

Iowa Workforce Monthly

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Youth for Iowa: Summer Jobs

Iowa's youth will have a new opportunity this summer thanks to the new program, Youth for Iowa. This exciting new program will offer summer employment options to youth ages 14-24 across Iowa. From office work to community assistance, youth will be offered a wide-range of employment options.

"This program is a great asset for Iowa's youth," said Elisabeth Buck, director of Iowa Workforce Development. "We will be able to help those teens and families who are in need of extra income in today's economy."

Eligibility for this program may require the following:

1. Be age 14-24
2. Be a citizen of the U.S., a lawfully admitted permanent

resident alien, a lawfully admitted refugee or parolee or an individual authorized by the Attorney General to work in the United States.

3. Meet one or more of the following: a school dropout, homeless, runaway or foster child, pregnant or parenting, an offender, or be deficient in basic literacy skills (have English reading, writing or computing skills at or below the eighth grade level).
4. Be registered for the selective service (if applicable).

This new program will run from May 1st through September 30th. More information regarding enrollment and employment options will be available soon. Visit www.YouthforIowa.org in mid-April.

Statewide Unemployment Data

Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up to 4.9 percent in February from 4.8 in January. The statewide jobless rate was reported at 3.9 percent one year ago. In stark contrast, the U.S. unemployment rate for February increased by one-half of a percentage point to 8.1 percent, the highest level since 1983. The U.S. unemployment rate stood at 4.8 percent one year ago.

"Although Iowa remains in a better position than most states to weather the current recession,

job losses have deepened over the past six months," said Elisabeth Buck, director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Iowa employers continue to trim their payrolls in response to declining sales and profits."

The total number of working Iowans trended downward to 1,587,100 in February from 1,592,100 in January. Total employment in the state was reported at 1,609,100 one year ago, which was 22,000 higher than the current figure.

One On One



with Elisabeth Buck, IWD Director

Well, it seems like Spring has finally come to Iowa. I hope you get a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather we have had lately. Let's hope it's here to stay!

It's been a busy year so far at Iowa Workforce Development. This month, we decided to include more information on the services we provide. From career assessment tools to Rapid

Response, our services are needed now more than ever. On the next page, you can read about Rapid Response and how it helps our citizens. Below, learn about the career assessment tools that our local Workforce Centers offer.

If you haven't already, read about our upcoming summer youth employment program – Youth for Iowa. We are very excited about the

opportunities that we'll be able to provide to our youth this summer. We hope this will be beneficial not only for the youth, but employers who participate. If you would like more information, please visit www.YouthforIowa.org in mid-April.

Variety of Assessment Testing available at local Iowa Workforce Centers

Local Iowa Workforce centers offer a variety of assessment testing, available for both job seekers and employers alike. While every office varies on the types of assessments available, below is a sample of a few basic options.

OPAC®

OPAC is a testing program for a variety of different fields including general office duties, financial, legal and medical. Assessment categories include Word, Excel, bank reconciliation, petty cash, keyboarding, transcription, 10-key or data entry.

WorkKeys®

The WorkKeys assessment program is used by employers to ensure qualified workers are hired. Centered around a thorough profiling of actual workplace jobs, WorkKeys will help determine the level of skill needed to perform a job. Once completed, potential applicants can be assessed in categories like Applied Mathematics and Technology, Business Writing, Listening, Observation, Reading for Information and Teamwork. Applicant scores are shared with the employer in each category allowing them to interview and hire a more

productive and skilled workforce.

TapDance®

TapDance is an assessment program that is a series of tests to assess applicant and employee skill levels in typing, math, grammar, spelling, data entry, numeric keypad use, word processing, and spreadsheet creation.

All of these programs and more are offered free at Iowa Workforce centers. Contact your center today for more information.

Veteran Success Story

IWD Associate Kristy Zeransky received a thank you letter from a gentleman who succeeded in attaining gainful employment due to the teamwork exhibited at IWD. This gentleman had come in to create a resume. While helping him, Zeransky discovered that he was a veteran and suggested that he attend the Veteran's Job Fair. The gentleman took our advice and attended the fair. The next week, he came to IWD to work on his resume again and to meet with a veteran representative. During this time he was referred to a job running heavy equipment with a company in Osceola. This position was exactly what he had been looking for, and the position paid well – \$25.00 – \$35.00 per hour. After all this, the gentleman got the job, and took the time to send us a very nice thank you card expressing his gratitude for all we did for him.

IWD/KCCI Job Fair Success Story

Regional Manager Steve McCann met Bruce Charlet at the IWD/KCCI job fair. McCann looked at Charlet's resume and referred him to Veteran's Representative Ted Hall. Hall found the job order that fit Charlet's qualification and referred him for the position. Charlet was given interview preparation from veteran and co-owner of Iowa Career Connections, Al Fering. This combination of services given to Charlet helped him secure a new position with Nationwide Insurance.

Rapid Response System: What is it and how does it help?

Iowa Workforce Development offers many services for employers as well as individuals. One service that assists everyone is called Rapid Response. It is put in place when a representative for a company calls Iowa Workforce Development to let them know a lay off will be happening in their business. This starts a two-step process: Rapid Response meeting and employee information meetings.

