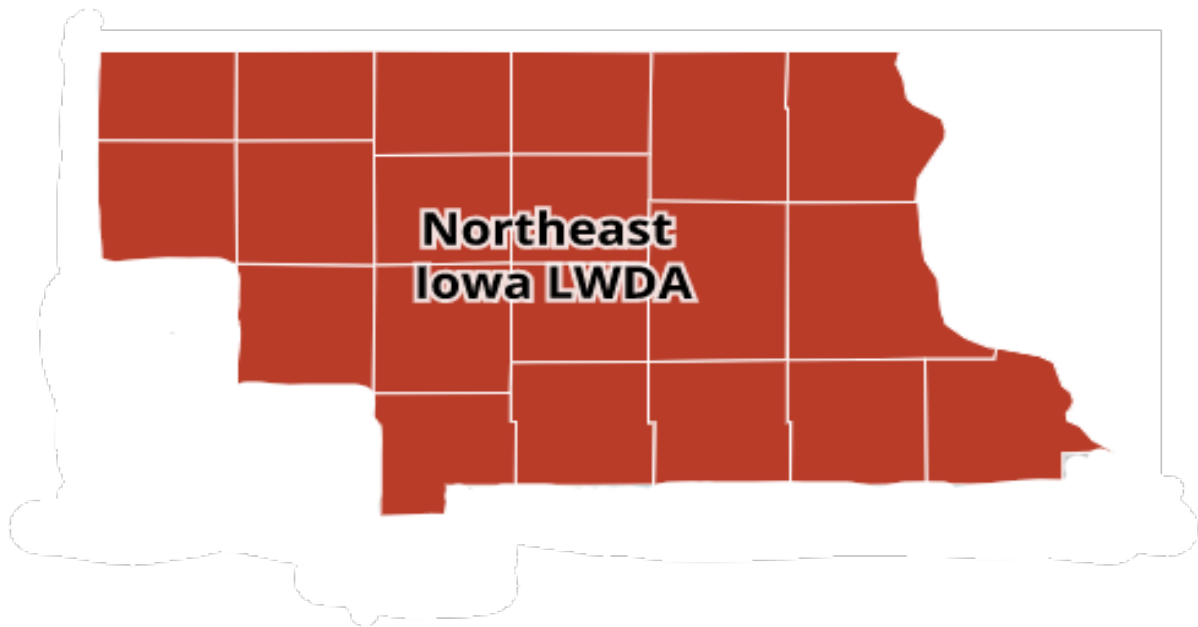


NORTHEAST IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

PY21 Annual Report



Executive Summary

PY21 was a new year after COVID. Our offices in Northeast Iowa reopened to in-person service delivery after being closed for over a year. We navigated towards a new approach of reaching our customers and local businesses. In Northeast Iowa we continued to see a growing number of individuals that needed access to employment and training services through Iowa**WORKS**. Businesses in Northeast Iowa struggled to find workers and fill job openings after COVID. Northeast Iowa's priorities included serving those within the local area so that they could gain successful employment and were connected to area employers. Partners collaborated to expand workforce services to target all individuals including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Northeast Iowa continued to improve equity and access to workforce programming resulting in greater opportunities for the local area.

The Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board continued to make strides towards WIOA compliant. The board established a strong foundation to continue to facilitate the collaborative efforts of the partners, ensuring that Northeast Iowa will continue to meet the workforce needs of the local area. We have implemented policies and procedures to streamline service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

In PY21 Northeast Iowa completed local, state, and federal monitoring. The local area also received approval of our local plan, which was a heavy lift for our partners and the local board. Our Memorandum of Understanding was finalized and approved. State Public Policy Group (SPPG) was selected as the One-Stop Operator and began services at the very beginning of PY21. They have been successfully coordinating service delivery of core and required partners and implementing successful strategies. The Northeast Iowa partnered with the other local areas in the state of Iowa to provide a statewide professional development event for local workforce development board members, CEOs, Fiscal Agents, Title I Directors, and One-Stop Operators. In PY21, the Northeast Iowa LWDB developed their committees. Committees started meeting in May and meet on a monthly basis.

In this report the Northeast Iowa local area highlights our business services and engagement activities, performances across our core partner programs and participant success stories throughout PY21. Additionally, this report narrative describes progress toward meeting Iowa's strategic vision and goals to ensure that the workforce delivery system partners will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa. In Northeast Iowa we continue to work together to provide the training and education needed to develop skilled workers for emerging industries throughout the state of Iowa.

Local Workforce Development Area System

The Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area consists of Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Mitchell, Winnebago, Winneshiek, and Worth counties.

The Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area is made up of three comprehensive centers and one affiliate center. The Iowa**WORKS** comprehensive centers are located in Mason City, Waterloo, and Dubuque. The affiliate center is in Decorah. Northeast Iowa also maintains a presence in Postville to

provide Title I and III services. Our Postville location was at the UpperExploreland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) throughout PY21. However, the space was vacated due to the office building selling. Currently, our Postville location is at the Postville Public Library and Title I and III are there weekly on Wednesday's. Title I, III and IV are co-located at the Mason City, Waterloo, and Decorah locations. Title II has a direct linkage in place in Waterloo and Dubuque. In Mason City, Title II is there in person every Wednesday from 9:00 until noon. We are still working to provide a direct linkage for our Decorah office. Title II and IV have a presence at this location as well.

LWDA Strategic Objectives

NEIWDB Vision Statement:

The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will serve as a strategic leader and convener of local workforce development system stakeholders. The LWDB will partner with employers and the local workforce development system to develop policies and investments that support public workforce system strategies that support:

- The local economy,
- The development of effective approaches including local and local area sector partnerships and career pathways; and
- High quality, customer centered service delivery and service delivery approaches

NEIWDB Goals Statement:

The LWDB will work to achieve the following goals:

- The Area's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and Future Ready workers.
- All Iowans in the Area will be provided access to a continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities.
- The Area's one-stop delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless, and integrated manner.

