

# State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report 2021



Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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## Special points of interest:

- Meet our New Administrative Staff
- Meet the State Rehabilitation Council
- Meet our Job Candidates
- Learn about Vocational Programs
- Learn about IVRS Funding

## SRC Chair Scott Turczynski



Scott has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Construction Engineering from ISU, and is still in the construction business. He said, "I don't let my spinal cord injury from an accident in 2010 slow me down."

Scott is active in many organizations: Des Moines Construction Council, Master Builders of Iowa (MBI), Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry (AWCI), Ceilings and Interior Systems Construction Association (CISCA), and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). Scott serves as a Trustee on the Painters' Health and Welfare Fund, the Carpenters' Pension Fund, and the Carpenters' Apprenticeship Fund.

He brings this experience and background to the State Rehab Council and the Central Iowa Workforce Development Board.

With this very full schedule, Scott is good at integrating fun at work and on boards.

"I take my work seriously, but not myself," he said. "At HRTLND, we have a very fun atmosphere in our office. We get down to business when we need to, yet always with fun in mind."



## SRC Members 2021

### Linda Rouse

Monroe County  
Workforce Development

### Richard Phelan

Clinton County  
Business and Industry

### Kirsten Lane

Ankeny  
Department of Education Rep

### James Luttrell

Mills County  
Advocacy

### Demarcus Thomas

Pottawattamie County  
Advocacy

### Morgan Johnson

Marion County  
VR Counselor

### Susan Seehase

Chickasaw County  
Business, Labor and Industry

### Daryn Richardson

Pottawattamie County  
Community Rehabilitation Program

### Lisa Schneider

Dallas County  
Client Assistance Program

## SRC Committee Heads



### Mari Reynolds

Polk County  
Parent Training and  
Information Center

**Mari Reynolds** chairs the Outreach Committee. This is her second appointment to the SRC. She is the Transition Iowa Project Coordinator and Data Coordinator for ASK Resource Center. She worked with families as a Family Support Coordinator at ASK for 15 years.



### Sarah Martinez

Johnson County  
Disability Advocacy/SILC  
Rep.

**Sarah Martinez** chairs the VR Service Delivery Committee. She has served as the Executive Director of Access 2 Independence of the Eastern Iowa Corridor, Inc. in Iowa City, Iowa since 2019. Prior to her work in Independent Living, she was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Mari Reynolds has partnered with hundreds of families of children with disabilities to help them to understand their rights through individual assistance, training and development of informational resources. Recently, Mari has worked on the re-development of the Transition Iowa website to support transition planning for youth with disabilities who are moving from high school to adulthood.

[www.transitioniowa.org](http://www.transitioniowa.org).



## Meet IVRS Administrator Daniel Tallon

Welcome Daniel Tallon!

Daniel Tallon was selected as IVRS Administrator and began his duties October 25.

Daniel has a Master's Degree in Public Administration and comes from a strong Human Resource background. Most recently, he was the Market Director of Human Resources for MercyOne Central Iowa having come into that position from being the Director of Human Resources at UnityPoint Health in Dubuque.

These experiences provided opportunities for him to interact with and actively engage in VR service delivery. He is a veteran of the US Army and was an Operations Supervisor with the Iowa Army National Guard. He also has innovative experience as the Chief of Workforce Development with the Veterans Administration Long Beach, California Health Care System. In that position, he championed the use of VA VR throughout the hospital. This involved educating leaders on opportunities to place individuals with disabilities receiving VR services into competitive employment opportunities.

Daniel has been a member of the Iowa Workforce Development Board and is familiar with the goals and objectives for a Future Ready Iowa Workforce that is inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

### From the IVRS Administrator

There are many new things going on at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and that begins with our staff. There have been several retirements at our agency and so you will see many new faces in new roles at IVRS.

As we move forward in 2022, we have several initiatives that we are plan to address: the Juvenile Reentry System to employment working with the Department of Corrections, Autism Speaks conferences and representing the vocational rehabilitation community through the Harkin Institute Initiatives to name a few . . .

We are fortunate to have many partners working alongside us across the state to enhance employment opportunities for Iowans with Disabilities.

