**REGION 08 PY18 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Region 8 program year 2018 continues to see low unemployment rates. There have been no large closure or lay off events.

In this low unemployment period the region’s activities have focused on assisting business to find employees that meet their production needs. The One-Stop facilitated numerous hiring events and job fairs. The region also hosted informational events that highlighted local business best practice for finding employees from unconventional sources; returning citizens, people with disabilities, returning veterans and registered apprenticeships.

Region 8 continues to maintain a community presence through outreach and strong partnerships.

**Regional Snapshot**

Region 08 is made up of 6 Iowa counties Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac. Region 08 is made up of many small rural cities; Carroll, Carroll Co. is the largest city with a population of 9,874 and Denison, Crawford Co. second largest city with a rising population of 8,362. Denison is home to the largest Hispanic community per capita in the state. The region is home to robust Manufacturing, Logistics, Retail and Health Care industries.

The IowaWORKS office is located at 619 N Carroll Street, Carroll, Iowa. The office provides integrated services with full time staff representation from workforce partners Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Workforce Development, Promise Jobs, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and WIOA Title 1. A satellite office is located at the Western Iowa Tech Community College campus at 11N 35th Street, Denison, Iowa. The office is operated by Iowa Workforce Development and WIOA Title 1 staff. Partner services are available through referral.

**Regional Initiatives and Partnerships**

During PY18 Region 8 worked with partners to facilitate events that advanced our common goals. We continue our work in creating strong partnerships by identifying common goals. Region 8 core partners have worked together to facilitate many events in efforts to provide information, workforce development resources to business and to provide valuable training to job seekers. Core Partners worked to form relationships among agencies serving people with disabilities, local schools, Adult Education, vocational training providers and businesses. Several events focused on encouraging conversations between educators and employers.

The Region 8 Core Partners worked to facilitate a reverse career fair. Western Iowa Tech, Des Moines Area Community College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department for the Blind and IowaWORKS work together to facilitate an annual Partners Reverse Job Fair. Individuals are prepared by the partners to showcase their skills and connect with employers who have open job opportunities.

In PY18 the region gathered 21 boxes of most needed food and hygiene supplies to be given to migrant seasonal workers in the area. Boxes contained beans, rice, oil, cereal, washcloths, tooth brushes and other items. Many of these workers come to Iowa with just a backpack and willingness to work. The Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) outreach staff used these boxes to hand out to workers during outreach events.

The region sponsored a librarian coffee hour to share information regarding online and walk-in services available at the one-stop. Many people use the local libraries to access computers and learn about services. The coffee gave librarians resources to pass to their customers. Twelve local librarians attended.

**Employer Services and Business Engagement**

To participate in national apprenticeship week Ashley Larson, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Specialist, and Sherri Vaughn, Business Marketing Specialist, from IowaWORKS attended the Workforce Council Luncheon held at the Denison Job Corp Center on November 14th.. The luncheon was in celebration of National Apprentice Week. The event was hosted by Job Corps Executive Director and Department Leadership. Several local businesses and staff from Western Iowa Tech Community College attended to discuss employment opportunities in the area, present-day skills and education necessary to obtain employment, and career development opportunities such as Registered Apprenticeships and Work-Study.

Following the luncheon, 78 students and their instructors from the Construction and Health Career trades joined in at the Job Corps Center Auditorium. Registered Apprenticeship and Future Ready Iowa’s Career Coach Presentations were facilitated by The Business Marketing Specialist IowaWORKS.  Deb Mauricio, HR Director for McLaughlin Family Companies, presented on all employment opportunities available within the organization and discussed their Maintenance Mechanic registered apprenticeship.

Region 8 “Be Me for a Day” invites local business to be a part of a career/curriculum-specific team, engage in a dialogue, and explore options that will benefit both student and business. The goal of the partnership is to provide educational and career-based opportunities for the students and to give employers a chance to work with students on potential career placement. Curriculum-focused teams are formed with local businesses present. Each team chose the direction of the discussions of aligning curriculum with real-world standards, offering business representatives the chance to speak to students, providing business tours and project-based learning opportunities and exploring possible internships of mentoring opportunities.

