance.

There is a shared outcome across all six core program for the State of Iowa. The two measures include:

i. Retention with the same employer – the percentage of participants who exit and are employed with the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit. Wage records are used to identify whether a participant is employed with the same employer. When wage records are not included (i.e. Self-employed individuals) or when the participant has not provided a social security number, supplemental wage data may be used.

ii. Employer Penetration Rate – the percentage of employers using services out of all employers in the state. Services are not necessarily on behalf of or for a participant. All services to a business or employees of a business are counted. Services are recorded in the Business Services Web Application located at:

<http://laborsurvey2.iowaworkforce.org/Checkbox/WIOA-BusinessServices-Entry.aspx>.

Performance accountability continue to be addressed by capturing data specific to program services, as well as review of previously discussed strategic plan objectives. Six performance measures are currently being assessed by core partners. These include:

Second and Fourth quarter wages

IVRS is working towards collecting the wages from our workforce center to start reporting available post-exit wages for PY2017 as of March 31, 2018.

Median earnings

IVRS is working towards collecting the wages from our workforce center to start reporting available post-exit wages for PY2017 as of March 31, 2018.

Credential attainment,

IVRS has started collecting credential attainment and reporting since PY2017.

Measurable skill gains

IVRS has started collecting measurable skill gain and reporting since PY2017.

Services to business

IVRS has started collecting the data with our workforce center since PY2017.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

On the annual RSA-2 IVRS reports the following expenditures as Innovation and Expansion Activity Costs:

- State Rehab Council
- Project Search Cooperative Agreement
- TAP Cooperative Agreement
- Department on Aging Cooperative Agreement
- Making the Grade Contracts
- Intermediary Network Contracts

These items include contracts with local school districts to fund Transition Alliance Projects; 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. Examples of Innovation and Expansion activities included funding for the travel and contractor costs for State Rehabilitation Council members to assist with the statewide needs assessment.

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.

IVRS has the intent to be an active partner and leader in employment services for individuals with disabilities and is excited regarding the work occurring across our state systems to align employment services to maximize state resources for the benefit of our job candidates. In our current arrangement, we are already providing considerable staff time and capacity in aligning service efforts. This includes representation on various work groups, business service teams, Disability Access Committees and service for our common customers. Beyond that, IVRS provide support costs for co-location efforts at our One Stop Centers. These dollars are used to pay for related rent and infrastructure costs for common space that provide opportunities for IVRS to collaborate with One-Stop Center programs and services. These efforts provide an opportunity to enhance the service delivery system because of the collaboration and shared partnering that is occurring.

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, IVRS continues to increase referral numbers and purchase services and supports from community rehabilitation providers. Data reflects an expanded array of services are 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 Annual Report, which is provided by IVRS to all partners. This information also influences informed choice options as job candidates make decisions on which providers they want to work with. IVRS involvement with Employment First efforts and the leveraged resources 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.

We are struggling with how to integrate SES programming into a quality assurance program that assess quality beyond just outcome measures of jobs, hours and wages. We do a customer satisfaction survey with all job candidates, but it is difficult to glean specific information specific to SES. We have received significant feedback from the community regarding the need for training in the area of customized employment and Discovery and this has been an emphasis during the past three years. We have outreached to WINTAC for further consultation on quality measurements and programs as it pertains to our SES programming and will further this conversation for this plan.

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 since Iowa's system of Managed Care has influenced long-term services in some cases. IVRS has revised forms to complement the current system of handing off job candidates from VR's short-term service system to the Waiver's longer-term system of supports. IVRS 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: **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David L. Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

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 I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA¹⁴, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.¹⁵ **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)**¹⁶ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan¹⁷, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations¹⁸, 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

¹⁴ Public Law 113-128

¹⁵ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

¹⁶ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

¹⁷ No funds under Title I 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.

¹⁸ 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 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan¹⁹, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations²⁰, 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**

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. **Yes**

¹⁹ No funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²⁰ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

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. **Yes**

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. **Yes**
- 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 (Option A or B must be selected):
 - A. is an independent State commission. **No**
 - B. has established a State Rehabilitation Council. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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). **Yes**
- 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. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No) **Yes**
- f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No) **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? (Yes/No) 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. **Yes**
- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 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.

Yes

- 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. **Yes**
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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? (Yes/No) **Yes**
- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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 **Yes**
 - 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 **Yes**

- ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).
Yes

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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**

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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

- a. Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**

- 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. **Yes**

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan²¹ must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by 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

²¹ Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

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 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:

- 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.
- Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE). The Iowa Coalition for Integration and 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 administrator represents the Department on the Coalition.

- **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 have low vision through their local, school, or college libraries.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

IDB has developed 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 have low vision. 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 collaborate with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center to provide devices for individuals, including students, with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs. IDB will continue to collaborate with these programs to provide assistive technology services to clients.

The Iowa Department for the Blind maintains a team of rehabilitation technology specialists who are trained in blindness and low vision assistive technology and provide training, assessment, and purchasing recommendations. The Iowa Department for the Blind also has a team of vocational rehabilitation teachers who provide training in the use of blindness and low vision rehabilitation technology as well as other types of disability related skills training to vocational rehabilitation clients across the state. In addition, IDB has independent living rehabilitation teachers who are trained in assistive technology to assist and individual to meet their independent living needs. IDB does collaborate to provide trainings and events about assistive technology to Iowans who are blind or have low vision and to trainers of assistive technology devices. The IDB partners with IVRS to ensure clients being served have access to information and training on assistive technologies.

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 Iowa's 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 or

have low vision. IDB will continue to partner with each local one-stop to ensure out-of-school youth who are blind or low vision 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.

IDB 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. Dedicated State unit'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 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 since 2006. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to children and youth who are blind or low vision, including students with the most significant disabilities. Through 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 collaborates with stakeholders such as educators, parents, and other service providers on an ongoing basis, to assure that students who are blind or have low vision will receive high quality education and rehabilitation services. IDB assists stakeholders in the transition process to coordinate and improve transition services and to increase pre-employment transition services throughout Iowa, especially in unserved and underserved areas of the state. IDB collaborates with individuals and entities statewide to provide services that meet the transition needs of students who are blind, deaf-blind, or low vision 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. Finally, the IDB plans to work closely with local education agencies throughout Iowa to improve and increase the delivery of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. This will be accomplished primarily through VR counselors who serve the LEAs within their service territories.

The Director of the IDB is a standing member of both the Management Team for Blind Services and Leadership Team for Deaf and Blind Services. These committees were formed to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Iowa Department of Education, Area Education

Agencies, IESBVI, IDB, and IVRS. The purpose of the Management Team is to provide direction for the development and implementation of work plans and provide oversight in order to maintain and improve the statewide system of educational services for blind, low vision and deaf-blind students. The purpose of the Leadership Team for Deaf and Blind Services is to provide a forum for the Executive and Management Teams to work together to gather information, solve problems, and to provide feedback on work plans and issues that are of a common interest as well as support collaboration and build cohesion in the statewide system of services for deaf and hard of hearing, blind and low vision, and deaf-blind students.

The IDB vocational rehabilitation program administrator is a member of the State of Iowa's Special Education Advisory Panel and a vocational rehabilitation counselor participates as a member of the Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee which informs Iowa's Deaf-Blind Project. VR counselors, Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers, Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, Instructional Materials Center staff and other IDB employees reach out to TVI's, OMS and other teachers and school personnel with a focus of building partnerships and collaboration. IDB staff connect with TVI's and OMS in group settings, present at IESBVI training events, and communicate on an individual basis with educators.

