

IOWA

WIA ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAM YEAR 2004

THE IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

OCTOBER 1, 2005



CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Iowa Workforce Development Board Members	1
Vision Statement	2
I. The Economic Environment in PY 2004	3
II. Iowa Workforce Development Board Activities	4
A. Engaging the Business Community	4
1. Business Initiatives	4
2. Employers Councils of Iowa	6
3. Laborshed Surveys	7
B. Expanding Services to Job Seekers	7
1. New Iowans Centers	8
2. Youth Collaborative	9
3. Individuals with Disabilities	10
C. International Exchange	11
III. Evaluation of Workforce Investment Activities	13
IV. Cost Effectiveness of the WIA Programs	13
V. Program Results	15
A. Adult Program	15
B. Youth Program	15
C. Dislocated Worker Program	16
1. Formula Dislocated Worker Funds	16
2. Rapid Response Program for Dislocated Workers	16
3. Early Intervention Grants	17
4. Special Intervention Grants	17
5. National Emergency Grants	18
6. Special State Funded Projects	19

	<u>Page</u>
VI. Regional Reports	20
Region 1 – Dubuque/Postville	21
Region 2 – Mason City	22
Region 3 – Spencer	23
Region 4 – Sheldon	23
Region 5 – Fort Dodge	24
Region 6 – Marshalltown	25
Region 7 – Waterloo	26
Region 8 – Carroll	26
Region 9 – Davenport	27
Region 10 – Cedar Rapids	28
Region 11 – Des Moines	29
Region 12 – Sioux City	30
Region 13 – Council Bluffs	31
Region 14 – Creston	31
Region 15 – Ottumwa	32
Region 16 – Burlington	33
VII. Performance Reports	
• WIA Customer Satisfaction	A
• WIA Adult	B
• WIA Dislocated Worker	C
• WIA Older Youth	D
• WIA Young Youth	E
• Combined Summary Report – Formula Funds	F

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERS

EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES

Dean Hicks – West Des Moines

Norma Schmoker – Fort Dodge

Sally Falb – West Union

Rosa Bailey – Sioux City

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

Vicki Duchene - Newton

Ken Sagar – Des Moines

Ben Duehr – Dubuque

NON-PROFIT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

Jean Logan – Sioux City

EX-OFFICIO NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES

Dr. Tahira K. Hira – Regents Institutions

Jan Varner – AFSCME

Steve Ovel – Community Colleges

Nancy Williams – Private Colleges and Universities

Senator Bill Dotzler – State Legislature

Senator Petricia Ward – State Legislature

Representative Willard Jenkins – State Legislature

Representative Dave Jacoby – State Legislature



VISION:

A prosperous, healthy and productive Iowa

Our vision is of a prosperous, healthy and productive Iowa, well equipped to thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy. More than ever before, the primary prerequisite for prosperity is a well educated, skilled and productive workforce employed in safe and healthy high performance workplaces.

- State Workforce Development Board

I. The Economic Environment

Iowa ended 2004 on more solid economic footing as the state's businesses finally demonstrated a willingness to hire workers. There had been a pervasive reluctance to expand company payrolls during the previous three years. Business investment, which includes hiring activity, was impeded during this period by the over-accumulation of capital stock that had contributed to the recession.

Although the pace of job growth picked up during the latter part of 2004, the Midwest states were slower to move into a recovery than many other parts of the country. One of the main reasons for the slower recovery was the region's high concentration of manufacturing in its total non-farm employment. Led by manufacturing, Iowa's non-farm employment increased from 1,435,000 in June 2003 to 1,456,000 in June 2004. This marked the first time since 2000 that payroll employment reflected an increase from the previous year. During 2004, the state remained in recovery mode as it tried to recapture some of the jobs that were lost during the 2001 recession.

The pace of the recovery was further challenged in 2004 by substantial increases in commodity prices. Steel mill product prices began to climb in late 2003 and continued to increase throughout 2004, ending the year close to 50 percent higher than a year earlier. In Iowa, the high price of steel was cited as a reason for some temporary layoffs and a couple of manufacturing plant closings. High oil prices have also placed tremendous financial pressure on manufacturers and trucking firms, jumping to over \$53.00 per barrel by October 2004. Metal is another commodity with price increases in early 2004, remaining high throughout the year. Metals are used extensively in the construction and manufacturing industries. In nondurable goods manufacturing, the high price of cattle squeezed profit margins in the meatpacking industry. This was a major factor in the closing of the Iowa Quality Beef Supply Company in Tama during the summer of 2004.

Even though Iowa's employment conditions improved in 2004, the state's unemployment rate rose to 4.8 percent/78,000 workers from 4.4 percent/72,000 workers in 2003. The fact that companies were hiring again attracted a larger number of job seekers into the labor force.

A ranking of the state's major industry groups shows that trade and transportation is Iowa's largest industry, accounting for 21 percent of non-farm employment. This industry encompasses wholesale and retail trade, utilities and transportation. For 2004, transportation turned in a strong performance by adding 1,500 workers over the year. The transportation and trade sector, as a whole, incurred large losses since 2001 as

many small retail stores were forced out of business during the recession. Government represents the second-largest sector in non-farm employment, with roughly two-thirds of the state's government workers employed in local government. Finally, manufacturing ranks as the state's third largest industry with an average employment of 222,900 in 2004. The industry peaked at 251,400 workers in 2000.

In the short-term, industries expected to grow in employment through 2005 will be educational services, specialty trade contractors, and food service and drinking establishments. Industries expected to decline in employment through 2005 will be computer and electronic products and electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing. The construction trade industry has grown significantly over the last couple of years, generating a need for persons skilled in the construction trades.

II. Iowa Workforce Development Board Activities

The Iowa Workforce Development Board was involved in a number of activities during Program Year 2004 with a special emphasis on the role of workforce development and economic development. The Board believes strengthening the relationship between these two groups will help to build a strong workforce development system and a labor force that will drive ongoing economic growth in the state. Iowa's workforce and economic development efforts are coordinated to reinforce each other, and a review of the Board's activities in the last year reveals that coordination. The state's business and job seeker customers were the focus of these activities.

A. Engaging the Business Community

The Board expanded its knowledge and impact in a number of crucial business initiatives. Included in these presentations were:

1. Business Initiatives

- ✓ **Economic Development and Workforce Development** – The Board conducted a daylong training session on this topic that included representatives from the local workforce offices. The board discussed ways in which to coordinate services and programs with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and local economic developers across the state. As a follow-up to the training session, the Iowa Workforce Development Board, the Iowa Department of Economic Development Board and the Iowa

Values Fund Board held a joint meeting to discuss issues of mutual concern, including: Using State Leadership to Align Workforce Development and Economic Development; Workforce Analysis; the Battelle Study; and the newly revamped Iowa Values Fund.

- ✓ **The Mature Workforce** – Iowa Department of Elder Affairs officials provided an in depth review of the mature worker in the Iowa workforce and how this demographic change will effect the current workforce and the workforce of the future. The Iowa Workforce Development Board will be participating in a series of forums on the mature worker that will be held in the fall of 2005.
- ✓ **Workforce Summit** – The Board co-sponsored a one-day Workforce Summit in September 2004 concentrating on the role of economic development and workforce development in both rural and urban areas in Iowa.
- ✓ **Iowa Public Television** – A tour of the Iowa Public Television (IPTV) studio opened discussion about the ways in which Iowa Workforce Development and IPTV can work together to provide instructional training to Iowa students and workers.
- ✓ **Targeted Industry Clusters** – The study of industry clusters was provided to the Board to promote workforce and economic development activities as well as to identify educational needs. The focus is to connect targeted industry and industry clusters to occupations, skill-sets, and community college course work.
- ✓ **Economic Trends and Labor Market Information** – Current economic information is vital to the Board’s decision-making process. Regular updates occur so that the Board can make informed decisions about building a skilled labor force in Iowa. The Board established a subcommittee to work on this topic.
- ✓ **Serving Farm Workers** – The Board was updated on how farm workers are served in Iowa and how these services are blended with those provided by Iowa Workforce Development and the New Iowan Centers.
- ✓ **Statewide Employer Benefit Survey** – The Board is a co-sponsor of a new statewide Employer Benefit Survey that will be sent to over 9,000 employers to gather information on the types of benefits that are currently being offered by Iowa employers.

