



**STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2022**

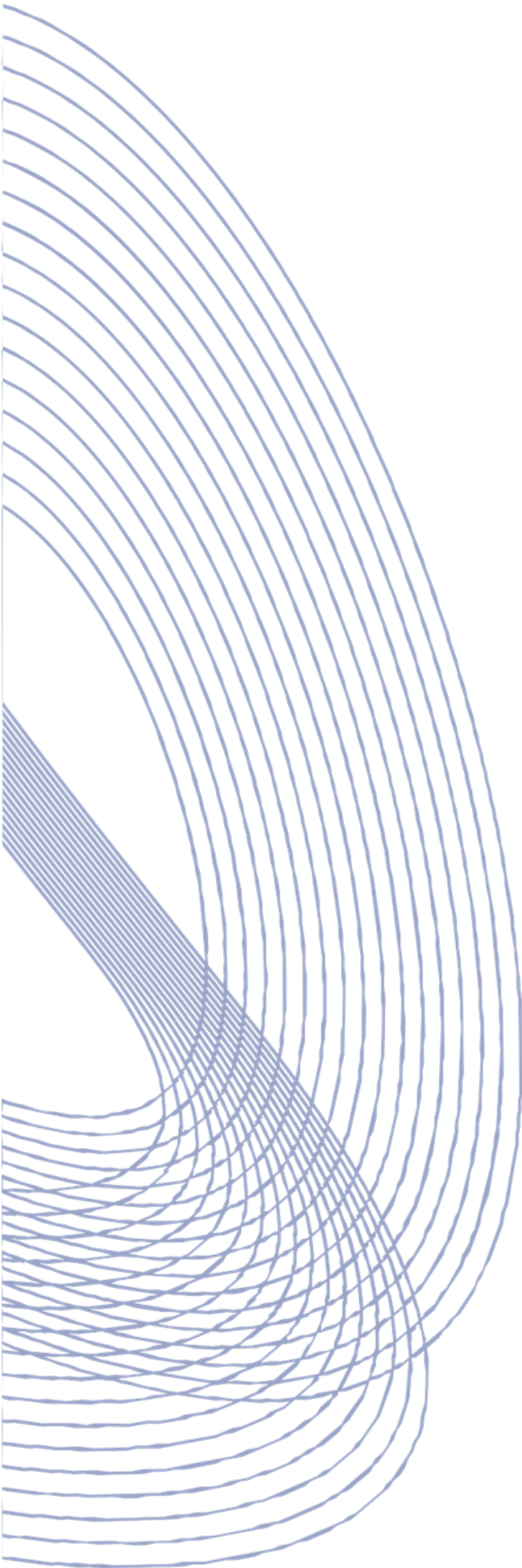


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SRC Chair Daryn Richardson



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

As a former client of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), I am honored to be the chairperson of the state rehab council. I have seen firsthand the diligence, empathy, and dedication of our IVRS counselors. All of us will be diagnosed with a disability sooner or later. My diagnosis came earlier than I wanted. I wanted to keep working to support my family. Thankfully, a diligent and compassionate IVRS counselor helped me begin my current career path 25 years ago. Since that time, I've worked as a community rehab provider helping IVRS find hundreds of jobs for individuals with disabilities. My experiences reflect the work of one office in one corner of our state. As you will see in the data contained herein, the work to employ individuals with disabilities continues daily. It impacts the lives of many individuals with disabilities and the businesses that employ them. An increasing number of smart business owners and managers are realizing the untapped potential and talents of people with disabilities. We all have a vested interest and keeping the work of IVRS continuing into the future. This work is critical to Iowa; thus, I am humbled to be part of it.

SRC Vice- Chair Mari Reynolds



Mari Reynolds is serving 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.



SRC Members 2022

Linda Rouse

Monroe County
Workforce Development

Amy Robasse

Iowa County
SILC Representative

Kirsten Lane

Ankeny
Department of Education Rep

James Luttrell

Mills County
Advocacy

Demarcus Thomas

Pottawattamie County
Advocacy

Morgan Johnson

Marion County VR
Counselor

Susan Koch-Seehase

Chickasaw County
Business, Labor and Industry

Margee Woywood

Dubuque County Advocacy

Lisa Schneider

Dallas County
Client Assistance Program

From the IVRS Administrator Daniel Tallon



In this year's SRC Annual Report we will focus on partnerships in action!

