

# Iowa Workforce NEWS

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## IWD Apprenticeship Report Shows Higher Wages

The Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Employment and Wage Report issued today by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) shows that job training via apprenticeships is yielding impressive results. IWD analysis shows that occupation by occupation, workers trained in apprenticeship programs earn wages in most cases significantly higher than workers in the same occupation who only earn a high school diploma or use other types of one and two year training programs.

“This report shows what we’ve always known – apprenticeships work,” said Teresa Wahlert, director of IWD. “Not only do they provide training to address the middle skills gap, they also provide individuals with on-the-job training to a new career.”

Governor Branstad has proposed tripling the amount of state funding allocated for apprenticeships under the existing 260F worker training program. Support for apprenticeships is increased from \$1 million annually to \$3 million by providing additional funds and reforming and streamlining administration of the program.

“Providing workers with the kind of training they need to be successful in the jobs Iowa employers are creating is essential to keep

our economy growing,” commented Debi Durham, director of IEDA. “Apprenticeship programs are a proven form of training that leads to higher wages for workers and specially trained employees for Iowa’s employers. Apprenticeships are an important tool in our efforts to raise the standard of living for Iowans.”

The proposed expansion of the 260F job training program comes after broad-based collaboration among IWD, IEDA, Iowa’s employers and building trades. Nationwide, there are registered apprenticeships for more than 1,000 occupations, with programs impacting 250,000 employers and approximately 450,000 apprentices. In Iowa in FY13, there were 662 registered apprenticeship programs, and over 8,100 registered apprentices.

With company expansion and relocation projects underway around the state, demand for a skilled workforce continues to increase. Apprenticeships provide a viable approach to effectively train workers to meet the demand, while also addressing the middle skills jobs gap through focused and streamlined training efforts.

## Iowa Unemployment Rate at 4.4 Percent

Iowa’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly to 4.4 percent in February from 4.3 percent in January, as the state’s labor force climbed to its highest level in five years. The statewide jobless rate stood at 4.9 percent one year ago. Meanwhile, the U.S. unemployment rate for February ticked up to 6.7 percent from the previous month’s 6.6 percent.

“Iowa experienced an unusually large increase in the state’s labor force in February, said Teresa Wahlert, director of Iowa Workforce Development. “This solid rise in the number of job seekers is a sign of growing confidence in the statewide economy.”

The statewide estimate of unemployed persons rose to 74,400 in February from 71,600 in January, but was down 6,700 from the year ago level of 81,100.

The total number of working Iowans advanced to 1,610,100 in February from 1,606,200 in January. Total employment is 23,900 higher than one year ago, and the highest on record since June 2008.

# Message from the Director

Iowa Workforce Development recently completed a US Department of Labor routine monitoring visit regarding the Unemployment Appeals process. The monitoring staff was very complimentary of the department's improvements and process changes.



**Teresa Wahlert**  
IWD Director

"US DOL completed a 3 day visit last week and will be releasing a report that does not contain any negative findings, a first in a number of years," stated Iowa Workforce Development Director Teresa Wahlert. "The department expects to be released from the corrective action plan that was in place from the previous administration."

One of the primary measurements for the UI Appeals program is a 30 day timeliness data point. Since August 2013, Iowa has moved from the 47<sup>th</sup> lowest in the country

to 12<sup>th</sup> place. This along with other process improvements within the unit has led to a better experience for our customers.

"I'm extremely proud of the administrative law judges and staff who have worked diligently and brought forth a number of innovative ideas to improve our process," indicated Wahlert.

Since August, the Appeals unit has implemented new training opportunities, introduced technologies that have decreased processing times and clarified rules that create a better understanding of the process for the customers. All of the improvements and increases in Iowa's standing nationally help to ensure the state receives continued federal funds to administer the Unemployment Insurance program.



## 2014 Career & Resource Expo Held April 3

IowaWORKS Central Iowa, in partnership with DMAACC, will be hosting the 2014 Career and Resource Expo on Thursday, April 3 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Free to the public, the Expo will be held at the FFA Enrichment Center on the DMAACC Ankeny Campus.