In addition, IDB employees are active team members at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at school districts throughout Iowa. 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. They 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. They also provide information about IDB programs and resources that can benefit students' learning both during high school and after. IDB vocational rehabilitation counselors and teachers also support potentially eligible students and eligible students with disabilities and their IEP teams with consultation and training services.

IDB staff participate regularly with Vision Discipline meetings in each area education agency region. At these meetings stakeholders review common caseloads, discuss common potentially eligible and eligible students with disabilities and coordinate services. 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 have low vision.

Referrals. The commitment to collaboration and partnership resulted in the development of a standard statewide referral procedure. In Iowa, Area Education Agencies (AEAs) coordinate services for students 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 low vision. 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 intake 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.

IDB staff 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 by the VR Counselor within 60 days. The next step is to partner with the eligible student to determine his/her goals and develop a plan (IPE — Individual Plan for Employment) identifying the services needed to reach those goals. The plan is developed within 90 days of eligibility determination for VR services. The Department coordinates its services with the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI), AEAAs and LEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation.

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.

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 and small group assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. VR counselors and teachers consult with families and educators on strategies for helping students increase their independence and take a more active role in their education. VR teachers provide one-on-one and small-group instruction in areas including braille, orientation and mobility and independent living skills. VR counselors and teachers also provide instruction in job readiness skills such as interview techniques and money management.

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.

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 pre-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 Pre-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 electronic text 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 is currently creating a special online portal for teachers, students, and para-professionals. This interface will make the location of existing accessible learning materials faster and easier. It will also encourage teachers to incorporate universal design principals into lesson planning to better include blind and low vision students in classroom activities. The library has also hired an accessible media specialist to work with teachers, TVIs, paras, and LEA staff to improve access to learning management systems for the students we serve. Often accessibility is not a consideration when acquiring a system and inability to access a learning management system puts a student at a considerable educational disadvantage. Blind and low vision youth need the same level of access and skill with technology as their sighted peers in order to become truly job ready. The accessible media specialist will also partner with agencies such as the Governor's STEM Council to create

opportunities for blind and low vision youth to actively engage in STEM learning and consider STEM related occupations. Many blind and low vision youth are passively and/or actively discouraged from considering STEM related professions, however, blind people can and do successfully work in these high demand fields. Exposure to accessible STEM curricula and activities will help blind youth build self-confidence and expand their view of what careers are possible. Because of this, STEM activities will be integrated into the youth library space we are creating. The youth library will encourage braille literacy and inspire a passion for reading and learning. A recent study has shown that daily use of braille is one of the three significant factors that lead to employment success in blind adults. IDB has hired a youth librarian to create programming that helps blind and low vision youth to build this crucial competency as well as increase access and inclusion of blind and low vision youth in library programming in their local libraries. These programs have included a monthly Saturday family program called SOAR Saturdays, a thousand books before kindergarten program, and a books for kids program that makes sure youth have leisure reading books at home and at school.

The IDB library has begun work on a College and Career Commons. The College and Career Commons will provide physical and virtual access to career exploration resources and information pertaining to post-secondary enrollment. In addition, accessible materials related to common career pathways identified by our Title II partners will be available. Most importantly, assistance in understanding and using the vast amounts of information available will be provided. Often the sheer volume of information regarding the many career options available leaves clients feeling overwhelmed. Our librarians' talent for curating and navigating the sea of available resources will help clients to move beyond feeling overwhelmed and help them make informed choices that lead to their employment plans. They can feel excited about pursuing activities.

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. The Library provides resources and training in braille literacy for educators, parents and students through its in-person and online trainings.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires 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. The expected outcome of all IDB sponsored programs is employment in integrated competitive employment.

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 low vision transition-age youth from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for blind and low vision 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 to: learn skills for independence and workplace readiness; explore careers and educational opportunities; and learn to advocate and take charge of their future.

The Summer LEAP Academy is a nine-week residential program that provides training to blind and low vision youth in independent living skills and non-visual techniques in the areas of

technology, cane travel, Braille, home and personal management, career exploration and money management. 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 equip them with the confidence to believe in themselves and their abilities.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are held six times per school year. Blind and low vision 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, teamwork, 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. It 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 may have the opportunity to advance to a national competition. 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 low vision students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff take 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, 34 CFR 300), 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 have low vision 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 or have low vision.

All of the Iowa Department for the Blind's programs for students who are blind or have low vision, 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 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;

School personnel make every effort to provide adequate notice to IDB VR counselors regarding upcoming IEP meetings for potentially eligible and eligible students with disabilities. VR counselors make every effort to attend all IEP meetings for their clients and potentially eligible students. At the IEP meetings, VR counselors and school personnel work together to identify necessary services that will both help the student with a disability complete their secondary education goals and also prepare the students for post-secondary work or school. As a result of these coordination efforts, IDB develops, aligns or revises an Individualized Plan for Employment to address the needs of each transition student. 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;

IDB and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)

defines the responsibilities of both departments. This MoA is designed 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.

Both departments collaborate in providing consultation and technical assistance to local education agencies and area education agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services. The departments collaborate to support transition planning efforts for students with disabilities and ensure that the transition services provided are done by qualified personnel. Both entities are responsible for the costs they occur in carrying out the agreement.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The Department of Education and IDB collaborate to support early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts 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 assists in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or have low vision occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

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, the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO and the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in New York have provided orientation and adjustment training and job search services to 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 low vision 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.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

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 low vision 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 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

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

IDB has established a Business Relations and Services Initiative which focuses on engaging with the business community to enable the development of work-based learning for students and youth with disabilities and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities. As a part of this initiative, IDB policy was created to ensure that IDB staff engage with business and provide our business partners with services that include but are not limited to:

- training that communicates the capabilities of individuals who are blind or have low vision;
- accessibility and accommodation related technical assistance;
- assistive technology consultation; and
- quality candidates to meet business hiring needs.

As all IDB work units participate in business engagement, the implementation of this initiative is inclusive of all IDB work units. All IDB staff are expected to use established procedures for documenting business services provided and work with the Business Relations Specialist to coordinate delivery of service provision. The BRS acts as a single point of contact and communicates and coordinates business engagement activities across the agency and creates a positive and simplified experience for our business partners.

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 one Business Relations Specialist (BRS) whose primary customers are employers across Iowa. The BRS'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. The Business Relations Specialist and IDB VR counselors 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, the BRS provides 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. The BRS 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. The Library's Accessible Media Specialist and Instructional Materials Center staff provide employers and businesses with information and resources with their accessibility needs through trainings and accessible materials. The Library's programming focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers provides employers and individuals a way to connect and discuss STEM careers. Youth and adults are able to be involved in career exploration and employers are able to receive training in accessibility and meet potential employees.

IDB connects with employers on a national level through involvement in the National Employment Team (NET). Participation in NET allows IDB staff 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 bars/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 have low vision, who have established successful businesses.

IDB is partnering with Iowa Workforce Development on an apprenticeship pilot program with the support of the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC). The goal of the pilot is to increase the number of individuals who are blind who are participating in and

completing apprenticeship programs resulting in employment that meets the individuals career goal and provides self-sustaining wages. IWD and IDB are partnering on outreach, technical assistance and training to employers and clients in this region to explore apprenticeships.