Partnerships enhance the experience of our job candidates by providing a full spectrum of services such as job coaching, business development and transition services within our schools.

This team approach allows for efficiencies in service delivery by avoiding duplication efforts by state agencies.

Partners with Iowa Businesses



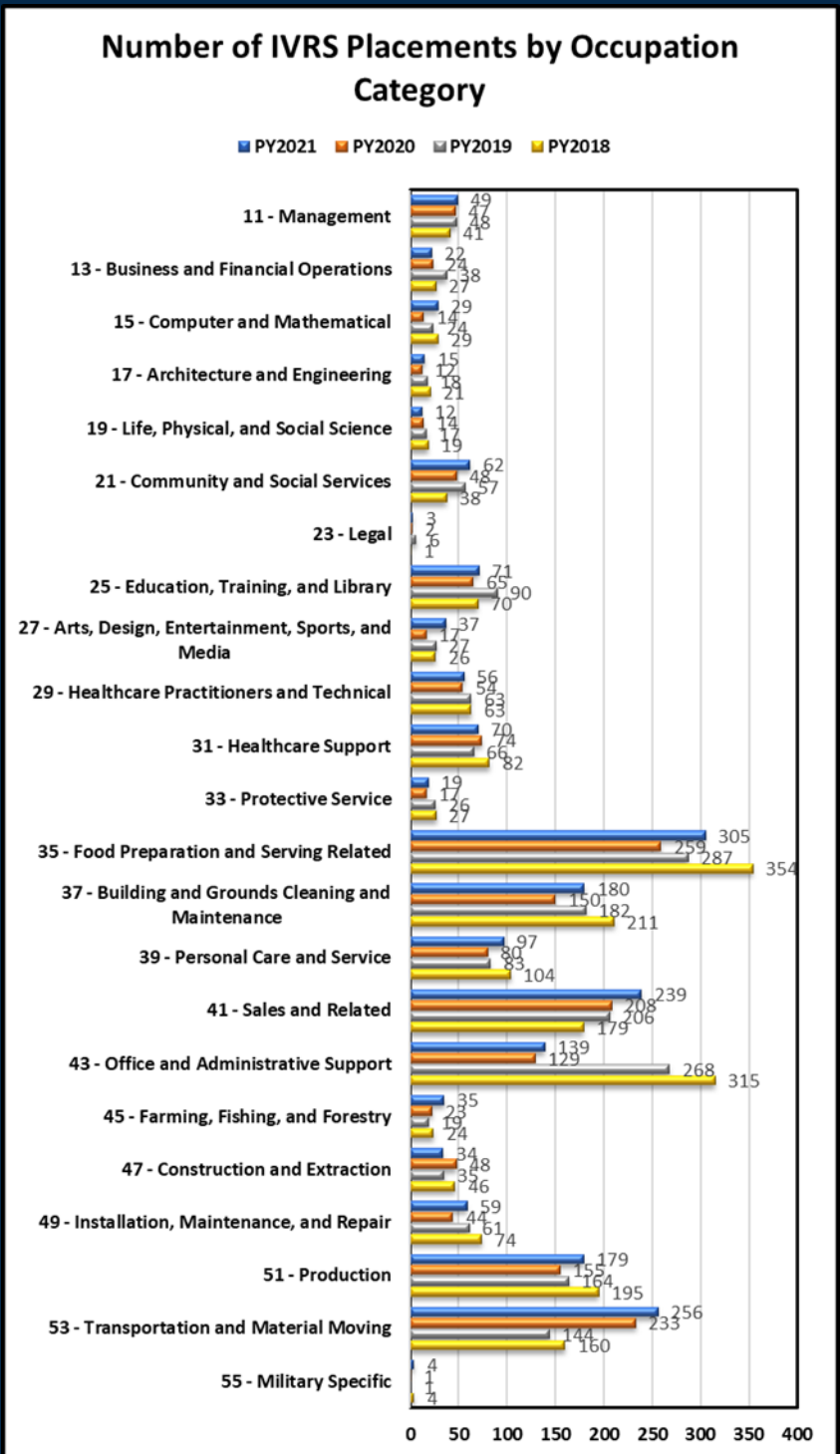
Hawkeye Molding was awarded the IVRS Business Appreciation Award in November 2022, when they were nominated by a staff member at IVRS. Daniel Tallon (middle left) is seen giving Keith Miller and Ryan Gruhn (left to right) the award, with Donald Varner also present (far left).