COVID-19 Post Pandemic Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WIOA partner programs in the Northeast Iowa LWDA made accommodations to ensure high-quality, integrated service delivery for job seekers and employers was continued, but also to adjust for a surge in pandemic-related employment and training needs. Our delivery of services changed as a result of COVID-19. We could have not done this work alone. We were fortunate to have an amazing group of partners that reacted as we navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to react post pandemic. We made it through the challenges that 2020 brought us, which was a year of unimaginable change. As a result of COVID-19 our workforce development system has been transformed. We have learned that there are different ways to achieve results. Northeast Iowa local area continued to engage and leverage and collaborate our resources to meet the needs of our customers throughout the local area. PY21 was about supporting our businesses and getting our community members back on their feet after the pandemic hit.

Iowa**WORKS** centers continued to remain open during PY21. The offices were able to implement services to customers with some new additions and changes in delivery. Workshops continued to be virtual statewide with 13 various topics of information being shared through the Zoom platform. Job seekers had a high rate of attendance and are grateful for the virtual option. Each office implemented some in person workshops to the center as needed for that area. All programs resumed to normal service delivery in PY21. Center programs such as the Reemployment Case Management program has helped drive additional customers into the center for services such as resume assistance and mock interviewing.

As soon as offices reopened to customers offices remained busy with customers primarily looking for UI assistance. 1,119 individuals registered in Iowa**WORKS** during Q2 in the LDWA. 2,345 distinct individuals received a total of 11,569 services over the same quarter. A total of 528 job seekers were enrolled into the Wagner-Peyser program. Most of these individuals received unemployment or RESEA services. 2,274 job orders were created in our LWDA to assist employers in filling their open positions.

IVRS still continued to run the summer programs for the high school students within our local area. Topics ranged from work readiness skills, employer presentation, general health and wellbeing, and much more. IVRS staff worked to find creative ways to engage those students enrolled in the program.

Title I and Title III have partnered to enroll about a dozen students into the COVID-19 Statewide IT Training Project. This 12-week virtual IT boot camp through JobWorks Education and Training allows students to earn credentials needed to obtain IT support positions.

Below is a highlight of what our Title II representatives post pandemic response was:

Hawkeye Community College:

In March of 2020, the college campus closed, but classes and services remained very much open. English Language Learning and High School Completion classes were held remotely over Zoom/Google Meet. Staff created an online student registration and orientation process. Staff met with WIOA core partners that first week to create an online partner referral form. Staff quickly converted any other remaining paper and/or in-person processes to digital, so that Title II would be fully functional from home. Technology training was provided to instructors and students who were lacking in the necessary digital literacy for online teaching and learning. In July 2020, AEL classes and services returned to in person with strict capacity limits. Students chose the modality that best suited their needs. Emergency funds were also provided for students with dire needs through AEL Foundation accounts and college emergency relief funds. The college health clinic provided free COVID testing and vaccines once available. Capacity restrictions were removed in January 2021. Since then, Title II has continued to provide both face-to-face and remote/online enrollment, orientation, instruction, and services to meet the needs of all learners.

Northeast Iowa Community College:

During the pandemic, NICC with GDDC started a Safe at work training initiative and helpline for small businesses, we served over 1000 businesses with consulting services on local, state, and federal funding requests, we provide over 10 Safe at work webinars with over 1,133 businesses attending.

NICC provided training in Brain health for over 2000 individuals from March 2021 through June 2022. The topics were chosen based on businesses and community requests, training ranged from Brain Health Stigma, signs and symptoms, resiliency, conflict resolution, mental health first aid, Talent development, creating a Got your back Culture of Resilience and much more.

To help address the skilled workforce needs of the Northeast Iowa Region, Northeast Iowa Community College launched a no-cost tuition program, aimed at the health care industry starting in December 2021. Students were able to receive no cost training in Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nurse Aide, Phlebotomy Technician, Paramedic, and Emergency Medical Technician. Through these initiatives, over 200 students were provided access to skilled training that will lead to high earning jobs while also helping to fill the gap in employment in the health care industry.

North Iowa Area Community College:

NIACC closed the campus in March 2020, however, all classes including ESL and HSED classes moved to online and live-online (Zoom). All aspects of the services, including orientation and registration continued with modifications to accommodate remote access. Arrangements were made with our Information Technology department to provide students with the tools needed for online learning, if needed. The available equipment was laptops and hotspots through a checkout system. Several participants did take advantage of the availability of this technology to participate. The campus opened back up in July of 2020 with capacity limits and classes following a hybrid model. Those that were able to return to campus did, at this time. During this time learning opportunities were flexible based on their current needs and instruction was provided online, live-online and in person to accommodate the needs of the learner.

The pandemic has intensified the already tight labor market in Iowa. Adaptive work environment and greater flexibility in the work arrangement, and better wages will encourage some workers back in the labor market. We saw some businesses bounce back quickly after the pandemic hit and some may take years to return to pre-pandemic levels. Our partners are doing what they can to continue to support our local businesses and customers with workforce needs.

Sector Strategies

During PY21, the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker team, in coordination with Title III and other WIOA partner programs, responded to the hiring needs of in-demand sectors, including healthcare and manufacturing. Training and education programs in these targeted demand sectors were funded with the aim of providing a skilled pool of work-ready candidates to employers in these sectors. Our Iowa**WORKS** locations in Northeast Iowa hosted times for employers to conduct on-site hiring events at each of the centers. These hiring events were promoted through social media, and core partner and community programs throughout the local area.

Business service initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities have been utilized to target specific industry and sector strategies to best serve the businesses throughout the Northeast Iowa local area. Career pathway initiatives are being made to identify where

to best place workers while utilizing effective business intermediaries to identify employers to host work-based learning sites. All business services and strategies in the local area will be designed to meet the needs of local employers in securing a high-quality workforce.

Sector partnerships were a highlight throughout the Northeast Iowa local area in PY21. Sector partnerships are developed to support business leaders from the same industry. These partnerships are developed to address items related to workforce needs within their industry. Some areas of focus include:

- Identify common issues, challenges, and opportunities
- Address priority needs of the industry
- Address current and emerging skills gaps
- Better align programs, education/training and other resources serving employers and workers
- Communicating industry priorities to partners

Sector partnerships will continue to be a focus in PY22 as we continue to work with the new Business Engagement Division with IWD.

In Northeast Iowa the goals of the Business Community Sector Boards were to educate on Safe at Work protocol and up-to-date, relevant information through webinars and newsletters and to provide training on resiliency, change and coping with the pandemic. Information was also provided on Work-Based Learning opportunities.