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

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. Counselors 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 opportunities.

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 having low vision. 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.

The IDB also works with stakeholders to resolve collaboration issues, promote innovative policies, procedures, and practices in service delivery and communicate those to local partners. 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 is a need for increased benefits planning. Partner agencies have begun to determine the feasibility of establishing a benefits planning network that identifies 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 with stakeholders to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities who are described as blind and low vision. Other mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

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 who are described as blind and low vision 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.

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

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. 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. The 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. IDB endeavors to maintain caseload sizes of between 50 and 65 cases per counselor. To ensure the ratio of one counselor to 50 – 65 clients, the Department employs 10 vocational rehabilitation counselors. The Department serves approximately 525 VR clients at any one time. The Department's list of functional position titles, (Full-time Equivalents), current vacancies, and the number of staff expected to retire in the next five years for each is provided below:

- Director: 1, 0, 0
- Executive Secretary: 1, 0, 0
- Accountant Supervisor (CFO): 1, 0, 0
- Program Administrators: 6, 0, 0

- Counselor Lead Worker / Quality Assurance Specialist (SSSB1): 1, 1, 0
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (SSSB1): 10, 0, 1
- Business Counselors: 2, 0, 0
- Business Relations Specialist: 1, 0, 0
- Activity Specialist 1: 1, 1, 0
- Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers: 7, 1, 0
- Senior Independent Living Teachers: 3, 0, 1
- Independent Living Teachers: 3, 0, 0
- Center Instructors: 6, 0, 0
- Rehabilitation Technology Specialists: 5, 1, 0
- Technology Specialists: 2, 0, 0
- 1 Intake Specialist: 1, 0, 0
- Secretary 1: 3, 1, 0
- Secretary 2: 1, 0, 0
- Patron Services Librarians: 2, 0, 1
- Special Services Librarian: 1, 0, 0
- Electronic Resources and Discovery Librarian: 1, 0, 0
- Youth Services Librarian: 1, 0, 0
- Accessible Media Specialist: 1, 0, 0
- Digital Recording Specialist/Studio Manager: 1, 0, 0
- Audio Production Librarian: 1, 0, 1
- Braille Coordinator: 1, 0, 0
- Instructional Materials Center Librarians: 2, 0, 0
- Braille Transcribers: 1, 1, 0
- Accounting Techs 2: 2, 1, 1
- Accounting Clerk 1: 1, 0, 0
- Facilities Engineer: 1, 0, 0
- Maintenance Repairer: 1, 0, 0
- Custodians: 3, 0, 0

Projections of staff needs in five years based upon current client trends would require the continued employment of ten vocational rehabilitation counselors to maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 65 cases. IDB will maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 65 cases in order to assure optimum services to clients. IDB is serving all clients that are referred for services, and it is not anticipated that there will be significant increases in the number of clients receiving services.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Please refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs, section i.1.A.i. above.

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.

Please refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs, section i.1.A.i. above.

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 (Iowa City, Iowa) and Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa) both offer graduate degree programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. Both programs offer graduates the ability to work in the field of rehabilitation counseling and/or 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 ten students enrolled in the Master Degree Rehabilitation Counseling program. Drake University has 10 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 had nine student graduates during the prior year and Drake University had 5 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 Department's plan for recruitment and training of qualified personnel is based on the highest standards in the state for VR counselors serving individuals who are blind or have low vision. The Department actively recruits persons who are blind or have a disability, and persons from minority backgrounds. Recruitment efforts include: employment announcements posted on Iowa's state employment opportunities web site; promotion of experienced and qualified

personnel from within the agency, including personnel who are blind; and 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 have disabilities; encouragement and support for personnel desiring advanced degrees; and opportunities for advancement within the department. 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 subrule 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 meet 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.

Please refer to section A.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(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 training 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 contracts with qualified 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 the following languages: 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. IDB, through the work of our vocational rehabilitation program administrator and the Iowa Client Assistance Program, has made available an orientation video for outreach purposes which is completed in American Sign Language.

The Department's Accessible Media Specialist and Instructional Materials Center staff provide individuals, educators, partners, employers and businesses with information and resources to meet accessibility needs through trainings and accessible materials. Training materials are provided in the eligible individual's preferred means of communication, including Braille, large print, or electronic formats. Braille is an integral part of the training that all of IDB's 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. Through this agreement, the agencies provide technical assistance and training for staff providing services to students who are blind or have low vision.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI), 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 have low vision. 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 have low vision. 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 IESBVI 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. IDB's VR counselors participate in IEP meetings. Pre-Employment Transition Services are made available to potentially eligible students and eligible students with disabilities. IESBVI and IDB collaborate on a number of programs throughout the year to meet the needs of students who are blind or have low vision.

j. Statewide Assessment

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;

An analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services, begins with an analysis of the primary disability types of individuals served, the number of individuals receiving supported employment services and the rate of SSA beneficiaries served by the organization.

The data collected in the most recent statewide needs assessment indicates that the rate of applicants for IDB services that were classified as having a visual impairment other than blindness decreased significantly from 2016 to 2018. Conversely, the rate of applicants classified as having blindness increased proportionately. The percent of all clients served by disability type remained relatively steady for each group from 2016 to 2018, with the rate of individuals with blindness constituting 75 percent or more of all clients each year. The number of plans developed, number of clients in training by type, and number of cases closed rehabilitated by type reflect a similar ratio of 25 percent for those with visual impairments to 75 percent for those with blindness. The average length of time for an open case that was closed either successfully or unsuccessfully was twice or three times as long for an individual with blindness as opposed to an individual with a visual impairment.

There are a number of individuals, especially among youth, that are on the Autism spectrum, and need supported employment services. IDB is serving an increasing number of individuals with mental health impairments and other disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision. This change in the demographic of the typical IDB client results in several needs that were identified numerous times during this assessment. These include: improved coordination with mental health service providers; increased capacity of IDB counselors to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities; an increase need for training of IDB staff; a need for more community resources to serve individuals with mental health impairments, especially those in crisis; the development of service providers that are able to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities; and the need to develop customized employment as a service option for IDB clients. Multiple participants in the recent needs assessment indicated that there is a very long waiting list for Medicaid waiver services in Iowa, as long as 800 days, which significantly impacts the

ability of IDB and the IVRS to identify an extended services provider for individuals that need supported employment services.

The number of applicants noted as needing supported employment decreased from 2016 to 2018, as did the number of plans developed with a supported employment goal. However, the total number closed successfully with an SE goal was stable from 2016 to 2018, though these cases increased as a rate of all closed successfully in 2018 due to the decrease in the number of overall cases closed successfully that year.

The analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities includes a review of the number of individuals that receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) because these individuals are automatically categorized as individuals that have at least a significant disability. It is well documented that the receipt of SSI or SSDI can affect the return to work behavior of individuals. The data indicates that SSA beneficiaries constitute nearly half of the applicants for IDB services and exactly half of all IPEs developed in 2017 and 2018. Although SSA beneficiaries represent more than 40 percent of all cases served by IDB in 2017 and 2018, they represent only one-third of cases closed successfully. The data is consistent with the feedback received from interviewed participants that SSA beneficiaries represent a large portion of individuals served by IDB. The fear of benefit loss (especially medical benefits) is a significant concern for SSA beneficiaries when returning to work. SSA benefits represent a safety net that many beneficiaries want to ensure is in place even after they start earning wages.