Program Year	Total Job Candidates Served	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2021	22,819	1,972	29	\$14.52

1,972 lowans 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 \$29,923,186 for FFY2022. No non-governmental funds are used to finance this program.

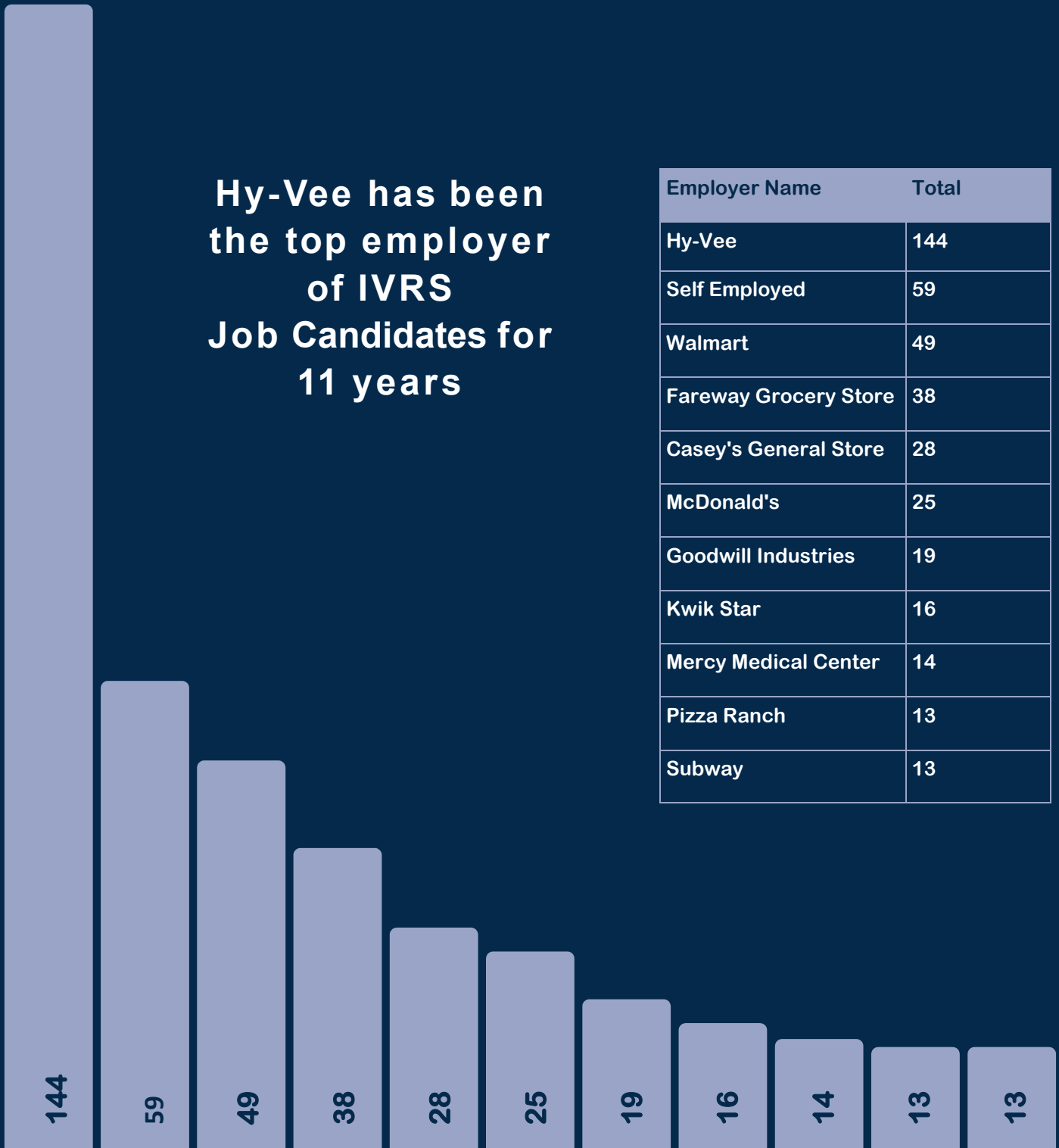
A total of 511 VR job candidates were receiving public support for living expenses (SSI, SSDI, TANF, General Assistance) and after receiving services, they are now employed and of those, 75 now support themselves, a savings of \$561,862 annually for the state.