2. Employers Councils of Iowa

Employers' Councils of Iowa (ECIs) are located throughout the state and are composed of groups of employers who work in partnership with Iowa Workforce Development to meet the workforce needs of employers. ECIs have been active in Iowa for over twenty (20) years. They provide an employer's perspective in advising IWD and other policy makers on the full range of workforce issues and topics of concern to employers.

Currently there are 21 local councils that support the mission of ECI by conducting regular meetings, lunch and learns, seminars, conferences, job fairs, legislative sessions and other programs that assist employers. Some of the ECIs have broadened their mission to include scholarship awards, computer purchases, and other items needed by job seekers. Membership in ECI is open to all Iowa employers.

The special role of the State ECI is to help gather and disseminate information about the activities of the local councils. In Program Year 2004, the State ECI adopted a strategy and work plan for 2004-2005, which outlines the principles of success for the organization and the core services for the local ECIs. One of the primary initiatives of the State ECI was the Workforce Summit held in September 2004. The State ECI is also beginning to establish a statewide marketing plan. Some of the recent topics that have been addressed by ECIs include:

- ✓ Employment Law
- ✓ Diversity in the Workplace
- ✓ Laborsheds and Employee Availability
- ✓ Workers' Compensation
- ✓ Employee Wellness
- ✓ Drug Testing
- ✓ Services for Veterans
- ✓ Child Labor Laws
- ✓ Goal Setting
- ✓ Worker Safety

3. Laborshed Surveys

Iowa Workforce Development assists economic development efforts throughout the state by conducting "Laborshed Studies." A laborshed is defined as the area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers regardless of natural or political boundaries. These projects are conducted in partnership with local economic development groups, utilities, community colleges, and local officials.

A Laborshed gives communities the ability to document and illustrate the characteristics of their labor force, which has proven to be a unique and effective tool for retaining and expanding their existing businesses while also attracting prospective new employers into the area.

A laborshed study addresses the following:

- ✓ Potential Labor force
- ✓ Availability & willingness to change/enter employment
- ✓ Occupations (previous/current)
- ✓ Wages (current/desired)
- ✓ Benefits (traditional/non-traditional)
- ✓ Commuting Distances
- ✓ Advertising sources for Employers
- ✓ Out commute / In commute
- ✓ Education / Training needs
- ✓ Underemployment

In the fiscal year 2004, the Workforce Research Group completed 43 individual Laborshed Studies and six regional analyses. Industry-specific labor availability data was requested for business expansion and prospect recruitment for 78 different projects throughout Iowa.

B. Expanding Services to Job Seekers

The Workforce Development Board supports all job seekers in the state, but is particularly focused on special populations. Activities and initiative are especially notable for three of these populations: New Iowans, Youth, and Individuals with Disabilities.

1. New Iowans Centers

The focus of the New Iowan Centers is to help anyone new to Iowa, whether from another state or another nation, feel welcome. Unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers are employed in all sectors of a community and add to the community's assets. These jobs are essential to keeping the state's economy growing and communities strong. In addition, newcomers bring their education and experience to be utilized by our state. The focus of the New Iowan program has changed from giving services to newcomers to Iowa to a broader range of economic development and the incorporation of newcomers into their communities.

New Iowan Centers are established in Muscatine, Sioux City, and Ottumwa. Activity in the Centers continues at a high rate. For example, in fiscal year 2004-2005, over 3,200 families were served with 20,000 services delivered statewide. During the same period of time, over 3,000 employers received special trainings, diversity presentations, translations, interpretations, immigration updates and presentations, marketing and staffing assistance. Some of the services offered by the Centers include:

- ✓ Economic and community development strategy initiatives
- ✓ Workforce development programming
- ✓ Cultural and multicultural event planning
- ✓ Cross-cultural diversity training
- ✓ Networking to create and identify cross-cultural market opportunities
- ✓ Entrepreneurial, business development consultation
- ✓ Translation/interpretation referral
- ✓ ESL and citizenship classes
- ✓ Immigration information and assistance
- ✓ Financial classes
- ✓ Housing Information and programming
- ✓ Migrant and Seasonal Farm worker outreach services

At the end of this FY, the NIC program applied for and received a DOL demonstration grant, which will be used to expand service delivery for the next three years. Additional staff will be placed in Ottumwa, and full New Iowan Center services will be available in Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo and Des Moines.

2. Youth Collaborative

Development of comprehensive youth services continued to receive attention in PY 04. Iowa Workforce Development participates in a multi-agency organization devoted to coordinating a multitude of programs and services that support comprehensive youth development in Iowa. This organization, called the Iowa Youth Development Collaborative (ICYD), is funded through a federal grant and includes representatives of the workforce, education, health, social services, and justice systems. Through the efforts of this group, coordinated planning for youth services is developed and direct support and training is provided to communities that are developing local initiatives to build comprehensive youth services and support networks. Both state and regional employment and training representatives participate in the collaboration through state and local partnerships.

In PY03 the ICYD applied for and received approval for one of ten YES (Youth Engaged in Service) Ambassador positions in the country. Efforts were made throughout PY04 to develop the plan of work for the YES position. The youth ambassador will work primarily with communities to engage youth in volunteer and service learning opportunities. The YES Ambassador position was made available through and is funded by the Points of Light Foundation. The position will be filled in early fall in PY 05.

Another collaboration with ICYD resulted in the application for a Grant award in the amount of \$1,047,500 for Preparing Youth Offenders to Enter High Growth and High Demand Industries. This is a demonstration grant that would serve at least 200 youth offenders in a 21 county region within Iowa. The result of this project will be the development of a demonstration model to provide intensive comprehensive services to at-risk youth with significant barriers to achieving success, while improving youth outcomes. Once successful, this model can be replicated throughout the state's workforce development system. Based on a successful model currently in use with adult offenders, it is believed that by adapting the model to the youth population, Iowa will increase the skills and abilities of the youth offender population, support them in becoming employed and contributing members of their communities.

3. Individuals with Disabilities

Iowa's One-Stop Workforce Center System maintained efforts to fully include Iowans with disabilities in the workforce in PY04. Iowa Workforce Development continued joint efforts with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, Iowa Department of Human Services and Iowa Department of Education to position employment services to be a stronger resource to our citizens with disabilities.

Iowa's Navigator program expanded to all 16 Iowa Workforce Development Regions. With a navigator assigned to each region, resources to address service accessibility, assistance with Social Security benefits planning services, staff training and support, and supports to businesses to successfully include Iowans with disabilities in their labor force have been enhanced.

Iowa continues to support a multi-agency "Assistive Technology Team" to address employment service access needs that can be provided through the use of technology. In May 2005 the Assistive Technology team reviewed a survey response report by Workforce Center managers regarding the use of various types of technology purchased through a Department of Labor grant. The purpose of the review was to determine the best likely investments for the future.

