**Annual Report-PY 2016**

**Region 6- IowaWORKS Iowa Valley- Marshalltown**

PY 2016 has been a year for partnership and innovation. 6196 new members came through the Marshalltown One Stop Center from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. 2908 job seekers participated in open interviews during that time, and 1466 customers attended a variety of workshops our center offers. The Marshalltown One Stop Center has been diligent in assisting customers with opportunities to grow through education and employment. Some of the things we are most proud of for the year:

**Veteran Services**

Veteran Services have remained a priority at Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley. All team members have continued the approach of gratitude and respect while working with our Veterans. Team members also continue to refer Veterans to Home Base Iowa, the Hilton Honors program and to our Disabled Veteran Outreach Program representative to ensure Veterans are aware of and are receiving the services available to them.

**OJT under JD NEG for a Veteran**

Rich began working with the Marshalltown office in April, 2016 when he came in to find out more about the robo call he received on apprenticeships. His job was seasonal, he was tired of layoffs and he wasn’t happy with what he was doing. He enrolled in the WIOA program under JDNEG. We were working on trying to place him in an apprenticeship, but he returned to work at another seasonal job. Rich was laid off again this past winter with no recall date; a follow-up call was well timed. Rich was ready for a change and was re-enrolled as a Dislocated Worker in WIOA under the JDNEG & SPNEG.

As luck would have it Brownells in Grinnell was looking for a Website Product Support Technician, a business where Rich had dreamed of working. As a former gunners mate in the Navy he loves working on firearms. Rich was connected with our local veterans representative to see what other benefits for which he might be eligible.

Rich started an OJT on March 6; as he put it, this opportunity married his passion with work. Rich said this job is everything he had hoped and he is learning so much that it’s “mind blowing.” He is working his way through a huge backlog of product questions from before he started, while keeping up with the new ones that come in every day from all over the world. Rich said he is so busy the days fly by. He is looking at becoming a regular (unsubsidized) employee after

September 1, 2017.

**Veterans Day Event**

A Veteran’s Appreciation Day and Hiring Event was held at Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley on November 10, 2016. Eight businesses attended our hiring event to talk to job seekers and veterans in general. We had about 35 job seekers come through that day.

**Employer Services**

Employers have taken advantage of our open interview opportunity. Area employers held over 200 open interviews at the Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley One Stop Center from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Employers let Business Services know dates where a representative from their business could come to hold open walk-in interviews, we provide space to conduct the interviews as well as recruit including scheduling customers for interviews in advance. The information is then sent out via our text messaging application and through our various social media accounts. Many employers have found success with the open interview events that they continue to come back sometimes weekly.

**Reverse Job Fair**

Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley partnered with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Mid-Iowa Workshop to facilitate our very first Reverse Job Fair in March. The purpose of the Reverse Job Fair is to allow job seekers who often get overlooked to get some one-on-one help and get in front of an employer to showcase their skills. Eleven participants signed up to hold his or her own booth. In order to prepare for the reverse job fair the participants first attended a three-day workshop that focused on job preparation, interview practice, soft skills, as well as creating and building his or her own booth to highlight skills. The following 14 employers attended the Reverse Job Fair: Marshalltown Company, QPS Employment Group, Randstad Staffing, Meskwaki Bingo Hotel Casino, the Animal Rescue League, JBS, Manpower, Raymon Enterprises, Consolidated Management, Amwood Homes of Toledo, LUNA (Latinos Unidos por un Nuevo Amanecer), Advanced Services, Mid-Iowa Coop, and a family restaurant opening soon in Marshalltown. Job Corps was available during the Job Fair to discuss services. One employer stated, "I wanted to say how impressed I was with the idea and the job fair. What a great event." Many participants had multiple employers ask them to apply for positions. One gentleman received 3 job offers on the spot. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services also had a booth for employers to hear about the benefits to employers on hiring individuals with a disability, and Veterans.

**Meskwaki Job Fair**

Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valleypartnered with Meskwaki Higher Education to hold a College & Career Job Fair in April. The job fair was held at the Meskwaki Veteran’s Convention Center in Tama. There were 65 colleges, employers, and organizations that participated and 92 job seekers attended. All area high schools were invited to the fair. Two of the area schools, Meskwaki Settlement High and South Tama High, had their students attend the fair.

**Youth Services**

The Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley youth team has focused on strengthening partner relationships and streamlining referral processes. The youth team also regularly provides soft skills at numerous places including at the HSED Learning Center, for local employers, for Americorp, Refugee Rise, and EMBARC.