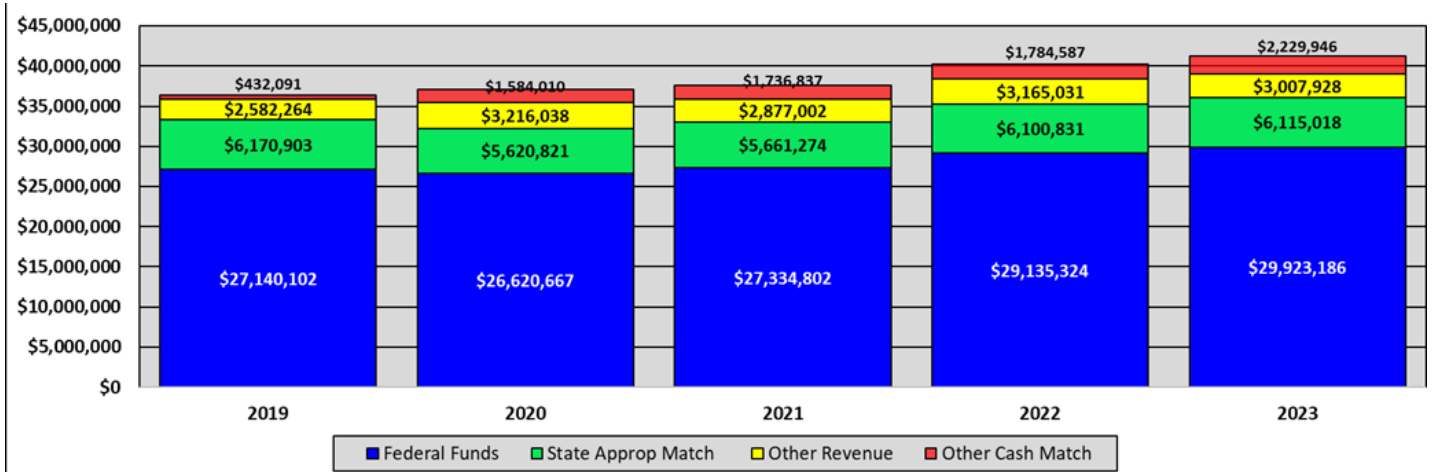
Top 10 Employers of IVRS Job Candidates:

**Hy-Vee has been
the top employer
of IVRS
Job Candidates for
11 years**

Employer Name	Total
Hy-Vee	144
Self Employed	59
Walmart	49
Fareway Grocery Store	38
Casey's General Store	28
McDonald's	25
Goodwill Industries	19
Kwik Star	16
Mercy Medical Center	14
Pizza Ranch	13
Subway	13



IVRS REVENUES



IVRS EXPENDITURES

2022 Top Expenditures

- Rehabilitation Technology
- Supported Employment
- Four- Year College or University Training
- Job Search
- Assessment

2021 Top Expenditures

- Four- Year College or University Training
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Supported Employment
- Junior or Community College Training
- Graduate College or University Training

2020 Top Expenditures

- Four- Year College or University Training
- Rehabilitation Services
- Junior or Community College Training
- Supported Employment
- Graduate College or University Training

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 = \$ 2 . 5 Million



U.S. Department of Education awards more than \$13.8 Million to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

DES MOINES, October 10, 2022 – Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), a division of the Iowa Department of Education, was awarded more than \$13.8 million through a competitive grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Education to expand opportunities for Iowans with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment opportunities that lead to economic security.

Iowa is one of 14 states awarded a five-year Disability Innovation Fund – Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment Grant totaling \$177 million. The grants support high-quality programs that can serve as a model for identifying services, implementing evidence-based practices and addressing challenges associated with access to competitive integrated employment for youth and other individuals with disabilities.