More than 75 employers will be on hand to meet with job seekers and discuss current job openings. In addition to the job fair, workshops will be held throughout the day with topics including:

- Apprenticeship
- Maximizing your Job Search with Social Media
- Overcoming "Red Flags" in your Job Search
- Career-Seeking Approaches for Seasoned Professionals

The 2014 Career and Resource Expo is a great opportunity to meet and visit with prospective employers, so dress properly, bring a copy of your resume, a positive attitude and ready to meet a future employer.



## Storm Lake ECI to Host Unemployment Insurance Claims Workshop

The Storm Lake Employers' Council of Iowa will host a workshop on Unemployment Insurance claims on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Area Education Agency in Storm Lake. Administrative Law Judge James Timberland will be the featured speaker.

Judge Timberland became an Administrative Law Judge in the Unemployment Insurance Appeal Bureau at Iowa Workforce Development in 2004 and has heard and decided 8,000 to 9,000

unemployment insurance appeals.

The session will cover the following topics:

- Steps to adjudicating an unemployment insurance claim
- Preparing for the appeal hearing
- Appeal letter
- Written statements
- Definition of misconduct and more

The workshop is offered at no charge but space is limited. Registration is requested by Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> to [kristi@stormlakeunited.com](mailto:kristi@stormlakeunited.com) or call 712-732-3780.

## Get Social with IWD and Skilled Iowa



### Facebook:

Iowa Workforce Development  
Skilled Iowa

### Twitter:

[@iowaworkforce](https://twitter.com/iowaworkforce)

[@skillediowa](https://twitter.com/skillediowa)

### YouTube:

Iowa Workforce Development



# City of Onawa and Monona County Achieve Skilled Iowa Community Designation

*Program seen as benefit to workers, businesses, economic development efforts*

Iowa Workforce Development Director, Teresa Wahlert, announced today that the City of Onawa is the first city to achieve the Skilled Iowa Community status by meeting all of the metrics for both business commitment and workforce certification. Additionally, Monona County as a whole is



recognized for their achievement in meeting the metrics on a county level.

“Through Skilled Iowa, we are preparing workers of all ages and skill levels to fill open positions,” said Iowa Workforce

Development Director Teresa Wahlert. “Participation at the community level from local workers,

businesses, elected officials and educational institutions will benefit the state as a whole.”

The announcement takes place at the Onawa Public Library on Tuesday.



candidates and find the right worker for their needs, as well as reduce turnover and training costs.

Skilled Iowa aims to have 10 percent of businesses in Skilled Iowa Communities support the program by hiring certified workers and recommending the NCRC

The Skilled Iowa Initiative helps develop the workforce by encouraging workers to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Through an assessment, the NCRC measures basic workplace skills. Skilled Iowa encourages employers throughout the state to recognize

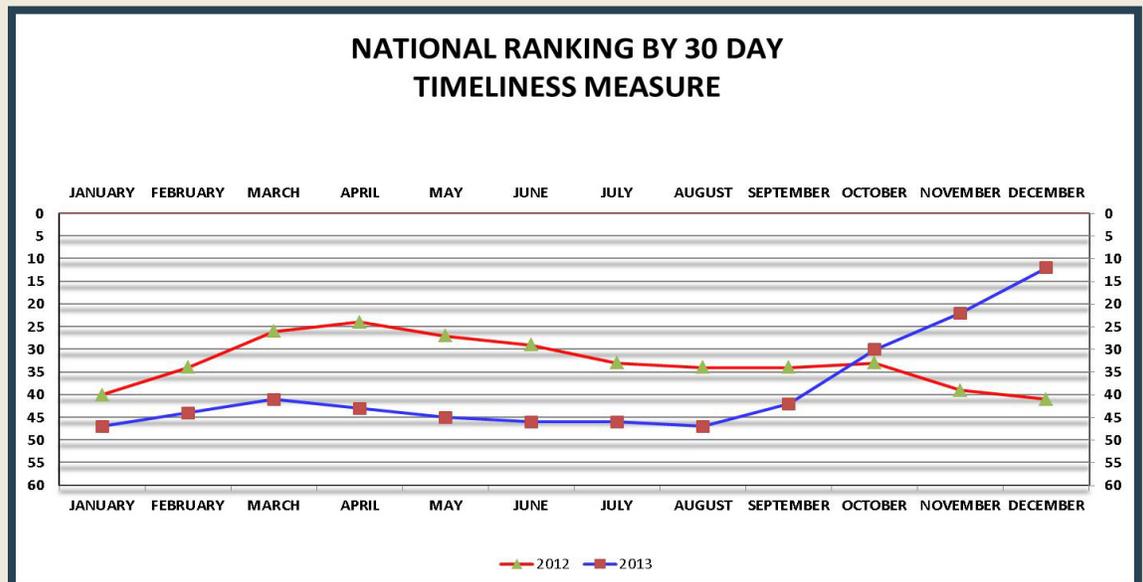
the certificate and recommend it to job applicants. The benefit for employers is that it can help them evaluate job

