

Brian Dennis Named Interim Head of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services



Brian Dennis believes every Iowan has the capacity and the ability to work – those with disabilities may just need a little help to achieve it.

“Employment is possible for every person, but that journey will look different for everyone,” Dennis said. “The best way to assist someone on that journey is to provide as much support as possible.”

Dennis, IWD’s Bureau Chief for Disability Services and an adjunct instructor at Drake University’s counseling master’s degree program, now will play a much larger role in providing that support. On Monday, June 19, he was named Interim Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), Iowa’s lead agency for helping individuals with disabilities find, retain, and/or advance in employment.

IVRS became a division within IWD as part of a statewide government reorganization that took effect July 1.

Dennis sees his role going forward as two-fold – empowering Iowans with disabilities to achieve their own goals and “making sure our employer partners understand the great deal of untapped potential that is out there.”

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VIDEO: Marshall County Joins HBI



In May, Marshall County became the 126th community to join Home Base Iowa, a program that seeks to help Veterans and their families find a new life in Iowa after they leave military service. [Click the image above to view our video of a ribbon-cutting celebration.](#)

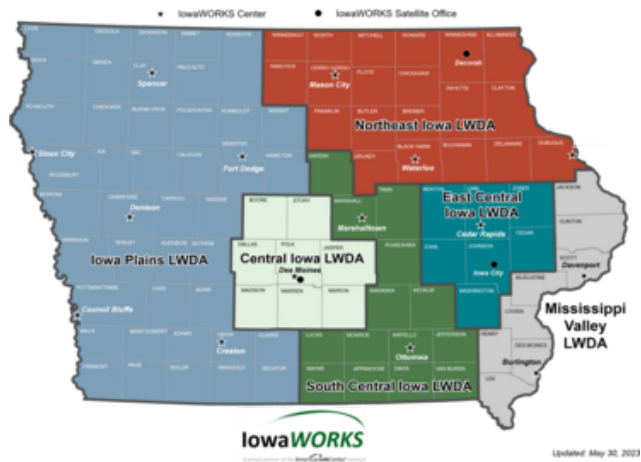
Teach Iowa Ending; Education Jobs Join IowaWORKS

Iowa school districts and their potential job applicants have begun educating themselves about IowaWORKS.gov after a new state law changed the way education jobs must be advertised in Iowa.

Senate File 560, which was recently approved by the Iowa Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Kim Reynolds, is an appropriations bill that eliminated the Iowa Department of Education's [Teach Iowa](http://TeachIowa) website. The law requires that after July 1, all Iowa education organizations begin posting their open jobs on IowaWORKS.gov. Teach Iowa will not accept any new postings after that date.

The new requirement applies to any jobs posted by the Department of Education, school districts, charter schools, Area Education Agencies, and/or accredited nonpublic schools.

Iowa Workforce Development will be working closely with impacted organizations to help them spool up their IowaWORKS



IA State Workforce Board Pondering New "Iowa Plains" Local Workforce Development Area

Starting this month, Iowa Workforce Development is playing a greater role in delivering job training services in western Iowa.

Iowa's State Workforce Development Board later this month will be asked to approve the final steps in reorganizing the state's Local Workforce Development Areas, consolidating four regions covering the western half of Iowa into one local area that now will be overseen by IWD.

The new area, which IWD has asked to begin calling the Iowa Plains Local Workforce Development Area, replaces four areas where local officials elected earlier this year to dissolve their policy-setting boards and back away from direct involvement in workforce decisions. By law, IWD on July 1 became responsible for delivering job training services throughout that 42-county region.

For decades, federal law has required the U.S. Department of Labor to distribute federal job training money by passing it through the states to elected officials in state-defined Local Workforce Development Areas. (Before July 1, Iowa had nine of those areas; now, it has six.) Elected officials in each area then select a board to determine how their share of the money should be spent and which job training services should be provided.

Earlier this year, elected officials in four areas – Western Iowa, Northwest Iowa, North Central Iowa, and Southwest Iowa – all served notice that they were refusing their portion of federal money and dissolving

their IowaWORKS accounts. IWD's Business Engagement Consultants already have launched a campaign to contact every impacted organization over the next few weeks to offer assistance with the transition.

For more information about IowaWORKS.gov and the transition away from Teach Iowa, visit IWD's [Iowa Education Jobs website](#).

their boards. The move capped years of frustration by local leaders over tight budgets and federal-driven requirements to implement detailed administrative safeguards on how the money should be spent.

IWD estimates that by consolidating administration and financial oversight, the state eventually will be able to serve more people than what previously was possible in the Iowa Plains area. IWD has hired 12 new people to provide and oversee the necessary services, and all employees have been cross trained on administrative functions in a way that's intended to speed up the process for Iowans seeking assistance.

Iowa Plains residents should expect no changes in the types of programming available. All services will be delivered by employees in IowaWORKS job centers who already live in the areas where they work.

For more information on the Iowa Plains Local Workforce Development Area, please visit [the local area's website](#).

IowaWORKS centers throughout the Iowa Plains area will be hosting open houses from noon to 1:30 p.m. on July 27 to educate area residents about the changeover. If you live in Fort Dodge, Spencer, Sioux City, Creston, or Council Bluffs and wish to attend, consult this [contact information](#).

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IVRS Program Helps Iowans with Disabilities Build Their Own Work



Anthony Reyman's business is expected to hit new heights in the coming year thanks to matching funds from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS).

Reyman, a 19-year-old resident of Ottumwa, parlayed his lifelong love of airplanes into a fulltime vocation after graduating from Indian Hills Community College. Reyman's Sky Inspired Aerial Photography uses drones to shoot videos for online real

Reyman's Sky Inspired Aerial Photography uses drones to shoot video for online real estate ads and other businesses looking to create social media content.

"I've always been interested in flying," Reyman said. "When I turned 16, I started thinking, 'I can make a living off of this!'"

Reyman, who has profound difficulty hearing and wears hearing aids in both ears, will get help doing so through Iowa Self-Employment, a program created by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to help Iowans with disabilities get their own small businesses off the ground.

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Realignment Unites State Workforce Programs Inside IWD



Iowa Workforce Development entered a new era this week, with three new programs joining the agency as part of a broad state government realignment approved by Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Legislature earlier this year.

The changes, which took effect July 1, are part of a longstanding effort to consolidate similarly oriented state programs within agencies that have the best resources and expertise to manage them. In IWD's case, this means that a broad range of efforts to help Iowans succeed in the workforce now will be placed under unified leadership for the first time.

Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development, believes the realignment will open new doors for IWD to increase the level of assistance available to all Iowans.

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07.20.2023

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