IVRS Administrator Daniel Tallon said, “We are really excited for the opportunity to bring new resources to the Iowans with disabilities who are currently employed in subminimum wage positions. This grant will allow us to invest in new tools to help these individuals move to competitive integrated employment and be active members of their community.”

The IVRS grant application was a joint effort between many of the various state departments and key stakeholders within the state of Iowa. Subminimum wage is allowed in limited circumstances when approved by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division. This grant will allow individuals with disabilities working in subminimum wage positions to access new resources and tools as well as provide coordination between the various service providers. The grant will also increase the resources available during early high school to facilitate uninterrupted transition to competitive integrated employment for youth with disabilities.

More information about the program and grant awardees can be found on the [Rehabilitation Services Administration website](#). To learn more about Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services visit our website at ivrs.iowa.gov



Students Transitioning to the Workforce

Most high school students plan graduation parties after they graduate. Instead Baylee Blanchard found out that she had no longer had a foster home.

Baylee's IVRS team jumped into action so that she would have somewhere to live and the chance to continue her education at Kirkwood Community College.

Baylee graduated from Central Community School District in Elkader and IVRS Counselors Kara Boldt and Jessica Miller first worked to provide housing for the young woman.

"Supporting Baylee has been a team effort," Boldt said.

Counselors Boldt and Miller arranged for testing and an application for a Brain Injury Waiver, a REM Host Home application and general assistance. It took many meetings and transitions for Baylee, but she qualified for the Brain Injury Waiver. The waiver allowed her to qualify for residence with a REM Host Home.

With the basic supports in place, Baylee could move to Cedar Rapids to focus on her education.

Baylee has plans to attend Kirkwood Community College (KCC) to study Human Services and American Sign Language. Her future employment goal is to become a social worker.

Baylee obtained her driving permit and has moved to Cedar Rapids with her Host Home Mentors. She is adjusting very well and said she is excited to start KCC in the fall.

For employment, Baylee is in the process of getting a part-time at a local daycare because she enjoys children and helping others.

Baylee plans to begin taking classes part-time at Kirkwood Community College this Fall 2022 to allow herself time getting acclimated to living in Cedar Rapids as part of her strategy to ensure success with her future plans.

IVRS Counselors Boldt and Miller were key to helping this student obtain housing, the resources and financial support so that she can achieve her future educational and employment goals.



Baylee 2022 High School Graduate

Program Year 2021

14,050 Iowa Transition Students were served by IVRS

In Iowa, 63.6% of IVRS referrals come from Iowa School Districts

Potentially eligible students served	7,542
Transition Students Served	6,508
Closed Rehabilitated	925
Hours Worked per Week	30
Average Hourly Wage	\$13.81

Juvenile Re-entry Program Launched in Iowa

By: Courtney Jackson

Juvenile Re-entry Systems Effort (JReS), is a program that works with students with disabilities that are in correctional facilities, helping them to safely reenter back into the community.

JReS was first started in 2021. This program has assigned facilities around the state, such as Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, where the youth are placed. These youth get help when they enter this facility and up to a year after being placed.

Mary Jackson the Assistant Bureau Chief of Transition, is one of the front runners of the program, to better help the youth of Iowa.

Jackson recently assisted Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) in hiring two new staff for this program, one of them being Alison Roe, a new hire that started in February 2022.

"I am able to incorporate my education and experiences working in youth development and vocational services into one role. I especially enjoy assisting youth in determining what they want their lives to look like after placement," Roe said.

Roe says that she has really enjoyed being a part of this program as it is just getting started and working with the JReS partners to help develop a framework that expands throughout the state.

IVRS partners with local Social Security Agency

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is able to work with a number of businesses and agencies to provide our job candidates with positions. One of the most recent is that of the Social Security Agency based in Sioux City, with two other offices in Carroll and Spencer.

Tara Gunderson, a Rehabilitation Counselor and Business Services Consultant, has been able to help job candidates apply for - and get - jobs with this agency. One candidate has already been hired, and two other job candidates applied for positions and are waiting on the hiring process to play out.

This is the first time that Gunderson has worked directly with a hiring manager for a federal government office. Gunderson said the process of building a professional relationship with the district manager of the Social Security office has led to a seamless, successful process for both agencies.