Individuals participating in IDB vocational rehabilitation services have identified that the skills learned at the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center and from rehabilitation staff are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live and work independently. The IDB uses a structured discovery approach for all clients, regardless of the degree of their vision loss.

Although the skills taught by the Orientation Center and by Rehabilitation Teachers are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live independently and to prepare for, obtain and retain employment, the Orientation Center has not been operating at full capacity, and there is a long wait for Rehabilitation Teacher (RT) services in many areas of the State. Multiple participants indicated that the wait for RT services adversely impacted the time frame for individuals with blindness and low vision to pursue a rehabilitation plan.

Individuals that need adjustment to blindness training that cannot attend the residential training program receive services in their homes and communities by rehabilitation staff. These services include training in the areas of nonvisual techniques such as braille, orientation and mobility/travel with a long white cane, and home and personal management, computers and technology, industrial arts and career exploration through a Jobs class. The acquisition and training in the use of assistive technology is a significant need of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. This need is important for success in academic and vocational training, as well as employment.

The need to develop self-advocacy skills was identified as a need of individuals who are blind or have low vision. The individuals served by IDB often do not come to the agency with the ability to advocate for themselves. These individuals need to participate in training to develop this ability so that they can combat discrimination in the job search and employment process.

The need for self-confidence of individuals with blindness and low vision was also a recurring theme identified through the needs assessment process. This lack of confidence was directly related to the pursuit of employment and the tenacity needed to overcome employer misconceptions about the abilities of people with blindness. The acquisition of the nonvisual skills learned through the Department's programs fosters self-confidence and helps to overcome misconceptions that employers and the general public have about the capabilities of individuals with blindness and low vision.

Transportation continues to be a need of identified for Iowans who are blind or have low vision. There are many parts of the State where transportation options are limited, and this limits the opportunities for individuals with blindness and low vision.

B. who are minorities;

During the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities did not differ from the needs of other individuals with blindness and low vision with the exception of language interpreter needs. There were participants in the most recent needs assessment who indicated that it may be difficult to find culturally competent staff to serve individuals who are blind or have low vision in Iowa. The Department is reviewing its processes and materials to more effectively reach persons with diverse backgrounds who might be eligible for services. The efforts to date have been focused on increasing outcomes to all Iowans who are blind or have vision loss. These efforts will continue, along with a continued review of barriers that inhibit participation in services.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Individuals that are Deaf-Blind were identified as potentially underserved by IDB. Although there were no specific racial or ethnic groups identified as underserved by IDB in the most recent needs assessment, there were participants that indicated any race where English is a second language may have difficulty finding culturally competent staff at IDB. The very rural areas of Iowa were identified as potentially underserved by IDB primarily due to the lack of transportation, which restricts access to IDB offices, and makes travel times lengthy and time consuming for Rehabilitation.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

The most recent statewide needs assessment identified several themes related to the services of individuals who are blind or have low vision being served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. Currently, the IowaWORKS Centers are not seen as effectively meeting the service needs of individuals with blindness and low vision throughout the State. The relationship between IDB and the IowaWORKS Centers remains primarily one of referral. IDB and other core partners need to develop a method to effectively track and report co-enrollment of IDB and other core partner clients. One area of concern that continues to be identified is that IowaWORKS needs to improve programmatic accessibility across the state.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

The relationship and communication between IESBVI and IDB is critical in the transition process for students and youth with blindness and low vision. The five required pre-employment transition services represent significant needs of students with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Work experience and soft skill development have been identified as the most important services that prepare students for the world of work, but all of the five required services are important and meaningful. Many of the students and youth served by IDB are individuals with multiple disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that staff and service providers are trained and capable of addressing the multiple needs presented by these youth as they prepare for postsecondary education and/or employment. There is a need to develop high expectations for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Transportation to and from school, work experiences, and full-time work is a significant barrier to employment for youth with blindness and low vision, especially in the rural areas. Because of the number of youth that are being served by IDB with multiple and complex disabilities, there is a need to enhance the development of supported employment, including the development of customized employment as a service option for youth.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

There is a need to develop supported employment providers that are experienced in working with individuals with blindness and low vision. Interview and survey participants in the most recent needs assessment indicated that there is a need for more providers in the rural areas of Iowa. Needs assessment interview participants also indicated that there is a need for more employment services providers in the State. IDB partners with a wide range of community partners statewide to develop and improve services provided by community rehabilitation partners. Department staff work with community rehabilitation providers and independent living centers to coordinate services and meet the needs of Iowans who are blind and have low vision, including those who have multiple disabilities.

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.

The statewide needs assessment identified the need to improve the skills of students and youth who are blind and have low vision. These services include the following: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living and instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring. Each of the pre-employment transition services was noted as a need for students who are blind or have low vision, with work-based learning experiences being most frequently mentioned and considered the most valuable in terms of preparing youth for employment. Soft skill development and self-advocacy were the

two other pre-employment transition services noted as a need by both IDB staff and partners in Iowa.

Through IDB, students are able to participate in trainings and to have opportunities that will allow them to more fully participate in the career development process and to develop meaningful employment plans. IDB offers opportunities and resources in assistive technology, career exploration, work-based learning experiences, attitude and adjustment to blindness training, and access to peer mentoring to assist students to develop the skills, positive attitude and confidence they need to move successfully into post-secondary environments.

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 low vision 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 offers a variety 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.

The Iowa Department for the Blind LEAP Program is dedicated to providing meaningful and high-quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and low vision transition-age youth from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for blind and low vision 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 students 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 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 a multi-week residential program that provides training to blind and low vision 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.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are offered during the school year. Blind and low vision 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 low vision students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff take 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.

The importance of pre-employment transition services brought forth an opportunity for IDB to develop the Youth Employment Services Team. This is a cross-agency group of individuals that focuses on the provision of pre-employment transition services and the development and implementation of related programs. IDB ensures the statewide provision of services in the five required activities. To ensure that students are able to fully access all of the pre-employment transition services, IDB will purchase and provide interpreters, readers, and appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids so students have the supports they need to access the pre-employment transition services.

Participants in the statewide needs assessment indicate that transition career services and pre-employment transition services are not sufficiently coordinated with school IEPs and students who are blind or have low vision are not prepared to transition to adult services. Several participants indicated that there is a need to develop high expectations for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Several participants in the assessment reported that there are low expectations about the future school and work possibilities for young people transitioning from secondary school, and that families, school staff and service providers need to encourage these young people to focus on achievement. Related to the need to develop high expectations for youth is the impact of the receipt of SSI on the pursuit of work at the self-sufficiency level. Multiple participants across all groups indicated that youth that are receiving SSI are only interested in pursuing employment at a level that ensures they are able to keep their SSI benefits, especially their medical benefits.

Participants also identified that youth that are transitioning to postsecondary education need to receive further training in the use of assistive technology prior to beginning college or vocational training so that they do not fall behind at the beginning of their programs. While the provision of assistive technology was not cited as a challenge, the training in the use of the technology was a recurring rehabilitation need.

Several partner participants indicated that there is a growing substance abuse problem with Iowa's youth, which adversely affects the ability of young people to prepare for and enter employment. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, the number of deaths related to opioid overdose has more than tripled since 2005, and the number of individuals treated for opioid dependency has almost quadrupled in that same time frame. While these statistics do not refer solely to youth, the participants in this study indicated that it is common for them to work with youth that have a history of substance abuse.