to job applicants, accounting for 20 percent of total employment in the area. In those communities, Skilled Iowa sets a goal of 5 percent of the current workforce becoming certified through the NCRC and 20 percent of the “transitioning” workforce -- those receiving unemployment insurance or other specified IWD services – becoming certified.

## IWD’s Unemployment Appeals Section Dramatically Increases Performance

*US Department of Labor Monitors Extremely Pleased*

A chart recently released from the U.S. Department of Labor shows the new Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau national timeliness measure rank. Moving from #47 to #12 nationally can be attributed to the dedication of the Appeals Bureau staff who revamped their workflow processes and who continues to work hard to improve their timeliness.



# Scents and Sensitivity

submitted by IWD Health and Safety Committee

Did you realize that there are a number of people who can become ill simply by running an errand in a store, going to work or attending a gathering? Simple tasks that most of us take for granted can cause mild to severe medical reactions to others. People with sensitivities, both great and small, need to find a way to communicate their health issues while still respecting the rights of those around them. What some consider as an ambient aroma, others perceive as a relentless chemical assault on their respiratory system.

If people have severe allergies, they have to find a way to interact with others without causing an undue hardship or infringing on others' individual rights. Sending a laundry list of banned beauty products is unreasonable. You need to find another way to resolve the issue. Scent is a personal preference. So if you're going to ask someone to change their behavior it has to be done in a respectful manner. Scent conflicts should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Most people know what scents they are sensitive to and to what degree. Possible solutions may be as simple as moving an employee's desk to a new location, maintaining good indoor air quality, providing an air purification system, allowing for fresh air breaks or modifying the employee's work schedule.

For the average person, short term exposure to these environmentally, everyday products and odors may only seem bothersome on occasion. But, many have found that once a person becomes sensitized to a substance, their intolerance is rarely reversible.

Symptoms commonly include difficulty breathing, sleeping and/or concentrating, memory loss, headaches or migraines,

nausea, abdominal pain, chronic fatigue, aching joints and muscles, and irritated eyes, ears, nose, throat and skin, hives, contact dermatitis and dizziness.

Perfumes and fragrances can permeate the air and waft through the area, as well as linger in the hallway, lobby and bathrooms. Scented products are volatile substances and get into the air quickly. Once in the air, containment to a defined space is impossible. Further, scented products are designed to diffuse into the air and linger. People should maintain an arm's-length policy when using scented products. If you can smell a perfume, body wash or deodorant from more than an arm's-length away, then that person is wearing too much. Noticeable odors from any source, including foods, perfumes, shampoos, nail polishes and removers, colognes, various cosmetics, shaving lotions, deodorants, incenses, scented candles, reed diffusers, potpourris, plug in or spray air fresheners, smoke-laden clothing, etc. are distracting and may trigger allergic reactions or create health problems for sensitive individuals.

Some fragrance sensitivities may qualify as an ADA disability and others may not. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity and there is a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairment. Some fragrance sensitivities may qualify for some sort of a Reasonable Accommodation in the

workplace. If you have sensitivity to a particular fragrance or odor in your



workplace, contact your direct supervisor to discuss the issue and possible solutions. To accommodate fragrance sensitive individuals, all employees should BE DISCOURAGED FROM: wearing or applying excessive amounts of perfume, cologne, scented lotion or body wash in the workplace; using hairspray, air freshener or any other scented product in the workplace and eating or keeping any fragrant food at their desk. Manners are about putting other people's needs – and nose – ahead of your own.