"Placement opportunities in government agencies provide employment stability and career longevity for our job candidates. Placing candidates in careers that match their interests, skills, and aptitude is the goal of our efforts. We aren't just getting people jobs, we are supporting people with disabilities to build life-long careers. Successful placement in government agencies hits all of these crucial areas," Gunderson added.

This partnership first started in September 2022, when Gunderson's supervisor, Brittney Gutzmann, was con-

tacted by Yashunda Lowder, the district manager of the Social Security Agency located in Sioux City.

Gutzmann handed the lead over to Gunderson, the Business Services Consultant for the Sioux City IVRS office. Gunderson fielded the connection, made a follow-up phone call to introduce herself to Lowder, and the partnership began from there.

"When making contact with people from community businesses and agencies, my main objective is to build a trusting, working relationship that leads to other partnership opportunities. My focus is finding solutions to the immediate needs, while striving to develop bigger picture opportunities where IVRS can educate and help businesses promote inclusive workplace cultures," Gunderson stated.

Lowder thinks the partnership is going very well and is appreciative of the on-going, open communication between one another.

"My favorite part is the communication. We appreciate being able to share information with IVRS and knowing that they are comfortable reaching out to us at any time," Lowder said.

"The main goal is to attract and retain employees who reflect the public we service, are committed to our mission, and dedicated to providing quality customer experience."



Self-Employment Program Drives Iowa Business

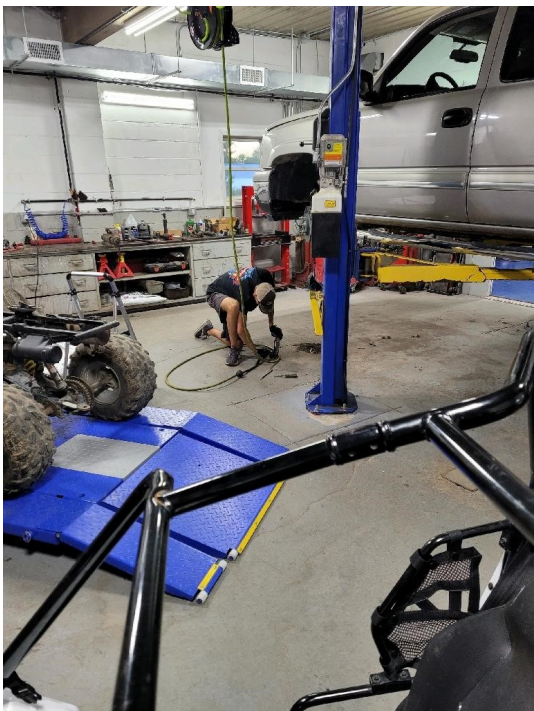
By Callie Borst

Noah, a job candidate, graduated from high school and, through the assistance of the Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) program, has opened a small engine repair business. The shop performs repairs, maintenance, performance upgrades, parts, and accessories for automotive, ATV, and side-by-sides.

The business is doing well, in part, because laws in the area have really expanded side-by-side use. Noah will be adding detailing to vehicles as he becomes trained in the various ceramic coatings. He has also taken a part-time job at a local business to enhance his customer service skills. Noah and his dad report that they are as busy as they can be right now. They will expand hours in the summer and once Noah has completed his training in detail.

Through financial assistance, Noah has received a leak detector, battery tester, wireless chassisEAR, jack, and AC machine. He also received assistance with setting up accounting and legal for his business. Graphic design services were provided by Cristoff.

Overall, it was a great team effort that started with an idea when Noah was a junior in high school and grew into a full-fledged business with help from Transitional Alliance Program (TAP), Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) Counselor, and the ISE team!



There were 59 IVRS Self-Employment Closures in Program Year 2021.



Iowa
**Vocational
Rehabilitation**
Services

Finding solutions. Generating success.



IVRS Becomes First State Agency to Receive Autism Friendly Designation from Autism Speaks

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) staff have gone through special training and certification to better meet the needs of people with autism and have recently received an Autism Friendly Designation from Autism Speaks. IVRS is the first state agency in the country to achieve this special designation. To qualify for the designation 199 employees, 86 percent of total staff, in 13 area vocational rehabilitation offices across the state of Iowa completed the training.