The State Rehabilitation Council is an example of our partnership efforts, and we work together to address the needs of our job candidates. The council brings together many experts, advocates and stakeholders to assist us in providing employment services and business staffing and support services. These people volunteer their time and service to assure Iowa provides the highest degree of quality through our program.

I look forward to working with you to achieve our state's employment and economic goals.

Sincerely,

Daniel Tallon

IVRS Administrator



## Meet the IVRS Staff Leading the Way Forward

One of the biggest changes at IVRS is the change in leadership due to the recent retirements of former Administrator David Mitchell and former Bureau Chief Steven Faulkner. IVRS was fortunate to have the experience and leadership of two long-time staff members to lead the agency forward in their new roles.



**Richard Clark**

Richard Clark was promoted to Bureau Chief effective July 15, 2021.

Clark has a Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology from Seton Hall University and a Certified Public Manager Certification from Drake University. He has been with IVRS for 16 years and has served as a Rehabilitation Counselor, Area Office Supervisor and Resource Manager.



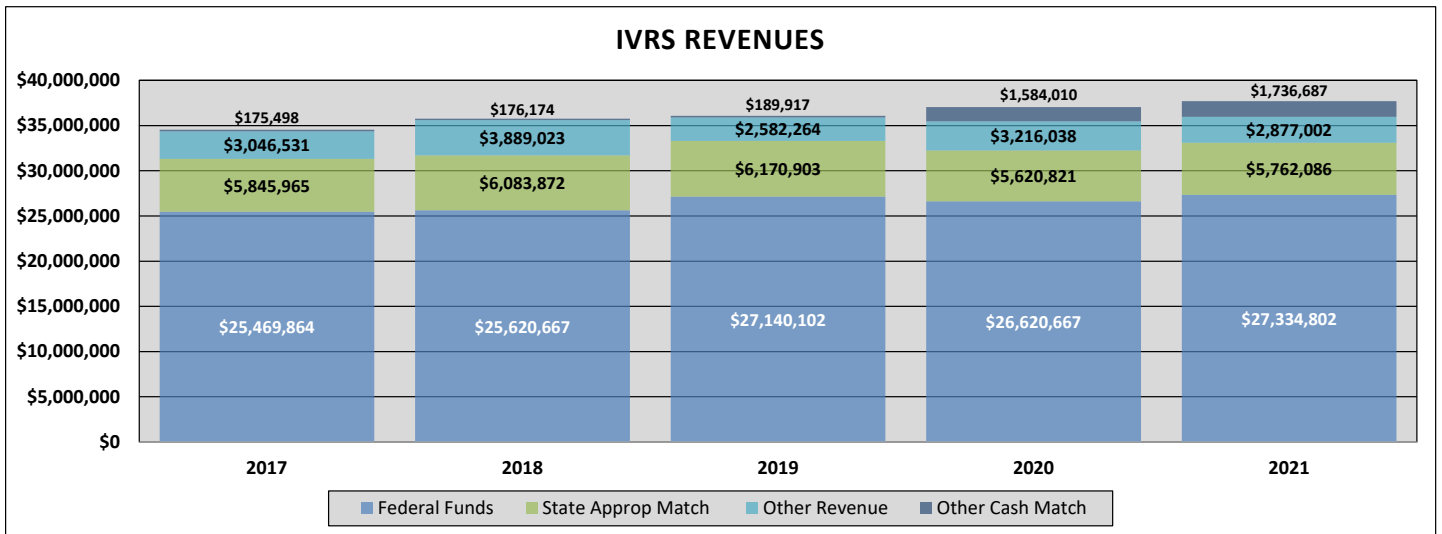
**Eric Evans**  
**IVRS Assistant Bureau Chief**

Eric Evans was promoted to Assistant Bureau Chief in October.

Evans has been with IVRS more than 18 years, serving as a Counselor and Supervisor across the state. Prior to joining IVRS, Eric worked with the Department of Human Services for 4 years.

Born and raised in Iowa, Evans earned his B.S. at the University of North Carolina, Asheville and played basketball during his time there. He has a Master's Degree from Drake University in Rehabilitation Counseling. His studies included an eight-month internship at the Roosevelt Institute in Warm Springs, GA and the research project he undertook there through Drake University was published.