The State of Iowa has established a robust continuum of services for children and youth with blindness and visual impairments that includes services provided by the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI), formerly known as the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. The relationship and communication between IESBVI and IDB is considered critical in the transition process for students and youth with blindness and low vision. IESBVI and IDB at times have different approaches to teaching and training youth to utilize assistive technology and to live and function independently. Frequent and regular communication between the staff of both organizations is recognized as a need to having a positive working relationship is cultivated. IESBVI and IDB have established quarterly coordination meetings in the different areas of the State to help improve communication.

Transportation to and from school, work experiences, and full-time work is a significant barrier to employment for youth with blindness and low vision. This is especially true in the rural areas. The availability of ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft have helped, but there is still a need to develop public transportation options in many parts of the State.

IDB provides pre-employment transition services directly and through contracted service providers. They rely heavily on summer youth programs for workplace readiness skills and work-based experiences. Many of the students and youth served by IDB are individuals with multiple disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that staff and service providers are trained and capable of addressing the multiple needs presented by these youth as they prepare for postsecondary education and/or employment. Because of the number of youth that are being served by IDB with multiple and complex disabilities, there is a need to enhance the development of supported employment, including the development of customized employment as a service option for youth. IDB needs to develop their internal capacity and the capacity of their service provider network to deliver CE.

k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

IDB projects the number of individuals in the Iowa who are eligible for services to total 525. Department's current staffing level does enable IDB to provide core services to clients. When the number of individuals being referred and applying to services increases, the department management team identifies ways to effectively streamline processes to enable staff to continue to meet the needs of clients. Services are monitored to assure that all core services are provided.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

There are approximately 530 individuals who will receive services under the VR Program.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

There are approximately 30 individuals who will receive services under the Self Employment Program.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

Not applicable, 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

Not applicable, 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.

The average cost of services in 2018 was \$7,993 per individual served. Estimating that 525 individuals will receive services, the cost of services for the number of individuals eligible for services is \$4,236,290. IDB is not under an order of selection. The costs of services are based on the prior year's actual expenditures.

I. 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.

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 jointly develop the State's vision and goals. Iowa's Unified State Plan Vision is that Iowa's workforce delivery system partners will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa. The system will provide the training and education needed to develop a pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries. Iowa employers will have access to the skilled workforce needed to prosper in today's global economy. This vision was jointly developed by Iowa's WIOA core partner and approved by the State Workforce Board.

The goals developed by Iowa's core partners and approved by the State Workforce Board are as follows:

Goal I - Iowa's employers will have access to 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.

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

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

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 have low vision across all agencies and organizations in the state. The responsibility of the Department's vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals who are blind or have low vision, including those with the most significant disabilities, to achieve high quality, competitive integrated employment.

The Department's primary priority is to assist Iowans who are blind and have low vision, including those who also have multiple disabilities to achieve the goals outlined in their individualized plans for employment, including supported employment. The Department will continue to 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. A second priority is a continued focus on increasing services to students with disabilities, including students who are eligible and potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The Department's third priority is to improve the quality assurance program as we integrate a new case management system.

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;

The Iowa Department for the Blind's goals and priorities are based on factors identified through an analysis of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, ongoing monthly forums, community conversations and staff and stakeholder input.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

The Iowa Department for the Blind's performance will be based on the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA as those are negotiated and determined.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

IDB's goals are based on information gathered through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, results of federal and state reports, and stakeholder input. The operation and effectiveness of the Department's vocational rehabilitation program is reviewed by the Department's Commission for the Blind on a quarterly basis.

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; and

Not applicable.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

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 low vision Iowans who require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive integrated employment receive them. The funds received under section 603 are intended to be used solely for supported employment services. At least 50 percent 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. When supported employment service funding requirements 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. The Department allows for the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for 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.

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 have low vision.

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.

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to increase the number and percentage of clients achieving competitive integrated employment outcomes; build awareness of IDB services; and to improve the quality assurance system. IDB uses strategies identified in the sections above and in WIOA to achieve these goals and priorities and to overcome barriers to accessing IDB's vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. IDB maintains one state office and uses telework methods, allowing counseling staff to work in regions across the state. Vocational Rehabilitation staff work in teams and travel their assigned regions to meet with referrals and clients, to educate the general public, including employers, and to reach out to individuals who may need our services.

IDB's goal is that Iowa's employers will become more aware of the IDB's services and the pool of advanced, skilled and future ready workers of which the department can provide access. The Department will collaborate with core partner programs and local workforce development boards to provide and gather information from local employers by developing effective relationships between the local workforce system and sector partnerships as a means to engage directly with industry across traditional barriers. IDB counselors, employment specialist, rehabilitation technology specialists and other staff will provide training, information and resources to Iowa's employers, educators and partners. The Department works to create a workforce with the attitudes, learning habits, problem-solving skills needed for upward mobility within industries. The Department will also collaborate with sector partnerships and Iowa employers to enhance work-based learning opportunities for all Iowans, including those who are blind or have vision loss.

The Department will work to ensure all Iowans, including those who are blind or have low vision will be provided with access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities. IDB will also work with core partners to develop and promote accessible career pathways to all Iowans. IDB clients will receive the vocational rehabilitation services they need to obtain, maintain, and advance in employment. IDB will actively engage the community to increase awareness of the mission, vision, and services available to Iowans who are blind or have low vision and how to access them. IDB will outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. IDB

will work with all eligible individuals to have well-developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education and training plans needed to achieve their career goal.

IDB will advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible youth will have well-developed individualized education plans that align with their career goals. IDB will also assist all youth who are blind or have vision loss in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from school to work. IDB will engage Iowa's students and youth who are blind and have low vision in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self-directed techniques in the delivery of career services.

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 will ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and the activities they engage in will align with career pathway. IDB will promote participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. IDB will collaborate 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 have low vision. IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. IDB will work in partnership with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. IDB will build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision. IDB will conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers and provide them with trainings to assist them in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB will continue to use an integrated resource team (IRT) approach in meeting the needs of clients. Strategies associated with this goal will be measured through the number of co-enrollments and the percentage of growth in the number of participants utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT). IDB will also work with core partners to align workforce programs and initiatives to improve service delivery and outcomes for all Iowans. We will work to blend and braid resources to the extent possible to maximize benefits for Iowans who are blind and have vision loss. We will work to ensure seamless access to programs and services of the workforce delivery system to all Iowans. IDB will continue to provide technical assistance and training to partners, programs, communities and employers to ensure clients have access to services they need to reach their employment and life goals. IDB will work with core partners on the continuous improvement of the system to ensure no programmatic or physical barriers exist to accessing programs and services. IDB will continue to participate in the state and local Disability Access Committees work in improving physical, technology and program accessibility for Iowan's.

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 will work with core partners to pilot an Assistive Technology Lab in a local workforce office to provide access to assistive technology to individuals accessing workforce programs and to provide training on assistive technology to individuals in their home communities. IDB will continue to work with state agencies including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Education and IowaWORKS to provide consultation and access to assistive technology and trainings to Iowans who are blind and have vision loss to be able to access their services and employment.

IDB Rehabilitation Technology Specialists work collaboratively with clients, training providers, partner agencies, 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 IDB Accessibility Media Specialist, through the Department's Assistive Technology Lab, will provide resources, trainings and opportunities for hands on learning of assistive technology.