The Rapid Response meeting organizes local sources and agencies in order to coordinate the services and information given to employees. A core group of organizations/agencies is used in every region to make sure employees are informed of all services

available to them. The core group generally consists of:

- Iowa Workforce Development including the local Veteran Representative to make sure veterans will be assisted
- Department of Human Services
- Local Dislocated Worker Unit
- Community Action Agency
- Community Based Mental Health Provider
- Local Credit Counseling Agency
- Local Community College
- Company management
- Labor Union representation if a union company or other representative of labor
- Local economic development
- Small Business Development Center
- Other local service providers as appropriate
- Legislators (optional)

- Mayor (optional)
- Clergy (optional)

At the Rapid Response meeting, all invitees briefly describe the services they can offer to the workers as they face dislocation, and the company will be asked to provide information on their situation and employee separation issues. This meeting can and often does relieve the initial anxiety being experienced by both the company and employees.

Once this meeting has taken place, employee information meetings will be scheduled. At these meetings, employees will be given information about all the services available to them.

Rosenboom Machine & Tool, recently went through the

Rapid Response system. RMT has plants in Sheldon and Spirit Lake. Both locations experienced reductions in labor force.

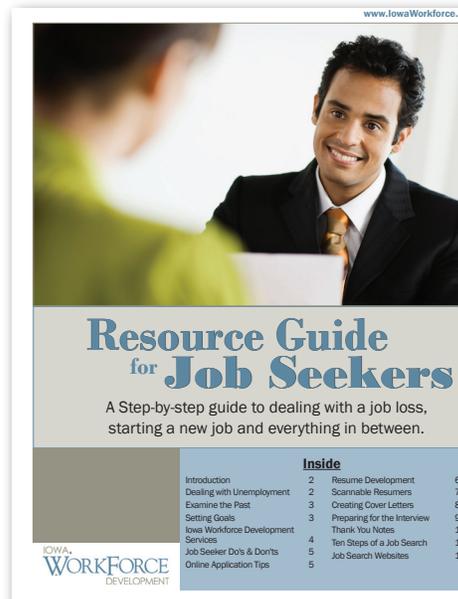
Human Resources Manager, Jack Schreurs, worked with IWD staff to move through the process. He recently wrote a thank you note to IWD for the professionals working at all levels because "their services were and continue to be invaluable."

"This kind of action is nothing less than painful," said Schreurs. "My assessment is that it went as well as something like this can go and I have absolutely no doubt that this would not be true without the assistance of IWD staff members."

Resource Guide for Job Seekers: A Step-by-Step guide to dealing with job loss

It shouldn't come as a surprise that looking for work can be a lot of work, especially if you haven't been in the job market for a while, or if you are changing careers. If you need help putting together a résumé, aren't sure how to answer some questions on a job application, or are scared to death at the prospect of a job interview, IWD has just the thing for you! The Resource Guide for Job Seekers has some hints to make the job

search less frightening and more productive. Before you begin a new job search, take some time to think through your situation. A job loss situation can affect every area of your life. How you handle this major life event can affect you for years to come.



Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

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

- Jim Cue called to compliment Sandy Magsaman, Workforce Advisor in the Oelwein office.

"She has been very helpful and is the friendliest person I've talked to in the job service office." Cue said he wanted to make sure others knew about her excellent customer service.

- Shannon Simmons sent a thank you to the **Des Moines Workforce Center**. She said that she was off work for almost a year and had many reasons to visit the local center. "Each time no matter what the issue, I was treated very graciously

and never encountered anything but true professionals ready and more than willing to assist." Simmons added in a time of stress for so many, the employees at IWD made life much easier with their knowledge.

- Tracy Bielecki, Constituent Liaison for IWD, sent a note of thanks to **Jill Borgeson**, Executive Officer, for all her hard work and dedication. "Whenever I have a constituent concern from the Governor's or a Senator's office regarding unemployment, she is always ready to help."

- Elisabeth Buck, director of Iowa Workforce Development, would like to thank all the **IWD staff** for their hard work over the last few months. "The need for our services has risen dramatically over the last six months. I commend all of our staff for their dedication to helping all Iowans during this time."

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

Iowa Workforce Monthly

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For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

Iowa Workforce Monthly is intended to help keep Iowa employers, job seekers and IWD employees informed about critical employment issues affecting Iowa. For more information, contact Kathryn Hommer via e-mail at kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov or 515-281-5407.

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Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.



Employee News

Anniversaries

10 Years

Randy Hendrickson
Margaret Mesecher
Siri Reed

20 Years

Tena Gaskill
Anne Jackson
Khamthong Khamma

25 Years

Robert Berndt
Kristi Judkins
Charlotte Miller
Andrea Muntz

30-35 Years

David Fraehlich
Teresa Stalker
Marilyn Weeks

Martha Brown

Shashi Patel
James Gillaspay
Mark Heiny

Luann Suma

Clair Cramer
35+ Years
John Williams

Promotions/ Transfers

Joe Mullen
Kathleen Norris
Stacey Brown
Amber Connolly
Carie O'Brien
Mary Traywick
Greg Cahail
Kelly Kramer
Brenda Tart

New Hires

Jason Allen
Theodore Johnson
Rhonda Scott