Created and provided by Autism Speaks, the certification program training was co-developed by autistics, clinicians, and autism experts to help businesses like IVRS create more inclusive and effective customer experiences. The training consists of several modules specific to best practices when working with individuals with autism.

IVRS Administrator Daniel Tallon said he is committed to providing training for IVRS staff to enable them to provide top quality services to persons with disabilities in Iowa.

“The training provided for the Autism Friendly Designation allows us to align our workplace culture and our services with our mission and values,” Tallon said.

Since 2020, IVRS has consulted with the national, nonprofit organization Autism Speaks to promote inclusivity throughout the agency and the state of Iowa.

Meet Sammy, a student with autism working as a small engine mechanic



School did not come easy to Sammy Haugen. As a teenager with learning disabilities, mental health diagnoses, and a diagnosis on the autism spectrum; Sammy realized he needed an alternative learning environment to really unlock his potential.

After being referred to Metro High School in Cedar Rapids, Sammy began to explore his natural abilities in the school's STEAM programming. He has been working at The Sled Shed for almost a year now, where he is a small engine mechanic.

"I guess for me, I've always been kind of a builder and engineer. I love tinkering around with different materials and robotic parts, when I first started I had absolutely no knowledge of gas engines. I like working on lawn mowers and snow blowers, having my coworkers teach me what to do and how to do it," Sammy said.

In his time at Metro, he was also connected with the Transitional Alliance Program (TAP) and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). These programs helped

him feel supported and connected as he transitioned away from his safe space, Metro family, and 2nd home into the new and unknown world of adulting.

"I would say my journey as a small engine mechanic is going strong. I've been here for almost a year now and went from ground zero with my knowledge. I started with no knowledge of a gas engine to where I am now and feel like I can find problems that aren't usually visible right off the bat. I am able to think of simple solutions that nobody has thought of," Sammy said.

His favorite part about being a small engine mechanic is being able to work with his hands, something he has done all of his life. He works with his hands to create things and he is finally grateful to get back to working with his hands again.

Sammy says that there are many benefits to working with TAP and IVRS.

"I loved working with TAP and IVRS, you guys are such a blessing because you guys know how to work with people on an eye-to-eye basis. They know how to use the resources that they have available and the same with the connections," Sammy said. "You guys help out in everyday life, whether it is from finding a job, getting work clothes, needing to find tools for work or even transportation to and from work. The people I've worked with are such amazing people to be around and talk to. They know exactly how to nudge you in the right direction for success."

IVRS Programming for Employment and Independent Living

As Fiscal Year 2022 came to a close, Supported Employment Service and the Independent Living programs at IVRS made some significant impact in the lives of many lowans with disabilities. IVRS rolled out two evidence-based programs statewide, Customized Discovery (CD) and Individual Placement & Support (IPS). Both programs manage the partnership from referral to closure of the plan development to successful placement in competitive integrated employment that is aligned with the person's knowledge, interest, skills and abilities. Both programs promote the involvement of all positive supports existing and building new ones to ensure long term success in CIE and independence. Both programs not only positively impact the lives of lowans but also the many agencies involved. Due to the nature of how both programs require a certain level of partnership between supporting agencies for fidelity, team communication, collaboration and case documentation have also not only increased but the quality have also improved.

Customized Discovery

Customized Discovery focuses on individuals with the most significant developmental and intellectual disabilities. The following tables capture the strides CD has made since going statewide as of September 30, 2022:

FFY	Customized Discovery Services - Rehab Rate	NO Customized Discovery Services - Rehab Rate	Total Rehab Rate	Customized Discovery Average Hourly Wages	Agency Average Hourly Wages	Customized Discovery Average Hours Worked / Week	Agency Average Hours Worked / Week
2022	0.58	0.50	0.50	\$ 11.12	\$ 14.93	17	29
2021	0.50	0.50	0.50	\$ 10.71	\$ 13.60	22	29
2020	0.50	0.48	0.48	\$ 8.50	\$ 13.50	40	30

There were 404 Supported Employment Closures during Program Year 2021

	Supported Employment	Agency Wide
Average Hourly Wage	\$10.87	\$14.51
Average Hours Worked per Week	16	29
Rehab Rate	63.03%	50.68%