The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's College and Career Commons will provide technology, equipment and software to assist individuals as they prepare for employment and to gain and maintain skills and credentials they need for employment. The S.O.A.R. (Success, Opportunities, Aspirations and Reading) Programs will continue to provide opportunities for parents and students to receive assistive technology training and information. The Library's creation of a Youth Library space will give individuals and families the opportunity for hands-on experience with assistive technology and resources within the space.

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 has provided information, referral, and assistive technology for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowan's who are blind or visually impaired. 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 continue to partner with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center to provide devices for individuals, including students, with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs.

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.

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. Outreach activities include traditional approaches such as open house events, community based trainings, 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. 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.

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, 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.

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 have low vision. 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 individuals, including students, with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs. IDB will continue to partner with these programs to provide assistive technology services to clients.

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 program administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the

services the Department provides to students who are blind or have low vision. One area of need often identified with students 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 attend IEP meetings and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers.

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. 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 developed several programs to expand the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services, to students who are blind or have low vision. Over the next four years, IDB will explore ways to build a 4+ program to serve Iowa's secondary students. Through provision of pre-employment transition services and other services, this program will work with local school districts to assist students with disabilities to develop skills needed for post-secondary environments.

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 core member of the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment whose activities are designed to enhance employment services for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowans who are blind and have low vision. 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 have low vision. IDB will build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision. 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 have low vision.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

The Department for the Blind has worked with core partners to develop an integrated data collection system across partner programs. At this time, current reporting and data collection processes are time consuming for both field staff and data analysts. IDB has made efforts to streamline data collection for counselors and other field staff to allow them more time to work with their clients and partners. IDB is planning to post a request for proposals for the development of a new case management system to allow for better tracking of requirements under WIOA. IDB is also exploring partnerships with other partner programs in the collection of common data elements. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities. IDB has continued to work with current standards and indicators knowing that the state's common performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA are currently being negotiated. 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.

Various strategies enable IDB to assist other components of the statewide workforce development system to assist individuals with disabilities, including those who are blind or have low vision to access services and expand opportunities to those who are, or who may become, eligible for services of the Vocational Rehabilitation or the Supported Employment program. 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 Iowa *WORKS* offices and partner agencies. The Department collaborates with other community agencies to ensure that their programs are accessible to clients who are blind or have low vision. IDB collaborates with Iowa's workforce delivery system partners to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or have low vision. IDB collaborates with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. IDB works to build intra-agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. IDB partners 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 collaborates 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. Community Based Trainings for

clients will continue as they have been effective in expanding and improving efforts to provide blindness skills, job readiness skills and job search assistance to clients. These trainings have also allowed for the delivery of pre-employment services clients require to be ready for employment and have supplemented the work done on an individual basis with rehabilitation counselors, teachers, and rehabilitation technology specialists. The Department's website and social media is updated and provides information to the public about available services and resources available to clients, partners, employers and other stakeholders.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

In 2019, IDB completed its formal comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). In to the CSNA, IDB holds monthly Director's forums with the public by telephone and electronic avenues to allow for consumer input regarding the services and plans for services to be provided to meet the needs of clients. The Department has also held community conversation to gather input from stakeholders about the Departments goals and plans for providing services to Iowans who are blind and have vision loss. The Department's Commission for the Blind holds public meetings on a quarterly basis in which clients and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide comments and suggestions about IDB programs and services. Clients and stakeholders are provided with information related to the IDB State Plan through a variety of methods including posting it to our website, sharing it through social media, and providing copies in formats accessible to the individual. The information gathered through our needs assessment, public forums and methods for collecting public input provided consistent information and have allowed IDB to develop the strategies listed in previous sections to achieve the goals and priorities of the Department for the Blind.

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 Iowans who are blind or have low vision under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). 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 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.

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.

Over the next four years, Innovation and Expansion funds will be used on the integration of a new case management system and to provide training on a new data management system. Data management collected will assist IDB to analyze the effectiveness of our programs, services and progress toward achieving goals, while also assisting in identifying potential barriers and challenges so that we can overcome them as we work to provide quality services to Iowans who are blind or have low vision.

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 reviewed current staffing levels in efforts to increase the presence of the Iowa Department for the Blind in local communities. We now have ten counselors in the field serving clients across the state. 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 have low vision. 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 have low vision 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 or have low vision.

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.

IDB will conduct marketing and outreach to increase awareness of and referrals to the Department. 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 community based training 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 community based trainings, 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.

IDB provides work-based learning experiences and job seeking seminars designed specifically for clients attending post-secondary school. The Department has set a goal that clients have paid work experiences prior to graduation. The Department firmly believes that access to work-based learning experiences increases an individual's likelihood of success in reaching his or her employment goals. IDB partners with local education and workforce partners to achieve this goal.

IDB will provide a longer period for job stabilization before closure in cases where a client is working toward achieving more hours, and requires additional documentation for cases closing in employment at less than twenty hours per week.

IDB will 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.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

One factor that has impeded the achievement of the Department's goals has been late application for vocational rehabilitation services by high school students who are blind or have low vision. These students are sometimes served through other programs who do not have the knowledge or resources to effectively serve individuals who are blind or have low vision. Another reason is due to parent or family member preference that the student 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 developed to work toward this goal. 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 have low vision, including individuals with the most significant disabilities. IDB staff work with community providers to provide consultation and technical assistance so that they are better able to provide services to clients with the most significant disabilities.

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 Department's goal is that all Iowans who are blind or have low vision and require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive employment receive them. The Department will continue to review procedures for managing supported employment cases and develop a strategic plan for supported employment services. Individuals the IDB closed who were receiving supported employment services worked 20 hours or less in integrated competitive employment settings.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

IDB continuously provides outreach to educational and community rehabilitation providers, however are often met with resistance to working with the Department to serve clients with the most significant disabilities. This is often due to a lack of awareness that the IDB is the entity responsible for providing supported employment and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind, including those with the most significant disabilities. Individuals are often referred to IVRS, Iowa's general agency who may refer the individual to the Department. Lack of understanding about the services IDB can provide combined with low expectations of the individuals being served also contributes to the lack of referrals of clients who may be eligible for supported employment services. IDB will continue to work to educate community rehabilitation and educational providers regarding services for individuals who may qualify for supported employment.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

Program Years 17 and 18 were baseline years for Performance Accountability under section 116 of WIOA. The Department will use the following performance accountability indicators: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program; The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit; Credential attainment rate; Measurable skill gain; Effectiveness in serving employers. While these measures are being negotiated, IDB continues to use additional measures including the average wage at exit (\$15.06/hour); ratio of VR wage to state wage as a percentage (75.39 percent); and average hours worked per week while in employment (29).

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). 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. Funds were 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 assessment; job coaching; job development and placement; social skills training; follow-up services; facilitation of natural supports at the work site; and, any other service necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Supported employment 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 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.

Certifications

Name of designated State agency: **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Keri Lynn Osterhaus**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator**

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 I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA²², and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.²³ **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)**²⁴ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan²⁵, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations²⁶, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under

²² Public Law 113-128

²³ Unless otherwise stated, “Rehabilitation Act” means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

²⁴ All references in this plan to “designated State agency” or to “the State agency” relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

²⁵ No funds under Title I 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.