NICC held several regional or specific Sector Board events with businesses and educators attending. Businesses found value and responded favorably to these opportunities with NICC. Diane Krentz, of JB Holland stated “NICC is an invaluable business partner for recruitment, training, upskilling and retention of our employees. JB Holland is able to connect with high school students through the High Demand Skilled Trades Career Fair hosted by NICC and recruit/employ students by offering a customized Earn & Learn Construction Equipment Operator class through NICC. We also utilize NICC for all of our customized safety, technical and leadership training to upskill and retain our workforce. NICC has been instrumental in creating a culture of lifelong learning for our team.”

In an effort to meet the hiring needs of the in-demand sector of healthcare, Title II and Title IV in Northeast Iowa LWDA collaborated to develop an extended CNA program. This program is geared towards individuals with developmental disabilities.

Business Services & Employer Engagement

The Northeast Iowa local area has three Business Engagement Consultants located in Waterloo, Dubuque, and Mason City. These three individuals work directly with our business customers to provide support. The Business Engagement Consultants continued its collaborative efforts of working with WIOA Core Partners to establish Career Fairs, Reverse Job Fairs, joint business visits, and business services meetings. This partnership has allowed creativity for serving businesses to be utilized and create events that are more diverse and serve the larger population of people. Employers have benefited from this partnership as they are looking for new and creative ways to hire and maintain their team members.

The Business Services Team was established in September and meets monthly. The One-Stop Operator oversees the Business Services Team to provide an integrated and consistent business services strategy. The Business Services Team is comprised of business services/placement specialists from each of the core partner agencies. The purpose of the Business Services Team is to provide a platform for our core partners to address issues related to serving employers in Northeast Iowa, discuss ways to collaborate on service provision to local employers, and strategically plan on how to address employer needs.

Core partners in Northeast Iowa Local Area have continued to meet monthly with the One-Stop Operator to share information for continued collaboration. During these Northeast Iowa Business Services Team Meetings, there is a large focus on collaboration to ensure information is shared out to all core partners.

Virtual Career Fairs using the Brazen technology has allowed for statewide and local events to be scheduled and held. This has been a learning experience for employers and job seekers to think of job fairs in a new way. The virtual career fairs have shown some success, but the Business Engagement team is continuing to look at how to make them more accessible and comfortable for employers and job seekers to attend.

In an effort to target high-demand occupations and assisting customers in vocational planning in an integrated approach, a method needed to be put in place to ensure business information is shared and documented. Therefore, the need for a Business Relations Report was developed as a means to ensure all partners are able to input and have access to employer data. As each partner develops relationships with employers in the Northeast Iowa local area, they will have the opportunity to input relevant employer information. The information included is high turnover positions, education and skills required for those positions, specified minimum age, the need for a driver's license, whether the employer hires ex-offenders, background checks and the drug screen process, and employers specific hiring process.

In addition, the type of employment the employer is hiring for and if the employer is open to on-the-job trainings, job shadows, internships, work experiences, etc. The form also allows partners the ability to provide either the employer's direct contact information or his/her own information to facilitate a warm introduction to the employer. This Business Relations Report is in the form of an accessible Google Form questionnaire that has response options of checkboxes, radio buttons, and drop-down options. As a result, the partners can more easily access the data. Each partner will be able to access a spreadsheet containing all employer data entered by all partners in the local area. All of the partners will use the employer information contained in the shared database in order to meet the hiring needs of local employers and benefit job seekers.

To emphasize a one-point of contact model and spread awareness of all Iowa**WORKS** services, a Business Services One-Pager was created to facilitate effective core partner integration and reduce duplication of services for all Northeast Iowa**WORKS** offices. This document includes a list and brief description of all core partner business services. This one-pager is to be utilized by core partners as they are meeting with employers in the local area so that they can confidently and accurately discuss partner employer services. If the employer desires additional information, they can then be directed to the core partner/subject matter expert. This is a resource to represent all core partners under the Iowa**WORKS** umbrella to provide a single access point for employers.

The One-Stop Operator created a template to collect programmatic data from the Core Partner programs on a monthly basis. The data report was implemented in September 2021 for a first reporting date on October 10th. This data is included in each quarterly report to the NEIWDB and includes information on program capacity (including enrollments and exits) and quality of services, outreach efforts, partnerships, success stories and goals for the next month.

With services such as talent recruitment and retention assistance, labor market information, accessing untapped labor pools and employee up-skilling; the Title III team ensured effective, demand-driven products and services were provided to employers during PY21. By creating and maintaining relationships, this team was able to provide targeted workforce information and solutions throughout the Northeast Iowa Local Area.

Mason City:

The Mason City Employers' Council of Iowa collaborated with state ECI and the Human Resource of North Iowa to offer 6 ECI events, with over 120 employers in attendance. Seminar topics included "All Things Unemployment", "Creating Registered Apprenticeship Programs & Connecting to High Schools", "Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace", "Workers Compensation Lunch & Learn", "Unemployment for Business Professionals", and "Family and Medical Leave Act". 53 employer-hiring events were hosted at the Iowa**WORKS** Office in Mason City. Employers talked to our customers about their current job openings and performed on-the-spot interviews.

The Mason City Iowa**WORKS** business engagement team also created ten registered apprenticeship programs with employers across the state. Seven of those programs were for local employers and high schools. Programs registered included Engineering Assistant with Forest City High School who collaborated with Winnebago Industries. Kingsland Construction in Forest City developed Carpenter, Construction Craft Laborer, and Steel Worker apprenticeship programs for incumbent workers and new hires. Big Mike's Custom Bath & HVAC created an apprenticeship program for a high school student to begin obtaining credit towards his journeyman license in HVAC. Henkel Construction collaborated with Mason City High School to develop a Construction Craft Laborer apprenticeship program, which connected them to a talent pipeline of qualified construction workers. They also helped Lehmann Family Dental create a Dental Assistant apprenticeship program to upskill their incumbent workers and prepare them for state licensing tests.

During PY21, the groundwork for Worth and Winnebago counties becoming Home Base Iowa Communities was laid. Meetings took place between Iowa**WORKS** business engagement staff, HBI Program Manager and county leadership. Due to those meetings, both Winnebago and Worth counties are scheduled to have their ribbon cutting ceremonies to become Home Base Iowa communities on November 21, 2022.