Iowa is participating in an effort funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy to develop prototypes for the transition of youth with disabilities from school to work through the development of resource maps. This project is currently in the second year with the development of three prototypes.

A state partnership team of representatives has reviewed feedback from local offices regarding local flexibility and how agencies can share customers, resources and information to improve customer service. The plan is for state representatives to visit two regions each year to generate additional comments and responses to aid us in strengthening our support to them in this area.

C. International Exchange

Early in 2002 the Iowa Resource for International Service (IRIS), a non-profit organization based in Ames, Iowa, approached Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) about becoming partners in a project to help two states in Nigeria, Africa, to improve their workforce development services. IRIS sought to tap into IWD's expertise in designing and implementing public workforce development services.

The project was designed in three phases:

- 1) IRIS and IWD representatives traveled to Nigeria to interview candidates and select teams from each of the Nigerian states of Enugu and Taraba to participate in the project, and to study the services already available.
- 2) Ten Nigerians – five from each state – traveled to Iowa to study the network of workforce development services in the U.S. and determine how to translate their findings into actions in Nigeria.
- 3) A follow-up trip to Nigeria for IRIS and IWD representatives to assist the Nigerian teams with their activities.

Phase 1 of the plan was conducted in December 2002. The reported findings were dire in that Nigeria faced extremely serious economic, workforce and other challenges. Having been ruled by a series of military dictatorships since winning their independence from Britain over fifty years ago, investments in transportation, communication, water, electricity and human resources have been grossly neglected. Poverty and unemployment rates are very high, and Nigeria struggles with inter-tribal and religious strife.

Phase 2 of the plan was the 9-week visit by the Nigerian representatives in July to September, 2003. Through a coordinated process with IRIS, IWD and employment and training partner agencies, there were focused professional development and cultural opportunities made available throughout the Nigerian visit. The range of services presented to the Nigerians was almost overwhelming. There was also in-depth observation of the services delivered through Iowa's One-Stop centers, including job fairs, life skills classes, self-service resource centers, business and veterans services, as well as services to welfare recipients and people with disabilities.

Phase 2 was designed to pack as much professional development as possible into the Nigerian visit. The Nigerian visitors are committed to taking action within their own areas of expertise and organizations to make recommendations to build upon this new knowledge base. But it doesn't end here . . .



Dressed in native attire.
Bob Anderson - IRIS, Jeff Nall – IWD, Elsie Lewis – IWD,
Muhammed Muri, Mike Witt – IWD.

Phase 3 took place in the fall of 2004 when a three-person Iowa delegation once again traveled to Nigeria to provide assistance and follow-up with the two Nigerian teams and their activities. During Phase 3, the team conducted many activities that advanced educational issues, including workforce development, economic, direct assistance to Nigerian education systems, and cultural exchanges. A number of formal and information presentations were made that included heavy emphasis on international workforce development. These efforts were followed up at home with training and educational sessions for staff, IWD board members, veterans' service workers, local employers' councils, community organizations, and others that have focused on international workforce development.

This project is considered a great success for the exchange of information, understanding, affection, and good will that passed between the representatives of the two nations involved. The opportunity to positively impact the growth and development of two states in an emerging nation was truly spectacular.

III. Evaluation of Workforce Investment Activities

All partner programs under the oversight of the State Workforce Board and Iowa Workforce Development are managed through the Division for Workforce Center Administration. One of the primary responsibilities of Workforce Center Administration is the evaluation of Workforce Investment Act activities in Iowa. A variety of reports, data, and documentation are readily available to ensure that WIA activities meet program compliance and that the fundamental principles and goals of the Act are followed and achieved.

Since workforce programs place a major emphasis on performance, a significant portion of the evaluation focuses on achievement of performance goals. A quarterly analysis of performance outcomes is conducted and the information is shared with regional administrators. Monthly meetings with those administrators provide another venue for discussion of performance and technical assistance. As appropriate, customized training is provided to administrators and line staff.

Annual on-site monitoring visits are conducted in each region. To the extent possible, these visits are comprehensive in scope, assessing aspects of program delivery, partnership, utilization of resources, and performance. Technical assistance, rather than compliance, is the primary focus of these visits. These reviews are documented in reports that are shared with local administrators and regional Boards.

The Division also assigns regional representatives to every Regional Workforce Investment Board. These individuals attend all board meetings and provide a conduit for information between the regions and state officials.

Finally, the State Workforce Investment Board requests that each region submit an Annual Report of activities. These reports include summaries of expenditures, enrollments, performance, and challenges for each region, and provide the State Board with additional region-specific information that enables them to conduct oversight responsibilities.

Over the next two years, the State Board will begin a process to certify the regional one-stop centers.

IV. Cost Effectiveness of the WIA Programs

The State of Iowa evaluates the cost effectiveness of its WIA programs by comparing the average cost of providing services (Average Cost per Participant) to the average increase in wages earned after WIA services were completed (Average 12 Month

Earnings Change). This comparison is being made for each of the three funding streams of Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker.

The chart below provides information on total expenditures in each funding stream as well as the number of participants. From this information, an Average Cost per Participant is calculated. The Average Cost per Participant is then compared to the Average Earnings Change in 12 Months to calculate a cost effectiveness ratio. The Average Earnings Change in 12 Months is a calculation of the average increase in Unemployment Insurance (UI) reported wages for the 4th and 5th quarters after exit over those reported for the 2nd and 3rd quarters prior to registration. The wage record information represents all data that was available for participants who exited from the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

Program	Expenditures	Number Participants Served	Avg. Cost/ Participant	Avg. 12 mos. Earnings Change	C-E Ratio
Adult	\$2,212,021	983	\$2,250	\$3,783	1:1.68
Youth	\$2,901,968	1067	\$2,720	\$4,859	1:1.79
Dislocated Worker	\$3,083,639	1780	\$1,732	\$1,819 **	1:1.05

** Since the national goal for Wage Replacement for Dislocated Workers is 90%, the Earnings Change for Dislocated Workers was calculated based on 90% of pre-program earnings.

Wage record data was available for 62% of Adults exiting the program. For each \$1.00 of WIA Adult resources spent there was an increase of \$1.68 in participant earnings 12 months after the completion of services. For Youth, 47% had wage record data, which showed that each \$1.00 of WIA Youth resources resulted in an increase of \$1.79 in participant earnings. For the 74% of Dislocated Workers wage records obtained, each \$1.00 of WIA Dislocated Worker resources spent resulted in an increase of \$1.05 in participant earnings 12 months after the completion of services. For the dislocated worker population, maintaining wage levels is an acceptable outcome since these participants are working prior to enrollment and a primary program goal is re-employment at comparable wages.

This method provides a point-in-time comparison and does not involve cumulative increased earnings, potential reductions in public assistance payments and/or benefits, or increased federal and state tax revenues from personal income and sales tax. Therefore, the overall cost effectiveness of the programs can be assumed to be considerably higher than this point-in-time, conservative measurement.

V. Program Results

A. Adult Program

The Adult program provides employment and training assistance to adults (age 18 and older) to increase their employment, earnings, occupational skill attainment, and job retention. Three levels of service are available to adults: core services, intensive services, and training services. Adults must first receive core services before they can move on to intensive services, and must receive intensive services before they can move on to training services. Because Adult program funds are limited, priority in the provision of intensive and training services must be given to adults who are low-income or welfare recipients.

A Field Group was initiated during program year 2004 to discuss Adult and Dislocated Worker program issues. This group is to meet twice annually and has representation from all 16 of Iowa's workforce regions. Their purpose is to identify ways to improve services in their respective regions. This is accomplished through discussions about performance changes, best practices, use and design of forms, and problem resolution.