Year	No. of CD Provider Agencies	No. of CD Direct Service Provider	No. of IVRS Staff using CD	Total No. of CD Providers
2016	4	4	8	12
2020	7	15	9	24
2021	9	17	14	31
2022	23	37	54	91

Customized Discovery

The average wages for individuals using Customized Discovery (CD) compared to agency wide is about \$3.81 less (\$11.12/hour versus \$14.93/hour) than those who used traditional employment services. However, this is a population of individuals who may have been deemed unemployable in the past. This may also be an indicator for more training in business development and negotiations. The Rehabilitation Rate for individuals using CD is significantly higher (8%) than the average of those who used traditional employment services (58% versus 50%). The average hours of work per week for individuals using CD is 17 compared to 29 hours per week for those in traditional employment services. Those with the most significant disabilities which are those using CD may not want as many hours of work. In general, many individuals with disabilities were securing employment over this past fiscal year, creating an unusually high rehabilitation rate across the board.

CD exceeds two areas of measures (rehabilitation rate overall and the average length of time from job development to closure). This positive trajectory also occurred in spite of barriers caused by the pandemic and significant CRP staffing issues.

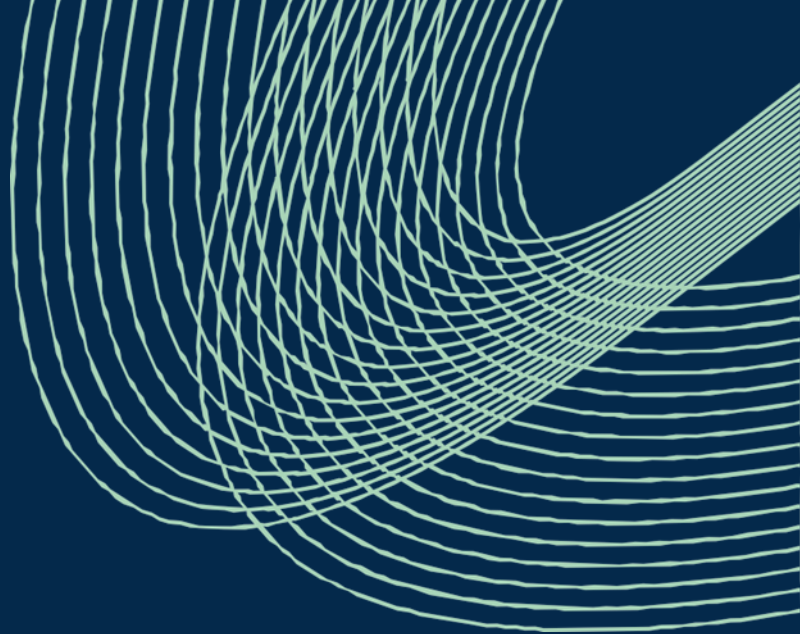
Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) focuses on individuals with the most significant chronic mental health. Since piloting IPS, rehabilitation rates have gone from 38.5% in FFY2019 to 47% in FFY2021 and most recently FFY2022 resulted in 53% rehabilitation rate. The number of CRPs providing IPS have gone from two in the entire state to five agencies with plans to stand up two more in FFY2023.

IVRS's Independent Living Program also made significant strides. In Federal Fiscal Year 2022 we successfully closed 24 Independent Living Cases with 92.3% of the cases, with Independent Living Plans, meeting their Goals. We provided \$92,954.21 in funding for direct services to those IL clients. Those services included:

- ◆ 11 Bathroom modifications/walk in showers/ADA Toilet/ Grab Bars
- ◆ 5 Vehicle Modifications/wheelchair lifts/Braun Turny Evo Seat/Receiver Hitch
- ◆ 3 sets of hearing aids
- ◆ 2 Sets of Steps/Handrails
- ◆ 1 Stairlift
- ◆ 1 Scooter
- ◆ 1 Scooter seat cushion
- ◆ 1 Lift Chair
- ◆ 1 Adjustable Bed with Mattress

All IL clients also receive Information and Referral, and counseling related to their IL needs, along with the above mentioned AT/RT. As of FFY23, IVRS has 21 active cases and 31 individuals on the waiting list. The person on the waiting list the longest at this time, who would be ready for services, is about 10 months.

CONTACT US



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**Vocational
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Finding solutions. Generating success.