²⁶ 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 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

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 Plan²⁷, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations²⁸, 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**

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:

²⁷ No funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²⁸ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

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. **Yes**

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. **Yes**

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:

- n. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- o. 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 (Option A or B must be selected):
 - A. is an independent State commission. **Yes**
 - B. has established a State Rehabilitation Council. **No**
- p. 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. **Yes**
- q. 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). **Yes**
- r. 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. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No). **No**
- s. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No). **Yes**
- t. 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? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**
- u. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

- v. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- w. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- x. 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. **Yes**
- y. 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. **Yes**
- z. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

- k. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- l. 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. **Yes**
- m. 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? (Yes/No). **Yes**
- n. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- o. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- p. 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. **Yes**
- q. 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. **Yes**
- r. 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. **Yes**
- s. 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. **Yes**
- t. 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 **Yes**
- 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 **Yes**
- ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).
Yes

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. **Yes**
- d. 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. **Yes**
- e. 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. **Yes**

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

- c. 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. **Yes**
- d. 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. **Yes**

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

- c. Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
- d. 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. **Yes**
- 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. **Yes**

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.²⁹ 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.

Not applicable to Iowa, which has submitted a Unified State Plan.

Appendix 1. 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 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 two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act

²⁹ 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.

of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

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 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

	Title I – Adult Program			
	Program Year: 2020		Program Year: 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	72%		73%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70%		70%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$5,000		\$5,100	
Credential Attainment Rate	67%		67%	
Measurable Skill Gains	30%		31%	

	Title I – Dislocated Worker Program			
	Program Year: 2020		Program Year: 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	75%		76%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70%		70%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,500		\$6,600	
Credential Attainment Rate	68%		68%	
Measurable Skill Gains	30%		31%	

	Title I – Youth Program			
	Program Year: 2020		Program Year: 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²¹	73%		73%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²	72%		72%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$2,800		\$2,900	
Credential Attainment Rate	59%		59%	
Measurable Skill Gains	32%		33%	

²¹ For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.
²² For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

	Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program			
	Program Year: 2020		Program Year: 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	50%		50%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	43%		44%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$5,800		\$5,900	
Credential Attainment Rate	24%		25%	
Measurable Skill Gains	46%		47%	

	Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program			
	Program Year: 2020		Program Year: 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	72%		73%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69%		70%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,000		\$6,100	

Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
	Program Year: PY17		Program Year: PY18	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²²	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	2,227 (actuals) 51.6 (rate)	Not Applicable
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ²³	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	\$4,291.44 (actuals)	Not Applicable
Credential Attainment Rate ²²	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	2,054 (actuals) 22.0 (rate)	Not Applicable	3,133 (actuals) 35.2 (rate)	Not Applicable

	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

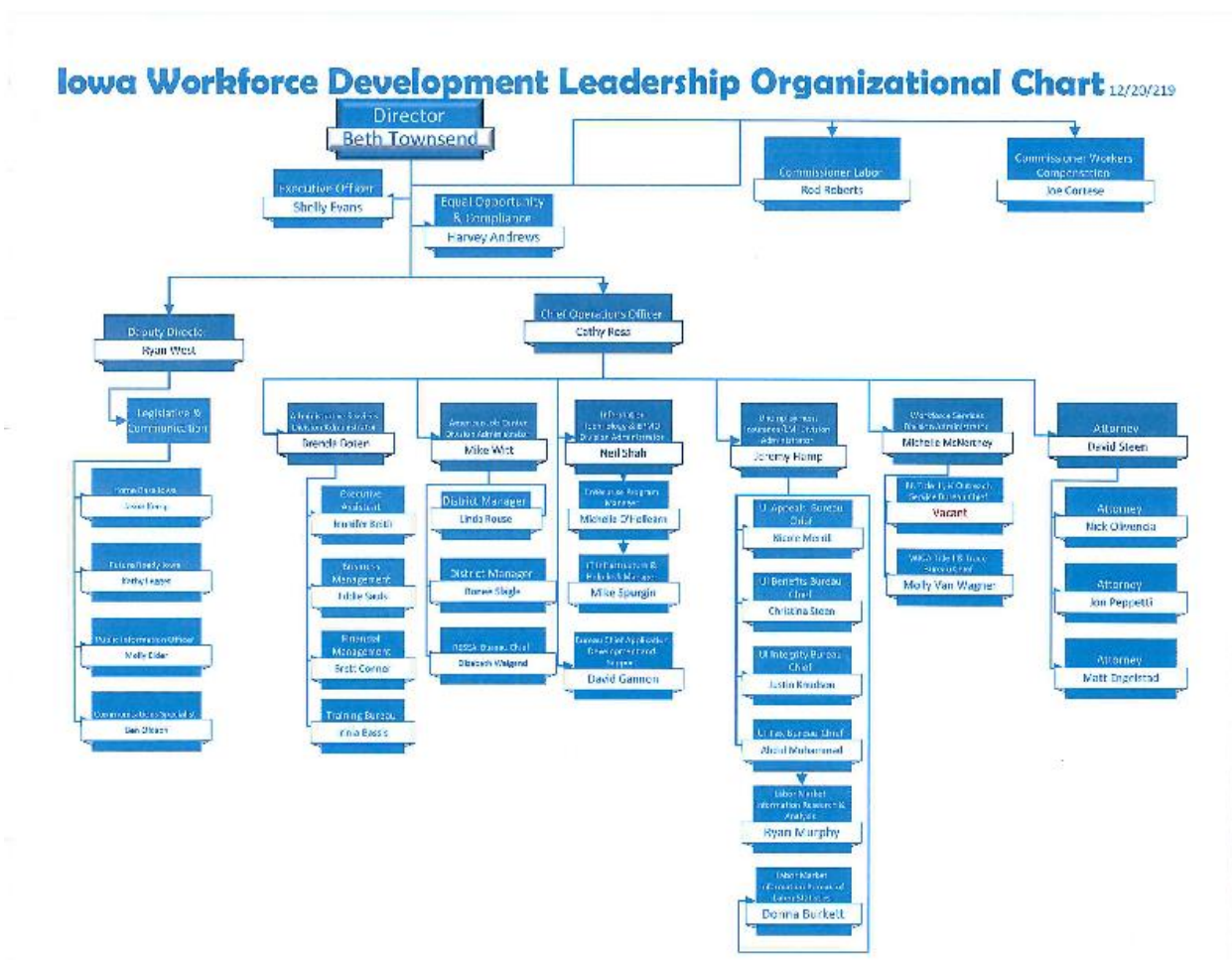
Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.

