

## **IowaWORKS Helping Refugees Find Life-Long Careers in Cedar Rapids**



There are two things to know about hiring refugees, explains Jamel Ajram, son of the Lebanese immigrant who created Ajram Upholstery and Fabric in Cedar Rapids in 1969.

First, is the need to accommodate religion. For example, most of the roughly 245 Afghanistan refugees who landed in Cedar Rapids last fall are Muslim, and they therefore need short breaks during the day to pray.

Second is the language barrier. Most of the Cedar Rapids group so far have been able to speak at least some English. But the average skill level is not high, and communication requires effort.

“You’ve got to be willing to work at it,” Ajram said. “For me personally, it’s not an issue. My mother was an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. We can usually figure it out.”

[Click here to keep reading.](#)

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## VIDEO: Child Care Grants Expand Available Slots for Special Needs Kids



ChildServe in Ames is using state of Iowa grant money to expand the number of child care slots and therapy programs available for autistic children. That's making a tremendous difference for the working parents of children with special needs.

Click the image above to [watch our video](#) about the program.

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# Advisors Connect Veterans to Careers

Sue May understands the difference that a good helper can make.

Thirty years ago, as she was leaving the U.S. Air Force, there was the helpful Veteran Service Officer in Nebraska who guided May through some hospital paperwork and started her down the path to getting a college degree. Much later, she met a Sioux City workforce advisor who helped prepare May to re-enter the job market following six years at home raising children.

May followed in their footsteps just over two years ago, when she agreed to replace that second man in his job assisting the veterans who visit IowaWORKS. She wanted to make a difference.

"I was informed of this job opportunity, and I jumped on it," May said. "Just to be able to help veterans."

May is one of 20 people in IowaWORKS offices around the state who



## IWD to Celebrate Iowa's Women Veterans in June

Iowa Workforce Development will be celebrating Women's Veterans Month in June, culminating in a special panel discussion and networking event on June 17 at the Camp Dodge Pool Pavilion in Johnston.

Women are the fastest growing segment of Iowa's veteran community, with more than 15,000 in Iowa as of 2019. Women are returning from military service every day with many valuable and in-demand skills, as well as many specialized needs that sometimes can be overlooked by a male-dominated veterans' infrastructure. IWD hopes to highlight both the contributions made by women veterans and call attention to their potential value to Iowa employers seeking to develop a workforce.

IowaWORKS offices around the state are planning to host Coffee & Camaraderie events in June to thank women veterans and remind them of the wide variety of resources that our state has ready to assist them in their civilian careers.

The June 17 event will feature guest speaker Darla Sheasley, a retired sergeant major with the Army National Guard, and a panel of women veterans who will discuss their successes and challenges after making the transition from military to civilian workforce.

**For local event information, contact the [IowaWORKS office](#) closest to you.**

**Watch IWD social media channels for registration information coming soon.**

work directly with veterans to help them find meaningful careers. Some, like May, are part of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and work to find training, housing, or other needed assistance for veterans who face significant obstacles in landing steady employment.

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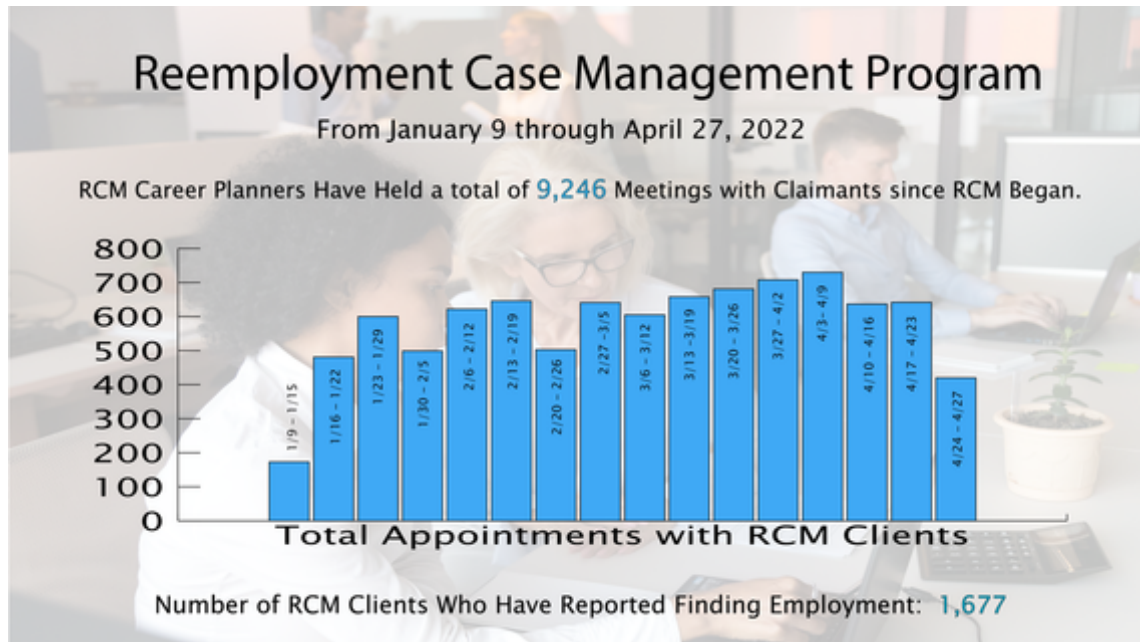
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# RCM by the Numbers



IWD career planners have had more than 9,200 meetings with clients since the Reemployment Case Management program started earlier this year, while more than 1,600 claimants have left unemployment for new careers. [Click here for more information about RCM.](#)



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# IWD Receives National Award for Use of Efficient Unemployment System



Iowa Workforce Development was recognized at the end of April for its work to preserve integrity and efficiency in a critical area of the state's unemployment insurance system.

The award from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) applauds Iowa for its strong integration of the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) to better serve employers and claimants.

IWD was one of 12 agencies recognized at a NASWA seminar in St. Louis for their SIDES system performance in 2021.

SIDES, created by a coalition of federal and state workforce organizations, brings greater efficiency and accuracy to unemployment insurance by giving employers a secure way to receive electronic notices of unemployment claims applications, thus reducing the time it takes to process and verify information. SIDES allows workforce agencies to receive timely and accurate separation information from employers while reducing administrative costs and the frequency of errors on paper forms. The system has also been instrumental in quickly identifying ID theft and fraud.

“Iowa is once again a national leader when it comes to preserving the integrity, efficiency, and cost savings in our critical unemployment system,” said Governor Kim Reynolds. “I commend IWD employees and their hard work in continuing to set the standard for how these systems can best serve all Iowans, even in the face of recent unprecedented challenges.”

**For more information, see the [NASWA news release](#).**

# Upcoming Events / Opportunities



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