## IVRS Revenues



**IVRS brings in almost four (\$4) federal dollars for every state dollar invested into the program.**

**The Federal Government matches the amount the state invests into Vocational Rehabilitation.**

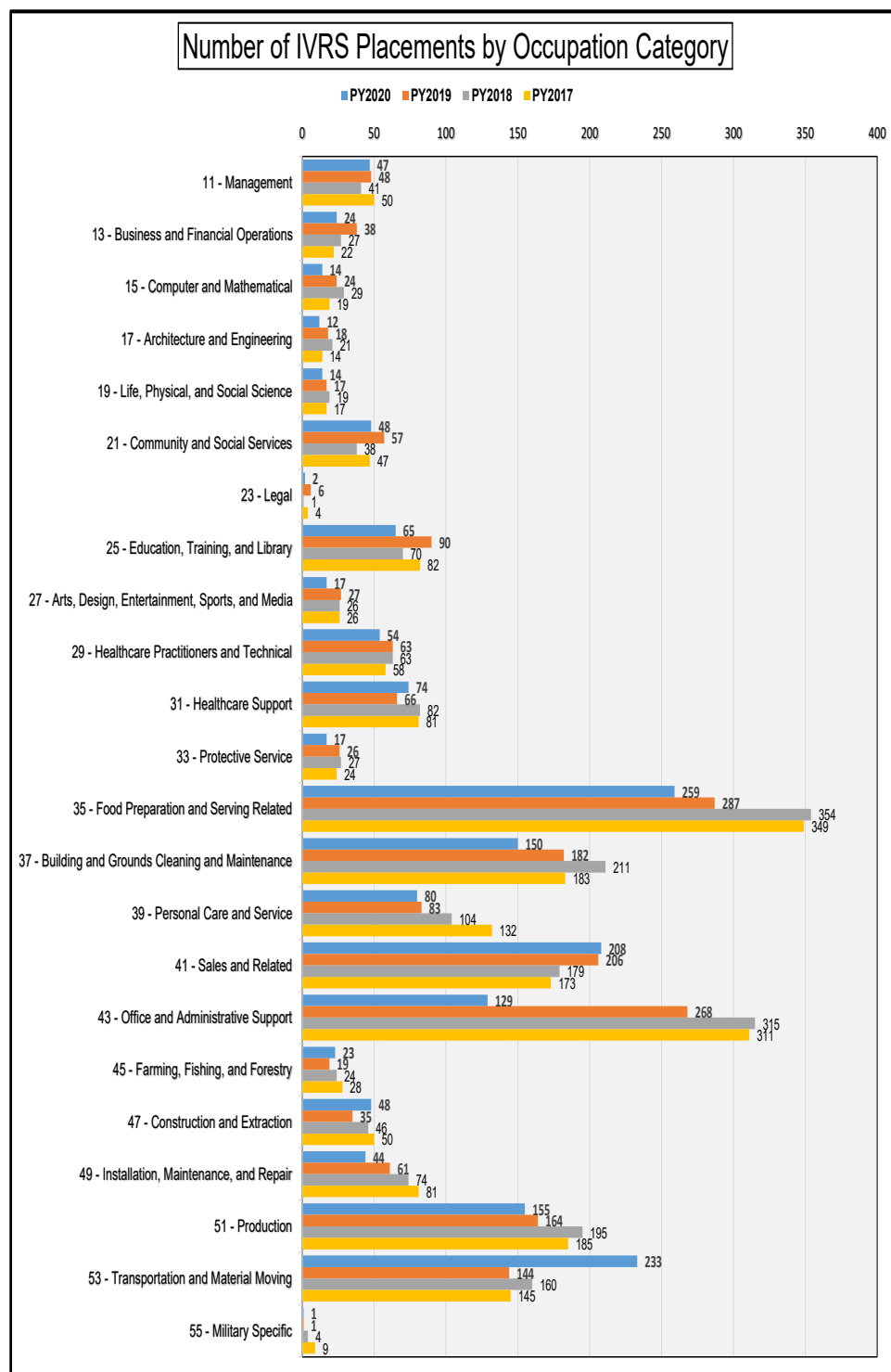
**Amount Expended on Post-Secondary Education = \$ 4.5 Million**