During Program Year 2004, the WIA Adult program served 983 participants at a cost of \$2,212,021 or \$2,250 per participant. Adult participants achieving employment after program participation earned an average of \$2,225 more per quarter than they earned prior to participation. All four of the performance measures for the adult program were achieved at the Department of Labor required performance levels.

B. Youth Program

The Iowa WIA Youth Program continues to grow and develop into a comprehensive youth development program. Across the state, workforce development approaches are becoming more integrated with a youth development framework in the provision of comprehensive services to WIA eligible youth. Many regions throughout the state are striving to engage more out-of-school youth in providing support and services that will lead the youth to gainful employment. It is important that youth are employed in a field that not only interests them, but one in which they have the potential to obtain the skills and abilities to be successful. Local partnership development has increased as resources become scarcer to provide services to youth with barriers to education and employment success.

During Program Year 2004, a total of 375 Older Youth (age 19 to 21) participated in the program. During Program Year 2003, a total of 693 Younger Youth (age 14 to 18) participated in the program. Total costs for the Youth program were \$2,901,968, or \$2,720 per participant. All Older Youth and Younger Youth performance standards were achieved at or above the level negotiated with DOL.

C. Dislocated Worker Program

1. Formula Dislocated Worker Funds

During Program Year 2004, the WIA Dislocated Worker Formula program served 1,780 participants at a cost of \$3,083,639, or a cost of \$1,732 per participant.. The participants who became employed after leaving the program were able to achieve at least 88.4% of their pre-program wage levels, therefore meeting the federal expectations for the program. The Dislocated Worker program achieved all four of the program performance measures at the Department of Labor required performance levels.

2. Rapid Response Program for Dislocated Workers

The Rapid Response program reacts as quickly as possible to announcements of mass layoffs or dislocations in Iowa. If a business that employs 100 or more individuals is closing or experiencing a permanent lay off of 50 or more individuals, the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act is in effect. The State Dislocated Worker Unit receives the WARN notice, which often triggers a Rapid Response. The Rapid Response coordinator contacts local Iowa Workforce Development and Workforce Investment Act providers, the business, and the local service providers to arrange a Rapid Response meeting. Information will be shared at this meeting about all of the available programs and determine a schedule to disseminate this information to the workers. The Rapid Response Coordinator has the responsibility of arranging this meeting and also serving as the facilitator.

During Program Year 2004, 22 WARN new notices impacting more than 1,572 workers were received by the State Dislocated Worker Unit. From these notices, the Dislocated Worker Unit identified those dislocations involving significant numbers of workers and conducted 18 Rapid Response meetings. The remaining 4 WARN events were addressed by

the local regions with locally sponsored Rapid Response meetings, or were amendments to previously issued WARN notices. In addition to Rapid Response, Employee Information meetings were conducted for every WARN event.

3. Early Intervention Grants

Early Intervention Grants are funded through the Governor's 15% Rapid Response funds. The grants are awarded to regions that experience a business closure or permanent reduction within a business resulting in the displacement of 30 or more employees. The regions use these funds over a 120-day calendar period to provide services such as recruitment, initial assessment, core services, staff-assisted core services, intensive services, and training to help the displaced workers transition back to employment.

The Grants are presently awarded to the WIA Region Contract provider at the rate of \$100 per displaced individual and range from a minimum of \$3,000 (30 employees) to a \$30,000 maximum (300 or more employees).

During Program Year 2004, Early Intervention Grants supported two programs that were transitioned in from the previous Program Year at a cost of \$17,600. These funds provided services to 176 participants. Seventeen additional Early Intervention Grants were awarded during Program Year 2004 totaling \$105,920 in regional funding and serving 1,043 participants.

4. Special Intervention Funds

In PY02 the Special Intervention Funds (SIF) program was created to assist regions with expenses associated with workers displaced because of foreign competition. It is similar in nature to Early Intervention Funds but provides a higher rate per individual (\$200 vs. \$100), lasts for six months (vs. 120 days), and is directed to specific target groups. The program continues to function and has proven to be very beneficial to both the participants and the contractor.

Special Intervention Funds (SIF) are used to assist those regions impacted by closings and permanent mass layoffs where a National Emergency Grant (NEG) would, initially, not be appropriate due to pending certification of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). If a region has expended or obligated its Dislocated Worker funds and a NEG, initially,

would not be appropriate, SIF may be requested to provide immediate assistance to eligible workers to initiate case management, provide assessment and career counseling, and develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). These funds are intended to fund staff, staff-related expenses, and assessment costs. The funds may also be used in conjunction with Early Intervention (E.I.) funds, which can be used to defray the costs of workshops. It should be noted that during Program Year 2004 that the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, started allowing Trade Dual Enrollment NEGs to be written to provide “wrap around services” to TAA-eligible participants. These “wrap around services” would include childcare, transportation allowances for non-TAA covered mileage, and other services not covered by TAA.

During Program Year 2004, the Special Intervention Funds program funded one Special Intervention Funds (SIF) grant that provided services to 281 participants at a cost of \$40,000. An additional SIF Grant was filed for and approved in Program Year 2004; however, it had a start date of July 1, 2005 (Program Year 2005) and will be included in next year’s report.

5. National Emergency Grants

National Emergency Grants (NEG) are awarded by the Department of Labor to the State of Iowa based upon applications submitted on behalf of dislocated workers from businesses that experience a closure or permanent reduction in staff. In January 2004 the Training and Employment Guidance Letter NO. 16-03 was issued, which established new guidelines for eligibility of National Emergency Grants.

Highlights of the changes include: displacement of 50 or more employees requires a minimum enrollment of 50 participants into a NEG; with limited exceptions there will be no “bundling” of companies; dislocations that occur more than 4 months prior to an application for a NEG will be denied, with few exceptions; an expenditure rate of 70% or more of formula dollar funds for dislocated workers based upon the previous program year will have to be proven in the application - for regions as well as the state; if the dislocation raised the unemployment rate by 1% or more over the previous six months a provision for community impact can be used to determine eligibility; and industry-wide layoffs from companies in the same industry, as determined by the three-digit code

level in the North American Industrial Classification System (NAIC), can be used to establish eligibility.

These new rules made it far more difficult for rural states like Iowa, which frequently have smaller employers closing or permanently laying off employees and who had previously “bundled” companies into a single NEG, to apply for and receive a National Emergency Grant.

Once a NEG application is approved, the state subcontracts the grant to the WIA regional service provider. The money from these grants is used in addition to Formula Dislocated Worker funds to provide recruitment, initial assessment, core services, staff-assisted services, intensive services, and training to assist the displaced workers in their return to the workforce. These funds have a “life span” maximum of three years.

Nine National Emergency Grants were transitioned into the Program Year 2004. These grants provided \$4,768,939 to assist up to 794 participants. During the course of the year, one additional NEG was awarded to provide services to 230 participants at a cost of \$527,835. This was a Trade Dual Enrollment NEG.