To better serve the businesses in Mason City Iowa**WORKS** in Mason City created a business engagement committee comprised of Title I and III.

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, there were 2,420 services reported for 388 businesses in Iowa**WORKS** for Mason City.

Waterloo:

Throughout PY21, Hawkeye Title II began planning pilot English Language Learning classes on site at Tyson Fresh Meats which then subsequently began in early PY22. In PY21, Hawkeye piloted two new Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and Basic Construction Skills/NCCER, for AEL students. This was in addition to Computer Numerical Control (CNC Machining) I-BEST, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) I-BEST, and Hospitality Management I-BEST that Hawkeye has offered for a number of years. These courses were developed based on labor market information and local student and partner demand. Title II partners with businesses for clinicals, tours, hiring events, employer visitors, and several IET students have then been hired by employers.

The Cedar Valley Employers' Council of Iowa offered 5 ECI events, including OSHA10 training and a collaboration with the local Cedar Valley SHRM Chapter in June 2022, with nearly 100 employers attending. Seminar topics included "Employee Engagement and Retention", "HR in a COVID World", "Digital Recruiting" and "Talent Attraction Strategies." They hosted more than 50 employer-hiring events at the Iowa**WORKS** Office in Waterloo. Employers talked to our customers about their current job openings and performed on-the-spot interviews. They also collaborated with several community organizations on external career fairs and reverse career fairs.

The Waterloo Iowa**WORKS** business engagement team also created two registered apprenticeship programs with employers. Programs registered included a Welder with CPM Roskamp Champion and a Carpenter with Cardinal Construction. They also started working with Northstar on a Direct Service Professional and worked with a consortium of 22 high schools in Western Iowa on the TPRA project and successfully registered K-12 Teacher and Teacher Aide for those schools.

The groundwork for Bremer County becoming a Home Base Iowa County was laid. Meetings took place between Iowa**WORKS** business engagement staff, HBI Program Manager, and county leadership. Due to those meetings, Bremer County is on track to become a HBI County.

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, there were 2,522 services reported for 366 businesses in Iowa**WORKS** for Waterloo.

Dubuque/Decorah:

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, there were 2,108 services reported for 260 businesses in Iowa**WORKS** for Dubuque.

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, there were 470 services reported for 80 businesses in Iowa**WORKS** for Decorah.

1,911 total employers were served with 7,520 business services in PY21 in Northeast Iowa. Services included job fairs, training services, recruitment assistance, economic development activities, etc.

Service	Total Employers	Total Services
Assisted Employer with Accessing Untapped Labor Pools	105	139
Employers view internal resumes	195	4,197
New Business Contact	10	10
Notification to Employer of Potential Applicant	30	57
Planned Layoff Response	2	5
Provided Candidate Pre-Screening	2	5
Provided Employer Information and Support Services	365	540
Provided Incumbent Worker Training Services	6	6
Provided Job Fair Services	167	258
Provided Job Order Follow-up/Assistance	114	149
Provided Rapid Response / Business Downsizing Assistance	6	9
Provided Strategic Planning / Economic Development Activities	127	222
Provided Training Services	56	65
Provided Workforce Recruitment Assistance	271	468
Referred Qualified Applicants	305	1,156
Registered Apprenticeship - Handoff to Office of Apprenticeship	15	18
Registered Apprenticeship - In-Depth Meeting	44	110
Registered Apprenticeship - Intro Meeting	82	97
Registered Apprenticeship - Program Registered	9	11
Total	1,911	7,520

Program Highlights & Innovation

Referrals

Total referrals for PY21 in Northeast Iowa was 903.

In PY21 the One-Stop Operator implemented a referral system for all WIOA partners in the Northeast Iowa LWDA. A Google Form referral system has been implemented across the local area since the OSO started at the beginning of PY21. The form is housed with the One-Stop Operator and all Core partner and Required partner staff have access to the form and use it to make cross-agency referrals. When a job seeker is referred to a program using the form, the program is immediately notified via an e-mail that includes a PDF of all customer details. This information is also included in a One-Drive spreadsheet, where staff and program directors are able to monitor all referrals made within the local area, track follow-up, and provide updates and outcomes for individual customers. A training video on how to use the referral form was developed and distributed to staff. Referrals are tracked and reported to the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board.

Organization Referred To	Totals
AARP	26
Goodwill Adult/Dislocated Worker	410
Goodwill Youth	72
Hawkeye Community College Title II (AEL)	16
Hawkeye Community College GAP/PACE	46
Hawkeye Community College Ticket-to-Work	4
Hawkeye Community College WE Build	1
North Iowa Area Community College Title II (AEL)	8
North Iowa Area Community College GAP/PACE	17
Northeast Iowa Community College Title II (AEL)	26
Northeast Iowa Community College GAP/PACE	70
JOB CORPS	4
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (all other counties)	3
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette)	0
Iowa Department for the Blind	2
Iowa WORKS Dubuque/Decorah	34
Iowa WORKS Mason City	25
Iowa WORKS Waterloo	19
IVRS Dubuque	65
IVRS Mason City/Decorah	30
IVRS Waterloo	24
Proteus	1

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, & Youth

Title I services through Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa continued to expand and evolve with the needs of the participants that they serve. More Title I staff were hired in order to accommodate and enroll more individuals with barriers to employment. Job duties and titles were restructured to ensure a more seamless and quality service driven process from enrollment through follow-up services. This change has benefited the participants by ensuring individualized one-on-one support and attention. Our Title I program aligns closer to the structure of the other local areas in the state.

A Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator position was created to provide thorough training to staff and implement internal monitoring processes, to ensure compliance with WIOA policies and procedures. A Quality Assurance Specialist was also created to assist the coordinator position. This individual will focus on quality and assurance of all financial documents and spending to ensure Title I is aligned with local policies. The Title I Operations Managers positions were created in Waterloo and Dubuque. These individuals will supervise those Title I staff members that are in those offices. They will also work to assist with rapid responses and seek out partnership opportunities within those areas.

Intentional focus and effort on building partnerships and linkage with partner programs and local organizations and businesses aided in an increase in referrals and creating more opportunities to co-enroll and ensure wrap around support for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants.

The Title I Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator developed a series of Case Note templates to assist Career Planners in Northeast Iowa. These templates help to assist in creating thorough and policy driven notes. The State was impressed by these templates that they have since implemented her case note templates statewide.