## IVRS Expenditures

Authorizations
Top 5 Authorized Services
<b>FFY2021</b>
Four-Year College or University Training
Rehabilitation Technology
Supported Employment
Job Search
Junior or Community College Training
<b>FFY2020</b>
Four-Year College or University Training
Rehabilitation Technology
Junior or Community College Training
Supported Employment
Graduate College or University Training
<b>FFY2019</b>
Four-Year College or University Training
Rehabilitation Technology
Junior or Community College Training
Supported Employment
Occupational or Vocational Training

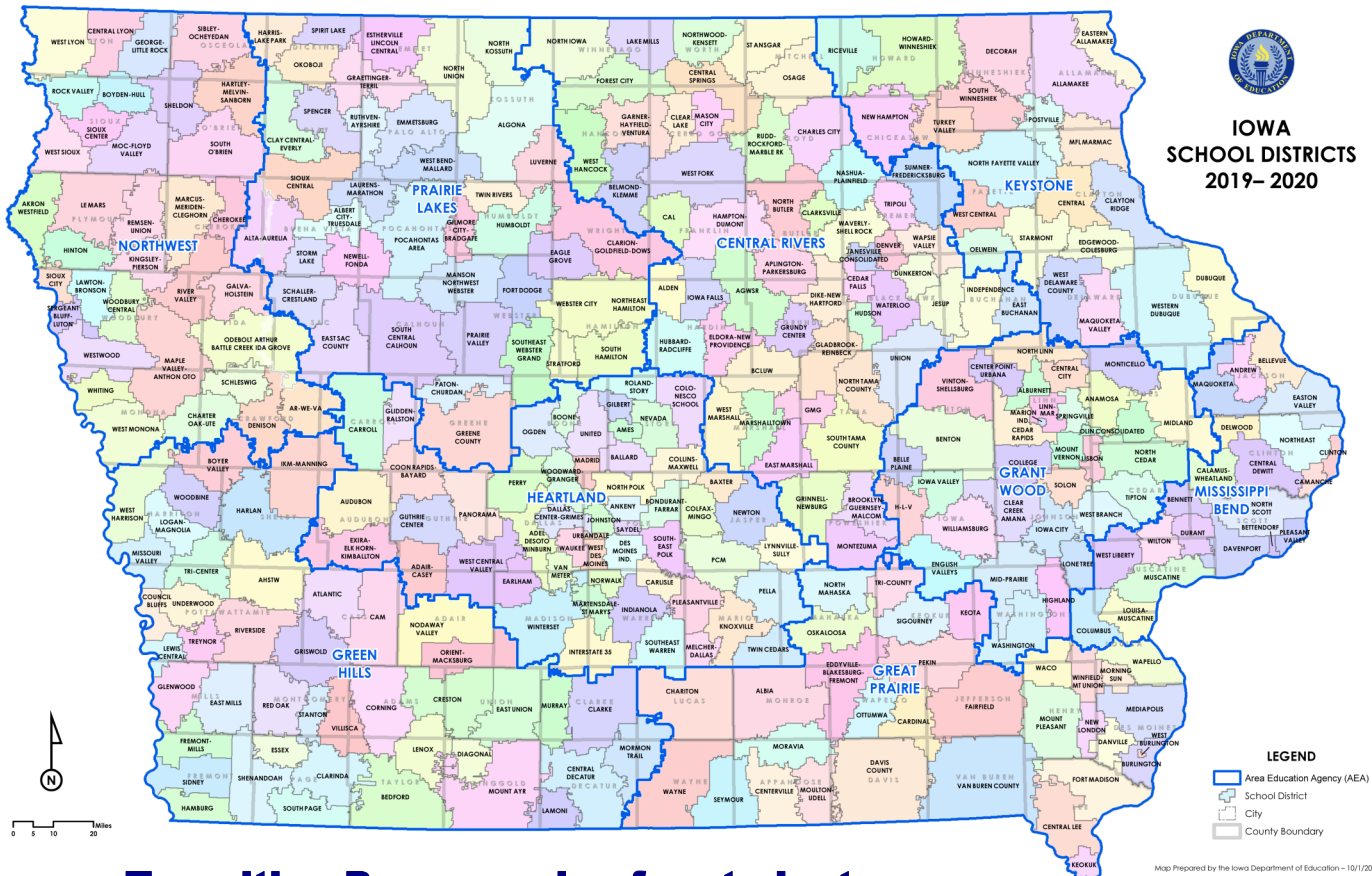
**1,718**  
Iowans with  
disabilities were  
successfully  
employed  
after receiving  
IVRS Services in  
Program Year  
2021