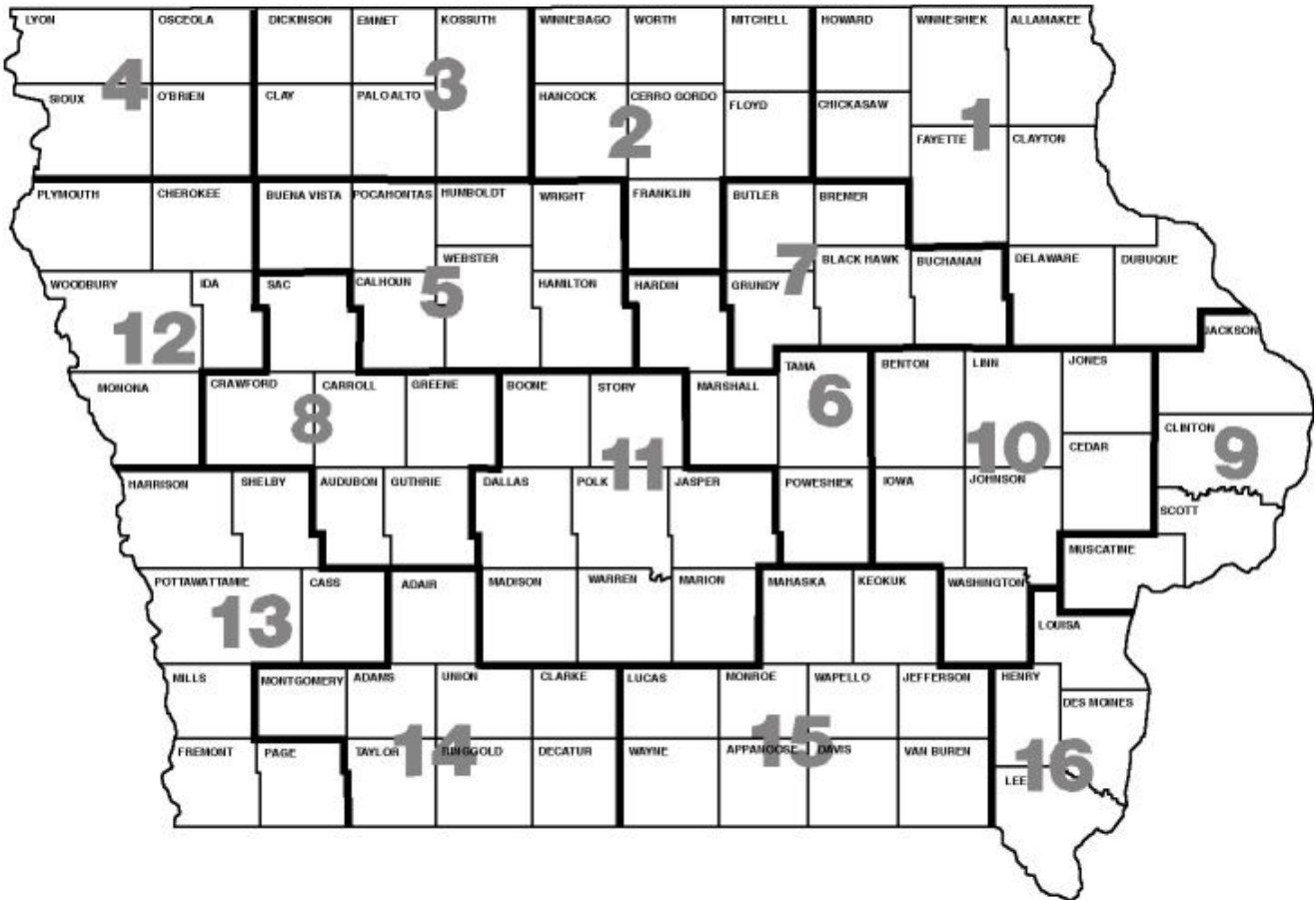
6. Special State Funded Projects

In Program Year 2004 two projects previously funded through the Governor’s 15% Rapid Response were carried in from the previous Program Year as Special State Funded Projects. As reported last year these two projects were either denied, or appeared they would be denied, for a National Emergency Grant (NEG) based on the rule changes previously noted above. These two grants provided \$504,554 to assist up to 212 participants. Both grants expired on June 30, 2005; however, one had significant funds remaining that allowed for conversion to provide services to a new dislocation of workers, again not meeting eligibility for a NEG, and to continue to function as a Special State Funded Project. This conversion will allow the use of \$162,912 to provide services to 50 participants during Program Year 2005.

Additionally, in PY04, there were two new projects funded through Rapid Response Funds for Special State Funded Projects that did not meet eligibility for a NEG under the new rule changes. These two grants provided \$128,185 to provide services to 68 participants during the first of two years of the grants. These two grants will expire on June 30, 2006.

VI. Regional Reports

Each of the WIA service providers provided information specific for their regions regarding the activities conducted there during PY 2004. The map below indicates the grouping of Iowa's counties into the 16 Regions.



Region 1 – Dubuque/Postville

Region 1 continues to stress excellence in programming and effective partnerships as the cornerstone to its philosophy for preparing the local workforce to meet the needs of area businesses, now, and in the future.

One result of this emphasis on program excellence and partnership was an incentive award of \$109,609 from the State of Iowa for meeting all federally mandated performance measures for the Workforce Investment Act programs. These measures require program operators to meet minimum standards in 17 areas including number of clients placed in jobs, wages of these jobs, and customer satisfaction. However, numbers alone do not tell everything. When an individual comes into the workforce center, partner staff assists them in the services they are seeking, and makes referrals to partner services that would be beneficial.

Substantiation of the region's emphasis on partnerships was demonstrated when the Dubuque One-Stop Workforce Center won the 2004 One-Stop of the Year award from the Iowa Chapter of International Association of Workforce Professionals (IAWP). The Dubuque Center was selected for its outstanding performance in the areas of: *Universal Access*, the extent to which all customers have access to core services; *Customer Choice*, providing exceptional flexibility in providing select services to meet the needs of specific customers); and *Service Integration*, for providing a seamless system of services. As the recipient of the Iowa award, the Dubuque Center went on to compete with other state workforce centers for national recognition, and finished second in the national balloting.

The effectiveness of seamless program partnering can be found in the success story of Carla, a seventeen year old who, after a car accident the night before her 2001 high school graduation, found herself re-learning how to eat, walk, talk and take care of herself. In the fall of 2001, Carla began by reading Dr. Seuss books. Six months later, encouraged to pursue further education, Carla's high school counselor steered her to the local community college at the Workforce Center in New Hampton. Carla received services from *all* one-stop partners, as well as Vocational Rehabilitation, while coordinating with her medical doctors. Graduating in May 2005 with an Administrative Assistant Associate of Art, she is working part time while searching for full time employment in her chosen field. Ultimately, it was Carla's attitude that led her from the mangled wreckage of her car to the cheerful young woman she is today.

Region 2 – Mason City

Regional economic development was the number one priority noted in the new Region 2 Customer Service Plan. Working with our partners, efforts will be targeted at new and expanding businesses that provide good wages and benefits, with Workforce Development Partnership services offered as part of the recruitment package. The new initiative of the Regional Accelerator Grant will provide current businesses with the opportunity for assistance where maintaining existing jobs and possible expansion will be a priority. An incubator project for new and emerging entrepreneurs is also on the horizon. The Workforce Development Partnership will continue to pursue ways to contribute to the regional economic development.

Few things are more important for the quality of life in North Iowa than progressive economic development. To improve our chances for attracting, keeping and growing businesses and industries in North Iowa, North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) recently formed a partnership with regional economic groups and Iowa Workforce Development to conduct two important regional studies: Laborshed and Cluster Analysis. These studies will help to identify the area's industry labor skills and employment numbers, which will allow businesses, economic developers, researchers and others to capitalize on development and recruitment efforts.

At the request of area manufacturers, NIACC is implementing a one-month evening training program designed to prepare workers for entry-level positions in manufacturing companies (originally developed by Eastern Iowa Community College). It is delivered four times per year, with the Workforce Center providing the on-site orientation and making referrals to the program.