To better serve the community and provide resources to those with significant barriers Iowa**WORKS** in Dubuque created a Homeless Advisory Committee comprised of Title III and I staff.

A shared Title I/NICC Career Planner role was developed, and an individual was hired in this role. This individual is officed three days a week on the NICC Calmar campus where she is available to provide Title I services to NICC students. She also spends two days a week at Riceville and Cresco High School providing career counseling to students and potentially enrolling students with barriers to employment in Title I services.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy

Northeast Iowa Community College:

NICC has College and Career coaches in all 25-school district in region one. They provide career and academic planning for secondary and post-secondary education opportunities. Fiscal year 2002 we touched over 10,000 students in k-12, 41,73 in Interact Career events, 124 Worksite Exploratory events, and 309 individual job shadows: 603 Classroom speakers, 1548 career immersion experiences and high school students obtained 292 Career Pathway Certificates in Welding, Childcare, Health. Further we supported 3, 265 interactive career events to promote apprenticeships, 20 mock interviews and job shadows for internships.

North Iowa Area Community College:

PY21 has been a year of transition for Title II at North Iowa Area Community College. In February, the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Coordinator moved to a Lead Instructor and full-time teaching. The role of AEL Coordinator is now part of a new position, Director of Education to Employment, which oversees AEL as well as PACE, GAP, and GEER. The transition has gone well, particularly because AEL and PACE, GAP, and GEER meet bi-weekly to collaborate to better serve students.

During COVID, the HSE instructors in Garner went on a leave of absence and this past August, returned and the evening class resumed. HSE classes are taught in Mason City, Charles City, Forest City, Garner, and Hampton.

Student enrollment in HSE has returned to pre-pandemic numbers. The Education to Employment team continues to explore ways to improve student engagement and completion as well as how to support students with barriers.

English as a Second Language (ESL), particularly worksite ESL remains a priority. Businesses in North Central Iowa are grappling with how to hire and engage non-native English-speaking employees. NIACC will hire a full-time ESL instructor in the next couple of months to build its ESL program. In October, NIACC added a new ESL class site in Forest City. A lot of interest from local businesses including 3M, Winnebago, and Larson around the offering of this course. Many of the students were new Winnebago County residents who relocated to the area from Puerto Rico.

Hawkeye Community College:

Hawkeye Title II has been well respected by the State Department of Education for its Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming. It was the first in the state to offer these programs that are now required. Piloting two new IET programs in early PY21 during the pandemic was a significant undertaking and was successful.

Additionally, the AEL student population tends to have very limited digital skills and has limited access to technology. While the program has access to loaner technology (Chromebooks and hot spots) currently for students to engage in online learning, this was not yet available in much of PY21 until GEER funds were made available. It is noteworthy that synchronous online classes were even able to be held without notice or time to prepare. Hawkeye was one of the first programs to digitize their program registration process for AEL students in early PY21 and has been noted for its high level of data integrity in the enrollment process.

Title III Wagner-Peyser

In office recruitment occurred at each One-Stop Center throughout PY21 with Walk-In Wednesday or open interview sessions with employers. Employers have found great success in this approach and have successfully been filling positions as a result. Cargill conducted the entire onboarding process right at the One-Stop Center in Mason City, which included filling out the application, interviewing, drug screening and onboarding.

The Reemployment Case Management was soft launched in the centers in November. The program officially launched in January 2022. This program has driven customers into the center to conduct job searches and attend workshops.

In November, Iowa**WORKS** in Mason City held the North Iowa Career Fair at the Southbridge Mall. 40 employers were in attendance, filling the majority of the mall's concourse with tables. There was a total of 83 job seekers that came to the fair. Leading up to the event core partners worked together to launch a massive outreach campaign to promote this event. Many job seekers found jobs as a result of this event.

In March, all Iowa**WORKS** offices began providing access to free training opportunities through Grow with Google. Through the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), Google set aside scholarships for four of their training programs to be allocated through the One-Stop Centers. Each center had a Title III team member who guided customers through the initial screening and referral process. Career paths included Data Analytics, Project Management, UX Design, and IT Support.

In PY21 Waterloo started having a staff member working each week at the Waterloo Women's Center for Change to provide career planning services to those individuals who may not be able to get to the center easily. This will eventually expand to the men's facility in Waterloo.

Mason City started having staff members visit Prairie Ridge Behavioral Treatment center on a regular basis in PY21. Staff will spend an afternoon at the facility once every 4 weeks (aligning with their treatment program schedule) to give an overview presentation about Iowa**WORKS** services and to hold office hours for 1-on-1 career planning appointments.

Title III in Waterloo developed a WIOA partner brochure that can be utilized as a resource when working with employers, and job seekers. This brochure explains WIOA core partner programs and how they work together to form Iowa**WORKS**. The purpose of the partner's brochure is to integrate and streamline the messaging about our WIOA partnerships. The brochure is visually appealing, easy to navigate document that provides employers with a short description of each partner program. The brochure also contains a bulleted list of core employer and job seeker services provided by each WIOA partner. Each office has since adapted this brochure. Since adapting this brochure, it has delivered a streamlined, integrated, and professional message to employers and community organizations.

Rapid Response

In PY21, twelve employers were served by Rapid Response services. In-person Worker Information Meetings (WIMs) were conducted for three employers in collaboration with the businesses along with mailing or emailing necessary paperwork. The meetings were held at various times to accommodate the schedules of the affected employees. Trade participation and informational meetings were also held for businesses who qualified for trade programming. Many community partners assisted with rapid response events as well.

Our local rapid response teams were created. Each local team has a lead, representation from each of the core partners, and Business Engagement Consultants. Our rapid response teams work together on providing Worker Information Meetings, job fairs and other events as a result of each rapid response.

Serta Mattress Rapid Response Job Fair was held in Clear Lake in May. Twenty employers were onsite to share opportunities with approximately 40 job seekers that were in attendance. This layoff was Trade certified and staff worked with impacted workers to ensure they were aware of those Trade benefits.

Registered Apprenticeship, OJT, OST, WEPs

In the Waterloo Area, IVRS started a new program called Project Search. This is a program intended to give students hands-on work experience during the school year. The program is contracted through Allen Hospital in Waterloo. Students completed three rotations during the school year. These included, but not limited to, working in food services, housekeeping, environmental services, and recording keeping.