**The Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
program in  
Iowa is funded  
with 78.7%  
federal funds in  
the amount of  
\$29,204,702.00 for  
FFY2021.  
No non-  
governmental  
funds are used to  
finance this  
program.**



**A total of 443 VR job candidates were receiving public support for living expenses (SSI, SSDI, TANF, General Assistance) and after receiving services, they are now employed and of those, 65 now support themselves, a savings of \$512,936 annually for the state.**

## IVRS has staff assigned to every school district in Iowa - from Diagonal to Des Moines



## Summer Transition Programming for students



**In Iowa, 67.7 percent of IVRS referrals come from Iowa School Districts**

IVRS summer programming provides high school students with opportunities for job exploration, job tours and career day visits to discuss the skills and training needed for positions.

**12,921 Iowa Transition Students were served by IVRS during Program Year 2020**

Our 13 area offices provide a variety of job exploration activities to students across the state. Top left: Students in Ottumwa made knot blankets for an animal shelter. Right: The Sioux City Area Office had visits from police and fire personnel to talk about careers in the public service sector.





# Students Training for Iowa's Workforce through Transition Services



## Meet Faith

Faith graduated from Fort Madison High School in May of 2021.

Faith started her journey at Hy-Vee Kitchen during Trimester 3 through a work experience that Transition Alliance Program (TAP) helped her obtain.

She said, "I participated in the summer program, customer service academy and volunteered with Mrs. Harter and Mrs. Garr. Also, Mrs. Harter helped me with my application and practiced interviewing with me. I had a team of people to help support me and get me where I am. I really like talking with the customers and I have nice co-workers. Deb is really nice and helps me out."



Gayle Graber with Hy-Vee said, "Our business and the students both benefit from this partnership. Students get experience and some preparation for life after school and we get to gain good employees."

Faith works in the dining area cleaning and sanitizing the tables and chairs. When she has spare time she does the dishes and wraps silverware to get ready for the next wave of customers.

Graber said Heather Harter did a good job matching Faith to her position at Hy-Vee. "She came with Faith for the first week or so of her work experience to help her get comfortable with the job. She also checked in to make sure things were going well along the way."

Graber says other businesses can benefit from hiring applicants through IVRS.

"Take a chance! This program has been successful in matching people with our store. It is important for the student not to be seen for their disability, but for the value they bring to our company as an employee. We are very happy that Faith has joined our team."

Program Year	Potentially Eligible Students Served	Transition Students Served	Total Transition Students Served	Students Employed	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2020	6,413	6,508	12,921	749	31	\$12.98



<b>Top 10 Employers of IVRS Job Candidates</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Hy-Vee</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Walmart</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Self Employed</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>McDonald's</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Goodwill Industries</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Casey's General Store</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Fareway</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Pizza Ranch</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>UnityPoint Health</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Mercy One Health Care Company</b>	<b>15</b>

**IVRS wants to thank Hy-Vee for being the #1 employer of IVRS Job Candidates for the last 10 years!**

### **Meet Aron**

Aron received IVRS services to assist him with obtaining competitive integrated community employment. He worked with former IVRS Counselor Pam Reid to explore his interests, skills, and abilities with career exploration through career index plus, job readiness skills, and benefits planning.

Aron participated in the Hope Haven RISE program in partnership with Hy-Vee and was offered a job opportunity as a Courtesy Clerk at Hy-Vee following his training. Through his training and employment Aron was able to minimize disability barriers from his learning disability, anxiety disorder, and ADHD and maximize his skills to be successful.

Aron states he loves his job at Hy-Vee and his co-workers. Ashley Sanderson, Service Manager said Aron is a great worker and is on top of everything. "He completes everything he is expected to do and has great customer service. Aron is always smiling and happy. Thank you to the team who supported Aron through his journey!"





## **Iowa Self-Employment helps to bring Salon Noir to Downtown Des Moines**

Counselor Kensie Channon's path has some parallels to Dwayne Ferguson's—they have served on similar committees and both are active in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Their paths converged to create the recently debuted Salon Noir at the Des Lux Hotel in Des Moines.