The Region provided a culture training workshop to give employers an opportunity to understand rural Iowa’s changing population and social dynamics. The workshop information on cultural experience and expectations in professional encounters may be different from clients or families of diverse backgrounds and key elements of human culture. Workshop Goal was to give local employers tools and information that help them expand their employment pool by successfully employing people from different cultures.

Denison is the new home of Continental Carbonic, a facility that manufactures and ships dry ice. The company has brought 60-70 new jobs to the region. To help meet new employer fill their positions the region’s One-stop, Crawford County Chamber and Development Council and Western Iowa Tech facilitated a Meet and Greet highlighting new career opportunities

**Promising Practices and Success Stories**

1. **Rapid Response**

Region 8 has had no large business closings or layoffs in PY18. However we have had some small job loss in the retail industries. To serve those affected, one-stop staff put together folders that contain essential information to assist these workers as they transfer to other employment.  Presentations passed information to the workers about services available including NCRC, WIOA Title 1 services, Registered Apprenticeships, IVRS, unemployment documents, and upcoming workshops available at the Denison and Carroll One-stops.

1. **Registered Apprenticeship**

In PY18 the region has experienced success in developing Registered Apprenticeships to fill local employers need for skilled employees.

Evapco located in Sac County offers a selection of products for commercial HVAC, Industrial Refrigeration, power generation and Industrial process. The company was experiencing difficulty in meeting its employment needs for skilled electricians. After learning about Registered Apprenticeship programs at an Employers Council of Iowa event the company moved to become a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor and developed a program to train their own electricians. The program has been so successful for their company that Evapco has doubled the number of electricians employed.

Irlbeck Precision Services of Carroll County cuts and installs stone countertops. Stone setting is a business sector specific skill that makes finding skilled employees difficult. To fill their employment needs the company became a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor for a stone setter occupation. With help from the region’s One-stop Irlbeck Precision has hired 2 stone setters. Once the employees have worked through their probationary period with the company they will enter the company’s apprenticeship program.

1. **Offender Re-Entry**

To learn more about offender re-entry best practices the region participated in touring the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF). FDCF offers Apprentice Programs in the following disciplines: Cook, Electrician, Painter, Plumbing, Welding, Computer Operator, Landscaping, Sewing Machine Repair, Carpenter, and Housekeeping.    Additionally, offenders are able to complete the National Career Readiness Certificate that assesses areas deemed critical for successful employment.

Region 8 success stories affirm the regions commitment to serving to serving citizens who are re-entering the workforce with legal barriers

Emmanuel came into the Carroll office in the middle of August stating he wanted to apply for the Carroll Smithfield. He shared that he had very limited computer skills and would need someone to help type in his information on the application. I was able to sit with Emmanuel and help him complete the application and wished him luck with the next steps. Emmanuel stopped back into the office at the end of August asking for help completing the Wal-Mart application. While beginning the Wal-Mart application, Emmanuel shared that he had been hired on at Smithfield and that day was his first day on the job! Emmanuel was hoping to pick up extra hours at Wal-Mart when he’s not working at Smithfield, but was looking forward to his first day!

Tubuok first came to the Carroll IowaWORKS office at the beginning of August wanting to look for a job. During Tubuok’s first couple visits to the office, he was impatient, unkind to staff and had a negative attitude. After his first couple visits, Tubuok came back into the office and said that he needed to apologize for the way he had acted. He shared that there was a lot going on and that the job search has been hard. Tubuok shared that he has several charges on his criminal background and also has to pay back some money before he can return to his college. This led to several good conversations with Tubuok about the importance of having a positive attitude while job searching and how to explain a criminal background.

During one of Tubuok’s visits, he shared that he received an email from an employer on the same day he applied, letting him know he was no longer being considered. Tubuok and I had a conversation about reaching out to that employer, thanking them for their time and consideration, and asking if they had any feedback they could share with him to help him in his continued job search. Tubuok decided to give it a try and while talking with that employer, was told his short-term employment was a red flag. Tubuok was able to explain his work history and was offered an interview the next working day. Tubuok ended up not getting offered that job, however learned a lot about explaining red flags and thanking employers.

Tubuok began coming to the office several days per week to apply for jobs and also update me on his job hunt. Tubuok applied for a general production job at Pella and applied many of the things he had learned in our office. Tubuok stopped in on August 31st to share that he was hired on at Pella and started on 8/27! He loves both the job and employer so far and shared that he is going to really work on staying humble and having a positive attitude.