Title I had three individuals participate in a work experience at Convivium Urban Farmstead in Dubuque this summer. The partnership showed great success and the participants learned a lot. We hope to continue this partnership next summer with the hopes of having more individuals enrolled.

Title I continued with the six-week summer work experience program at the Swiss Valley Nature Preserve in Dubuque County. Each year students from the local special education programs in Dubuque are invited to apply for the opportunity to participate in the program. Students worked to trim trees, clean up trails, painted, and spread wood chips. This program continues to be a positive program for Swiss Valley and the students that are enrolled. Students enrolled in the program learn basic work skills that will help them maintain employment in the future. WIOA funds were utilized to provide students with work boots, shirts and hats needed for their outdoor work duties and paid their wages for the six weeks they were participating in the work experience.

Work Experience opportunities were expanded to meet the individual needs of youth participants throughout the local area. Several individuals participated and successfully completed WEPs in various settings, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and an auto repair shop.

Title I began a partnership with an Electrical Apprenticeship program in the Mason City and Waterloo area and Title I is assisting participants with successfully and completing this program. Supportive services will be provided throughout this program.

Offender Re-Entry

Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa developed a committee in May 2021 devoted to providing supportive services to individuals coming out of jail and prison with a focus on connecting individuals to training, increasing employability, and connecting them with the resources needed to obtain and maintain permanent employment. Title I and partner programs, Title III and Vocational Rehabilitation are involved in planning efforts as active members of this committee as well as various community organizations.

Title I has two Career Planners specifically assigned to providing support to ex-offenders. They have made partnerships with local correctional facilities and have regularly scheduled office hours in the facilities to build connections with individuals, who are looking to improve their chances for a successful

re-entry in the workforce upon release. This outreach has been so successful and is resulting in many referrals from parole and probation services. Title I will continue to support ex-offenders with developing career goals, obtaining needed training and finding jobs.

The Mason City office continued to work with Beje Clark Residential Center to help recently returning ex-offenders find employment. All new residents are required to meet with a Career Planner at Iowa**WORKS** within their first few days at the center.

Northeast Iowa Community College, Iowa**WORKS**, and Fountain of Youth partnered to offer two, 8-week sessions in the Dubuque County Jail. This program was developed to offer those individuals coming out of jail to improve employability and create an opportunity to receive wraparound support to ensure success. Participants were provided training in emotional intelligence, financial literacy, resume and job skills, and a variety of workforce related topics. Participants had the opportunity to connect with a NICC College and Career Coach, as well as employees of Iowa**WORKS** for employment placement, upon completion.

The Pathways to Education and Employment and Reentry (PEER) program at Hawkeye Community College and Adult Education and Literacy (Title II) in Waterloo expanded a new partnership. This partnership was developed to start High School Completion instruction in a community reentry setting, which is to launch this Fall (August 2022).

Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) staff is co-located or has a presence in each of the Iowa**WORKS** Centers in the Local Area (Dubuque, Decorah, Mason City, Waterloo). IVRS provides expert assistance in the area of vocational services for those with disabilities, with highly trained Master's level counselors serving each individual. Those with visual impairments are served in the same manner through IVRS sister agency, the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB). Customers accessing Wagner-Peyser or Title I services that attest to having a disability or barrier to employment are referred to IVRS or IDB as appropriate.

During Spring 2022 Goodwill Industries, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Northeast Iowa Community College began to meet and develop the NICC Flourish Certified Nurse Aide Program. The Flourish Nurse Aide program stretches program contact hours, over a longer period of time and provides tutoring services for participants. The goal of the Flourish program is to provide high skilled training to community members who may have a disability or barrier to training and/or employment.

In Mason City, through a collaboration with IWD and IVRS, we had an externship with a VR job candidate for the greeter position at the Mason City One-Stop Center. This individual was paid a stipend through VR. This was a great opportunity for the individual as she some valuable work experience, while also building capacity for IWD.

Veteran Services

Veteran's utilizing Iowa**WORKS** services receive priority regarding service access, intensive Case Management and have a dedicated employment specialist called a Local Veteran Employment

Representative (LVER) to facilitate connections and placement with employers who are veteran focused. In addition, these activities are supported through ongoing training to Iowa **WORKS** staff and partners on the importance and the legislation related to Priority of Service.

Northeast Iowa Community College hired a Military and Veteran Services coordinated to work directly with active military students, Veteran students, and dependents of active or veterans. NICC partnered with the Iowa **WORKS** veterans service team to help educate students on the opportunities available to them. Additionally, NICC was able to establish a military/veteran's scholarship for any currently enrolled student or dependent enrolled at Northeast Iowa Community College.

Home Base Iowa goal was to have all 99 counties as HBI Community designation by Veterans' Day 2021. Fayette County became a Home Base Iowa Community May 2022. The counties in our area that do not have HBI designation is Chickasaw, Allamakee, Delaware, Cerro Gordo, Worth, Winnebago, Mitchell, and Bremer. Worth and Winnebago counties will become HBI Communities in November 2022.

Implementation of Priority of Service

Veterans and their spouses are given priority to all services offered in the Iowa **WORKS** One-Stop Centers. When individuals enter the Iowa **WORKS** offices they are asked if they have served in the military or if they are the spouse of a service member. If yes, they are thanked for their service and/or support and are given special packets of information containing center and Veterans services. Staff are honored to always express gratitude to military members and their families for their service. All services offered are given priority to veterans/covered persons, which means they are served first before other individuals who are seeking services at that time. Veterans receiving public assistance are the highest priority. 244 Veterans were served in Northeast Iowa for PY21.

Participant Success Stories

Success Story #1:

At the beginning of "Joe's" senior year of high school, he started in the Diesel Mechanic program at NIACC in Mason City. He would spend half his day at NIACC, working towards his Diesel Mechanic Degree and half the day at his high school, meeting his graduation requirements. As of today, "Joe" has graduated high school and is completing his Diesel Mechanic Degree. He plans to continue at NIACC and complete his Auto Mechanics Degree, as well. He's on the NIACC honor roll. He is doing an outstanding job and is on his ultimate career path, to become a mechanic, just like his father. The IDB helped "Joe" obtain the necessary tools he needed to become a mechanic. IDB also worked with him on career choices and interacting with others. I have spoken to the head of the mechanics program at NIACC, and he reported that "Joe" is a hard worker and is doing a great job. I have observed him in the shop with his classmates and he has built great relationships and knows exactly what to do. He's there to work hard and learn. It has been awesome watching him grow from the freshman in high school that didn't really like school, to the young man, honor roll student, mechanic, that he has become today. Looking forward to seeing what's next for "Joe."