Dwayne has worked in the cosmetology field for many years and was ready to take the next step to business ownership. He saw the opportunity at Des Lux Hotel to provide salon services for the many special events that take place. Dwayne emphasizes an inclusive business model for a diverse customer base.

The salon takes on the Art Deco style of the hotel and Dwayne has many additional pieces that he chose specifically for his business. He was closely involved in the design process, from the lighting on the ceiling to the floor tile.

Dwayne uses assistive technology that allows him to communicate with both hearing and Deaf salon clients and Kensie consulted to provide the best fit for his business needs. Able Up provided a business loan.

Both Kensie and Dwayne are enthusiastic about the business and encourage others to partner with IVRS for the tools and expertise to achieve successful self-employment

Salon Noir is located at 800 Locust Street in Des Moines inside the Des Lux Hotel. Call for an appointment at 515-441-6531 or email [Dwayne@SalonNoirDMS.com](mailto:Dwayne@SalonNoirDMS.com).

Visit the Salon Noir website at [www.SalonNoirDSM.com](http://www.SalonNoirDSM.com).

**There were 49 IVRS  
Self -Employment Closures in  
program year 2020**

# IVRS Partnering with Business

Thank you to **Jason Rubel** and his team in Dubuque for this partnership!

“Partnering with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is a crucial networking resource for employers to successfully connect with skilled, dedicated, capable employees that may not necessarily have the abilities to locate or capture a position independently. IVRS compliments any Human Resources department by working with the employer to achieve a win-win success story for individuals with disabilities and the disability-inclusive businesses that engage IVRS’s services including; identifying candidate skill strengths, onboarding assistance for qualified candidates, employee retention consultation, and ongoing support and check-ins with both employer and employee. IVRS works through some of the hurdles that might get in the way of the work and gives their participants a chance to shine while equipping employers with an empowered, supported employee that can be a valued member of their team.”



**DUBUQUE  
SCREW PRODUCTS**  
WORLD-CLASS PRECISION MACHINING

*Sarah Till, Human Resources Manager*

**AMES AREA OFFICE** — Several meetings have occurred with the management team at ISU dining hall with exciting opportunities for our job candidates. These positions will be a minimum of \$15 an hour and offer IPERS. Our staff are busy preparing training for their management team and getting ready to begin onboarding. After our staff have on-boarded they will connect our job candidates to this amazing opportunity! Be ready to see ISU jump up into one of our top business partnerships in the next year! Special thanks to **Melissa Keen** for her commitment to this business!



**Tony Paul, Plant Manager Lee Container**  
**Rob Petit, Production Superintendent Lee Container**  
**Jaime Claywell Herrera, IVRS Counselor**  
**Kelli Hugo IVRS Supervisor**  
**Claire Cleaver, HR Manager**  
**Robert Varnedoe, President of Lee Container**  
**Josh Cobbs, Senior Manager of Employment Initiatives, Autism Speaks**

The Ottumwa Area Office has formed a business partnership with Autism Speaks and Lee Container in Centerville led by Counselor Jaime Claywell-Herrera. Several Job Candidates have been given opportunities to tour, interview, and join the Lee Container team! In fact, one of the managers at Lee recently presented to the career class at Centerville High School regarding local career opportunities with Lee!

The team was highlighted in a film project for Autism Speaks and this was presented at the Capitol on December 1.





# Our Community Rehabilitation Partners



*Daryn Richardson is a SRC member and a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) who can provide a valuable perspective on the opportunities and challenges of our CRPs across the state.*

I am a person with a disability, who is employed by a CRP, a parent of a person with a disability, and an advocate for disability employment. Please understand that when I talk about disability employment, I'm talking about the unique challenges of finding employment for those with intellectual and behavioral disabilities. I have been in my current position at Vodec for 22 years. Vodec has provided services in western Iowa for the last 55 years. Like many CRPs, we have a strong background in vocational services—specifically community-based employment. Employment of people with disabilities as described herein is a service we are proud to provide.

It is important to express how difficult it is to provide community employment services, a service that leads to meaningful employment, in the current labor market. Many community rehab providers are severely understaffed; some as much as 50 percent. The reasons for this are varied, nevertheless, the impact is not. Currently, because of the number of job openings, there is an unprecedented opportunity for people with disabilities to be employed, and because of the number of job openings, community rehab providers are struggling to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities.