**NAWDP Youth Symposium**

The Region 6 Youth Career Development Advisors, along with three WIOA Youth participants gave two presentations at The National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Youth Symposium in Chicago, Illinois, on October 31 through November 2, 2016. The first session presented was Face your Fears: Knock-Down the Podium, a session that focused on how to keep WIOA participants engaged in center workshops. The interactive workshop provided ideas for activities and addressing adult learning styles all while supporting relationship building between participants. Over 70 people attended the session and gave very positive feedback.

The second session presented was the 3 P’s of WIOA: Pathways, Participants, and Partners. The rewarding part was the three youth participants that were able to share their backstory, experience, and future goals in the WIOA youth program. Over 50 people attended the session and appeared to be mesmerized by the stories of struggles and triumph these young people faced. One participant shared how she is the first person in her family to graduate high school and is enrolling in college and shared that attending the Youth Symposium has inspired her to become a public speaker. Another participant shared her struggles of growing up in a refugee camp and moving to America knowing no English and now is doing a work experience for ESL classes to help others like her learn English (which was her idea!) She is also now enrolled in college to become a teacher. Our third participant shared how he struggled with addiction, and absent addict parents, bouncing from house to house and even finding himself homeless for a short time. He is now doing a work experience working with troubled youth and is testing for his HSED next week.

**Limelight Leadership Academy**

Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley Title 1 Youth partnered with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, The Department for the Blind, and Iowa Valley Vocational Rehabilitation Intermediary program to hold a summer youth event called Limelight Leadership Academy. The purpose of the Limelight Leadership Academy was to target youth, ages 14-24, to assist them in seeing their full potential and help them gain leadership skills, workplace readiness skills, and practice interviewing for jobs. We also wanted them to connect with other youth to start building their network both professionally and socially.

The weeklong event was held June 5th through the 9th from 9:00AM to 3:00PM at Iowa Valley Community College in Marshalltown. Youth from every county in Region 6 were invited to this event. An average of 35 youth attended each day. The feedback received was phenomenal; 100% of the youth who attended said they would come back next year. We enlisted all those participants to come back to a follow-up meeting to foster their network over the summer and have decided to continue to meet on a regular basis. Since the participants have talked about coming back next year they have been given the opportunity to be involved in helping to plan next summer’s youth event.

Limelight Leadership Academy Attendees were asked what they liked best about the week:

*“I liked everything about this event” “I like how they motivated us”*

*“I liked learning about careers and how to be successful and to follow our dreams”*

*“I liked how the week made me think bigger” “Making new friends and meeting new people”*

*“Talking about and learning about jobs and expectations”*

**WIOA Partnerships**

Continuing on our integration path we have been growing in trust and gaining more understanding of our core partners and expanding our system partners. We have been able to pull together many successful events and in turn have been able to provide better opportunities for our customers.

**State Training School Initiative**

Since November 2016, Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley has partnered with the State Training School in Eldora, Iowa, to provide preparation services to students for when they exit the training school. Computers have been placed at the state training school with the IowaWORKS shell on it in order for students to begin their job search while in the training school to prepare for their exit. The WIOA Title 1 Team regularly visits their ACT class which is designed for preparing to go home and back into the “real world”. The Career Advisors are invited into the ACT class to work on soft skills and talk about the center with a big focus on easing fears of going into their One Stop Center. The students learn what services are available to them and given regional contact information for a starting point.

**National Apprenticeship Week/Design Your future**

We partnered with Iowa Valley Continuing Education to hold a career event titled “Discover Your Future in Manufacturing” which was held at the Iowa Valley Education and Training Center in Marshalltown. Eleven employers were present, including Iowa*WORKS* Iowa Valley representatives. Our audience consisted of approximately 70 students/customers comprised of mostly students from our ESL and HSED classes. A representative from Alliant Energy was the key speaker for Register Apprenticeships. Alliant had one of their Register Apprentices and one of their instructors with her to give the audience a better understanding of what Register Apprenticeships are and the benefits of participating in one.

**Discover Your Future: Explore Healthcare Employment Opportunities**

IowaWORKS Iowa Valley hosted an event titled "Discover Your Future" in the health care/medical field. This event was for anyone interested in finding out more from area healthcare employers about what type of providers exist in our area and the varied positions for which they hire. This event was held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The event was held at the Iowa Valley Education & Training Center. There were 10 Employers that attended and spoke to the participants with 55 participants in attendance. The employers present were Iowa Veterans Home, Hawkeye Care Center, Grandview Heights, Sunny Hill of Tama, Premier Estates of Toledo, Central Iowa Health Care, McFarland Clinic, Grinnell Regional Medical Center, Iowa River Hospice, Mayflower in Grinnell, and Hy‐Vee Pharmacy. After the event IowaWORKS and Iowa Valley staff had a recap and luncheon for all of the employers in order to receive feedback about this event and suggestions for improving any future similar events.