Success Story #2:

“Ran” graduated in August 2022 after entering the High School Equivalency program in March. Her personal story of success is remarkable because she committed to studying hard despite raising seven children and navigating several difficulties. She was ecstatic to receive her diploma and has had three job offers.

Success Story #3:

“Lucy” is working on her HSED and only needs to pass the math exam. She decided to obtain her CNA certificate. After some challenges, she is doing very well and is getting an A- in the theory class.

Success Story #4:

In 2019, Azike Tampi arrived in Waterloo. He had just left his home country of Togo in West Africa and moved to a community that he did not know using a language that he did not understand. Tampi, though, was undeterred by the barriers. He was determined to find a way to learn new skills and ensure his success in Iowa.

Enter Hawkeye Community College. As a part of their adult education curriculum, Tampi enrolled in an English Language Learning (ELL) course, which not only helped this 25-year-old native French speaker acquire necessary English skills, but also connected him with opportunities to shape his future career pathway.

“I wanted to learn English,” Tampi said. “My teacher, Emily, asked me what career I was interested in. I like helping people, so I chose nursing and took the CNA (certified nursing assistant) class.”

Through Hawkeye’s integrated education and training (IET) program, students like Tampi can pursue other career training while also completing adult education classes. Individuals who are enrolled in courses like ELL or High School Completion can greatly benefit from these concurrent opportunities.

“For the longest time, students would finish their High School Completion or ELL programs, but it wasn’t enough,” said Laura Hidlebaugh, director of adult education and literacy programs at Hawkeye Community College. “We really needed to provide them short-term training options and credentials to make them more employable in the field.”

IET programs allow adult learners, who often work full-time jobs, to save valuable time in their pursuit of career upskilling. Traditionally, students need to complete their adult education classes prior to enrolling in other courses, which can sometimes take months or longer. Through Hawkeye’s program, students can now simultaneously enroll in courses like commercial driver’s license (CDL), CNC machinery, construction, hospitality management and other in-demand career training while also earning their high school equivalency or ELL.

Individuals participating in IET programs are well-supported during their classes, too. Being enrolled in the two programs ensures students have at least two instructors who are working jointly to provide support and promote success. And through a mix of funding opportunities, including Gap Tuition Assistance and Pathways for Academic Career and Employment, most students at Hawkeye do not have any tuition or out-of-pocket costs when enrolling in IET programs.

“Having this integrated model, especially for ELL students, is a huge benefit,” said Brandon Alves-Morgan, manager of ELL and family literacy at Hawkeye Community College. “Integrating career exploration and looking at next steps early helps eliminate some barriers that are typical for ELL students.”

Completion of an IET program can lead students directly into the workforce or into a guided pathway for further education and a potential degree. For Tampi, his completion of the IET CNA course directed him to other classes and a new career goal.

“I am in my second semester working towards an LPN (licensed practice nursing),” he said. “I want to start as an LPN and then go to school to get the RN (registered nurse) certification.”

IET programs provide valuable opportunities for adult learners to make significant career and life changes individually, and they can help strengthen Iowa’s workforce overall.

“We are really responsive to the local labor market,” Alves-Morgan said. “This gives us the unique ability, in a tight labor market, to connect with businesses and develop a class that meets their needs for a talent pipeline while also being responsive to what students are looking for in careers.”

Hawkeye started offering IET programming in 2015, using the state of Washington’s IBEST model. It was the first time the college had done any blending of credit and non-credit programs, and they did extensive work to see how admissions, financial aid, funding and other logistics fit together to provide quality experiences for their students. Over the years, Hawkeye has improved their operations, and they continue to expand into other career fields based on local labor needs and student demands.

“One of the things I liked about adding the CDL class is that not only is it a big need in our community, it is also one that is student-driven,” Hidlebaugh said. “Students couldn’t afford to go to the regional transportation center on their own and didn’t have the language skills yet. This IET program was designed specifically for their needs.”

Whether IET students go directly into the workforce or onto other training and education, the experience they receive in the program introduces them to new opportunities for success within the community. Tampi says his own time in Hawkeye’s IET CNA and ELL classes has definitely been worthwhile, and he is grateful for the support.

“I am thankful,” he said. “Juggling work and school is a great challenge. I have learned a lot of things with Hawkeye by my side.”

This story can be found at <https://yourfuturestartshereiowa.org/success-stories/> or at <https://educateiowa.gov/article/march-29-2022/path-language-and-learning-career-skills>

Success Story #5:

A former ELL and CNA I-BEST student at Hawkeye Community College, went to Central Michigan University for his Master’s in Public Health. He was hired as a Community Epidemiologist at the Ingham

County Health Department and was heavily involved in public health and contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Success Story #6:

“Carrie” began working with Vocational Rehab March 2022 after being referred by Promise Jobs. She quickly became an active participant in her employment plan. She was undecided about what she wanted to do in the future other than knowing she didn't want to return to fast food. We explored the option of college but couldn't find the right training program for her and she decided she wanted to go straight into employment if it was remote work due to her diagnoses. Melanie worked with a Vocational Rehab Assistant to update her resume and attended some virtual job fairs. While it was frustrating to receive some rejection letters, “Carrie” persevered and kept putting herself out there with job applications and took advantage of job leads sent her way. After patience and continuing to apply to jobs she received 2 potential job offers at the same time. Vocational Rehabilitation provided her support and assistance as she navigated through the situation. She ultimately accepted a position with Aureon FT Customer Service \$14/hour with benefits. She was only given a few days' notice that she had to travel 3 hours to pick up the company provided computer equipment. Vocational Rehabilitation and Promise Jobs collaborated so the travel expenses would not be a barrier for her. She applied for grants through Promise Jobs for reimbursement on those travel expenses. PJ is also providing a computer desk and chair for her home office. “Carrie” has relied on her family up to this point for childcare but is starting to consider the idea of looking for a daycare center for her daughter. “Carrie” is so happy to have a fulltime job and to be able to provide for herself and daughter. Her entire team is excited for her future, and we couldn't be prouder of her!