#### References:

Journal of Management and Marketing Research: Fragrance in the Workplace: what managers need to know, by Christy De Vader, Loyola University of Maryland

Cubicle Etiquette: Sights, Sounds and Smells, by Mindy Lockard

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Fragrance Sensitivity, by Elisabeth Simpson, M.S.

WebMD: Fragrance Allergies: A Sensory Assault, by Colette Bouchez

Accommodating Fragrance Sensitivity in The Workplace, by Alexander Hamilton Institute

HR and Employment News: Do you have a workplace odor and fragrance policy? Here's sample language, November 28, 2012

The Noe Valley Voice, October 1997: Think Twice About Wearing a Fragrance to Work, by Maire Farrington

# Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers. Here are a few noteworthy comments we've received:

- Vicki Lopez recently sent in an email thanking Lea Hubbard for helping her husband file for unemployment insurance benefits. "She was very helpful in getting the problems resolved. It is great to know that there are people who care about the people they are serving. It was really a pleasure working with Lea."
- Deborah Babb with Iowa OSHA sent a note to thank Ronee Slagel and Debra Harmon

for the use of the Waterloo office. "Debra had everything ready for us when we arrived, checked on us several times and had a waiting area for people we were interviewing. Thank you for the professionalism you displayed."

- Deborah Babb also sent a note to thank Neysa Hartzler in the Waterloo office for her assistance with interpreting. "Neysa was in a very new and uncomfortable situation interpreting for a serious accident. Neysa was compassionate but very professional. She made the employee feel comfortable

enough to talk to us. Neysa is a true jewel and is a great addition to IWD's staff."

- Nicole Rethman thanked the IowaWORKS North Central Iowa staff in Fort Dodge. Rethman had the opportunity to attend a workshop in January. "It was very informative and the IowaWORKS staff were wonderful presenters."
- Marcia Fink received an email from Kathy Pinkerton for her excellent customer service. "I really appreciate how quickly you responded and how helpful you were in the process. I just want to let you know who incredibly happy I am with the job you did."

Sue Fackler sent Lisa Kolontar an email to thank her for her customer service. "How great to have such a quick and positive response and super quick answer. That's 'old-fashioned customer service' at its best."

- Charles Avery complimented the IowaWORKS Eastern Iowa staff in Davenport. "Everyone was extremely professional when I arrived and I felt right at home."
- Donna Burkett assisted Denny Lawson, WCCA HR Director, by locating information from 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2013. "This is exactly what I need for my report. Thank you for all you do for Iowa."

If you would like to send us your noteworthy comment, send it to: [kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov) or 515-281-5407.



## Employee News

### January - April Anniversaries

#### 5 Years

Rhonda Scott  
Theodore Johnson  
Joann Hickok  
Lindsay Anderson  
Genea Sporer  
Leslie Schmalzried  
Mark Halloway  
Jill Malmer

#### 10 Years

Roxana Devine  
Don Bailey  
Kristina Hughes  
Melisa Hite  
Lisa Castillo

#### 15 Years

Siri Reed  
Randy Hendrickson  
Siri Reed

#### Patricia Underwood

Shelli Tobis  
Andrew Coxe

#### 20 Years

Philip Dirksen  
Larry Rincon  
John Hessa  
Bradford Edaburn  
Lisa Farley  
Craig Immerfall  
Cheryl Darell

#### 25 Years

Lori Adams  
Alan Muntz  
Randall Stephenson  
Khamthong Khamma  
Anne Jackson  
Angela Dickey  
Melana Hammond

#### 30 Years

Robert Berndt  
Kristi Judkins

#### 35 Years

Marcia Fink  
Quentin Kooiker  
Teresa Stalker

#### 40 Years

Shirley Winebrenner

### Transfers/ Recalls

Joshua Stull  
Joseph Walsh  
Tina Woods

### Retirements

Barbara Ambrosius  
Carolyn Baumberger  
Richard Hyde  
Gladys Runner  
Lynne Brokaw  
Vicky Sande  
Thomas Schieffer  
Marvin Whitlock  
David Rasey

### New Hires

Neysa Hartzler

## Iowa Workforce NEWS

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For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

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Governor

**Teresa Wahlert**  
Director

**Kerry Koonce**  
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