**Partner-Business Outreach collaboration**

The core partners continue to meet monthly in order to facilitate increased understanding of the services provided to businesses by each partner with the goal of increasing trust and reducing duplication of services. A logo was created to signify this partnership as well as a brochure to market the collaboration and combined one-entry for services.



**Success Stories**

**Alina**

“I dropped out of high school at age sixteen, and at age eighteen became a single mother. I worked many types of jobs during this part of my life from a casino to freezer in a meat plant. Eventually I found myself working with Promise Jobs which lead me to a Workforce Boot Camp where I learned skills to help me obtain employment. During this boot camp I began to open up and gain confidence. It's there that I got to meet a WIOA youth worker who told me about a youth program that could help me. I enrolled in the youth program not fully understanding what it was I just signed up for, only the fact it was free. In the program I was able to start a work experience as an office assistant in the Workforce building while I attended HSED classes. Time went on and my life was only getting harder. My grandfather, who I see as a father, was now sick and in the hospital, then to top it all off I became pregnant again. Quickly, I dropped everything I was doing, including my work experience and school, to now focus on my family and the fact I had another child on the way. It was a little too much to handle at once. When things settled I found myself six months pregnant and realizing I may never have to the chance to finish school became all too real. Then I received an email from my youth worker saying I was about to exit the program, that's when I decided to ask what the program could actually do for me. Not only did the program help with the cost of school, but it helped with childcare. The childcare was a huge thing for me because it's very expensive and I had a now 3 year old little girl on my hands. With help from WIOA I was able to not only get my HSED diploma, but do it with high scores. I started thinking about attending college which seemed unreal and intimidating at the time. After having my second child I stayed home awhile to care for him. One evening my youth worker asked if I would like to tell my story at a national conference in Chicago. I had never been to Chicago so it was exciting yet made me nervous because not only was I going to leave my little family, but I was going to speak in front of a lot of people. Still I summoned all my courage and attended the three day adventure. I would never trade the life lesson for anything. The workshops I attended taught me so much about a world outside of mine. When I told my story in front people I was nervous, but I used the confidence I found that continues to grow to speak. After I was done there was a thrill and a new found passion for speaking. In that same moment I decided I was going to go to college for public speaking. I have completed my first term and will begin classes again the fall.” -Alina D. WIOA Youth Participant

**Yoni**

Yoni came to the Trade Office after being laid off from Lennox International in 2014. He had previously worked at Trinity Structural Towers in Newton, but he was experiencing health issues and had to quit. He started at Lennox right after he left Trinity, but was laid off from Lennox within months.

Deciding he needed to make a change and find a way to build a career instead of just having jobs, Yoni saw attending school through the Trade Program as his opportunity. A few years prior when he still lived in Minnesota, he started school in the construction trades but was unable to finish the program, so he moved to Iowa to be with his parents. The wind turbines he saw in Iowa really piqued his interest, and his plan was set to get his degree in Electro-Mechanical Technology with an emphasis in Wind Turbine Maintenance.

During his first term at DMACC, a representative from AccuMold (an Ankeny based micro injection molding company) presented a program to the students in Electro-Mechanical Technology about their scholarship opportunity for maintenance mechanics which had Yoni rethinking his major. He applied for the scholarship and was accepted. An amendment to his education plan was written. Working out some details between the Trade Office and AccuMold, Yoni was accepted into the scholarship program with Trade continuing to pay for his education. By Trade paying Yoni was able to have part-time work during school and would be guaranteed a job after graduation, but he did not have the contractual agreements with AccuMold that he would have had otherwise.

For the past year and a half Yoni has had the opportunity to work part-time for AccuMold gaining experience while attending school. The company was very willing to work around his school schedule and time he needed for studying. The ability to work at the company was very valuable Yoni had the chance for “hands on” learning as well as having experienced workers that were able to show him how what he learned in school related to what he was doing on the job.

Yoni successfully completed his schooling in May, 2016 with a diploma in Applied Engineering Technology, Certificate of Specialization in Electro-Mechanical Technology, an AAS in Industrial Electro-Mechanical Technology, and a Scholastic Achievement Award for earning a 3.5 or higher GPA for the spring 2016 term. He is the first person in his family to graduate from college which makes his parents very proud. He is now working full-time for AccuMold making $17/hr and has a full benefit package.To date he continues to maintain employment with AccuMold with a continually increasing hourly wage. This past December Yoni returned to Mexico to get married; he and his wife are working on getting her immigration papers so that she will be able to come to Iowa to live.