North Iowa Area Community College now offers College 101 to persons over 23 who have not taken a NIACC class in the past 3 years. Participants receive one free 3-credit hour course upon completion of the two-hour workshop. WIA staff made a presentation at all seven sessions along with WIA participants who share their experiences as non-traditional students. This introduction to student life is heavily attended and has become a great recruiting tool for both NIACC and WIA.

The Department of Labor One-Stop and Business Service Team identified Region 2 as one of the top ten highly functioning One-Stop Centers for Region V. This selection was based on the review and rating of the information/feedback provided by the local responders. There were 106 One-Stops participating in the assessment from DOL's Region V ten-state region.

Region 3 – Spencer

Workforce Investment Act services continued to be provided in the five county area of Region 3, through an agreement between the Regional Workforce Investment Board and the Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission. The One-stop center located in Spencer is the primary source of services. Partners co-located in the center coordinate activities in order to provide the most effective services to clients. These partners include: the Department of Human Services; Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission's community and economic development and job training divisions; Iowa Workforce Development; and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Although the region is primarily known for its agriculture-based industries, in actuality, wholesale and retail trade is the area's largest private industry with 20.5% of the covered employment of 32,502 working in this sector. Since this sector traditionally has a lower wage structure than other employment sectors (such as manufacturing or professional services), the average weekly wage of \$491 is substantially lower than the state average of \$591, and even more so than the national average of \$726.

During PY 2004, the region saw some new job creation as well as some jobs lost, which maintained an average unemployment rate of around 4.6%. Major local economic development job creation projects totaled \$6,906,416, of which \$416,418 was local investment, and \$618,000 was state/federal investment in the form of economic development programs, all of which was leverage against \$5,875,000 of private investment.

Region 3 WIA services are designed to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to employment. This effort continued during PY 2004, by placing an emphasis on Institutional Skills Training and basic skills upgrading so that clients could earn a sustainable wage above the regional average and also qualify for any job creation that might take place.

Region 4 – Sheldon

The primary One-stop center in Region 4 is located in Sheldon. The Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission (NWIPDC) provides WIA and other training services. NWIPDC WIA/PROMISE JOBS staff are co-located with IWD and coordinate with all the other partner organizations that are also located in Sheldon.

This region is primarily known for its agriculture based industries, however, manufacturing is the area's largest private industry with 22.1% of the covered employment of 28,503 working in this sector. Although manufacturing traditionally has

a higher wage structure than other employment sectors (such as retail and food services), the average weekly wage for the region remains low at \$460, which is substantially lower than the state average of \$591, and even more so than the national average of \$726.

During PY 2004, Region 4 saw more new job creation than other areas of the state. The region's unemployment rate averaged 3.7%, which is far below the state average of 4.8% for the same period. Major local economic development job creation projects totaled \$41,790,540, of which, \$6,890,190 was local investment, and \$2,878,000 was state/federal investment in the form of economic development programs, all of which was leverage against \$32,022,350 of private investment.

NWIPDC and IWD serve as the primary WIA partners in Region 4. WIA services are designed and delivered with the primary goal to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to employment. Service delivery efforts include placing an emphasis on Institutional Skills Training and basic skills upgrading so that clients can earn a sustainable wage above the regional average and also qualify for any job creation that takes place.

Region 5 – Fort Dodge

Several areas in Region 5 have experienced an economic upswing in program year 2004. Most major manufacturing facilities have begun taking applications once again after a suspension in activity, adding employees or expanding their businesses. New ethanol plants are hiring employees in Webster and Wright Counties and will be on-line soon. Pocahontas County, arguable the most depressed area in the region, celebrated the arrival of Link-Snacks, Inc., a Wisconsin-based firm, which located in Laurens. The company, working closely with Iowa Workforce Development, is in the process of hiring approximately 140 employees and will begin production in Fall 2005.

WIA continues its efforts to create seamless delivery of services between partner agencies. The success of those efforts is evidenced in partnerships utilized to assist employees affected by two recent business closings. WIA and IWD staff worked closely to ease the stress of transition for employees, most of who were long-term employees and needed assistance with their new career preparation. TAA staff offered additional assistance to the employees whose jobs were displaced out-of-country.

Working in conjunction with staff of the North Central Correctional Facility in Fort Dodge, job-seeking classes were presented to prisoners as part of KEYS – a pre-release program. One-stop services, job-seeking skills and labor market information are shared with inmates nearing release.

WIA youth and adult programs have strengthened their partnership with Promise Jobs, allowing both programs to successfully target those clients most in need of assistance. Relationships include referrals, joint programming and shared clients. The partnerships have been an effective means of insuring the non-duplication of services and the maximization of resources leading to increased enrollments and clients experiencing success, reflecting the benefits of having mentors from both programs.

Youth program staff developed many new work experience sites for its participants. Youth program partnerships with other community agencies and programs such as Corrections, DAIS, and Domestic and Sexual Assault Outreach Center (DSAOC) have been instrumental in guiding youths through troubling situations.

Region 6 – Marshalltown

The Region 6 program year started off quite well. The unemployment rate was below the state average and the economy was looking positive. Unfortunately, six weeks into the year, a major meat packer in the area closed its doors displacing over 300 workers and leaving a devastating effect on two of the four counties in the region. This loss of jobs caused a downward spiral in the overall economy of the region from August 2004 through March 2005. The rising jobless rate during these months brought many job seekers into the region's three one-stop centers. The Center partners worked as a team and were able to deliver the services needed by the job seekers and the businesses. The region's unemployment rate then began to decline and by June the overall rate of 4.8% was just slightly above the state average of 4.6%.

A testimonial to the quality of services delivered by partners within the One-Stop system lies in the performance achievement by the WIA program operator, earning WIA incentive funds for the second straight year. Iowa Valley Employment and Training exceeded WIA negotiated performance levels in 16 of the 17 measures and earned the maximum dollar amount available. The funds enabled Region 6 to hire an additional WIA counselor to serve Poweshiek County, and assist with services to participants in Marshall County. The remaining funds were distributed to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs to enable more participants to be served.

The Region 6 Business Services Team was resurrected in PY04 as the result of additional positions added by partners within the One-Stop system. Under the direction of the One-Stop operator, the Iowa Workforce Development manager, the WIA/Promise Jobs job developer, the Iowa Workforce Development Navigator and several other partner groups, a cohesive partnership was developed to deliver products and services to businesses in the region in an organized, efficient and non-duplicative manner. To keep the partners and staff informed of significant business events and other interesting

happenings within the region, a weekly newsletter was created, authored by the region's Navigator. This has proven to be an excellent communication tool among all partners within the One-Stop Center system. Lastly, the completion of two community leadership programs by WIA staff cemented our bond to community and business leaders alike. These individuals gained outstanding leadership skills and developed long lasting relationships with the business and community leaders.

Region 7 – Waterloo

According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metro area experienced one of the highest rates of job growth during the last year. The Bureau reported that the Cedar Valley expanded its job base by 3.8 percent – the fifth highest percentage in the country - between September 2003 and 2004.

The Region also managed to sustain businesses currently operating in the five counties with only two Rapid Response and Employee Informational meetings conducted for company closings and 188 individuals during PY 04. In response to these lay-offs, Hawkeye Community College (HCC) Workforce Development expanded the number of Iowa Advantage workshops provided in-house and also extended offerings of the classes at the worksites.

HCC Workforce Development and the Iowa Workforce Development office in Waterloo continue to envision co-location in a single resource center with a single communication system, improved services and products for Region 7 customers, and other benefits that are associated with Workforce Partner co-location. Shrinking revenues and developing a true seamless Workforce Development System remain the driving forces behind these co-location efforts.