In speaking with other CRPs, we know that many have a waiting list. This means that people with disabilities who desire to work and have the ability to work with some supports are unable to work regardless of ability or desire. As a result, many businesses which would benefit from hiring job seekers with disabilities remain needlessly understaffed.

What is needed is a way for CRPs to be competitive with every other business. We need a way to bring our direct support staff wages up to the level which will eventually result in more staff available to help job seekers with disabilities find the understaffed businesses that need them. Many CRPs and partner organizations have been working with policymakers to increase funding. For example, recently the state of Iowa provided a 3.5% increase for providers. Forward-thinking investments like this example will improve the staffing situation of the community rehab providers. It's a great start, but more work needs to be done. More increases in funding may be required. As a result, our advocating must continue.

As we know from recent news reports the pandemic is far from over. With that knowledge, we know that the labor market may not improve for some time. As CRPs, we are dependent on legislatures at the federal and state level for our funding. We are not the type of business that can adjust our hours or pricing to alleviate staff shortages.

For more information see the website <https://vodec.org/>

Daryn D Richardson  
Services Development Director  
Vodec

### Supported Employment Closures by Program Year

	SES Successful Closures	SES Non-Successful Closures	SES Rehab Rate	Total Successful Closures	Total Non-Successful Closures	Rehab Rate Total	SES Avg Hourly Wage	SES Avg Hours Worked Per Week	Agency Avg Hourly Wage	Agency Avg Hours Worked Per Week
PY2020	342	156	68.67%	1718	1602	51.75%	\$ 9.91	17	\$ 13.43	29
PY2019	352	183	65.79%	1930	2087	48.05%	\$ 9.48	15	\$ 13.43	29
PY2018	306	200	60.47%	2110	2263	48.25%	\$ 9.41	15	\$ 12.45	28

The participants in the Discovery Project are individuals who had not experienced successful work in the community and have met the most significantly disabled category which means they have barriers to employment in a minimum of at least three functional capacity areas out of seven. They have not had prior transferable skills to know what jobs to pursue and how to be gainfully employed in competitive integrated community employment.

### Case Study

Jonathan worked subminimum wage jobs all his life in another state. He moved to Iowa in the summer of 2019 with no community work experience and was unsure of interest in services. Jonathan needed to begin services in Iowa so Rehabilitation Counselor Helen Billmeyer in the IVRS Dubuque Area Office connected him with Integrated Health Home and a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP).

Jonathan completed the Discovery pilot project and was very successful. There were concerns over Social Security and wage (he is making well over minimum wage) and he and his guardian were referred to VR's Benefits Planner, Suzanne Paulson to address his wage and benefits management.

Transportation was a concern and because the times that Jonathan works are early and can't utilize city bus schedules or routes. This has been addressed with Jonathan and his guardian paying out of pocket. His counselor and CRP met with Jonathan's employer to complete a Work Activity Report to help him offset the out-of-pocket transportation cost.