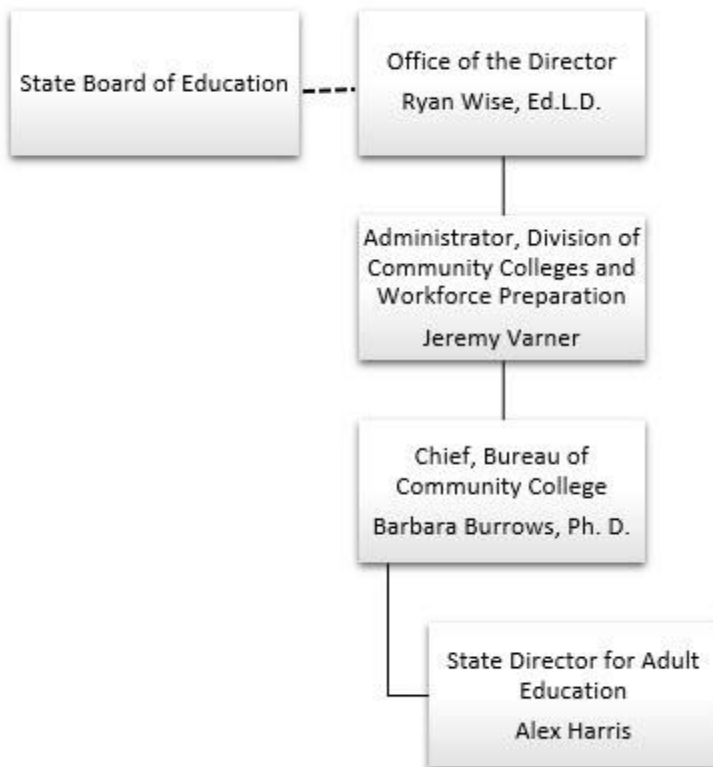
- 5.
- 6.

23 For the VR program, these indicators are Not Applicable for PY 2020 and PY 2021; however, they will be applicable for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

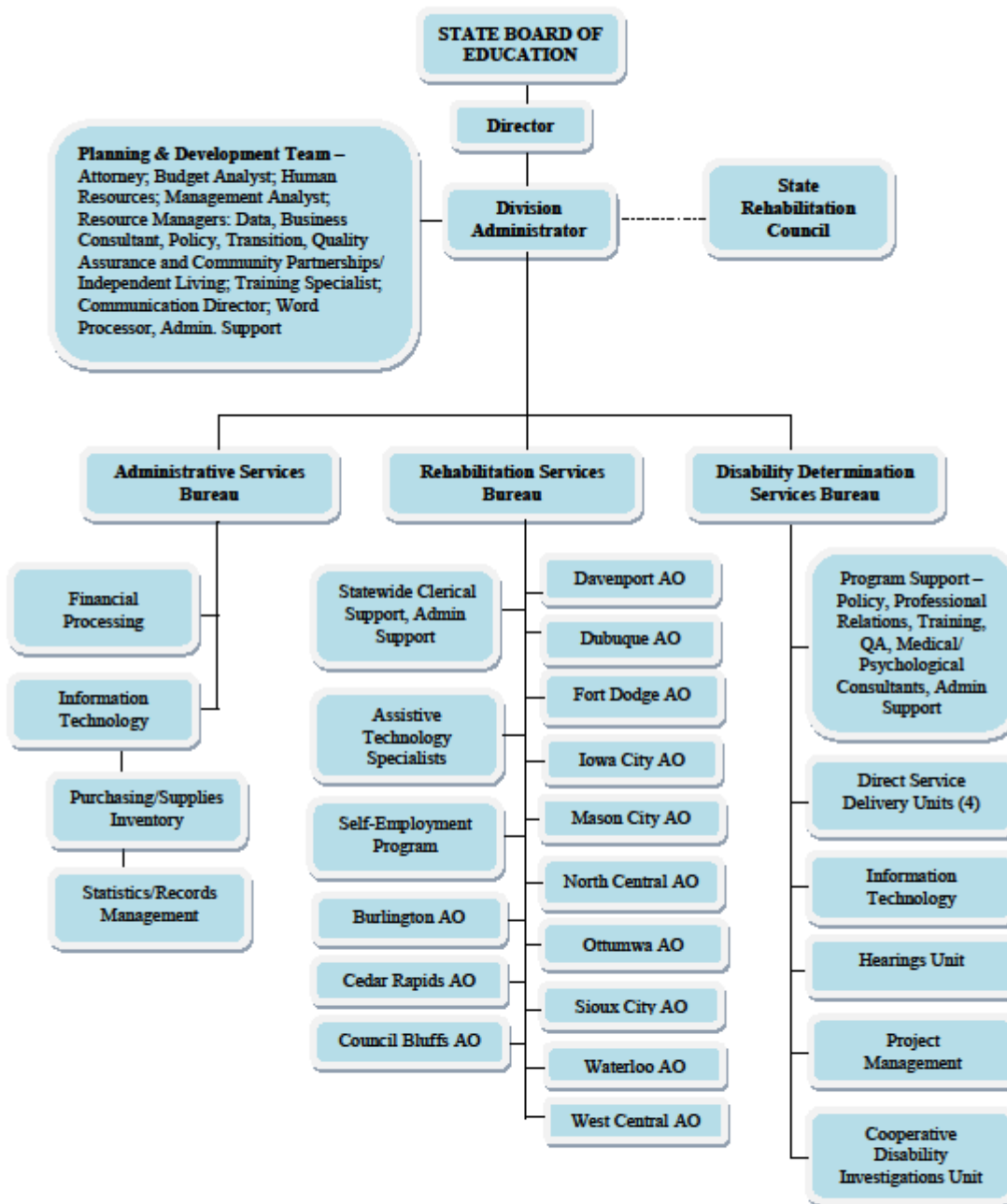
Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)

Appendix 2: Organizational Charts for Core Partners





Adult Education and Literacy Organizational Chart



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION -
IOWA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

Updated 01.18.18

Iowa Department for the Blind Organizational Chart

Iowa Commission for the Blind

Sandra Ryan, Chair

Joe Van Lent, Commissioner

Ryan Brems, Commissioner

Direct Reports:

- Director

Emily Wharton, Director

Direct Reports:

- 1 Executive Secretary
- 1 Accountant Supervisor (CFO)
- 6 Program Administrators

Sarah Willeford, Library Director

Direct Reports:

- 2 Patron Services Librarians
- 1 Special Services Librarian
- 1 Electronic Resources and Discovery Librarian
- 1 Youth Services Librarian
- 1 Accessible Media Specialist
- 1 Digital Recording Specialist/Studio Manager
- 1 Audio Production Librarian
- 1 Braille Coordinator
- 2 Instructional Materials Center Librarians
- 2 Braille Transcribers

Helen Stevens, CTO / Education & Training Program Administrator

Direct Reports:

- 7 Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers (Senior Service Specialist for the Blind 1)

- 3 Rehabilitation Technology Specialists
- 2 Technology Specialists (Senior Service Specialist for the Blind 2)
- 1 Secretary 1
- 1 Activity Specialist 1 (Lead Worker over Temporary Youth workers)
- 15 Temporary Youth Workers

Keri Osterhaus, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator

Direct Reports:

- 10 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (SSSB1)
- 1 Employment Specialist (SSSB1)
- 1 Counselor Lead Worker / Quality Assurance Specialist (SSSB1)
- 1 Rehabilitation Technology Specialist
- 1 Secretary 1
- 1 Secretary 2

Alan Bickell, Orientation Center Program Administrator

Direct Reports:

- 1 Rehabilitation Technology Specialist
- 6 Center Instructors (SSSB1)

Kim Barber, Independent Living Program Administrator

Direct Reports:

- 3 Senior Independent Living Teachers (SSSB1)
- 3 Independent Living Teachers (SSB2)
- 1 Secretary 1
- 1 Intake Specialist (SSb1)

Cheri Myers, CFO

Direct Reports:

- 2 Accounting Techs 2
- 1 Accounting Clerk 1

Kathy Roat, Facilities & Business Enterprise Program Administrator

Direct Reports:

- 2 Business Counselors (SSB1)
- 1 Facilities Engineer
- 1 Maintenance Repairer
- 3 Custodians