Region 8 – Carroll

The overall economic conditions for Region 8 have not changed significantly in the past several years. The six-county region remains driven by the agricultural and manufacturing sectors; wage levels are still below state and national averages; and the population continues to age, but has stabilized. Larger issues facing the region are the lack of an abundant workforce and the aging population.

During PY 2004, focus continued on active workforce partnerships, creating seamless referrals between partners' programs. The Partner's Group meets quarterly to share information on the workforce and programs. Over the last several years the group has visited Western Iowa Tech Community College in Denison, Des Moines Community College in Carroll, Proteus, Inc. in Fort Dodge, as well as the new Region 5 office

located on Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge. We have also been guests several times of Job Corps in Denison for a wonderful lunch served by their culinary arts department. Other partners include: Iowa Workforce Development, Region XII Council of Governments, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, West Central Development Corporation, Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of the Blind, Elderbridge Agency on Aging, and Experience Works.

Success in the coordination between partner programs, combined with the use of traditional services, is outlined in Yvette's WIA success story. Yvette was 19-years-old and unemployed when she walked into the Carroll Workforce Center. She wanted to get her G.E.D., but needed a job as her only income was from the nickel deposits she collected on discarded pop cans. Shortly after enrolling in WIA, Yvette confided that she was involved in an abusive relationship. At that point it was most important to get Yvette out of her present situation. Because of our wonderful partnership with the Denison Job Corps Center, it was selected as the best remedy to her dire circumstances. Yvette enrolled in an apprenticeship programs and soon earned her G.E.D. She successfully completed the WIA/Job Corps programs and currently resides in Omaha where she is a full-time student working on an accounting degree. Yvette also dreams of getting a Theology degree as she wants to become a minister.

Region 9 – Davenport

Eastern Iowa Job Training (EIJT) is a division of Eastern Iowa Community College, reporting through the economic development department. The workforce system benefits from community college involvement and resources such as economic development connections, use of facilities, grant/resource development offices, business and industry connections, data/focus group experts, employer advisory groups, financial aid, tutoring/special needs experts, small business development, quality improvement/staff development, and more.

WIA generally serves individuals who need more than self-service and reaches out to engage them and provide individualized assistance, including: youth dropouts/at-risk in school, low skill adults, and dislocated workers. Many earn academic/vocational credentials, which translates into individuals with higher skills, working, supporting families, and paying taxes.

In Region 9, WIA contributes substantial effort to developing and maintaining a multi-agency workforce partnership. At the local level, workforce partners provide services, capitalizing on the strengths of each. WIA, along with their Community College sponsor, is a key partner in serving employers and bringing additional grants and training resources to the region. Last year the Community College provided millions in

job training funds through state bonding incentives for new and expanding employers in the region. Together, the WIA program and Eastern Iowa Community College were nominated for the Department of Labor's "E3" awards. This is the heightened energy and results from combining economic development, education, and employment/training.

Unfortunately, plant closings and layoffs continue in Eastern Iowa, with over 700 layoffs at multiple plants/locations. EIJT calls workforce partners together for a rapid response, seeks funding if needed, and provides workforce services. BRAC (Base closing) recommendations may also result in a 1600 job loss at the Rock Island Arsenal over the next 2 to 4 years. In addition to serving WIA participants, each county has a goal to offer unique services to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. Examples include:

- Scott County staff worked with a corrections/community team to design employment/exit services for the new County jail with the goal of exiting individuals ready to job seek.
- In Scott County, SCORE Counselors to Americas Small Businesses spoke to summer youth participants about the option of going into business for oneself. Explaining that there can be quite a difference between working for hourly pay and having your own business - \$50 per hour as opposed to \$10 - really got participant's attention. Participants also learned about business plans and ways to obtain funding for small business.
- Clinton Youth staff participated in Youth for a Non-Violent summer through an information booth and demonstration of our new career tool - Touch and Inspire. Seventy-five youth signed-up for the Region 9 monthly newsletter mailing list.
- Muscatine developed a workshop for mothers who need more information on job seeking and careers. The three-hour workshop includes topics such as how to look for a job, interviewing tips, how to write a resume and how to dress for an interview.

Region 10 – Cedar Rapids

During PY2004, Region 10 continued its focus on active workforce partnership and strengthening the role and involvement of the RWIB and CEO boards. These boards visited two industrial sites and collaborated with technology corridor workforce and economic development initiatives. A strategic planning session was conducted with the

RWIB and CEO boards to determine workforce initiatives and projects that will be directed by the boards during PY05 in the areas of workforce skills, retention and growth of jobs, and youth connections to occupational interests.

Performance for the region was strong, with marked improvement from PY03. The region continues to excel in enrollments. Earnings change in both the adult and dislocated worker program continues to be a challenge due to the slow recovery of the economy. The region continued to experience mass lay-offs and plant closings. The Skills-to-Employment dislocated worker office worked closely with the closure of the General Mills Iowa City plant, successfully assisting in the placement in over 90 percent of the workforce to businesses in the region. This effort combined resources from Kirkwood Community College, Kirkwood Training Services, the WIA Dislocated Worker program, and the community.

Region 11 – Des Moines

Collaboration efforts continue with the State of Iowa, Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), Job Corps, Des Moines Public Schools, Experience Works, and other agencies. This has led to co-enrollments in regular programs and collaborations on grants. However, lack of funds for all programs continues to be a problem.

Enrollments in the Adult Program continue to increase and should improve further with recent changes to the Customer Service Plan, which include an increased emphasis on On-the-Job Training and Classroom Training. All WIA Adult performance outcomes were met for PY 2004.

The Youth Program had an exciting and productive year. The biggest procedural changes came with continued state training on performance outcomes and the reporting process. It was through this training that Case Managers really understood the whole concept of how to identify appropriate youth for the program, and how and when to exit them to get proper credit. Staff celebrated numerous successes with participants this year as they got diplomas, GEDs, certifications and jobs. All WIA youth performance outcomes were met for PY 2004 except for Older Youth Employment Retention.

Program Year 2004 ended with significant layoffs taking place. Several businesses have closed, downsized, or relocated. Informational meetings and assistance were provided to many of the workers. Lack of funding continued to be a problem for training and support services in PY 04. Staff Assisted Core services were refined to better address the needs of the clients. Dislocated Workers met all PY 04 performance measures.

Project Employment is a demonstration project made possible by the Department of Labor that brings greater focus to serving people with disabilities or with less than a high school education through the Workforce Development One-Stop System. The project targets individuals 18 and over who want to be employed, works part-time but want full-time employment, or is underemployed and desire job advancement. Employment strategies are customized for the participant, and training is provided for soft skills and GED curriculum as well as basic skills and computer instruction. The Senator Tom Harkin Learning Center accommodates up to 12 students with appropriate assistive technologies including software and products.

Region 12 – Sioux City

Region 12 has had three significant plant closings during Program Year 2004. Early Interventions funds were successfully accessed for workers affected by these closings. Several individuals identified with the Early Intervention funds have been enrolled in training. The National Emergency Grant for Schaeff Inc/Sioux Tools ended in May 2005. The NEG exceeded the planned enrollments and had a 90% placement rate.

The WIA Youth program has been facing a challenge to recruit out-of-school youth, as the number of persons enrolled is relatively low. Meetings with probation and parole officers in the region have occurred to place special emphasis on service to young adult offenders between 18 and 21 who lack direction and employment. The goal is to provide service for a special population at a critical point in their lives. A new partnership with the Probation and Parole office and Goodwill Industries will provide a program to assist individuals in completing their GED, obtain a Work Readiness credential, and assist with job placement and follow-up once employed. A partnership has also been established with Community Action of Siouxland to recruit 18-21 year old youth from their database of young persons served in the last year.