Success Story #7:

Roxanne applied for vocational rehabilitation services after an accident at a previous job that resulted in obstructive pulmonary disease from chemical exposures. In addition to the physical challenges, this sudden life turn led to depression and anxiety. As a result of the injury, she would get out of breath and her voice would quickly get tired from speaking. Roxanne still wanted to work if and knew she would need a career change to a job that was less physically demanding.

Roxanne applied for IVRS services a few years ago and worked on making a career change by updating her computer skills in hopes of getting an office job, but still had not found a good fit. She considered work-at-home options but realized that she enjoys being in the community with people. She went through some difficult times, but kept attending her VR meetings, and continued working on her personal health goals which slowly but surely improved her stamina, breathing, and mental health.

Then she attended IVRS's Customer Service Academy Workshops and felt this boosted her confidence to not give up. Then her counselor saw a job that she thought would be a good fit and told Roxanne about it. The OWEP Employment Specialist assisted Roxanne to follow through on the job application. She was interested but nervous, however Roxanne aced the interview. She was able to advocate for her needs and asked for accommodations, and the employer was very understanding about disabilities. Roxanne was offered the job and decided to take the leap and ended up loving it. She said her new job works because it is a “calm, friendly environment.” And the employer accommodates her condition by allowing her to sit or take short breaks as needed.

Roxanne said she loves helping the customers that come in, which gives her purpose, and that she feels understood and supported by her coworkers and employers, and this makes all the difference in her success!

Roxanne said that participating in the Customer Service Academy workshop through IVRS helped her feel confident that she could work in the community again and would be able to deal with any situation that arose. She added that she finds herself using this training a lot, and it has helped her deal with difficult customers. She said it helped her feel confident and how to be professional as well as how to accommodate all customers.

Roxanne described how in looking back, now she can recognize that she was building her ability to work again step by step, and that returning to work has built her confidence and benefited her mental health. Roxanne said she “went from hopelessness to hope,” and that she “found new life” in this new job.

Success Story #8:

Title I Youth participant “David” was unemployed, homeless, and without transportation at the time of referral. Through encouragement from his Program Coordinator, he found employment as a server at Applebee’s and was able to arrange rides to work with his co-workers. They worked together to find the right educational program for him, and he started the process of enrolling at NIACC to earn his A.S.S. in Computer Programing. Title I was able to assist with tuition, fees, and books, and to get “David” connected with student housing on campus. He is doing well in school and has a stable place to live and study. He is still employed at Applebee's and is saving money for a vehicle. There is every reason to believe he will graduate and go on to a successful and productive career in the IT industry.

Success Story #9:

Army Veteran "Samantha" was being assisted by an integrated resource team consisting of Iowa**WORKS**, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Veteran Administration Medical Center and Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging. “Samantha” suffered from chronic knee pain and could not perform her duties as a bagger at a grocery store and was subsequently put on a medical leave of absence. While “Samantha” received physical therapy services for her knees from the VA, the rest of the team focused on a two-pronged attack; prepping Sam for a different career that did not exacerbate her disability and creating job modifications within her current job at the grocery store and guiding “Samantha” in applying for SSDI. After her physical therapy was complete, “Samantha” was able to return to the grocery store in a modified role and had been approved for SSDI.

Annual Performance Analysis

Title I:

Title I reported there were 257 total participants served in PY21. There were 113 total Adults, 96 Dislocated Workers, and 48 Youth. The below table gives a breakdown by office location of participants served:

Participants Served	Decorah	Dubuque	Mason City	Waterloo	TOTAL
Adult	14	33	19	47	113
Dislocated Worker	6	11	39	40	96
Youth	6	29	5	8	48
Totals	26	73	63	95	257

The following shows the number of veterans served in Title I for PY21:

Veteran	Title I
Title I Adult	3
Title I Dislocated Worker	8
Total	11

The combined total of WIOA/WP/TAA Veteran's that were served in PY21 were 282. The following breakdown by office is 16 in Decorah, 68 in Dubuque, 63 in Mason City and 135 in Waterloo.

Title II:

Hawkeye Community College in PY21 served 1,195 students. They had 533 "participants," defined by the DOE as having at least 12 hours of instruction.

North Iowa Area Community College in PY21 served a total of 140 students in HSE. There were 45 HSE graduates in PY21. NIACC served 43 ESL students in PY21.

Northeast Iowa Community College in PY21 served a total of 291 students. 240 of those students were in ABE/IET/HSE. There were 51 students in ELL. Northeast Iowa Community College had a total of 83 HSED completions in PY21.

Title III:

In PY21, Wagner-Peyser served a total of 3,335 individuals.

Location	Number of Participants Served
Decorah	274
Dubuque	863
Mason City	543
Waterloo	1655
Total Served in PY21	3,335

Title IV:

IVRS reported that there were 2,241 customers that were served in PY21, along with an additional 1,085 students. Total participants served in PY21 with students was 3,326. There were 518 individuals that have been closed and considered stable in employment.

IDB in Northeast Iowa reported that there were 62 clients that were served in PY21. There were 24 pre-employment transition clients that were served, and total status 26 closures were 1.

Northeast Iowa PY21 Annual Performance Outcomes

Wagner-Peyser

	Negotiated Rate	Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr	73.00%	66.90%
Employment 4th Qtr	70.00%	70.40%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr	\$6,100	\$7,675

Adult

	Negotiated Rate	Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr	73.00%	78.50%
Employment 4th Qtr	70.00%	88.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr	\$5,400	\$6,339
Credential Attainment	67.00%	66.70%
Measurable Skills Gain	44.00%	31.00%

Dislocated Worker

	Negotiated Rate	Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr	85.00%	86.60%
Employment 4th Qtr	83.00%	96.70%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr	\$8,400	\$10,371
Credential Attainment	68.00%	54.50%
Measurable Skills Gain	31.00%	56.00%

Youth

	Negotiated Rate	Actual Rate
Employment 2nd Qtr	73.00%	75.60%
Employment 4th Qtr	72.00%	84.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Qtr	\$3,600	\$3,003
Credential Attainment	59.00%	56.30%
Measurable Skills Gain	41.00%	26.50%