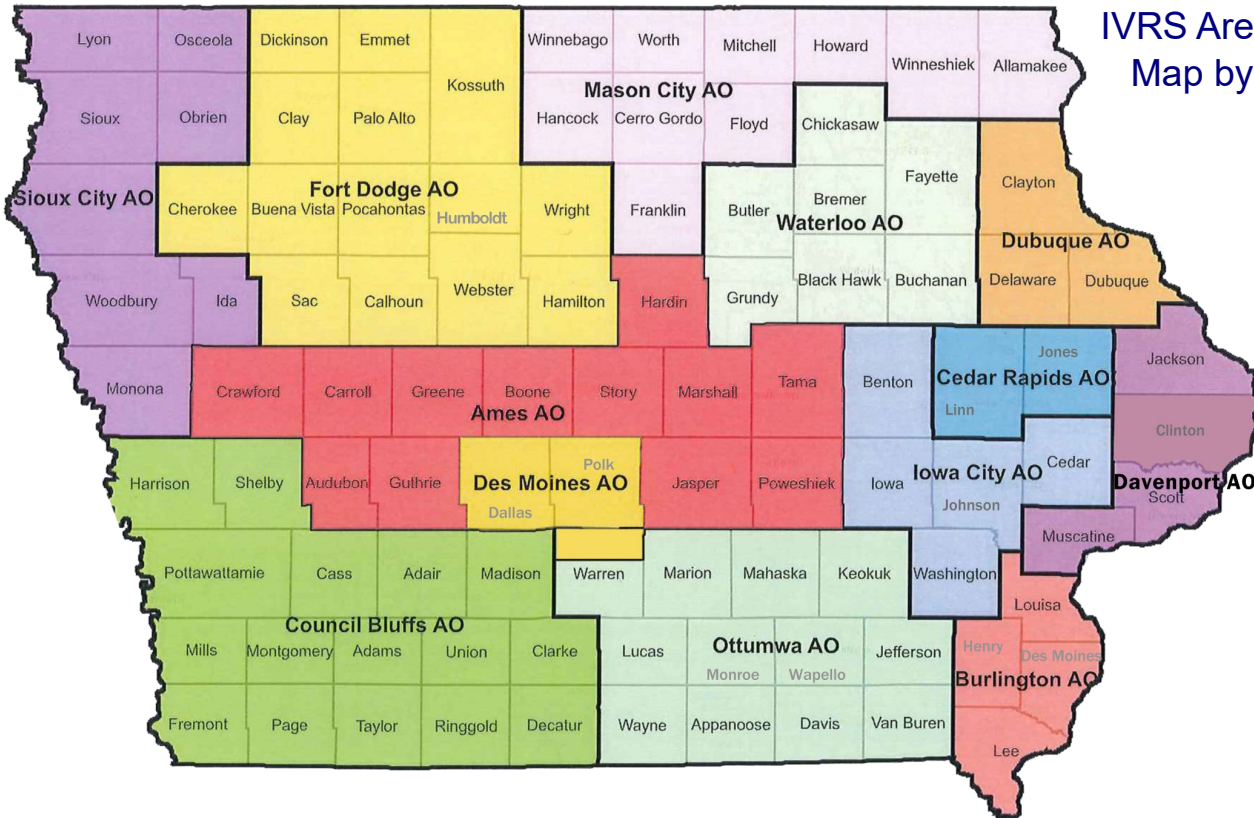
Jonathan is an assembler and is using a job coach who will check in and help address any issues Jonathan or his employer may be experiencing.

Jonathan is working 26 hours a week at \$14.50 an hour.

"This was a Discovery pilot project and was an amazing team effort all around!" Billmeyer said. "It took a long time but so worth it because most of all Jonathan loves it!"

# Contact Us

## IVRS Area Office Map by County



### Ames Area Office

819 Wheeler Street, Suite 6  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
515-233-5753 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Burlington Area Office

1000 North Roosevelt, Suite 7  
Burlington, Iowa 52601  
319-753-2231 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Cedar Rapids Area Office

4444 First Avenue NE  
Suite 436  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402-3221  
319-294-9308 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Council Bluffs Area Office

300 W. Broadway, Suite 33  
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503-9030  
712-328-3821 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Davenport Area Office

3827 W. Locust Street  
Davenport, Iowa 52804  
563-386-1200 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Des Moines Area Office

510 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
515-281-4211  
Toll Free 1-800-532-1486  
Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Dubuque Area Office

2600 Dodge Street, Suite NW2  
Dubuque, Iowa 52003  
563-588-4697 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Fort Dodge Area Office

Two Triton Circle  
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501  
515-573-8175 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Iowa City Area Office

1700 South 1st Avenue, Suite 11-A  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240  
Eastdale Plaza  
319-354-4766 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Mason City Area Office

600 South Pierce Avenue  
Mason City, Iowa 50401-4836  
641-422-1551 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Ottumwa Area Office

15260 Truman Street, Suite 4  
Ottumwa, Iowa 52501-1473  
641-682-7569 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Sioux City Area Office

2508 East 4th Street  
Sioux City, Iowa 51101-2298  
712-255-8871 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711

### Waterloo Area Office

3420 University Ave., Suite D  
Waterloo, Iowa 50701-2008  
319-234-0319 Voice/TTY-Relay Iowa 711



Finding solutions. Generating success.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.IVRS.IOWA.GOV](http://WWW.IVRS.IOWA.GOV)

For More Information

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