Based upon *Project Serve*, a successful demonstration project, Woodbury County Social Services is contracting with Job Training Partners to identify and serve persons on welfare who have hidden disabilities. The county will provide special funding for ten PROMISE JOBS participants who can benefit from a short paid Work Experience. PROMISE JOBS will screen participants to identify persons who are likely to benefit. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation will certify the need for services and arrange with a local service provider to facilitate the Work Experience placement with a job coach. The work site will agree to hire the disabled person after about 140 hours of a paid Work Experience. The service provider will also provide post placement services once the person is hired. The county will provide the funds for the paid Work Experience, job coach and follow-up services.

Region 13 – Council Bluffs

At the end of June 2005, the region closed out its National Emergency Grant (NEG) for laid off American Growers Insurance Company workers. This was the first large closing and subsequent request for NEG funding in the region in over seven years. Final statistics show that the region served 10% more than the planned number of participants, achieved an entered employment rate of 85.71%, and expended over 97% of the dollars available in the grant. From the region's perspective, the grant more than achieved the intended results.

In PY 2004 the region identified a need to assist youth with disabilities to transition from school into adult life. WIA staff partnered with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Area 13 Education Agency, Iowa School for the Deaf, Iowa Western Community College, League of Human Dignity, Pottawattamie County Community Services, and Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce to apply for a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Service's Improving Transition Outcomes Grant. The successful application and grant funding in the amount of \$100,925 has allowed the region to establish partnerships between businesses and four area school districts. Businesses have been recruited to collaborate with the schools to offer employment-focused activities for students with disabilities, including electronic mentoring, job shadowing, career education/exploration activities, and work experience. Because of the project's success, the region has applied for second year funding.

The region also expanded its ability to reach out to the disabled population by accepting a deaf Navigator position offered by the state, thereby enhancing the service offerings of the existing Disability Navigator Program. Since the Iowa School for the Deaf is located in the region, this position better equipped the Workforce Center to accommodate the needs of deaf job seekers. The Workforce Center is now positioned to better identify resources that can support area businesses in the employment of people who are deaf.

Region 14 – Creston

Region 14 has completed a successful program year serving area individuals in the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs. We were fortunate to have only one facility closing in PY04 affecting 15 employees. The Workforce Investment Board has been very supportive in allowing us to serve individuals who have lost their high wage jobs and come to us for assistance in finding their way back to employment. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and the Workforce Investment Act partnered to provide three separate job fairs in our region during PY 2004. Over 100 area employers participated in these events providing 400 job seekers a chance to check out job

opportunities and information about the businesses that were represented. Pre-fair workshops, designed to prepare the job seekers to make the most of this opportunity by interviewing successfully, completing applications correctly, and preparing a resume showcasing skills to meet the employer's needs, were provided through an IWD/WIA partnership. The workshops included information on first impressions and job fair do's and don'ts.

As a result of active outreach to the eight rural counties in the region, 41 adults were served. As always, our county Neighborhood Centers actively strive to keep us in touch with the area's unemployed who are seeking re-employment assistance. Southwestern Community College (SWCC) continues to be an active partner in providing training services to participants who need new skills to move them towards self-sufficiency and they host an annual employment fair that is open to WIA participants as well as the public. SWCC also provides a great service by hosting an Exploration Day allowing participants interested in training to learn about programs offered at the college, get a campus tour and meet instructors. Area businesses have been gracious in their support of Pre-employment Training services by participating in employer panels where our participants get first hand information about the hiring process.

Region 14 also served 21 Youth in PY 2004. Many of the area schools throughout the eight rural counties actively work to link us with youth who can benefit from WIA services. Additionally, Vocational Rehabilitation continues to provide a good partnership for referrals to Region 14's youth program.

Region 15 – Ottumwa

Region 15 is comprised of Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello and Wayne Counties. The available labor force is 72,770 individuals, which is an increase of 410 from a year ago; year ago, and the unemployment rate has dropped to 4.8% compared to last year's rate of 5.4%.

In Wapello County, the labor force has grown 11.4% over six years compared to the state's labor force growth of 2.8% in the same time period. Much of this growth is attributed to the expansion of Cargill Meats. With the labor force growth such as this comes many community challenges, such as housing, transportation, childcare, legal services for immigrant families, interpretive services, plus building cultural competencies.

One event conducted in Region 15 to help build cultural competency and help to explore diversity was "Diversity: Many Faces; One Vision". This conference featured a

keynote speaker, breakout sessions, entertainment; conference materials and lunch, all provided free of charge. In addition to Indian Hills Workforce Development, other conference co-sponsors included: Indian Hills Community College, Iowa Workforce Development, the Abilities Fund, the State of Iowa, Humanities Iowa, the New Iowan Center, the Iowa Department of Economic Development, and Multi-Cultural Ministries. Collaboration and cooperation with all agencies played a big part in the success of this very unique Diversity Conference. The conference planning committee is working to expand sponsorships to include area employers, Fellowship of Churches, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Corrections, John Deere Foundation, Crisis Center, Navigator Program and Rural Health Partnership, just to mention a few.

Topics covered at the conference included age, disability, diversity, education, media, workforce and panel discussions. Participants were challenged to examine their own viewpoints. Speakers came from: Seneca Area Agency on Aging; Iowa Taskforce on the Elderly; Iowa Commission on Persons with Disabilities; Entrepreneurs with Disabilities; Bureau of Latin Affairs; Iowa Teacher of the Year; University of Iowa Department of Diversity Resources; Iowa Diversity Committee; Humanities Iowa; Hispanic Newspaper in Mt. Pleasant; KTVO-TV; National Public Radio; Department of Natural Resources; University of Northern Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration; the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and many others.

Region 16 - Burlington

Southeast Iowa continues to experience the highest unemployment rates in Iowa. Averaging 3,630 people unemployed every month. The unemployment rate in the region was over 6.5% for the year. WIA, working with partners, uses an array of resources to meet the challenges presented by the number of plant closures and business staff reductions. Programs and services used to assist people seeking employment include:

- ✓ 500+ workshops were held in PY04.
- ✓ Led efforts for the region's fifth annual regional job fair, with over 40 businesses participating.
- ✓ The Workforce Center staff established *Helping Hands*, a project to assist customers with needs not covered by any programs. Fundraisers were held to initiate the program.
- ✓ WIA staff completed implementation of a National Emergency Grant, which assisted individuals from three companies that closed or experienced major reductions in force.

- ✓ Continued dual enrollment of individuals entitled to Trade Adjustment Act benefits in the WIA program to provide local case management and to expand services available to individuals, enhancing chances for success.
- ✓ Over 500 Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers were served during PY04.

The Youth program maintains a focus on out-of-school youth, often serving youth offenders. The *Academy for Career Exploration and Success*, the program developed to assist our youth, helps prepare youth to enter the workforce. A federal Government Accountability Office report cites the region's need to purchase items such as bicycles for youth offenders as a reason WIA dollars need to cover more than classroom training.

Recognizing the need to expand services to businesses, the RWIB and CEO boards initiated the use of focus groups to get business input for programs. Study results are part of the Customer Service Plan and will be used to help direct the region's efforts in serving business customers.

During PY04, nine WIA staff achieved the Certified Workforce Development Professional credential, and two additional staff earned the Offender Workforce Development Specialist credential.