Suanne was a returning citizen that was referred by her parole officer to came to our office to seek employment. Suanne acknowledged being uncertain how to attain employment having a criminal record and being over 18 months since the last time she was employed. Removing all doubts and fears, during a brief interview, staff discovered Suanne had an extensive history of transferable skills and professional experience in customer service, entrepreneurship, and self-employment as a certified Pet Stylist.  Coincidentally, there was a Pet Stylist open position with a local Veterinary Clinic. That afternoon, Suanne and IowaWORKS staff worked together on creating a persuasive Resume. One that would entice the reader's attention to Suanne's expressed personality and professional experience, blurring out the criminal background and employment gap. Throughout the following days, Suanne worked diligently and acquired copies of her certificates, professional references, and a recommendation letter. Suanne mailed these documents, along with her Resume and cover letter, to the indicated address hoping to hear back and be given the opportunity for an interview.  Suanne was interviewed and offered the Pet Stylist position by the following Wednesday.

1. **Serving Customers with Disabilities**

Strong partnerships with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation and Iowa Department for the Blind enable the region to design services accessible to those who are experiencing barriers to employment because of disabilities. Structural barriers are reviewed and monitored by local committee. The region’s Partner committee meets regularly and oversees the ticket to work program.

Ticket to work case management reports the following success story:

During our first conversations, Ashley shared that her ultimate goal was obtaining full-time employment as a Registered Nurse and no longer needing her SSDI benefits. She had 11 years of prior experience in the nursing field, however had not worked since June of 2016. She was concerned that her poor work history and attendance record due to her disability would be a barrier in finding new employment. She also shared that her main concern was what would happen to her benefits as she got back into the workforce.

Back at this time, Ashley wasn’t ready to enroll in Ticket to Work but continued to work closely with me. At one point, Ashley had decided to go back to school for Human Services and enrolled in an online college.  Ashley and I worked together to evaluate her need for additional schooling by completing labor market research and contacting local human service employers. In the end, Ashley decided it wasn’t in her best financial interest to go back to school and refocused on finding employment as a RN. Ashley was referred to both Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and WIOA Title I during this pre-enrollment phase; however those programs ended up not being a good fit at the time.

In April of 2018 after some of Ashley’s medical concerns settled down, she decided she wanted to enroll in Ticket to Work by assigning her ticket to our office. I provided her with some basic information on work incentives and referred her to the Ticket to Work helpline to get further information on how working will affect her SSDI benefits. Unfortunately Ashley’s enthusiasm to get back to work was quickly diminished as her health declined and she had to take the next 6 months off from job searching to focus on getting better.

In November of 2018, Ashley was finally on the mend and actively back on the job hunt. I gave her guidance on how to revamp her resume and tips for excelling in phone interviews. Ashley also asked several questions on when/how to disclose her disability and how to explain both her poor work history and gaps in employment. I shared several resources with Ashley and gave her advice on how to handle those tough conversations.

Ashley reached out to me this week to share that she has accepted a full-time position working as a Registered Nurse with ChildServe! She will be starting on February 18th working 36-40 hours per week, making $24.62 per hour.

The last 15 months have been full of ups and downs for Ashley. She was excited and motivated to get back to work from the first time I contacted her, but unfortunately she had numerous medical setbacks. Although she is nervous to start this new position, she is excited to be back to work as a nurse!”

1. **Veteran Services**

This year Region 8 won the Veteran’s Incentive Award for offering exceptional service to Veterans with special emphasis on veterans with significant barriers to employment. The region’s IowaWORKS Center enjoys being able to help veterans in many different ways.

An event at the Crawford county fair where a booth was set-up on a weekend guard duty helped the region to reach out to 82 National Guard members. Guard members were provided with information about the local workforce services.

IowaWorks partnered with the Employer’s Council of Iowa to host a luncheon at the region’s One-stop to provide an opportunity for the IowaWORKS staff to learn about how service providers can better help Veterans. Staff was available for one-on-one career counseling. Veterans Affairs representatives were also on-site to share resources available in the local area.

1. **Priority of Services**

The region is committed to providing all veterans and their spouses’ priority of service. Staff members are trained on priority practices and processes to ensure compliance. All staff training is documented. Workforce programs including veteran’s priority of service are monitored by the local management team.

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